

Honeyflower/ Vuokko Honkaniemi

Vuokko Honkaniemi has been a beekeeper for 25 years, she has now 60 hives and she is a qualified beekeeper. She finds the bee business very fascinating.

Europe's greatest crater lake, Lappajärvi, is now on Unesco's Geopark list and it is therefore very important to promote this status. Vuokko Honkaniemi got the Geopark logo for my honey to be used for example for souvenirs.

Last year she visited Portugal on a GeoFood trip. All the places they visited were Geopark sites. The farms that have acquired the GeoFood trademark sell local products.

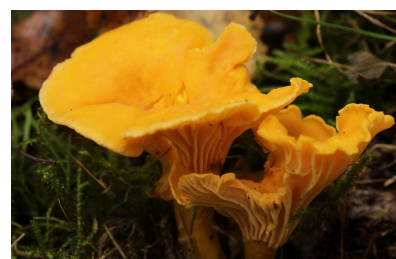
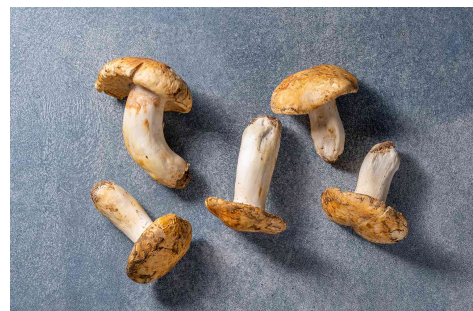
Nature and local food products have always been important to Vuokko. Mushrooms and berries are picked in their specific seasons. Her beehives have always been in the middle of the forest, so her honey is pure forest flower honey. Even the bears like it! In August Honey Flower was awarded the title of the Best Honey in the Ostrobothnia Region.

MUSHROOMS

There are about 6,000 species of mushrooms. I can identify about 250 species. I have also trained over 400 mushroom pickers. A popular mushroom here is the **boletus** which is transported to Italy for further processing.



Matsutake (tuoksuvalmuska, pine mushroom) is exported to Japan. The DNA is the same in Finland and Japan. It's the most expensive mushroom in the world.



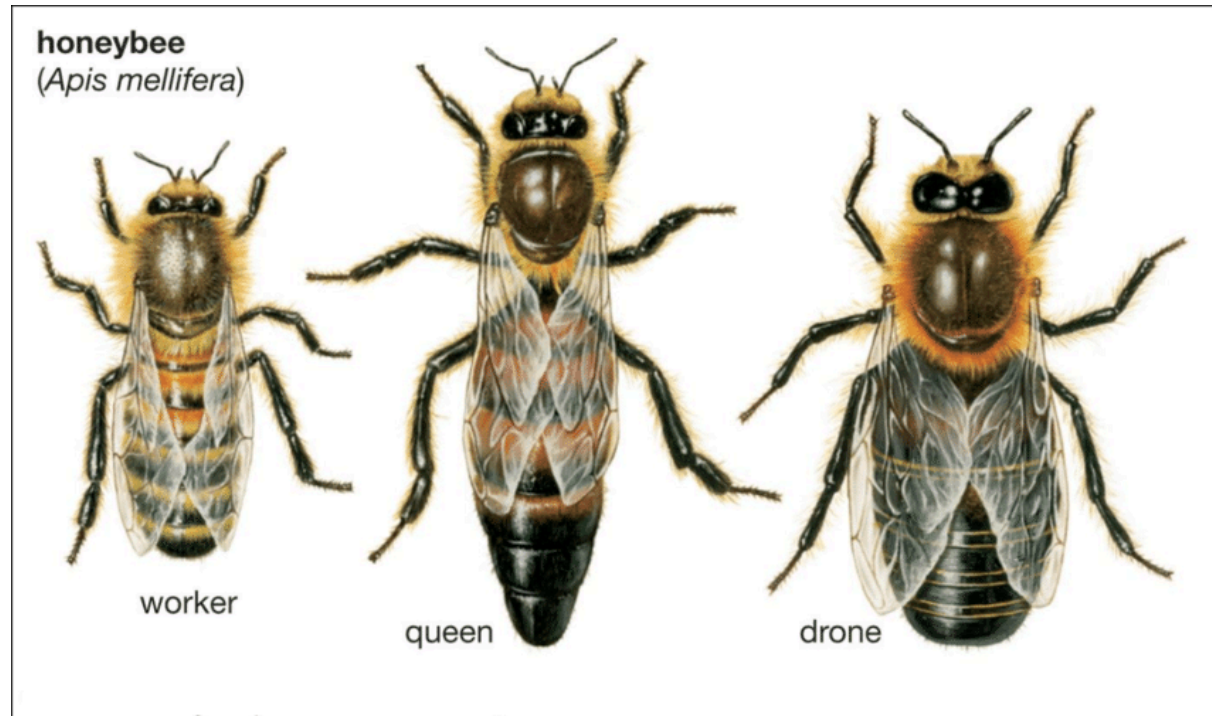
This mushroom season was bad because of the dry summer. The **yellow chanterelle** is many people's favourite mushroom because it is easily identifiable and an edible mushroom.

The funnel chanterelle grows until the snow covers the land. It tastes very good either fresh or dried.

All mushrooms have their imitators, one can be an edible mushroom and another one that looks similar may be poisonous enough to kill. You mustn't pick any white mushrooms unless you identify them as edible mushrooms. Join a mushroom course so you learn to identify mushrooms!



Chaga mushroom (*Inonotus obliquus*) is famous for its health benefits. It grows from a birch destroying the tree. The tumor growing inside is hard and brownish black. You can only pick it with the permission of the landowner. It is ground and brewed as tea.



The bee (*apis mellifera*)

People have enjoyed honey for 15,000 years. Until the 1400s honey was the only sweetener. The health benefits have been known for thousands of years. In one hive there are between 10,000 - 80,000 individuals. The queen bee lays 1,500 eggs per day. It flies only during the mating flight and when swarming.

“Swarming is the way that honey bees reproduce in nature. If the queen runs out of space to lay eggs and the hive becomes too crowded with bees, the queen will leave with half of the colony to start a new colony somewhere else.”

A **worker bee** is any female bee that lacks the reproductive capacity. Worker bees collect nectar from flowers, gather pollen, feed the young bees, build a honeycomb, live a few weeks, their wings wither and they die.

The **drones** live to reproduce, go on a nuptial flight and die. They are fed because they cannot feed themselves, there's no sting. They only live in the summer.

To produce 500 g of honey you need:

- 75,000 loads of nectar
- 3-4 million flowers
- 80,000 km of flights = twice around the world

Honey contains:

- 180 different ingredients
- almost 30 varieties of sugar, the main sugars are fructose and glucose
- minerals, vitamins (C, D), enzymes

Honey varieties:

- forest flower honey
- heather honey (dark jelly, smell)
- honeycomb honey in waxed honeycomb
- flavoured honey
- sauna honey
- honey mustard
- berry jellies sweetened with honey
- honey salves

Other products

- beeswax, sodium dodecyl sulfate (kuorimavaha)
- pollen (richer than vitamin), good for physical health
- propolis (from the buds of seeds, used to fill the gaps in the hive) to fight diseases
- royal jelly
- bee venom (strong antibiotic, arthritis)

Health care

- injections for arthritis
- honey massage
- honey for surgical wounds
- propolis and honey for sore throat
- honey as cough medicine for children
- honey plasters, abrasions
- honey for wasp and bee stings
- desensitization for pollen allergy

