

# How Honey is Made

**Bees use nectar to make honey. Nectar is almost 80% water with some complex sugars. In fact, if you have ever pulled a honeysuckle blossom out of its stem, nectar is the clear liquid that drops from the end of the blossom. In North America, bees get nectar from flowers like clovers, dandelions, berry bushes, and fruit tree blossoms.**



**Bees use their long, tube like tongue as a straw to suck the nectar out of flowers. Then they store the nectar in their "honey stomachs". Bees actually have two stomachs, their honey stomach which they use like a nectar backpack and their regular stomach. Bees visit between 100 and 1500 flowers in order to fill their honey stomachs.**



**The bee returns to the hive and passes the nectar onto other worker bees. These bees suck the nectar from the honeybee's stomach through their mouths. The "house bees" chew the nectar for about half an hour. During this time, enzymes are breaking the complex sugars in the nectar into simple sugars so that it is both more digestible for the bees and less likely to be attacked by bacteria while it is stored within the hive.**



**The bees then spread the nectar throughout the honeycomb where water evaporates from it, making it thick syrup. The bees make the nectar dry even faster by fanning it with their wings. Once the honey is gooey enough, the bees seal off the cell of the honeycomb with a plug of wax. The honey is stored until it is eaten. In one year, a colony of bees eats between 120 and 200 pounds of honey.**

