





NATIVE BEES ARE ALSO AT TOOWORRA FARM



WARRÉ HIVE



OPENING THE WARRÉ HIVE



NATURAL COMB AND BEES



HONEY HAND PRESS WITH COMB BEING PRESSED



BEE COLLECTING NECTAR AT TOOWORRA FARM ORCHARD



## Tooworra Farm

The Goldin Honey Apiary is located on Tooworra Farm in the Central Tablelands of New South Wales, Australia. Here the flowering sources of nectar and pollen reflect the red and yellow ochres of the traditional land of the Wiradjuri people.

Being on the western side of the Great Dividing Range, and at a higher altitude than the Sydney coast to the east, seasons are distinctive with short hot summers and longer cold winters. The bees forage in response to these seasonal patterns, and the honey flavours and aromas reflect these changes. Tooworra Farm is nestled under Mount Ilford with Cunninghams Creek running through the farm on its westerly journey from the Mount Vincent Range. The Apiary is surrounded by the farm's quince, pear and apple orchard, food forest, hazelnut grove, and guild gardens of vegetables and flowers. Combined with the spring blossoms, these add to the bountiful natural sources of nectar and pollen. The farm uses renewable energy from solar and wind sources.

### Small is beautiful – Slow Food

Tooworra Farm's slow food management is grounded in the desire to 'tread softly on the earth' by utilising environmentally sustainable and organic practices. The Apiary management techniques place the bees first before honey production to avoid stressing the bee colony. These techniques include being mindful of how cold or hot the weather is, if there is a drought or if it raining and wet, if there is a shortage of food or food of adequate quality. Minimal intervention is used to manage the hives.

The Apiary is small. Simple tools and equipment are used. Only Warré hives are used and tiered hives follow the natural tendency of bees to draw down their own comb, with new hive boxes added from the bottom rather than the top. This system makes for happy, healthy bees which is central to their hive development. Sufficient comb is retained in the hives to satisfy the hives' growth and emergency feeding needs. Sugar syrup is therefore not used as there is always sufficient honey left for the bees to eat, especially over winter. Local floral resources are seen as more than adequate to supply the pollen and nectar.

The bees are kept in a permanent location and the farm management chooses not to move the bee hives to follow agricultural crops or nectar sources around the countryside. This means that the farm minimizes external chemical contact and reduces stress to the bee colony due to movement. The bees remain a constant and integral part of the Farm Garden.

### Nectar & Pollen

At Tooworra Farm you often can hear the bees buzzing before you can see them as they feed on nectar and pollen.

This is often the case with the beautiful Yellow Box eucalypts of which a remnant island exists on Mount Ilford and Mount Vincent range. This is an iconic Australian native tree and as its botanical name suggests (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) it means honey scented. The Yellow Box woodland grows with Blakey's Red Gum and White Box and has a rich understorey of native grasses, flowering wildflower herbs and shrubs.

Yellow Box trees can be 200 to 300 years old and are a fantastic tree for honey production, perhaps the best of all the eucalypts. Eucalypts give Australian honey its distinctive taste and density. The flowers of this tree provide an important habitat for native animals. The remnant Yellow Box trees provide an essential habitat for many endangered species. The Yellow Box is now recognised as critically endangered and is protected under both Australian Commonwealth and NSW State legislation.

Tooworra Farm is planting wildlife Yellow Box vegetation corridors, and creek plantings. These corridors provide 'stepping stones' for bird and animal species. Like frogs hopping between lily pads, birds and native animals move along the bushland corridors to reach safe havens as they move from one habitat to another.

### Bees & the hives

The first Warré hive at Tooworra Farm came from a natural bee keeper who populates his hives from natural wild bee swarms in the Blue Mountains.

The bee hives are made by hand by a hive maker in the Blue Mountains and are made of natural wood. The hive boxes contain no chemicals or synthetic materials. Plastic combs are not used, as the bees create their own combs in the Warré hive system. All Tooworra Farm bees are derived from this first hive – no 'external' bees have been introduced. The bees remain true to the gentle and content nature of the original source bees.

### Harvesting the honey

At Tooworra Farm, Permaculture Principles of Care for the Earth, Care for People and Share the Excess are followed. Caring for the environment means working with the beautiful bees to nurture the colony's long-term resilience.

It is understood that Warré hives produce 70% less honey and yield per hive than other hive systems. Harvesting the precious honey is therefore seen as a privilege that is taken after the needs of the bees are met.

Other factors also affect the decision to harvest honey at Tooworra Farm. The seasons, plant characteristics and weather influence honey flows. Honey flows in early spring can suddenly end due to weather events and if honey is harvested too early, the bees can be affected. Frosts and lack of rain can adversely affect nectar sources from spring blossoms and summer flowers. Some eucalypts including the Yellow Box do not always flower each year. Being observant of these factors is important for bee colony health and resilience.

Once the honey comb is harvested however, the extraction practices ensure that the honey is pure. The honey is cold-extracted from the honey comb by a hand press. The honey is not heated and is unpasteurised. The honey is not blended.

Each harvest has its own flavour, colour, aroma and density depending on the season and the nectar and pollen sources foraged by the bees.

### Pure honey

GOLDIN Farm House & Garden Produce  
1193 Mt Vincent Road, Ilford NSW 2850 Australia  
e: goldinadmin@icloud.com

