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# Keeping up with the bees

It's hard work keeping up with a few million bees, but that's what John and Theodora Andonaros do to produce their Melissa Fresh Pure Honey.

What started as a hobby on their two-hectare property in Googong has been transformed into a love affair with honey-making and a thriving business.

"We were both born in Greece and John always wanted to live in the country, to grow vegetables and have animals," Theodora Andonaros says.

"When he got his first hive nearly 10 years ago, he was hooked. We now have nearly 60 hives."

In Australia, honey is mainly produced in the warmer months and there are hundreds of varieties, depending on the flowers from which the bees take their nectar.

Varieties include yellow box honey, which is light to golden in colour with a smooth flavour and pleasant aroma. Honey from the spotted gum is only available about every four years when the spotted gum trees flower all at once. Its flowers produce the most nectar of all the eucalypts and its honey has a mild flavour and lightish colour.

"We are constantly searching the countryside for the best flowers for our bees because the more flowers, the more honey they produce," John Andonaros says. "I've travelled up to 500km to find good flowers."

The drought has affected the amount of honey produced. Trees produce fewer flowers, so there is less nectar for bees to collect, he says. The couple also sells fresh produce, eggs and garlic. Melissa Fresh Pure Honey sells for \$5 for a 500g tub.

■ This article was contributed by the Capital Regional Farmers Market.



Theodora Andonaros