

# Mixing in pure pollen



**Michael DALY**

Whoever came up with the expression "busy as a bee" sure knew what they were talking about. This amazing insect makes an average of 10 pollen runs a day, flying from hive to flower and flower to hive as it gathers its bounty.

In good weather, the combined efforts of a colony of worker bees can result in as many as 54,000 pollen loads a day. Bee pollen is essentially the male seed of a flower blossom that has been collected by bees and to which they add certain digestive enzymes.

The pollen is gathered using special collection nets, which the bee rubs against as it enters the hive. Bee pollen contains at least 22 amino acids, 18 vitamins, 25 minerals, 59 trace elements, 11 enzymes, 14 fatty acids, 11 carbohydrates and approximately 25 per cent protein. Now that's a lot of goodness packed into one product.

For the purpose of this article I am going to use bee pollen dry granules from Vitality Ltd in Hamilton. Vitality Ltd was set up about a year ago by Martin and Stephanie Lynch and partners James and Marian Driscoll.

I came across them at a farmers' market a few months back and I must say once I tasted their products, I was hooked.

If you can't get your hands on Vitality's products then don't worry as you can purchase bee pollen granules from any health store or chemist.

The trick to buying good bee pollen is to look for the ones with the widest range of colours which reflects a variety of plant sources and therefore nutrients. Before taking it just be careful as it can cause adverse allergic reactions in some people.

**Storage:** Fresh pollen stored at room temperature loses its magic quickly, although freezing can delay this nutritional denigration. Store pollen in a cool dark place, buy in small quantities, and use quickly. Dry bee pollen just needs to be kept air-tight and stored in the dark part of your cupboard.

## Bee Pollen Granules

□ Add bee pollen to a dish of ice cream and hot chocolate sauce.

□ Place bee pollen onto a piece of tin foil then take a peeled banana and roll it in the bee pollen and toasted coconut.

□ Add a tablespoon of bee pollen to beef casseroles or beef stir-fries.

□ Add bee pollen to salsa, home-made salad dressings, and sandwiches.

□ Can be sprinkled on your favourite cereal, fruit or yoghurt to provide a tasty and nutritious supplement to your diet.

□ You can also spread it on toast with honey. Bee pollen is a supplement and not a replacement to a balanced diet.



**PACKED WITH GOODNESS:** Chocolate and bee pollen Irish fudge is a treat with coffee.

PICTURE: Donna Paget

## Did you know?

□ Bee pollen contains over seven times more iron than beef.

□ Pollen is best consumed raw to preserve as many nutrients as possible.

## CHOCOLATE AND BEE POLLEN IRISH FUDGE

Store this fudge in an airtight container in the fridge and it will keep for months. If you are one of those people who are allergic to bee pollen, then just leave it out of this recipe. It won't matter to the overall flavour of this dish.

50g butter  
155g evaporated milk  
375g castor sugar  
2g salt  
280g dark chocolate  
100g hazelnuts  
3 tbsp Irish whisky  
6 tbsp Irish Baileys cream  
1 tbsp ground coffee granules  
2 tbsp bee pollen granules

□ Toast the whole hazelnuts over a high heat in a dry pan until golden brown but not burnt. Cool and lightly crush in a food processor or put them into a plastic bag

and crush with a rolling pin.

□ Boil butter, milk, sugar, salt, whisky and Irish Baileys over medium heat for 4-5 minutes, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon.

□ Stir through the chocolate and coffee until it starts to thicken.

□ Fold in the hazelnuts and pour into a loaf tin lined with non-stick baking paper. Smooth with the back of a spoon and sprinkle over the crushed bee pollen granules. Slightly push down with the back of a dessert spoon. Cover with cling film and place in the fridge to set for a couple of hours.

□ Cut into small squares and serve with a nice cup of coffee.

# Fresh for the palate



**PETER Shaw WINE**

There are times when we tire for the moment of wine varieties that we know well and look for new or at least alternative flavours.

There are wineries in New Zealand that are producing small quantities of new experimental varieties but there is one Australian company that has long been a leader in the trialling of new and different varieties – at least new to this part of the world.

That company is Brown Brothers, based in Milawa, northern Victoria.

Of course they produce some very interesting wines that are made from mainstream varieties but they also produce different wines from varieties that are not common and give us different and exciting aromas and flavours.

I have tried a range of these over past months and enjoyed the experience.

## Brown Brothers Zibibbo Rosa.

Zibibbo is the Sicilian name for muscat of Alexandria. It is a white grape frequently used as a table grape but can be used to produce a range of wine styles from dry to lusciously sweet. This one is a pink sparkling wine with a sweetness that makes it an ideal aperitif. It is relatively low in alcohol at 8 per cent by volume and that adds to its appeal. RRP \$17.

## Brown Brothers 2007 Vermentino.

This white grape variety can be found in Sardinia, Corsica, and in the Languedoc Roussillon area of France; and Brown Brothers grow it in south eastern Australia. It is thought to have its origins in Spain. This vintage has pale colour and aromas of stonefruit. The palate is a little sweet, but is tightly structured with those stonefruit and yeasty flavours, good mouth feel and a little astringency.