

“You are what what you eat eats.”

— Michael Pollan

For Thanksgiving 2016 I gave everyone great suggestions for honey-based appetizers, main courses and desserts (see November 2016’s [“Giving Thanks for Honey!”](#)). At a reader’s request, I’m pushing the envelope a little this year by offering recipes for a couple of overlooked products of the hive that, like Rodney Dangerfield, “don’t get no respect.” These are enjoyed elsewhere in the world but not so much in the United States, where everything we eat has to fit within boring societal parameters regardless of nutritional and taste value.

Waste not, want not

Many beekeepers practice drone trapping as a slightly helpful component of Integrated Pest Management of Varroa mites.¹ In a nutshell, this involves placing drone comb frames (such as the commercially-available green frames) on the edge of the brood nest in spring. Once the drone larvae are capped, the entire frame is removed and placed in the freezer. The drones and all of the mites in the drone cells are killed.

In the interest of getting the most value from the resources that we’ve been blessed with, we need to find an appropriate use for all of those drones who were sacrificed in pursuit of colony health. An excellent option is to eat them. Many people feed them to their chickens, but watching the rapturous joy the birds get from devouring them should be enough to let us know that drone pupae are good eatin’.

The United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization (UN-FAO) publishes a nice guide to [value-added products of the hive](#),² including instructions on how to directly use honey bee adults and brood as food. They’ve got recipes



A bee club tasting event proved that some folks love sautéed bee pupae while other folks aren't so sure. (Right: Dawn Rogers; left: Larry Arnold.)

for brood-filled cheese tarts, bee fudge, bee stew, bee mango chutney and many more. My personal favorite is a simple and delicious variant of their Garlic Butter-fried Bees recipe:

1. Use an uncapping fork to remove drone pupae from their cells. In my experience, young pupae, still with all-white bodies but distinctively identifiable as “bees”, work well. (Larvae are mostly water and don’t hold together as well as pupae do during preparation.)
2. Rinse well to remove bits of wax and other debris.
3. Add seasoning as desired (salt, pepper, rosemary, garlic, etc.) and stir fry in olive oil over medium heat until golden brown.

To me, the final product tastes a lot like roasted corn. I’ve seen other descriptions that call it “nutty.” Try it and judge for yourself.

If you are having trouble getting over that American culinary taboo about eating insects, take a long hard look at a raw shrimp. Then look at a fat bee pupa. Which one is yuckier? Consider this: which one has been eating trash off the ocean floor (America’s sewer) and which has never had anything to eat but pure pollen, nectar, honey and a little lovingly-made bee jelly? Plus, bee pupae have more protein (% of fresh weight) than either beef or soybeans, as

¹ See the Honey Bee Health Coalition’s [Tools for Varroa Management](#) for a discussion of how, when and why to apply legitimate Varroa control measures, available for free download at <https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/varroa/>.

² R. Krell, [Value-added Products from Beekeeping](#), FAO Agricultural Services Bulletin No. 124, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, 1996



Why not substitute drone brood for over-priced caviar as a holiday hors d'oeuvre?

well as Vitamin A and Vitamin D. So they are nutritious and delicious!

Are you ready for this?

Once you become a fan of nicely-prepared honey bee brood, the UN-FAO has another hive product for you to try: wax moth larvae. We don't typically consider wax moth larvae to be a product of the hive but we must admit that they qualify. On the plus side, we can again compare them with high-dollar shrimp. What do wax moth larvae eat? Nothing except what is in the hive: pollen, nectar and honey, plus left-over honey bee larval skins and cocoons.

As full disclosure, I haven't eaten these yet but I'm not ruling out the possibility. Fortunately, I don't have a constant, readily-available supply. If you do, then I recommend you try this recipe and let me know what you think.

The UN-FAO recipe for "popmoth" is extremely easy:

"Heat some cooking oil and drop fresh (live) or frozen wax moth larvae into the hot oil. Their skin will break and the proteins will expand, making them look like popcorn. Remove them before they become too dark, let the oil drip off them and salt or flavour them with other spice mixtures similar to popcorn, potato or banana chips. They might also taste good with honey...."

*This product should be packaged attractively in clear plastic bags for sale in markets or stores. Once fried like this, it may be stored for some time without spoiling."*³

Enjoy!

Famous foodie Anthony Bourdain said, "Your body is not a temple, it's an amusement park. Enjoy the ride." Why not try these hive products as your next adventure?



Is your hive overrun with wax moths? Turn that frown upside down with a tasty popmoth recipe!

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³ Ibid, Section 8.10.10.