

# Charles Mraz Apitherapy Course and Conference 2016

by Tina McDonald, RN, a CMACC 2016 participant

The Charles Mraz Apitherapy Course and Conference (CMACC) was held in October this year in Redondo Beach, California. This annual conference is sponsored by The American Apitherapy Society (AAS) and alternates venues between the East and West coasts. A couple of us local beekeepers went and enjoyed an incredible adventure and learning experience! Not all attendees were beekeepers: many were homeopaths, healers, herbalists, activists, doctors, functional/integrative medicine practitioners, therapists, acupuncturists, and/or recipients/practitioners of bee venom therapy. Just sharing ideas with the other participants was rewarding in itself! We were all warmly welcomed by AAS President Frederique Keller, who shared a wealth of knowledge and insight into the world of apitherapy based on her expert experience and love and respect of the bees. The entire program was very comprehensive and engrossing, covering the many gifts from the hive. The speakers were so diverse and absolutely inspiring, there was even a commercial beekeeper from Iran who showed footage of how they extract bee venom for commercial use in cosmetic products. It was completely fascinating!



Apitherapy, or “bee therapy” is the medicinal use of products made by honeybees and it includes bee venom, honey, pollen, royal jelly, propolis, and beeswax. All products of the hive work synergistically, and can be used in combination to individualize treatment to best achieve desired results. There was quite an emphasis to maintain the quality of the products, which comes as no surprise to backyard beekeepers who carefully preserve delicious raw honey their bees make for all to enjoy. Using mass produced products for Apitherapy purposes would be like eating pasteurized, ultra filtered, store bought honey to

help with allergies. (Sorry Sue Bee!) When using apitherapy for yourself or others, it is important to know where the raw material comes from and who/how it was processed. Compare and contrast different products to obtain the highest quality available. To quote one of my favorite speakers at the conference, Glenn Perry (a self proclaimed “Mason jar scientist”): “Preserve and protect what the bees expertly make.”

The speakers at the CMACC were all so informative and passionate about their subjects, they were each inspiring in their own ways. Presenters also brought honey for tasting from all over the country that was insanely varied and delicious! As much as I would love to, it is truly impossible to list everything that was presented during this intense long weekend. I would, however, like to try and share some highlights of my favorites that I learned about while with these experts.

Propolis is the resinous substance collected by honeybees from tree buds and sap flows in combination with bee digestive juices and wax. It is used by the bees to fill and seal crevices in their hives. Don't scrape it off and discard it...this stuff is medicinal! Its benefits include cancer

prevention, immune system modulation, as well as possessing antibacterial, probiotic and anti-inflammatory properties. It has many uses including: wound and burn healing, skin health, liver detox, and immune system support during cancer treatment. Propolis has been found to be effective in treating stomach ulcers caused by H Pylori, urinary tract infections and cold sores. The color of propolis varies depending on its botanical source, the most common being dark brown. Brazilian green propolis is the most studied type, and has become the “gold standard.” Japan is the largest consumer of propolis in the world. Because this substance is sticky at and above room temp, but hard and brittle at lower temps, it is difficult to completely extract propolis like you can beeswax. Glenn Perry: “Propolis is a living substance: respect it as a deep organism. Like a living substance, develop a relationship with it.” The beauty of propolis is that each is completely different, although the medicinal effects are the same. Surprisingly, the National Institute of Health (NIH) has found no contraindications for the use of propolis. Although propolis tinctures can be made and are available from multiple sources, [www.wholepropolis.com](http://www.wholepropolis.com) offers the only source of whole propolis emulsified in a water solution.

Royal jelly is the nutritional element secreted by honeybees to feed their larvae. After day 3, only Queen larvae continue to be fed royal jelly during their development. Many fun facts were shared at the conference about royal jelly! Royal jelly is consumed by humans as a dietary supplement to improve diabetes and cholesterol imbalances, as well as for stomach ulcers (H pylori). Historically royal jelly has also been used to increase libido, and the larvae themselves were consumed as the “poor mans” royal jelly: drone larvae to increase testosterone in men, and worker or Queen larvae to be consumed by women. Alternately, a Queen cell can be placed in a jar of honey to infuse her special qualities. Royal jelly must be refrigerated immediately as it begins to spoil quickly. RJ has been shown to have some adverse effects in sensitive people including: Increased heart rate, nausea/vomiting, hives, and anaphylaxis. Hossein Yeganehrad, whose family has been keeping bees in Iran for over 165 years, presented about royal jelly at the conference. He spoke about many fascinating subjects from his unique point of view. Hossein has hives in both Iran and Canada, and plans on expanding his commercial beekeeping business into the USA. On his website [www.caspianapiaries.com](http://www.caspianapiaries.com) you can learn about his product “Caspian solution” which is a combination of royal jelly, bee pollen, and pheromones used to increase the production of royal jelly for collection purposes. It is a very interesting site and offers a glimpse into the life of this successful entrepreneur and bee health advocate. In our modern world many of the most sought after and expensive cosmetic products contain royal jelly.

