

BEES FOR WEALTH AND HEALTH

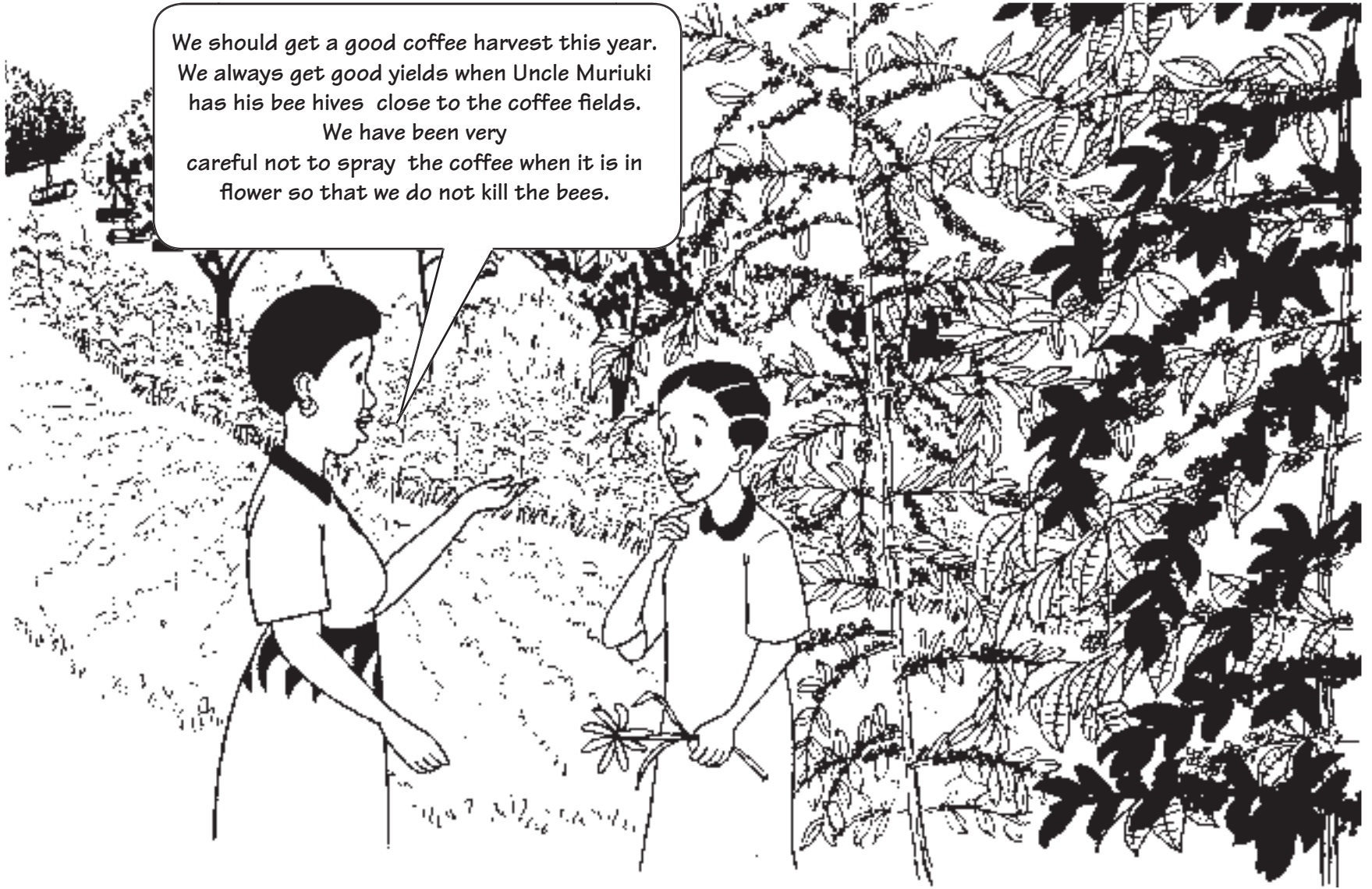


Wambui finds out...

