

Home on the Range

September is National Honey Month. Many of the crops honey bees help to pollinate are harvested in September, so this time of year it's appropriate to pay tribute to honey bees.

According to information from the national honey board at www.honey.com, bees not only make honey, but they are also vitally important in crop fertilization.

As honey bees pass from blossom to blossom, gathering the nectar they need to make honey, they collect and redistribute pollen around the crop.

As the pollinated seeds develop they produce natural hormones that promote growth and flavor. There are many fruits, nuts and vegetables that are dependent on the honey bee for pollination.

According to website information, pollination is the necessary first step to start more than 90 food crops growing. These include almonds, melons, cranberries, apricots, lemons, kiwi fruit, and many others.

Check out these recipes for a few ideas to make use of the sweetener. All of the recipes are from the National Honey Board unless otherwise noted.

HONEY OF A DRESSING

1/3 cup red wine vinegar
1/3 cup honey
1 teaspoon dried oregano, crushed
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground pepper
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
Combine vinegar and honey; mix well. Stir in remaining ingredients.

FALL FRUIT SALAD

2 apples, cored and diced
2 bananas, halved lengthwise, cut into 1-inch pieces
12 dried apricots, quartered
4 pitted prunes, quartered
1/2 cup golden raisins
1/4 cup plain yogurt, or dairy sour cream
2 tablespoons honey
Dash nutmeg

1 1/2 tablespoons orange juice, or apple juice

Combine fruits in a medium bowl. Blend yogurt with honey, nutmeg and juice to taste. Gently stir into fruit. Cover and chill thoroughly. Makes 6 servings.

HONEY GARLIC PORK CHOPS

1/4 cup lemon juice
1/4 cup honey
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon cooking sherry
2 cloves garlic, minced
4 boneless center-cut lean pork chops (about 4 ounces each)

Combine all ingredients except pork chops in small bowl. Place pork in shallow baking dish; pour marinade over pork.

Cover and refrigerate 4 hours or overnight. Remove pork from marinade. Heat remaining marinade in small saucepan over medium heat source 12 to 15 minutes, turning once during cooking and basting frequently with marinade (may also be grilled). Makes 4 servings.

EASY HOME-STYLE CHICKEN

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (3-1/2 to 4 oz. each)
1/2 cup honey
1/2 cup buttermilk baking mix
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoon seasoned salt
1/4 teaspoons pepper
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
Coat chicken with honey; set aside. Combine baking mix, ginger, seasoned salt and pepper; mix well.

Roll honey-coated chicken in seasoned mixture. Brown chicken in hot oil in nonstick skillet. Drain excess oil.

Place chicken on rack in baking pan and bake at 350 degrees for 20 to 30 minutes or until juices run clear. Makes 4 servings.

APPLE GEM JELLY

1 cup apple juice
1 1/2 cups honey
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
2 red apples, grated with peel on
3 ounces liquid pectin
In a 5-quart saucepan, combine apple juice, honey, lemon juice and grated apples. Bring to a full rolling boil. Boil hard for 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from heat.

Stir in liquid pectin. Skim off foam. Ladle into hot sterilized jars. Seal. Makes 3 1/2-pint jars (24 2-tablespoon servings).



HONEY CARE TO TAKE A DIP

1 pint (16 oz.) lowfat plain yogurt
1/4 cup honey
2 tablespoons orange juice
1/2 teaspoon grated orange peel
Assorted fruits for dipping such as sliced apples and pears and strawberries

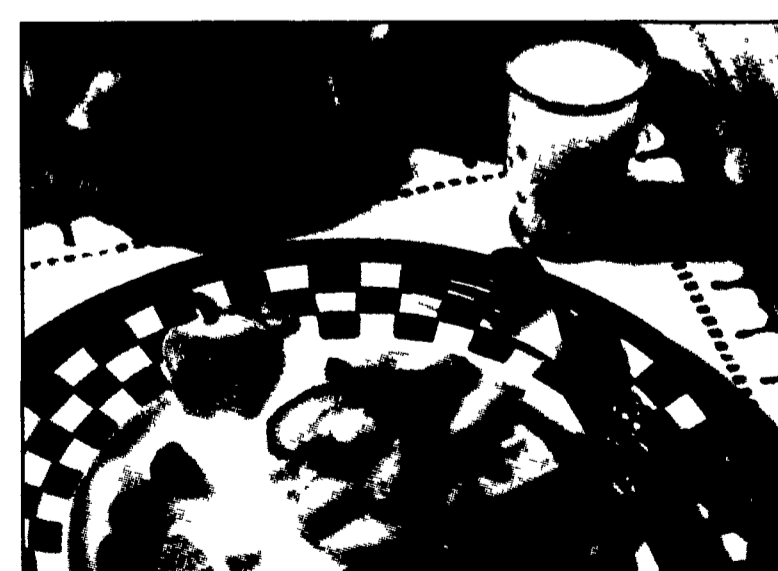
Combine yogurt in a small bowl with honey, orange juice and orange peel; mix well. Serve with sliced fruit. Makes 2-1/4 cups.

BANANA YOGURT SHAKE

1 1/2 cups milk
2 ripe bananas, peeled
1 cup plain yogurt
1/4 cup honey
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Dash of ground nutmeg
5 ice cubes

Combine all ingredients except ice cubes in blender or food processor; process until thick and creamy. With motor running, add ice cubes and process until smooth. Pour into tall glasses to serve. Makes four cups.

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Peach Bottom



BREAKFAST WAFFLE CLUB SANDWICH WITH HONEY APPLE SYRUP

3/4 cup honey, divided
1/4 cup apple juice
2 tablespoons butter or margarine
2 crisp, red apples, cored and diced
8 frozen waffles, toasted
8 thin slices ham
To prepare syrup, place 1/2 cup honey and apple juice in

small saucepan over medium heat; heat through. Set aside and keep warm.

Melt butter and remaining 1/4 cup honey in large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add apples; cook and stir about 4 minutes or until apples are lightly caramelized and crisp-tender.

Top each waffle with 1 slice ham. Top with 1/4 of apple mixture and drizzle with 1/4 of syrup. Makes 4 servings.



HONEY SPICE OATMEAL COOKIE GIFT MIX

2-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon ground ginger
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoons salt
1/4 teaspoons ground cloves
1/4 teaspoons nutmeg
1 1/2 cups oats (quick or old fashioned, uncooked)

To make mix: In large bowl, combine flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, salt, cloves and nutmeg; mix well. Add oats; mix well. Transfer to resealable plastic bag, an unbreakable decorative jar with lid or other airtight container. Store in cool dry place.

Ingredients Needed To Complete Cookies
1/2 pound (2 sticks) butter, softened (no substitutions)
3/4 cup honey
1 large egg
To prepare cookies:

In a large bowl, beat butter and honey with electric mixer until creamy.

Add egg; beat well. Add half of cookie mix; beat well. Add remaining cookie mix; beat well. Divide dough into thirds; place each on a piece of plastic wrap and flatten to 1/2-inch thickness. Wrap tightly; chill at least 4 hours.

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Remove one portion of dough from refrigerator.

Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Flatten to 1/8-inch thickness with bottom of glass dipped in granulated sugar. Repeat with remaining dough.

Bake 5 to 7 minutes, just until centers are set. (Cookies will feel soft. Do not overbake.) Cool 1 minute on cookie sheets; remove to wire rack. Cool completely. Store tightly covered.

Makes about 6 dozen cookies