

## **John Sproule's bees have been busy as . . .**

An estimated 420,000 bees have worked to produce the 600 lbs. of honey that will be supplied to the Streetville Bread and Honey Festival by John Sproule.

The local beekeeper, has been in the honey business since 1943. His colonies, placed on farmers' bushlands in areas from Oakville to Orton produce a good supply of honey.

Each colony (hive) produces 100 lbs. of honey per season. In beekeeper terminology, 20 colonies of 60,000 to 70,000 worker bees make up one yard. One bee, the Queen, rules each colony.

Instinctively, bees hatched in spring begin their chore of collecting pollen for the colony. The hardworking bee travels up to two miles in his search for the nectar.

The bee colony produces 500 lbs. of honey but only 100 lbs. are taken — 400 lbs. are required to feed the next brood of bees.

The bee that gathers up the honey doesn't live to reap his rewards. Throughout his six-week lifespan, the spring- and summer-born bees toil daily to supply the hive with pollen.

The new generation of bees hatched are nurtured on a honey and pollen mixture, supplying them with energy. Towards the beginning of fall, when the bees begin to winterize, they are nurtured by sugar syrup.

The trend towards healthy living brings with it the appreciation of natural honey.

Today, its white, refined competitor can look back on better days when people were led to believe its refined texture was beneficial.

Pure honey, free from artificial additives, can be easily digested. A natural sweetener, honey can be used as a sugar substitute in baking, on cereal, with fruit and in tea and coffee.

Come hay fever season, allergy sufferers flock to John's farm in search of pollen to use as a cure-all for allergies. "My customers swear by it," says John. "Some use it throughout the year to ward off many types of allergies."

In order to collect pollen for this medicinal purpose, special pollen traps are attached to the hives.

John is a member of the Ontario Bee Keeper's Association and the Canadian Honey Council.

Clover honey, Buckwheat honey from buckwheat fields and clear honey, pasturized for use in glass are the wholesome products of a well-run bee community.

Their never ending life cycle provides us a natural energy source. The bee's wax, a by-product of the hive, is used in the making of candles.