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT, KENYA



We should get a good coffee harvest this year.
We always get good yields when Uncle Muriuki
has his bee hives close to the coffee fields.
We have been very
careful not to spray the coffee when it is in
flower so that we do not kill the bees.



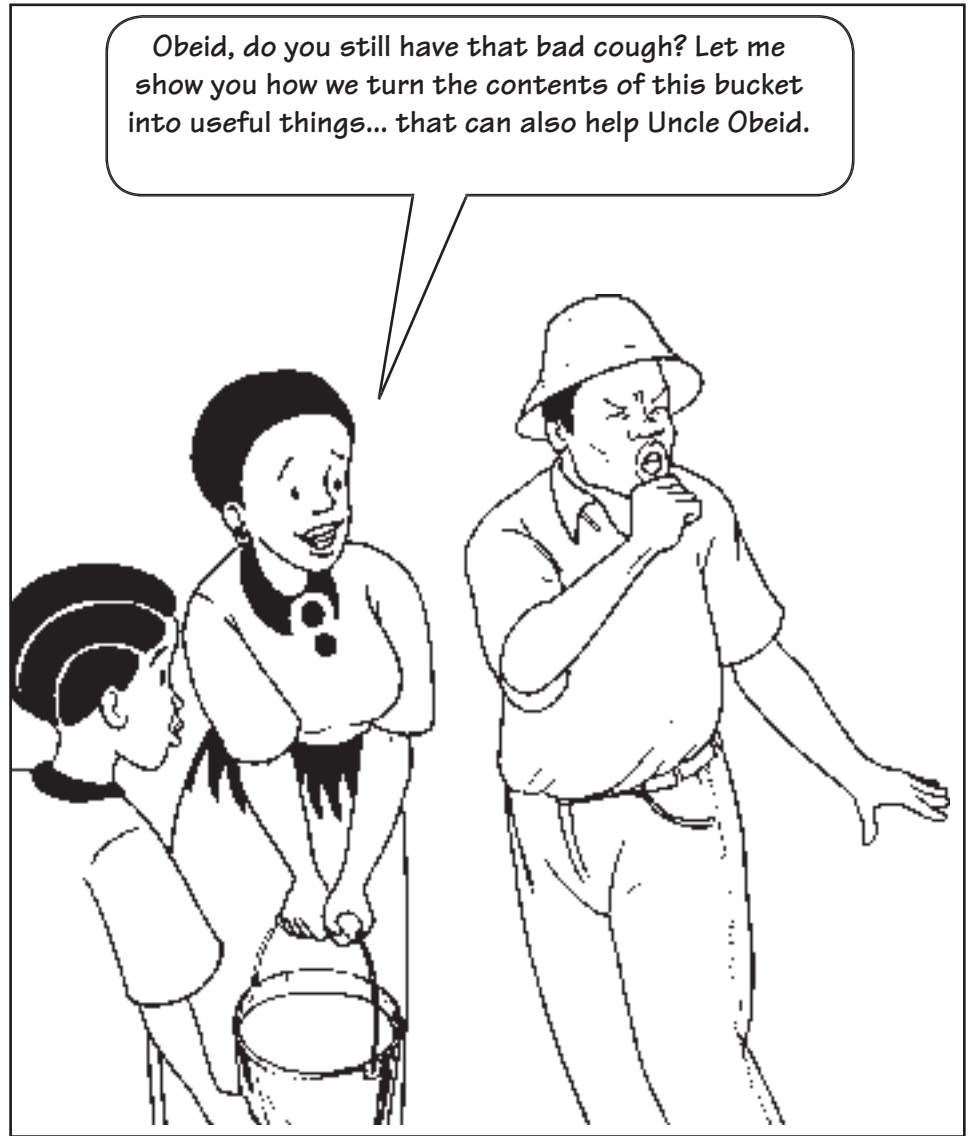
Bees do a good job of pollinating the coffee bushes as well as many other useful plants - like that Papaya over there.



