

The Mānuka plant from which Mānuka Honey is derived grows in virtually any kind of soil. It's found in swamps, on sand dunes and in rocky spots across Aotearoa-New Zealand. It is fast-growing, and when in bloom, has a mild, sweet fragrance that's extremely attractive to bees. Mānuka is one of the best native plants you can grow for pollinators. The sheer exuberance of the flowering is what draws in the wildlife. Insects love the open centre of the flowers.

On the herbal front, mānuka is a Māori rongoā (medicine) stalwart, with many marvellous medicinal qualities. Traditionally, an infusion from the leaves was drunk for kidney and urinary problems, and the vapour from the boiled leaves inhaled to treat colds and respiratory problems. Both the leaves and bark were boiled together, and the warm liquid rubbed over aching joints.

Ash made from the bark was rubbed onto the skin to treat skin diseases. A decoction of the bark was also used as a sedative and mouthwash as well as for bathing sore eyes and treating diarrhoea and dysentery.

Māori used mānuka as a treatment for burns and scalds, and the white gum as an emollient. A poultice of pounded mānuka berries could be applied to a flesh wound with these being strongly astringent this would dry it up quickly and greatly assist in healing. It's reported that the seed capsules were chewed for stomach problems.

Nowadays the focus is on the medicinal properties of mānuka honey and mānuka essential oil rather than the plant itself, though the whole herb is still used to treat a long list of ailments, including gingivitis, diarrhoea, dysentery, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and stomach cramps as well as bacterial and fungal infections.

Indeed, the plant is antimicrobial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, anxiolytic (reduces anxiety), spasmolytic, astringent and sedative, among other things. You can make your own antimicrobial, antifungal and anti-inflammatory salve by infusing the herb (all aerial parts) in oil and adding the infused oil to melted beeswax.





The [Unique Manuka Factor \(UMF\) quality trademark](#) was developed by the Active Manuka Honey Industry Group (AMHIG) now known as The UMF Honey Association. Manuka Honey producers then needed to go through independent testing to receive a UMF grading for the honey they produced. Once a UMF grading was obtained Manuka Honey producers were able to label and market their honey as pure, quality, genuine Manuka Honey. This grading sets authentic Manuka Honey apart from blended Manuka Honey (multifloral) and counterfeit Manuka Honey so consumers know they are buying the real thing.

The UMF grading still holds true to this day and Manuka Honey producers are audited and tested annually to ensure their honey meets the standards they claim on their label. More recently an [MGO \(methylgloxal\) grading system](#) was introduced to measure the precise content of the naturally occurring compound Methylgloxal. Methylgloxal is found uniquely in Manuka Honey and directly related to its potency. The higher the MGO content the higher the grade of honey. Today both UMF and MGO grades can be found on genuine Manuka Honey.

The mānuka honey used in Taha is an extract. The extract is produced by Safe Foods Ltd. Taha is currently exploring sourcing honey from our friends at [Tai Tokerau Honey](#) and then having this honey produced into an extract by Safe Foods Ltd. By doing this we will have greater traceability over the source of the mānuka honey used in Taha.