



Making a Difference: Meet the Beeswax Lady

— Debbie Lawrence

No apples, cauliflower, peaches, or onions. Where would we be without the honeybee?

Add to that list no handcrafted beeswax candles and you would certainly get the attention of Rosemary Furlong, owner of *The Garden Bee Beeswax Candles*. Although small in stature, there is nothing demure about her passion for this work. It was easy to see how Rosemary is fueled by a love of the properties of beeswax. She has a deep commitment to care for the environment and she really enjoys the craft of candle making. What began as a desire to get together with other crafters has grown into a full-fledged business venture and has made a successful entrepreneur of its founder.

In 2004, with the urging of friends and family, Rosemary and another colleague went hunting for a local bee producer who could meet their demand for high quality beeswax. In time she found Paul Kittilsen, a beekeeper in Debert, who has been the prominent supplier of beeswax for *The Garden Bee* ever since.

"*The Garden Bee* is a cottage industry. We simply combine the desires of environmentally conscious and 'candle savvy' consumers with the age-old art of candle making," Rosemary explained.

Today, Rosemary Furlong creates beautifully handcrafted 100% pure beeswax candles from her studio in Rawdon, Nova Scotia. Known as "*the beeswax lady*", she is continually developing new designs to add to *The Garden Bee's* ever growing line of high quality beeswax candles. This fall, multiple lengths of taper candles are being introduced for the first time.

When I asked Rosemary why she was drawn to making beeswax candles, she smiled broadly. "How can you go wrong with a product that has no negative characteristics or side effects?" she said with delight. That's because beeswax, as a natural product, is a renewable resource that is virtually smokeless and drips less than any other candle when used properly. *The Garden Bee* goes one step further than other candle manufacturers by choosing to use only cotton wicks to ensure they produce pure, biodegradable beeswax candles.

Thank heavens for the little honeybee. This insect dedicates its entire average 6-week life span to flower pollination. At the hive nectar is dehydrated, reducing its water content from about 80% to a mere 16%. The result is the honeybee's sole food - a rich, gooey honey flavored by the source of its pollen like the blueberry blossom's pollen. Consuming 10 pounds of honey during its lifetime, the honeybee secretes milky white beeswax through its abdomen using this wax to create and coat the honeycombs.



The next time you are walking in the garden and hear that familiar hum, think about how it takes more than two million flowers to produce a single pound of honey. One honeybee is only capable of making 1/12th of one teaspoon of honey throughout its whole life; no wonder a beehive needs to house approximately 60,000 bees to keep it healthy and productive. With one third of North America's food dependent on honey pollination, we have many reasons to "bee" grateful to the Pilgrims who brought the honeybee to our continent and to "bee" amazed by the beloved little honeybee.

I also learned that the honeybee's beeswax is a natural ionizer. "Just like lightening, beeswax produces negative ions when burned. These negative ions attach to positive ions floating in the air like dust, pollen, mould, odor and toxins," Rosemary expounded. "By doing so, burning beeswax candles becomes a natural process for cleaning the air."

Allergy sufferers will be thrilled to know that *The Garden Bee's* candles are non-allergenic. That is because nothing is added to the beeswax – not artificial coloring, not synthetic scents, nothing but pure beeswax. In fact, those suffering from asthma or scent-sensitivities can breathe easier when the air has been cleaned by burning beeswax.

Aromatherapy anyone? Beeswax burns with a golden halo of light, which brings the full spectrum of sunlight to the room along with a gentle fresh fragrance. Rosemary added that, "the natural fragrance of a burning beeswax candle calms the inner spirit, allowing for relaxation and a true sense of inner balance."

The Garden Bee has also just launched a line of products ideal for those looking to raise funds for schools, teams, and non-profit organizations. Wanting to use her candle making as a platform for education, Rosemary was inspired to create a way to connect with young people by getting them engaged in learning about beeswax as a renewable resource. She also knew that their fund raising efforts would be heightened if these young people had the knowledge and con-

fidence to talk with potential buyers about beeswax candles. Moving away from the days of selling the traditional chocolate bar or box of chocolate covered almonds, Rosemary saw beeswax candles as an ideal choice. In addition to the benefits already mentioned, candles are used by everyone in a variety of ways, which means there would be great demand for the product. Beeswax, when compared to other types of candles, also offers the best value for your money; and *The Garden Bee's* commitment to minimum packaging means that you get exactly what you pay for – beeswax!

Victor Hugo once said "Life is the flower for which love is the honey." For Rosemary Furlong, her passion for the environment is the flower for which her beloved beeswax is the honey. She's yet another person living in one of our rural Nova Scotia communities who really is making a difference every single day. Check out her company's website at www.thegardenbee.ca or call Rosemary at (902) 632-2393.

Founder of Abundant Living Personal Coaching, Debbie Lawrence is a life, business & career coach and author of "Standing In Your Light: Women and Entrepreneurship". The former Director of the Professional Ethics Review Committee for the International Association of Coaches, she is a columnist for several publications and has been an adult educator and business coach for more than two decades. Check out her website at www.abundantliving.ca or call 895-6987.

