



What is Propolis ?



Produced by worker bees, **propolis** is a mixture of resins collected from trees and salivary secretions. As a beehive defender propolis ensures that the hive is sealed and protected from external bacteria.

Propolis offers numerous properties thanks to the multitude of substances that it contains.

Among them are flavonoids, phenolic acids, aromatic acids and numerous trace elements which make it a **unique substance in nature**.

With an attractive amber colour and viscous consistency, bees can alter the **composition of propolis** by contributing some of their secretions as well as beeswax.

A certain number of foraging bees specialised in this difficult work, collect resin from buds using their tongues and their jaws, as well as their hind legs. Propolis is then stored in the form of large drops that the bee brings back to the hive for various uses:

- **As a construction and repair material:** to bond, fill cracks and maintain an ideal temperature for the good health of the colony, but also to prevent predators from entering the hive.
- **As an antiseptic treatment:** to allow a healthy environment for the development of broods. To do so, bees will mummify non-transportable dead intruders to avoid the development of microbes.
- **For fine layers:** to smoothen the walls of the hive and also the cells.

All these actions ensure that the hive is made aseptic.

The ideal period for **collecting propolis** is during the Winter season, because at this time it is more easily removed from its supports. To do so, the beekeeper removes the propolis at the level of the hive without harming the colony by the annual scraping of the frames of the hive supers, as well as by using perforated plastic grilles, subsequently resealed by the bees.

Moving the grilles to the freezer then allows beekeepers to recover the resin which becomes brittle. The **quantity of propolis** collected depends on the surrounding vegetation and the breed of bees, the Caucasian bee collecting the most. The collection is in all cases between **100g and 300g** on average per hive per year. This is how rare and noble propolis is!

## History of propolis



The **therapeutic and medicinal properties of propolis** are not new: the Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans, discovered and exploited its benefits as an anti-inflammatory, antibacterial and antiseptic agent for decades.

- In Egypt, **propolis** was used in the context of sacred rites such as mummification and embalming.
- For the Romans, each legionnaire always carried a small piece of propolis with them to use, especially during military campaigns.
- In South America, traces of the **use of propolis** by the ancient, developed civilisation of the Incas have been found.
- In Africa, during the colonial war (1880 et 1902) between the Boers, Dutch people of South Africa, and British soldiers, propolis was widely used for its benefits.
- In Russia, during the Second World War, Soviet clinics commonly used it with success.

In the present day propolis is of great interest to scientists, who since the 1970s have sought to unlock the hidden secrets of propolis which never cease to surprise us. Numerous studies have been carried out, little by little revealing everything that this incredible resin can offer us.

## Characteristics of propolis

### A spicy flavour, attesting to its effectiveness

Numerous products presenting propolis as an active ingredient are available on the market (notably sprays, lozenges or syrups for the throat), and these may have a very mild taste.

If this is the case, don't attribute this smoothness to propolis! What you should know first and foremost is the **good, effective propolis** is spicy in the mouth – this attests to its action!

### Propolis and its sweet, resinous flavour

In comparison with honey, propolis may be less pleasant on the palate. Less sweet than honey, the **taste of propolis** is not bad: with a natural flavour, it has notes of vanilla and hyacinth, reminiscent of natural softwood forests. Propolis is also available in different forms, to adapt to all consumption preferences and allow all benefits to be enjoyed in a pleasant way.

### Changing colour depending on the plants from which it is extracted

Being a resin, propolis is very colourful by nature: green, red or brown propolis – these natural colours come from the plants of origin. Despite the purification processes, a **propolis extract** retains its colour, as with certain essential oils. It is therefore quite normal for a product containing propolis to be tinted, rather than white or transparent.

The propolis used in Propolia® products is brown, and slightly red (the colour of Propolis Intense products), a colour which attests to a great diversity of plant origins.

## Use of propolis

Currently, propolis is one of the most renowned **beehive products**, just like honey, royal jelly and pollen.

In the present day, it is recommended as a treatment, as a **food supplement**, mainly to help maintain **natural defences** and the normal function of the **immune system** during the winter period and changes of season. However, it can also be found in numerous cosmetic treatments, to allow its purifying, antibacterial and antiseptic properties to be enjoyed!