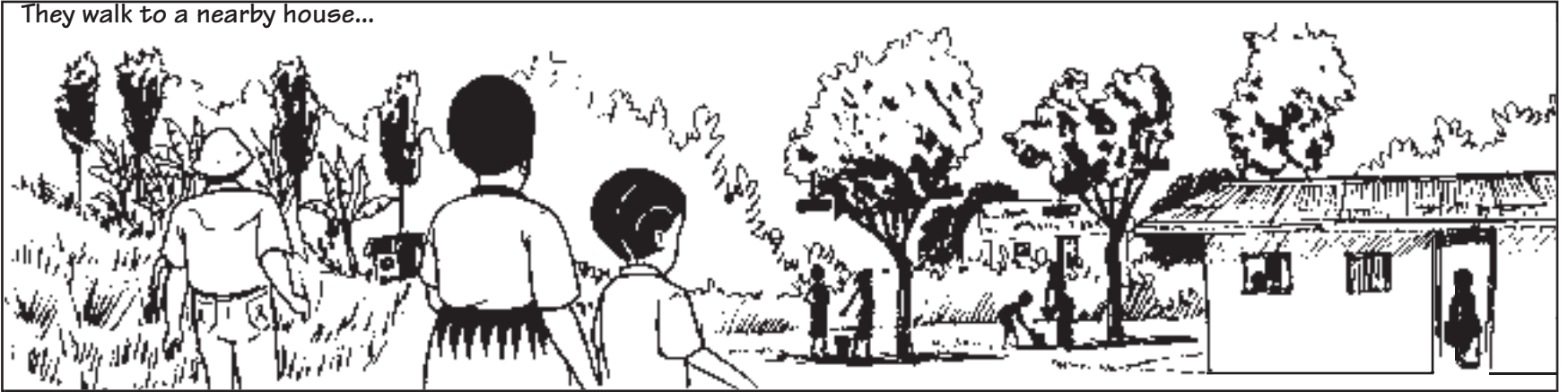
Is that why so many people keep bees here?

Partly Wambui, but let me show you the other reasons why we value bees. Here comes Uncle Obeid now.





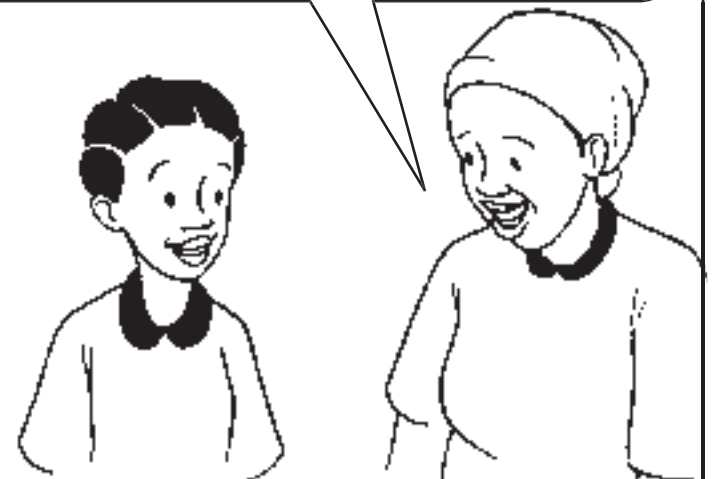
They walk to a nearby house...



Good morning ladies!
This is my niece
Wambui. She has
come to see how
our Womens Group
produces good quality
honey for market.



Well Wambui the first job is to separate the honey
from the comb. Remember that both the honey and
the comb are valuable products.





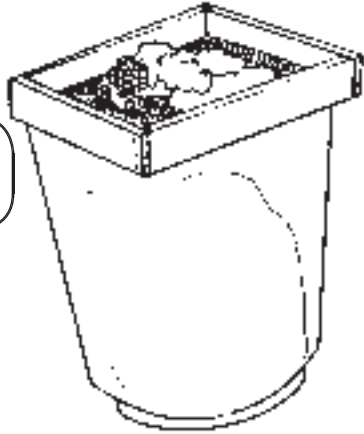
Exactly right, Wambui. We put the strainer on top of a clean bucket and then pour the honey and comb mixture into the strainer.

