

# THE QUEEN OF BUZZ

For skin care guru **Tammy Fender**, tending to her thriving beehives comes naturally. BY **JENNY B. FINE**

**SURE, NATURAL SKIN CARE** is hot at the moment.

But when it comes to buzz, Tammy Fender has got other brands beat.

One of the original pioneers of plant-based beauty, Fender is also an avid apiarist, who maintains three thriving beehives at her home in West Palm Beach, Fla.

While Fender has always been interested in the natural world, her beekeeping came about by accident. Shortly after opening her namesake spa, a swarm of bees flew into the building's break room. One of Fender's holistic practitioners remarked that bees are attracted to purity, creativity and fertility, and Fender decided that rather than letting a beekeeper take them elsewhere (killing them would be unthinkable), she would move them to her own backyard.

Today, she has three flourishing hives on her two-acre property, which share space with 35 different kinds of fruit trees, a vegetable garden, a butterfly garden and a medicinal herb garden. At any given time, a hive can have up to 50,000 bees.

"There is nothing more fascinating than when the hive is thriving," Fender said. "Because I do so much gardening, it was interesting for me to see how the bees were affecting the blooms. You become really aware, because you start to notice what is in bloom and you become much more innately aware of your surroundings."

Fender tends to the hive daily, first making sure that the queen bee is secured before checking the frames or harvesting honey. She wears standard protective gear, and has never been seriously stung — not even recently when, while transferring a swarm of bees to a new hive, the queen escaped and landed on Fender's back.

"It was as if I had a cloak of bees on my back, like a superhero in a cartoon," she said. "All of the bees swarmed me. They wanted to protect her." A friend and fellow beekeeper who was assisting gingerly removed the queen and placed her back in the hive. "And the bees all went zoop, right back in," Fender said.



Sound is a constant feature of the hive, and one of Fender's favorite aspects. "The constant hum is like sound therapy. It helps calibrate the brain," she said. "Where you are sitting with that energy, there is a peacefulness that comes with it."

As a product formulator, Fender also relishes harvesting pollen, propolis and honey, which is antimicrobial and antibacterial. She takes a spoonful of honey every day, and noted that it tastes different depending on whether the bees are pollinating from a eucalyptus tree, for example, or orange blossom. Fender also formulates with honey — albeit not her home-produced variety because she doesn't produce enough — including manuka honey in her newest moisturizer, Celestial Rose Crème.

Fender's hives have thrived, as has her namesake business, Tammy Fender Holistic Skin Care, and it turns out that nurturing the health of both isn't so very different.

When asked the similarities between the two pursuits, her answer is immediate: working together.

"When you hear it takes a team to make the dream, it feels like that is what I've learned. The roles change within the hive, but everyone is working for the same goal and purpose, and it feels like it is to the benefit of everyone involved," Fender said. "To me, whether I'm in the treatment room or formulating a product, that is such a mission, and that's how I view the hive."