

EATABLE

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RHUBARB & RASPBERRY PAVLOVA p43

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A fragile state

Wild honeycomb is a pure reflection of the environment it's made.

Every wild-produced honeycomb captures time and place and the architecture is unique to each individual bee colony. Comb is made from the bees own bodies and crafted into a profoundly important part of the bee superorganism, by the bees themselves - it can be thought of as the skeleton, skin, womb and liver of the colony, and also acts as a communication network, contributor to social immunity and functions as an extended gut of the colony. The wild honeycomb we harvest is just a small section of the nest - the uppermost part that contains the surplus food stores.

There are times of hyper-abundance of nectar and pollen in the environment - beekeepers call this a honeyflow - which triggers the bees to expand the nest and produce surplus comb. Therefore a beekeeper can take a small section of comb whilst on a honeyflow, without having any impact on the bees.

As a food, wild honeycomb has a delicate structure and is quite different to commercially made honeycomb, which has a thick midrib of artificial beeswax to increase yield. The cell structure of wild comb is very thin and there is no midrib, so when you eat a piece it crushes easily and melts in your mouth, giving a mighty explosion of flavour. Unfortunately, nearly all honeycomb bought and sold is produced on artificial bees wax sheets. Most of what we see on the market is not really even honeycomb - just frames of honey that would usually be extracted in a centrifuge. Our aim is to care for the bees and produce the most natural, bee-friendly honey. Wild honeycomb captures not only the essence of the bee colonies and the landscape, but our life's work too.

– Tim Malfroy, *Malfroy's Gold Honey*