

Apiculture: A Case for Producing Local Honey

3 to 5 keywords: Apiculture, Pollinators, Health & Food, Climate Change, Sustainability

This poster will illustrate the benefits of local beekeeping on Winthrop University's campus and the need to protect honeybees. We will provide information about educational programs and national, state and local support available for those who are interested in the process of producing locally harvested raw honey for consumption. The authors have earned certification as Certified and Journeyman beekeepers, successfully maintained colonies and successfully gained approval for bottling and labeling local honey for distribution.

Humans have been harvesting honey from honeybees since prehistoric times. Raw honey is a natural food with many nutritional benefits, contains powerful antioxidants, counters pollen allergies and is a natural energy source. In addition, honeybees are responsible for pollinating about one-third of all food crops. However, honeybee populations have been declining at an alarming rate. Extensive research has been investigating what is causing this decline. Globally, apiculturists are exploring methods of protecting bee colonies from accidental destruction by various sources including pesticide use and climate change. At the state and local level, the South Carolina Beekeepers' Association serves to support local beekeeping associations through education and research grants. Locally, many people are asking the question, "What can be done to protect the honeybee and increase its numbers across South Carolina?" The Rock Hill Educational Community Garden is home to two colonies where visitors are learning to overcome his or her fear of "bees" while exploring the importance of local beekeeping, maintaining and protecting hives, and the process of harvesting honey.