

## Storage

- Proper storage is essential to maintain the propolis' properties. It's typically stored in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight.
- In all these steps, care is taken to ensure that the propolis maintains its integrity and beneficial properties for consumers.

## Personnel hygiene

The person handling propolis should adopt good hygiene practices to ensure that propolis is not contaminated through improper handling: Examples include, but not limited to:

- Wearing special working clothes such as headgear of washable material or Apron.
- Any person handling the propolis should ensure they work correctly and ensure good hygiene. For example frequent hand washing and disinfection during work and especially after visiting the toilet.
- The containers, harvesting tools and other harvesting equipment that are continuously used should be appropriately cleaned, disinfected and maintained.
- Use clean uncontaminated water while handling propolis



**Compiled** by: Kasina J.M., Ndung'u N.N., Toroitich D., Mulwa J.M., Kimani C.W., Onyango I.A., Guantai M.M., Kinyanjui J.M. and Kimani C.W.

**Design:** Odipo S.N.,

**For further information, contact:**

Institute Director  
Apiculture and Beneficial Insects Research Institute  
P.O. Box 32-30403 MARIGAT  
Director. ABIRI@kalro.org

**Editors:** Nyabundi K.W., Mukundi K.T., Omondi, S.P., Maina P., Wanyama H.N., Mugata R.K., Mungube E.O., Nyambati E., Changwony K., Ilatsia E. and Kasina J.M.

**KALRO/NAVCDP Apiculture VC  
Brochure No. 031/2024**



## HARVESTING AND PACKAGING STINGLESS BEE PROPOLIS





to as cerumen. The propolis is used to make nest entrances and to seal any openings or cracks in the stingless bee hives used by intruders to access the hives. The propolis can be used to make a propolis extract that can be used as an anti-allergy and for cough management. The propolis also tends to be darker in colour and can be used to create a kind of varnish for staining wood.



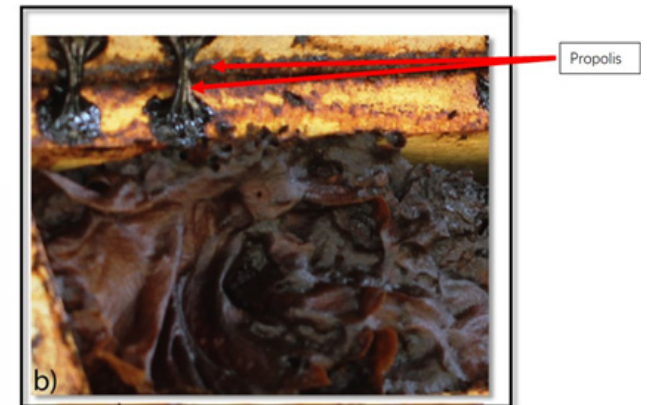
*Propolis in M. bocandei hive. (Source: Nelly Ndungu)*

### How to harvest/ Collect propolis

Propolis is soft and sticky at the temperatures found in the beehive. At lower temperatures, it becomes hard and brittle. Propolis is collected from the hive areas that are sealed using the propolis.

The following procedure should be followed during harvesting;

- Use the flat side of the hive tool to scrap off the propolis from the hive floor, corners or any other place.
- Do not over-harvest the propolis, rather, harvest the excess one in the hive.
- Place the harvested/ scrapped propolis on a clean plate.
- Place back the hive cover.
- Use a cello-tape/ masking tape /mud to seal



*Propolis in a Hypotrigena hive (Source: Nelly Ndungu)*

### Inspection and drying of propolis

- Upon collection, the propolis should be inspected for any debris, such as wood particles or other contaminants.
- Separate the contaminants from the propolis
- Examples of contaminants are: rodent droppings, pests frass and pests such as wax moths and ants, dead bees, wax, insect parts, wood, dust and other foreign matter
- Dry the propolis at room temperature to remove any remaining moisture. Do not dry in the sun. Avoid using excessive heat, as this may compromise the propolis' quality.

### Packaging

- The dried propolis is packaged in clean, dry, and airtight food-grade containers.
- Label containers with propolis such that the source can be traced to a given hive or hives. The label should include a statement that propolis product may contain substances e.g. pollen that may cause severe allergic reactions.
- Value addition processes may later be involved to generate propolis tinctures or sprays.

### Introduction

Stingless bees are different from the common honey bees. They are smaller in body size, do not sting, and are many different types. In Kenya, we have documented more than twelve species occurring in different parts of the country. Some species are common across wide geographic areas while others are restricted.

The stingless bee propolis is known to have antioxidants and antibacterial properties which are of economic and medicinal importance. These properties have made stingless bees popular in addition to the appealing aroma and flavor of the products.

Stingless bee propolis is made from plant resins and wax. The propolis made by stingless bees tends to be higher in wax compared with propolis made by honey bees and is therefore sometimes referred