

Freddie Terry, Freddie Terry's Apiaries



Fred Terry has the sweet duality of singer/songwriter and beekeeper. In fact, he is infamously known as "Oracle's Singing Beekeeper." Fred began eating honey as a child for allergies. As a teen athlete, he ate honey as a healthy substitute for sugar. He was influenced by the book Honey and Your Health, written by the Hungarian immigrant Bodog Beck. The book is still considered an authoritative text about the history of honey and its many uses as a medicine for burns, wounds and sore throats. Terry also became involved and inspired in the early 70's by Hatha yoga and the principle of harmlessness. This would later become important in his decision to become a beekeeper.

Terry's undergraduate degree was in International Relations and while getting his MBA in 1974 at the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Glendale, AZ, he met an old beekeeper and decided to pursue the opportunity to learn to work with bees. During two years of apprenticeship, he captured his first swarm and learned the basics of beekeeping, hive management and production. There was much more to be learned by trial and error when he began his own business as a beekeeper. He began selling in bulk to stores in Phoenix and was the first beekeeper in Arizona to harvest and sell both bee pollen and propolis. At one time he had 400 hives. He lost many hives to bears and drought 1999-2004. He started selling his honey at the farmers market about 10 years ago. He has now scaled down to 150 about hives.

Desert beekeeping depends on rainfall and general weather conditions. Terry's bees are kept in the Sonoran desert far away from agriculture. Bees depend on the nectar and pollen from wildflowers, trees and desert plants. If there is no rain, there are no flowers and no honey. This year the lack of moisture has meant that Terry is now feeding his bees pollen instead of selling it at the market. Unusual spring weather in recent years has led to unusual consequences. In 2006 a cool and rainy spring and early summer meant that the major honey producing plants gave little nectar. However the ages put on a 15 to 20 year bloom (10% vs 90% bloom) and because the nature of agave the cold and rainy weather did not stop it from blooming. Therefore that was the nectar source of his bees which gave the unique agave honey that some customers may remember purchasing. Fred anticipates a good wet winter with El Niño which is good for wildflowers, for the desert and consequently for the bees.

Fred Terry also doubles as a singer/songwriter. He has a storytelling style of songwriting and he writes children's music for teaching Spanish and English., He does sing songs about bees, (not to the nees, they don't like folk music) such as Kenny Loggins' "House at Poo Corner." He has written "Bee Positive" and "The Secret" which reveal some of the things he has learned from the bees. You can find Freddie Terry and his sweetheart Marie at the Tucson Farmers Market at St. Philip's Plaza every Sunday selling organic honey, organic comb honey, organic pollen, homemade beeswax candles, Freddie's CD's and a fabulous skin cream made with beeswax, propolis and coconut oil.