

# LOGAN'S LAKE HONEY



*By Jessica Manley*

Nestled in Dyersburg, Tennessee, Logan's Lake Honey has been providing the state of Tennessee with 100% premium raw honey for about 12 years. Owner Mike Harris has been a master beekeeper for nearly 25 years. He spent 10 to 12 years beekeeping at Logan's Lake where he came up with the name Logan's Lake Honey. Harris has since relocated to Dyersburg and started business there.

Harris recalls his passion for beekeeping coming from his grandfather who was a backyard beekeeper. "He just gave me a love of bees," Harris said. "Years later, I went to a local beekeepers club and discovered how to do it, and I just taught myself."

Harris bought his first box of bees from a guy in Dyersburg. At this time, it had been 30 years since he had worked with bees with grandfather when he was a kid.

"I was very scared, Harris said. "After 10 minutes, I realized this is pretty cool. It's fun. They aren't going to tear me up. My grandfather got me started and then I eventually got into it. It didn't take me long before bees were all that I was doing."

Today Harris is a resource for many beekeepers in the area and is very knowledgeable, belonging to a local beekeeping club in Dyersburg and the Tennessee Beekeepers Association.

Harris has had many careers over the years. He's been a riverboat pilot, sold real estate, and had a car lot. While he says that beekeeping is harder work than anything, it is something that he loves.

"It's not really work," Harris said with a smile. "I'll be working bees till I'm 80 I guess."

Harris currently has around 600 hives in five counties in West Tennessee: Lauderdale, Crockett, Gibson, Dyer, and Lake.

"Along the Mississippi River, we have wonderful soil, and the soil has to be rich," Harris said. "The soil helps the plants become healthy. And then the healthy plants produce more of an abundance of nectar. So that's why we're in this area."

In West Tennessee, there are a multitude of different honey sources. For bees to make honey, they need a flowering plant. Some common plants in West Tennessee that bees use include heartleaf peppervine, red vine, wild cucumber vine, asters, and cotton and soybean crops to name a few. But there are many others. Essentially, bees need a flowering plant with a good source of nectar to make honey.

"You've got the same plants everywhere," Harris said. "Any honey produced in West Tennessee is all local honey, even in Middle Tennessee. This is because we've got the same plants."

Harris' honey is both rich in flavor and loaded with health benefits. Honey has many uses that people are unaware of. It is a natural remedy that can vastly improve how you feel and help your overall health.

"It will help with allergies," Harris said. "It's just for general health. It's like taking a vitamin. You know, you've got minerals, vitamins, antioxidants, and then all those other little micronutrients that nobody knows about."

The micronutrients are all things that your body can use. According to Harris, if you don't get these micronutrients, you wouldn't know it. You might not feel as good. The main health benefits are mainly because the honey is local and raw.

"We pride ourselves on making a premium raw honey that everybody enjoys," Harris said. "It's got more health benefits, because it's raw. We don't cook it."

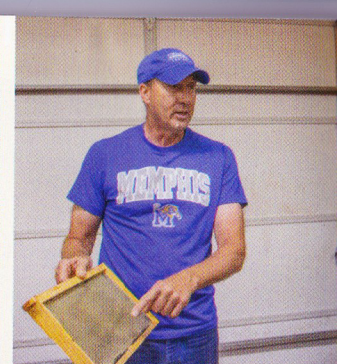
Because Harris' honey is raw, it will crystallize. Crystallization rates all depend on temperature. Depending on the plant, nectar sources will have different crystallization rates.

"There's like 200 compounds that are living that heat destroys in honey and all that stuff is stuff the body can use," Harris said. If you kill it off or destroy it from heat, then you don't get the benefits of honey."

A majority of Harris' bee boxes are located near wooded areas. This is because all that bees need to survive and make honey can be found in the woods.

"Bees get three things out of the woods," Harris said. "They get nectar, pollen, and water. The nectar they turn into honey, the pollen they use in their diet, and the water they use to cool the hive down."

Weather is extremely important in honey production. Hot weather is good for honey production because it encourages the bees to get





on the outside of the hive a lot more.

"We like hot weather for the bees for honey production because if it rains occasionally, hot weather makes the plants produce more nectar. So we can make more honey," Harris said.

With around 600 hives, Harris cannot run Logan's Lake Honey alone. He requires help during the busier seasons like when it is time to start pulling honey. Cody Kulikowski helps Harris tremendously during the extraction season.

"When we start pulling honey, then we'll get some more people," Harris said. "But Cody and I can pretty much handle it through the summer."

While Harris has been fortunate enough to enjoy success, he believes his success is all in the taste of his honey. He lets the product speak for itself.

"We let the taste of our honey do a lot for us, specifically word of mouth," Harris said. "People will get the honey, and go wow, that's good."

Harris' success can be traced back to his work ethic and passion for beekeeping. He believes that anyone can make a living with bees. They just have to be willing to work and love doing it.

"I learned that you just don't give up. Nobody knows everything. But the longer you work, the more you learn. And you know, the luckier you get," Harris said. "If you are met with failure, and you quit, then you are a failure in that area. You just keep working. I didn't always have a \$150,000 extraction system. I started out with stuff like any other beekeeper, but I kept going and going, and I just wouldn't quit. And so finally ended up with this level of success. It's good. I make a good living, and I enjoy it. I guess that's probably more important than anything."

Logan's Lake Honey is located at 5341 TN-104 Dyersburg, TN 38024. You can contact them by phone (901) 212-6916 or by email [sales@loganslakehoney.com](mailto:sales@loganslakehoney.com). For more information, visit their website [www.loganslakehoney.com](http://www.loganslakehoney.com) or their facebook Logan's Lake Honey.

