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10 b Pkg w/young laying queen	\$89.00	\$86.00	\$83.00	\$80.00
10 b Pkg w/young laying queen	\$99.00	\$96.00	\$93.00	\$90.00
10 Extra Queens	\$26.00	\$24.00	\$23.00	\$22.00

Queens Clipped \$3.00 each Queens Marked \$3.00 each

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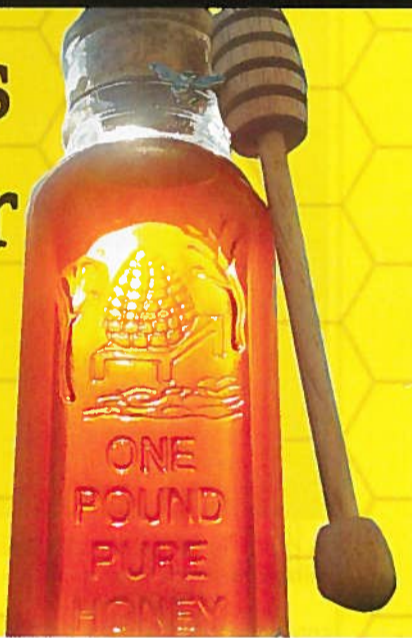
\*\*\*\*\* IMPORTANT NOTICE \*\*\*\*\*

**PACKAGE BEES:** Package Bees are shipped and insurable to Zones 1-4, Zone 5 package bee customers should contact our office regarding truck delivery.

**QUEENS:** Can be shipped to most zip code destinations. Priority Mail or Express Mail INSURED, -OR- by UPS overnight UNINSURED.

# North Carolina Beekeepers Win International Black Jar Honey Contest

by SHARRY MIKELL



There's a lot of International buzz about one local apiary's honey in North Carolina. Mikell's Farm Honey owned by Sharry and Doug Mikell of Old Fort won an International Honey Contest twice for their Certified Sourwood Honey. They won the 2014-2015 and 2016-2017 Sourwood category in the International Black Jar Honey Contest. The results were released February 10, 2017.

When Sharry Mikell started taking beekeeping classes in 2012 through Cooperative Extension, she had no idea she and her husband would start a business that would garner international acclaim. In May of 2013, they had two hives and managed to get them to survive through the winter. Then Doug took lots of advanced beekeeping courses in Asheville and was a quick study.

Doug is a retired career Firefighter from South Florida (thus the fire helmet on their honey labels), but came back to where his

family roots run deep in Western North Carolina. Doug carries over the care, compassion and professionalism from his Firefighter career to their bees and is the resident beekeeper.

The couple expanded their business to 25 hives with the help of an AgOptions grant and started producing honey along with beeswax beauty products, using the wax from processing the honey. While Sharry was busy filling orders and tending to the couple's organic garden, Doug worked in the bee yard.

The Mikell's use Organic Beekeeping practices and were the first in the area to have their honey analyzed for the pollen/TNV (true nectar value) content and to certify their honey. "When we sent a sample of our honey to Texas A&M University to test, the report came back with glowing reviews and Dr. Bryant, the professor, even reached out to us to explain that it was the best he'd

seen in quite a while," said Sharry. The results they received from that test convinced Sharry to enter their honey in the International Black Jar Honey Contest. Their first entry paid off and they won the Sourwood category for the International Contest, which was quite a feat because Sharry received a letter that the Sourwood category was the most competitive. "What's so good about the Black Jar Honey Contest is that it is completely based on taste and judged on anonymity; meaning the jar is covered and the judges vote on the honey taste alone," said Doug. The Mikell's property borders the Pisgah National Forest and they feel that their location helps with their success.

Since the beginning of their beekeeping, the Mikell's have always had their honey tested to certify the pollen/TNV (true nectar value) content and sell accordingly, along with using organic beekeeping practices. We have a nice spring blend honey and have



(l) Doug with a jar of his honey in their North Carolina beeyard. (r) Working in their beeyard.

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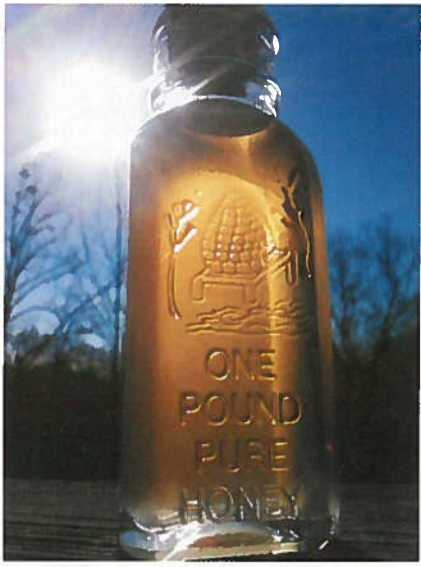
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A close-up of the Mikell's Award-winning sourwood honey.

consistently had a great sourwood honey each year, ranging from 80% to as high as 94% Certified Sourwood Honey. "There is never a 100% of any honey type because you can't put a leash on a bee, plus you'd need to have a single plant source over a large area," explained Doug. The Mikell's sell Raw Honey, that is pure, unheated, unpasteurized and unprocessed because it preserves all the natural vitamins, enzymes and other nutritional elements.

Now the Mikell's have grown to 35 hives. They also have a website; [www.mikellsfarmhoney.com](http://www.mikellsfarmhoney.com), along with selling on *etsy* and spreading the word on Facebook. The Mikell's take pride in selling their Sourwood Honey in beautiful etched glass muth jars.



Sharry Mikell showing some of their honey and beehive products for sale.

They also sell their honey called, "Mikell's Farm Honey" and beeswax beauty products called "Bee Naturally by Sharry" at several festivals throughout the year and have their goods in several local stores. The most recent location that their honey and beeswax beauty products can be found is the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor's Center and the Folk

Art Center, on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Mikell's Farm Honey is also a Certified Honey Producer for the NCSBA (North Carolina State Beekeepers Association) and will have both their Spring Blend along with their Certified Sourwood Honey for sale. Please check out their website; [www.mikellsfarmhoney.com](http://www.mikellsfarmhoney.com) or give Doug and Sharry a call at (828) 668-0103 to place an order or ask a question.



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