

## Beeswax verses paraffin candles

Worth reading -- especially through the latter section if you burn paraffin candles...

-Margaret

### *In case you didn't receive the following...*

What follows is interesting information about why candles made of beeswax are preferable to any other kind, and the symbolism of beeswax. Let us start with the latter:

The pure wax extracted by virgin bees from flowers symbolizes the pure flesh of Christ received from His Virgin Mother, the wick signifies the soul of Christ, and the flame represents His divinity which absorbs and dominates both. Although the two latter properties are found in all kinds of candles, the first is proper of beeswax candles only. Thus the great paschal candle represents Christ, "the true light", and the smaller candles are typical of each individual Christian who strives to reproduce Christ in his life.

## Why 100% Pure Beeswax

Natural beeswax is an extraordinary material to work with. It naturally occurs in different colours - ranging from creamy white, through to pink, orange, bright yellow and dark brown depending on the flowers the bees have been foraging and, to some extent, how the beekeeper has handled the wax. It is also beautifully translucent.

Being a natural product, it is a little different to work with every day. This is one of the delights of being a beeswax candle-maker... no two days are the same! What does stay the same - due to years of research, development, trial and error - is:

- beeswax candles will always have a superior burn to a paraffin, soy or palm wax candle because beeswax has the highest melting point of any wax known to mankind and therefore when a beeswax candle is properly made (and not burned in a breeze), it will not drip everywhere or drown its wick
- a pure beeswax candle will always burn for longer than a comparably sized paraffin, soy or palm wax candle
- a pure beeswax candle will always have a more golden flame than a paraffin, soy or palm wax candle (because the wax is not bleached with chemicals)

A 100% beeswax candle made with a pure cotton wick will also always be a natural alternative to paraffin (a petrochemical by-product) and soy or palm wax (which are both hydrogenated oils). When burned correctly, a beeswax candle will not smoke or drip and the wicks will not disintegrate or drown in their own wax.

A beeswax candle is also a natural ioniser when it is burning, purifying your air of dust, pollen, odours, toxins, mould and mildew whilst leaving a light, natural honey scent.

By using pure beeswax candles, you are giving on various levels - to your health (by purifying the air you breathe), to the environment (no toxic smoke), and supporting beekeepers.

To produce one pound of beeswax, a worker bee eats about 10 pounds of honey, flies 240,000 kilometres and visits 33 million flower blossoms!

### **Beeswax is a natural ioniser**

Beeswax candles burn smoke-free and purify the air when burned. How do they purify the air?

Beeswax is a natural ioniser - emitting negative ions when burned.

Other natural ionisers include moving water (oceans, waterfalls, rain, etc.) and plants. Short of setting up a waterfall or rainforest in your living room, or buying an expensive electric ioniser, burning beeswax candles is the simplest and most effective way of purifying the air that you breathe. It has been scientifically proven that the only fuel known to mankind to produce a balanced negative ion is pure beeswax... care of Mother Nature. And what is even more astonishing is that a pure beeswax candle burns the dust and toxic fumes drawing them closer to the candle through the force of convection - you will notice that the dustier your environment, the darker the pool of wax around the wick of your candle.

Scientists have shown that anything floating in the air does so because it is 'positively charged' - this includes dusts, pollens, nasty odours, viruses, bacteria, germs and even toxic residues and emissions from household furnishings. Odours remain because they have a positive charge. All of these toxins present a potential health risk as they live in the air you breathe. Beeswax, when burned, emits negative ions which bind with the positive ions, creating a complete molecule, which is heavier than air and thus falls to the ground.

By burning 100% pure beeswax candles a few times a week, your home will be cleaner, smell sweeter and the air you breathe will be healthier.

### **Beeswax Bloom**

Over time, and especially in colder weather, beeswax naturally produces a 'bloom' - which appears as a white film on the wax of your candle. This is a natural occurrence and will not affect the quality of the candle or the way in which it burns - in fact it is another sign that the candle you are burning is 100% beeswax. To get rid of the bloom, either handle your candle with warm hands, or use a hairdryer on a low setting.