If the honey is going to get a good price at the market we need to make sure it is very clean. That means that all our utensils must also be very clean and dry. You see Jewa over there rinsing and drying the buckets. She does not use any soap.

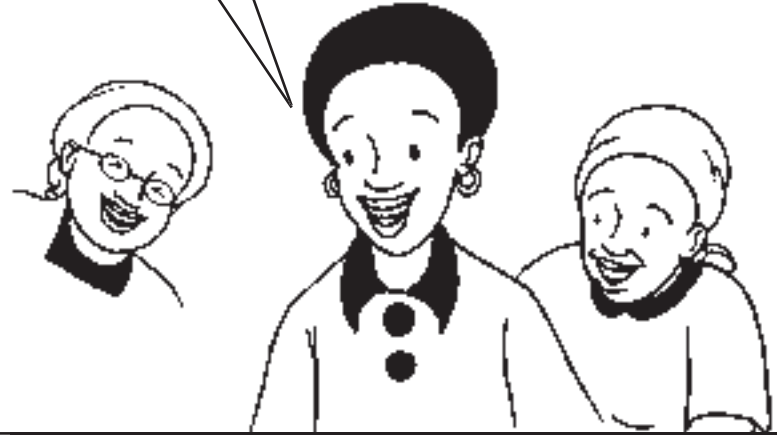


The sieving is done out of direct sunlight and in a cool place where there is no dust.

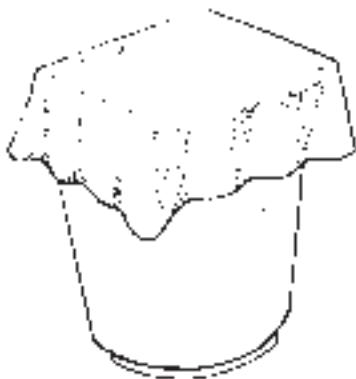
The honey looks like liquid gold!



It is, Wambui - especially to poor women like us!



Putting this cloth over the strainer and bucket keeps the dust and insects out. We will leave the honey to strain over night.



The next morning, when all the honey has strained through we take the comb out of the strainer, wash it with clean water and keep it in a safe place until we have collected a good quantity.

