



ORGANIC BEEKEEPING

HONIG EINFACH GUT!

vom Donautal zum Böhmerwald

The Principles of our Organic Beekeeping

- **The Harmony of the Colonies**

Our colonies are allowed to develop quite naturally in spring. They grow in harmony with the rhythm of flowering plants in the natural environment. We do not “force” them with sugar in order to produce a rapid boost in the size of the colonies. We always give them enough space to build their own combs, and we do not constrain the colonies with so-called barrier fences, which are used to help the beekeeper to harvest the honey more easily.

- **Respecting the Power of Nature**

Throughout the year the colonies remain at the same site. In this way they get to know their environment really well. We do not move any colonies (the beekeeper’s term for this is ‘migration’) from lower sites to higher sites in order to force the bees to produce a larger honey yield. Of course, wild bee colonies always remain at the same site (for instance in the hollow of a tree), except when they swarm. However, such movements are the bees’ own decision, within the context of their natural development.

- **Extensive Organic Farming, Forestry and Nature Reserves**

We choose the locations for our colonies in a healthy region, with organically farmed as well as extensively cultivated meadows and fields, the majority of which are farmed without artificial fertiliser. We prefer to choose locations with a high proportion of forests (especially naturally growing organic mixed forests). This is not only important for a yield of forest honey, but also because the blossoms of the flowering plants at the forest’s edge, and in the hedgerows, provide diverse varieties of pollen and nectar. This variety contributes greatly to the health and vitality of the bees. We are also lucky to be able to site our bees within, and at the edge of, nature reserves.

- **The avoidance of intensive farming methods**

We abstain from harvesting oilseed rape honey and locating colonies within intensively cultivated orchards, even though we would receive pollinating fees from the farmers. For us, organic beekeeping and intensive farming, often entailing the heavy use of artificial fertilisers, are incompatible with each other. Although there are hardly ever any residues found in the honey, the pollen definitely does contain them. As we know nowadays, these can greatly affect the colonies’ vitality.

- **Total Absence of synthetic chemical medication**

We prioritise the strengthening of the natural immunity of the colonies by using natural landscapes and by letting the colonies develop without any coercive measures. We contain the Varroa mites with organic methods and with the help of formic acid. This, of course, requires much more work and attention, as well as a sense of empathy with what is going on within a colony. It is very important for the beekeeper to gain a thorough understanding of the correlations between weather conditions, the abundance of blossoms in the foraging areas, and the development of the colony and its pathogens. The organic beekeeper works without chemical medication and avoids easy remedies which may leave behind harmful residues.