### **Pure cotton wick**

True beeswax candles are made with pure cotton wicks, without a core - be that lead, zinc, copper, paper or any other type of core.

It has been known for many years the dangers of using lead-based wicks in candles. For this reason, many candle makers began using zinc-based wicks. However a University of Michigan study has found that lead is still emitted from the zinc-based wick at levels that can exceed EPA air quality standards. Furthermore, many imported candles, particularly from China, still use fully leaden wicks. So, where are the drawbacks? Why isn't everyone making pure beeswax candles? The primary reason is the cost. Beeswax as a raw material costs around 50 times the price of paraffin and 20 times the price of soy or palm wax at a wholesale level. Unfortunately, because consumers don't realize that they are burning a petro-chemical or a bleached, hydrogenated oil in their living space, they are reluctant to pay the price of a beeswax candle.

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Paraffin is a toxic, waste product from petroleum refining. This greyish-black sludge is bleached with 100% pure bleach (the bleach used in laundries is about 10%), creating billions of tonnes of dioxins. The discovery of paraffin revolutionized candle-making because it was cheap and readily available. It still is.

As a toxic product, paraffin is shipped to the candle factory with a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). Concerningly, the MSDS says that when handling paraffin (and this is while it is in an 'inert' -unlit - form) you need to wear gloves, a lab coat, goggles and a respirator!

The main alternative to beeswax is paraffin - representing over 95% of all candles sold.

Paraffin is a petro-chemical by-product which, when burned, emits a toxic smoke. Paraffin is the greyish-black sludge oozing out of petroleum refineries. To make this waxy sludge more 'palatable' it is then bleached (which creates dioxins), processed and then texturised using carcinogenic chemicals. Candle makers then take this bleached, toxic wax, and colour it with synthetic colourants and artificial scents selling these candles to the unsuspecting public to burn in their living room!! Fantastic!

The toxic smoke from the paraffin candles covers your walls, furniture, carpet and curtains, not to mention the inside of your lungs and your skin. The soot given off from the burning of paraffin candles is the same as that given off by burning diesel fuel. Some of the air contaminants in paraffin fumes include toluene, benzene, methyl ethyl ketone (MEK), and naphthalene - substances found in paint, lacquer and varnish removers. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has determined that benzene and toluene are probable human carcinogens.

In addition, many paraffin candles are made with a lead core or zinc core wick, further polluting your environment with toxic smoke.

A University of Michigan study has found that wicks that have either lead or lead cores (used particularly in scented paraffin candles) emit potentially dangerous levels of lead into the air - including allergens and even carcinogens including benzene, acetone, mercury and toluene. The effects of these emissions can be damaging to the cardiovascular, neurological and immune systems. The scientist concluded "burning leaded candles can result in extensive contamination of the air and house dust with lead ... House dust is widely recognized as a primary route of childhood lead exposure through hand-to-mouth activities"

While it is illegal to sell candles with lead core wicks in Australia, we are aware of at least one case in the past couple of years where a large US beauty company which proclaims as part of its mission 'environmental leadership and responsibility' were forced to recall their candles which were found to have lead core wicks. Indeed they continue to sell candles in paraffin coated cups. There is a lot more profit in paraffin.

A similar study was conducted in Australia by Mike van Alphen which concluded "Modelling of a number of residential scenarios and detailed exposure assessments readily demonstrate that daily candle burning of several hours duration would result in elevated blood lead levels. The burning of multiple candles in a confined space for greater than 3-6 hours daily would readily result in severe Pb poisoning."

Natural beeswax is considerably more expensive than paraffin. If a candle does not say 100% beeswax, then you can be almost guaranteed that it isn't. In fact, legally, a candle maker is allowed to call their product a 'beeswax' candle with as little as 10% beeswax content. We are aware of one candle company, claiming consciousness, who simply dip their wicks in beeswax, then inserting the beeswax coated wick into a pure paraffin candle, and promoting the candle as beeswax.

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