

IS YOUR SOAP VEGAN?

It's the best shaving soap I have found! Nick



My soap is vegetarian as it contains no animal products, is it vegan? I use local sustainable beeswax which is a product produced by the honey bee - *apis genus*. But then are avocado's vegan?

Important

Emma's Soap only uses local suitable beeswax and condones commercial bee keeping, along with monoculture farming of crops where bees are essential to cultivate the fruit or vegetable.

Migratory bee keeping is where the hives are moved from one flowering crop to another covering thousands miles from February to November, which many scientists say is a direct cause of colony collapse.

The worst culprits of such farming practices happen to be in the United States, where bees are used to cultivate almonds, oranges, cherries, cranberries and apples.

The husbandry standards drop, when 400 colonies are put onto 18 wheel flat-bed trucks. Bee hives on pallets in close quarters, to be moved from one farm to another. This confined space leads to increased Varroa mites and the spread of disease.

The constant moving also results in stressed bees. Each new location is timed to be when that crop is in flower and needing pollinating, the worker bee immediately goes into harvest overdrive, they are always working in 'high season'. If you look at the maths on how many flowers are pollinated, you will not be surprised that the bees are just exhausted.



Our hives



Alternatively leaving hives in an apiary, the bees work to the natural season.

Colony collapse disorder - is when the adult bees desert the hive, the United States are suffering 95% colony collapse following one year's migratory road trip.

Good news is the EU and USA have banned certain pesticides that have been linked to honey bee deaths.

That brings me on to **Commercial Honey** - in short - bees make honey, and store it to eat later, they have large stores depending on that year's harvest, more than they can eat. A sustainable beekeeper takes some honey to make room in the hive and prevent the hive being a target for robbing (*eg wasps*), whilst leaving sufficient honey for the bees to have enough food throughout the winter.

Commercial beekeeping - takes all the honey and gives the bees sugar syrup, the sheer volume of hives the methods used to extract the honey are brutal, causing harm to the bees.

I just had to contact you as I've just realised that if you're celebrating 10 yrs in business, I was likely to have been one of your first customers.

I clearly remember in October 2010 when my school was closed for us teachers to have meetings in our departments, it was unusual to be a Friday, we finished early and three of us went to Totnes Market and there you were, I've used your soap ever since.

Keep doing what you're doing - love it!!
Lorna



A large swarm!



Megan with our bees

Thank you Emma, for your wonderful attitude towards providing beautiful natural products.
Best wishes for a Happy New Year

Anne :-)

Sustainable Beekeeping - working in harmony with nature

The Beekeeper has a role to play to help the bees with their housework. We need bees to pollinate our crops, so why not help these wild animals do their job. By understanding how a hive works the beekeeper can recognise when the bees could do with a helping hand, adding supers for their honey food storage, removing old dirty wax to prevent overcrowding, watching out for disease - mites.

Many state that beeswax is from the capping of the honey, whilst this is true, it is not the only source of beeswax.

Bees work for their hive, for the unity of the colony, the workers all have different roles, foraging, pollenating and harvesting, some are guards, builders, cleaners, nurses to the young, some have the role of temperature control while others are undertakers, basically general housework. The queen lays all the eggs and the drones don't do much apart from the important role of fertilising the queen.

The younger bees secrete wax and build the hives architecture cells for honey, storage of food and cells for the queen to lay her eggs which in the height of the season can be up to 2000 eggs a day.

As egg becomes larva grows into a pupa and then into a bee it hatches and leaves the cell leaving its cocoon behind. The cleaners prepare the cell to be reused for the queen to lay another egg. However there is only so many times the cell can be cleaned over a period of reuse it eventually gets too dirty and the queen will refuse to lay.

Overcrowding of the hive can be a reason to swarm. **95% of wild swarms don't survive**, that can't find a new home (*this is our fault too, humans have populated and cultivated everywhere*).

The Smallholder

A smallholder beekeeper collects the swarm and gives them a new home, a hive. Or they help the hive manage their space and prevent the swarm, by adding supers and excluding the queen from that area of the hive, the honey storage area, allowing more room in the main brood chamber for the queen to reproduce. By inspecting the brood chamber of the hive the beekeeper can removed old dirty wax that the queen is refusing to lay in and replace with fresh wax foundations. *"A little help on house work"*.

It's this wax that is melted down, sieved and used in my soap.

Looking after bees, working in harmony with a colony, only taking a little honey and leaving enough natural food for the colony is an enjoyable, essential environmental contribution.



Bees on a frame



Don't buy commercial honey. Buy it instead from your local beekeeper where you know its been extracted with care, and is after all "natures little present".



Emma's Soap

A blend of natural oils
to make nothing but Soap

Beeswax is a natural, renewable product. This means it is a sustainable alternative to synthetic, mineral oil-based waxes and other products. Beeswax is a by-product of honey production and good husbandry. For beeswax to be cruelty-free, it has to be harvested at a low rate, so that there are no real negative effects on the colony.