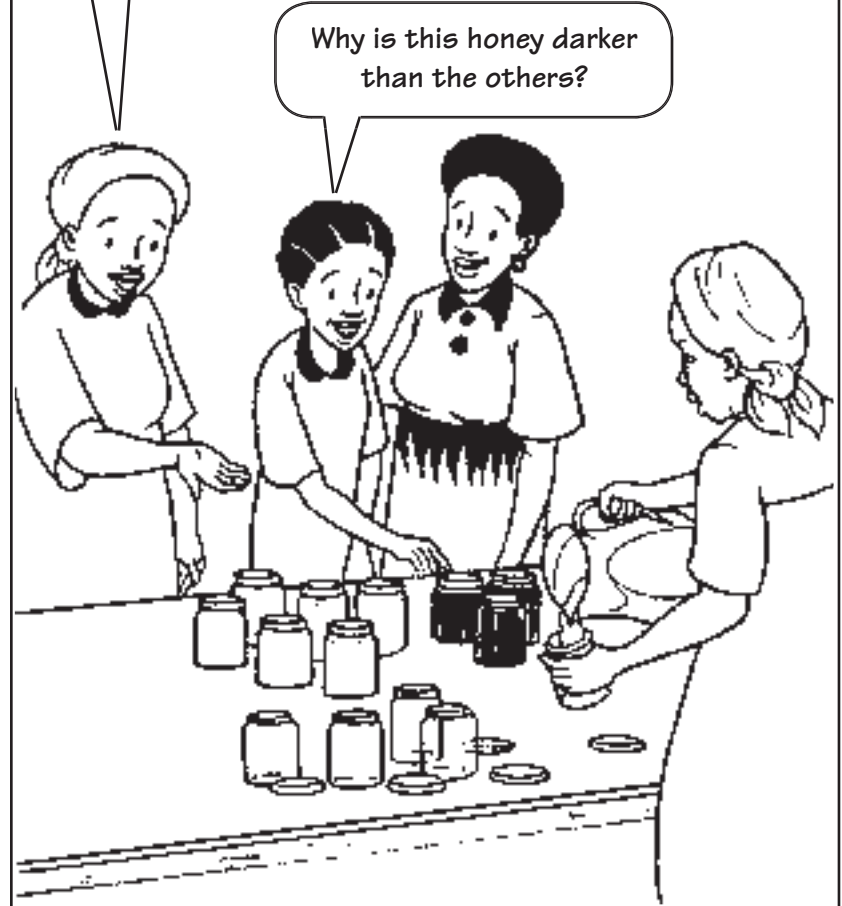


Next we close the bucket of strained honey tightly and leave it in a cool dark place for one week. We make sure not to spill a drop otherwise ants will discover it and arrive in their thousands for a feast!



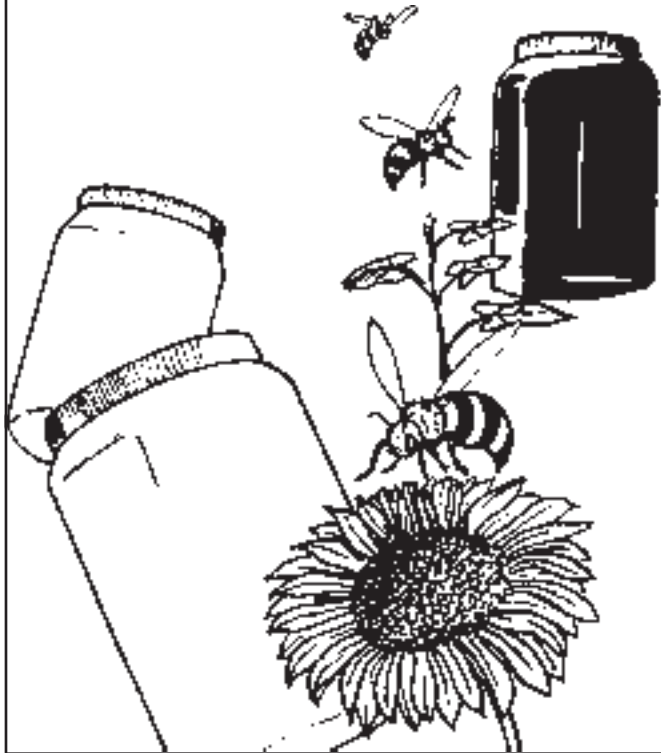
After a week we carefully skim the surface of the honey with a knife like this to remove any scraps of wax comb.

Now the honey is ready for putting in jars for sale. Remember that clean jars containing honey will sell better than ones that look dirty.



Why is this honey darker than the others?

That is because we made it during the rains when the bees were feeding on the flowers of beans. The colour of honey depends on the plants that bees feed on. Beans give a dark colour, whilst sunflowers give honey a light, golden colour.



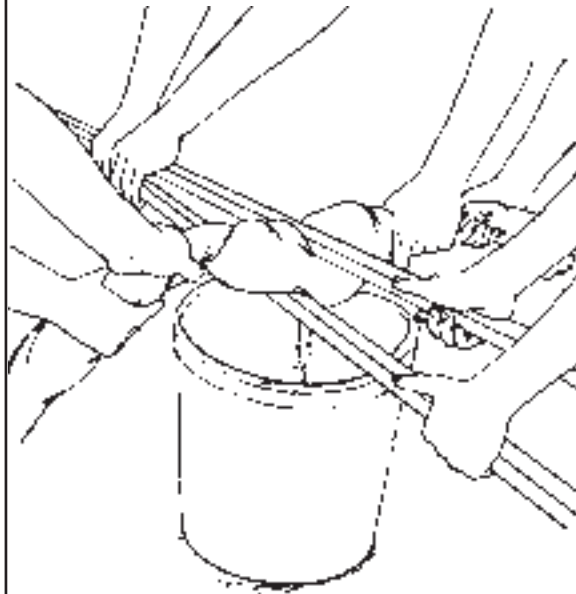
We take all the pieces of comb and put them in the cooking pot with water. Then we heat up the pot until the comb has melted. Be careful not to let the water boil.



