



PC27. Understanding sensory information of *Melipona favosa* pot-honey.

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Melipona favosa Fabricius 1798 thrives in the Venezuelan plains and produces a honey relished since pre-Columbian times, and mentioned in the novel "Doña Bárbara" written by Rómulo Gallegos. The pot-honey produced by this bee is known as 'erica honey'. This peculiar honey has higher water content and free acidity than *Apis mellifera* honey, but diastase activity is very low. It is a delicate honey that keeps the scent of the flowers. Initial approaches of descriptive sensory analysis were done with a panel of assessors who perceived floral-fruity odor-aroma with a bouquet of the erica nest. Further acceptance tests with Spanish assessors using a 10-cm unstructured line scale, positioned this honey in the highest average, compared to Australian, Bolivian, Brazilian and Mexican pot-honeys. The analytical approach to correlate sensory characteristics of *Melipona favosa* honey was carried out by aroma GC-MS and non-aromatic organic acid analysis. Preliminary results consist in 18 major aromatic components. The analysis of seven erica honey samples showed that contents of L-malic and total citric acids were similar to those of *Apis mellifera*, but D-gluconic acid was ten times higher (Sancho et al., 2012), and this could explain the sour taste. Besides the identification of the floral aromas, an interesting proposal for chemical studies would be to extract aromatic components of the cerumen pots to identify if they are also present in the honey to confer its distinctive flavor.

1) Sancho MT, Mato I, Huidobro JF, Fernández-Muiño MA, Pascual A (2012) Non-aromatic organic acids of honeys. In P Vit, SRM Pedro, DW Roubik. Pot-honey: A legacy of stingless bees. Springer, USA (in press).

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