

ADDING VALUE TO YOUR BEESWAX

Lotion Bars

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A few years ago I had never heard of lotion bars until I was searching for cosmetic recipes suitable for adding value to hive products.

My husband, John, and I work for the charity Bees Abroad, which is seeking to help subsistence farmers and marginalised groups generate income from beekeeping, so I needed something that was easy to make using basic equipment and ingredients that could be sourced locally. I came across a number of websites describing how to make lotion bars.

Lotion Bars

A lotion bar is a solid moisturiser which looks like a soap bar, but it works as a

lotion. No water is added when creating the bar, which melts when it comes in contact with the warmth of your skin. The bar stays solid when kept at room temperature or lower.

Typically, lotion bars are composed only of natural ingredients, including beeswax, which effectively soften your skin and create a long-lasting protective coating against the elements. They are naturally nourishing moisturisers as well as being anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, anti-allergenic and a germicidal antioxidant. Beeswax is combined with several plant oils and butters, all of which will have additional properties. Bars can be as simple or as complicated as you like to suit any type of skin or condition.

Basic Ingredients

The basic ingredients are one-third beeswax and two-thirds chosen base oils. Vitamin E, which is good for the skin, is used as a preservative at approximately 1% to prevent the oils going rancid, especially in a warm climate.

I realised that lotion bars would be very suitable for value addition to hive products in Kenya as all the ingredients were readily available in local shops and supermarkets.

Perfect Gift

Handmade lotion bars are a perfect gift for a crafter to make; a really versatile product that can be made to suit any skin type or for any particular purpose. Lotion bars have a reputation for being a health-conscious choice



All photos by Mary Home

because they are free from the chemicals found in many commercial lotion products.

Use

Simply take the lotion bar between the palms of your hands. The warmth will melt a small portion of the bar which is then rubbed onto the body part that needs moisturising: hands, feet, ankles, knees, legs, arms, elbows – or any other area with dry skin.

It is best to apply only light layers of lotion to an area as it can feel as though it is greasy. The lotion needs to be given a few moments to absorb into the skin for this feeling to disappear.

Make in small quantities unless adequate cool storage is available.

Why not try some yourself? 

Making the Bars



Equipment

- Moulds – soap moulds, jelly moulds, a baking tray for small buns, anything with a suitable shape and size which is flexible
- Scales and a measuring jug
- Wooden spoon
- Double boiler (a smaller

pan in a larger pan of water on a low heat).

- NB: NEVER MELT ON A DIRECT HEAT

Ingredients

- 1 part beeswax
- 1 part oil (maize oil/olive oil/sunflower oil/caster oil)
- 1 part solid butter (coconut butter/shear butter/avocado oil/cocoa butter/mango butter or other luxury oils)
- Fragrance oil of your choice (optional)
- Vitamin E oil (preservative)
- Essential oils of your choice, for example:
 - neem oil for use as an

insect repellent

- lavender oil for relaxation
- tea tree oil for antiseptic properties.

There are many more oils to choose from to suit different likes and needs.

Method

- 1 Weigh all your ingredients.
- 2 Combine the oil and beeswax in the double boiler over a gentle heat until the wax is completely melted.
- 3 Remove from the heat and add the remaining ingredients, stirring slowly until completely mixed.

- 4 Pour carefully into moulds.
- 5 Leave to cool for three hours. To save time the moulds can be floated in cold water once the mixture has started to set.
- 6 Pack as desired such as plastic zip-lock bags, cellophane wrapping or a small decorative tin.