Then we ladle it into a woven plastic sack, like a rice sack, tied up over a clean plastic bucket with straight sides. The sack acts like a sieve and traps the solid materials we do not want.



When the liquid has stopped dripping through, we squeeze the bag to force all the liquid through.



We cover the bucket and leave it until tomorrow.

This is the one we did yesterday. When you take the cover off - look!



A disc of clean beeswax floating above the dirty water.

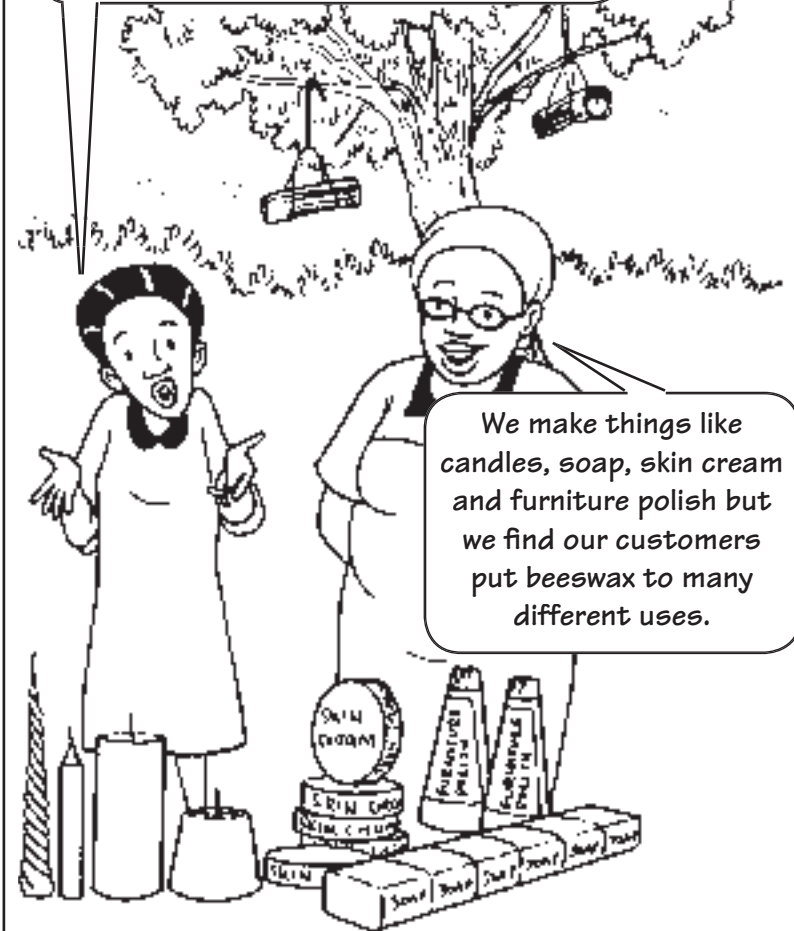
Lifting it out is easy if the bucket has straight sides. We can scrap of any bits of dirt on the bottom with a knife.

If we want to make the beeswax purer, we go through the same process again but this time strain the hot wax mixture through finer cotton cloth.



What do you do with the beeswax?

We make things like candles, soap, skin cream and furniture polish but we find our customers put beeswax to many different uses.



Honey has many uses too. I have made this cough mixture for your uncle by cooking six chopped onions slowly for two hours with one third of a Treetop bottle of honey. Here Obeid, take a spoonful of this Dawa at regular intervals.

Thank you but now I have a sting on my finger too!

That is a small price to pay for what we owe to bees!



PROJECT: GO HOME AND ASK YOUR FAMILY HOW MANY BEES PRODUCTS THEY USE AND WHAT THE USE THEM FOR. THE NEXT DAY IN CLASS, MAKE A LIST OF THEM ALL. SEE IF YOU CAN THINK OF MORE.