Bee venom therapy (BVT) was definitely the hot topic at the conference, and the presentations elicited many lively discussions about the safe practice and potential of bee venom healing. Bee venom is administered with either live bees or by bee venom injection for the treatment of multiple ailments including arthritis, pain, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, Lyme disease, immune support, skin rejuvenation, and chronic inflammatory disease. Most presenters and practitioners I met use live bees, and if live bees are inaccessible, injectable bee venom can be hard to acquire.

Ellie Lobel, Lyme activist and survivor, presented her Lyme BVT protocol that she uses and promotes with her “bee bus mission” and within her growing online community. Ellie has been instrumental in connecting Lyme sufferers and beekeepers to promote BVT in the fight against Lyme disease. I was hoping to find out what credentials I could obtain to become a licensed “Bee Therapist,” but sadly discovered that there is no certification or licensure recognized in the U.S. to allow legal protection to practice Apitherapy. Doctors, Acupuncturists, and a Nurse



Practitioner at a pain clinic discussed how they all choose to incorporate BVT into their practices while protecting their licenses. Although more BVT research is needed, there are a multitude of studies that have been done internationally, especially in Korea, Palestine, Iran, and Romania. Studies in the U.S. have mostly centered on Melittin, the main component of bee venom. The conference concluded with an expert panel comprised of all the speakers where we all had a chance to ask all our last minute unanswered questions about apitherapy. The entire conference was truly a wonderful experience.

Presenter Dr. Patrick Fratellone: "I prefer and believe in the power of utilizing regional plants instead of rare and imported. Sustainability is a very important conversation when using botanical remedies and medicinal products of the beehive. Cultivating a few herbs for teas/salves/infused honey will enrich your medicine cabinet with connected personal medicine." As beekeepers we are in a perfect position to enjoy the complex, yet completely simple health benefits from the bees we nurture in our own backyards.

*This article was submitted by Tina McDonald, RN, BrCBA Board Member, in the Winter 2016 Newsletter of "The Massachusetts Bee," the quarterly newsletter of the Massachusetts Beekeepers Association and reprinted here with her permission.*



*Frederique Keller, L.Ac., AAS President with Tina McDonald, RN at CMACC 2016*



*American Apitherapy Society President, Frederique Keller, prepares to administer BVT to a first time participant.*

# Apitherapy Resources

## READING RECOMMENDED BY THE EXPERTS:

**Bee Propolis: Natural Healing from the Hive** by James Fearnley

**Folk Medicine: A Vermont Doctor's Guide to Good Health** by DC Jarvis, 1958

**Healing Lyme and Coinfections** by Stephen Buhner

**Shamanic Way of the Bee** by Simon Buxton

**FREE ONLINE RESOURCE: Value-Added Products From Beekeeping** by R. Krell, published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Rome, 1996)

**FREE ONLINE ARTICLE: Socialized medicine: Individual and communal disease barriers in honey bees** by Evans & Spivak, 2010. *Journal of Invertebrate Pathology*.

## WEBSITES:

[www.caspianapiaries.com](http://www.caspianapiaries.com)

[www.wholepropolis.com](http://www.wholepropolis.com)

[www.fratellonemedical.com](http://www.fratellonemedical.com)

[www.facebook.com/TheBeeBusMission](https://www.facebook.com/TheBeeBusMission)

[www.pain-puzzle.com](http://www.pain-puzzle.com)

[www.apitherapy.org](http://www.apitherapy.org) (submit email for free online newsletter!)

<http://discovermagazine.com/2015/april/00-poison-medicine>

[www.facebook.com/groups/worldwidebeebuddylocatorforlymedisease](https://www.facebook.com/groups/worldwidebeebuddylocatorforlymedisease)

[www.beepharm.com](http://www.beepharm.com)

[www.apimondia.com](http://www.apimondia.com)