

the orange groves of central and southern Florida into tupelo locations. Special effort is made by some tupelo beekeepers to move to tupelo, leaving other already producing crops to do so. After the short tupelo season, there are no more honey or pollen plants along the rivers. The apiaries must be moved again to new locations or the bees will soon starve.²⁰

The nature of the swamp in which tupelo trees grow adds additional expenses to production. On some sites the swamp terrain makes it impossible to use forklifts to move palletized hives so all hives must be loaded and unloaded one at a time by hand. Fluctuating water levels can quickly cut off the beekeeper's access to his apiaries and drown his bees. Since the trees grow at least knee-deep in the river it is sometimes necessary to build platforms 14 to 16 feet high and hundreds of feet long to keep hives above the water level.²¹ Barges on which to move the bees are the only access the beekeeper has to such locations.

Since the tupelo bloom is so short, sometimes lasting as little as 5 days, the effect of the weather on production is profound. Untimely thunderstorms, winds, and other weather factors common to the area, can quickly knock off blooms and end the entire crop production.

In order to get fine, unmixed tupelo honey, colonies must be stripped of all stores just as the white tupelo bloom begins. The bees are then given clean boxes and combs in which to place the tupelo honey. This new crop must then be removed before it can be mixed with additional honey sources. The timing of these operations is critical and years of experience are needed to produce a fine product that will certify as tupelo honey.

Conclusion:

The Tupelo Beekeepers' Association of Florida hopes that the factual information we have given here will help you appreciate the tupelo honey our members and their families produce. Look for **TUPELO HONEY** when you are shopping and **ENJOY, ENJOY** for eating pleasure and good health.

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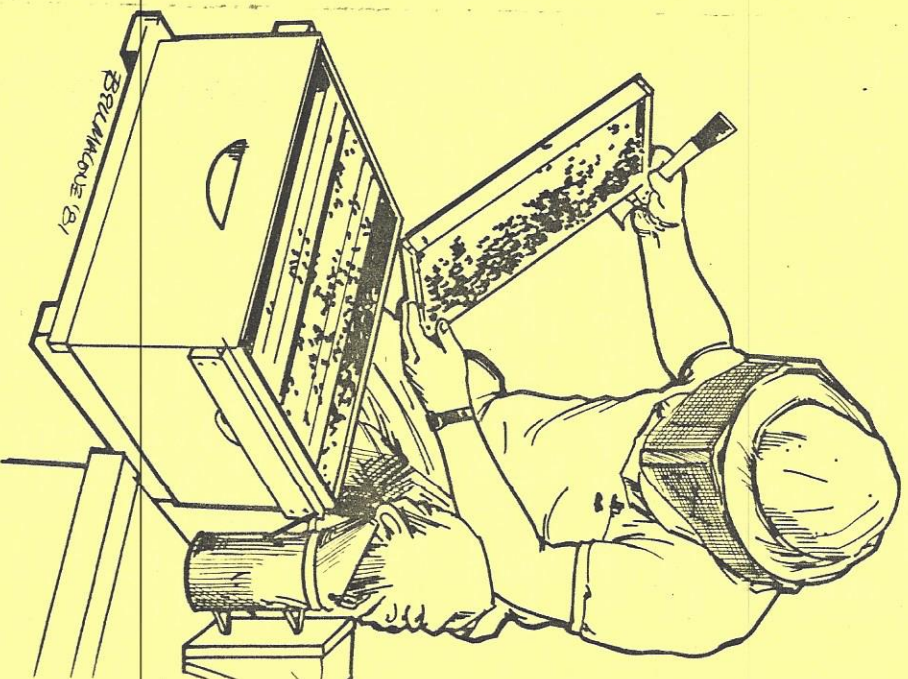
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