

For Immediate Release
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Burnsville Beekeeper Takes First Place at Mountain State Fair Honey Entry Now Goes to Raleigh to Compete for State Honors

Yancey County was well represented at this year's Mountain State Fair with the president of our own ToeCane Beekeepers taking top honors in the extracted honey category. Chris Mathis' entry won the blue ribbon and was awarded "Best-in-Show" among all entries at the fair.

"Well, we're very excited about the award," says Mathis, "especially since this has been such a tough year for all area beekeepers."

"With one of the rainiest springs and summers on record, it is amazing we had any honey to even enter in the fair," Mathis said. "By some estimates, local honey production is down seventy to eighty percent from last year. All of the rain we had this spring really hurt. And it's doubly hard on the honeybees. They can't forage when it is raining. The rain also washes away the flower nectars and pollen the bees need to produce honey."

Chris entered into the fair competition three tall bottles of medium amber honey that he extracted in late June. "It wasn't the typical dark tulip poplar honey we normally harvest in the summer around here," noted Mathis. "The bees had to work extra hard to produce this honey in between the rainy days. Its lighter-than-usual color probably comes from a few locust blossoms and maybe some linden, along with what few wildflowers they could find."

"We were prodded by my mom who won a blue ribbon for her crab apple jelly last year," explained Mathis. "Once we decided to enter, the search began for just the right jar or bottle. I won't say how much glassware we looked at before choosing these. And then we had to find just the right lids!"

The award winning honey was also selected by the fair judges to represent the best of the Mountain State Fair during the statewide competition at next month's State Fair in Raleigh. "We're just happy to be able to bring some additional attention to our mountain beekeepers," says Mathis.

Chris Mathis and N'ann Harp own The Spicewood Farm, appropriately located in (where else) "Bee Log". You can find honey from The Spicewood Farm at Ye Olde Mountain Store near Cane River Elementary School. Soon you will be able to order it directly from the web at thespicewoodfarm.com.