

ANAIS DO X ENCONTRO SOBRE ABELHAS  
RIBEIRÃO PRETO



**FUNPEC-Editora**

**Dados Internacionais de Catalogação na Publicação (CIP)**  
**(Câmara Brasileira do Livro, SP, Brasil)**

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Encontro sobre Abelhas (10. : 2012 : Ribeirão Preto, SP)  
Anais do X Encontro sobre Abelhas. -- Ribeirão Preto, SP :  
FUNPEC Editora, 2012.  
Vários organizadores.

1. Abelhas - Congressos.

12-08896

CDD-595.79906

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**Índices para catálogo sistemático:**

1. Congressos : Abelhas : Zoologia 595.79906

Anais do X Encontro sobre Abelhas. Ribeirão Preto. 2012  
Simões, Z.L.P.; Bitondi, M.M.G.; Bomtorin, A.D.; Nascimento, F.S.

Número de páginas.  
533



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# THE STINGLESS BEE *Frieseomelitta varia* IS A VIABLE OPTION TO PRODUCE PROPOLIS

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Propolis is a mixture of resins and viscous substances harvested by bees from plants. After being processed by the workers, it is used to close gaps of the hive, avoiding entrance of natural enemies and proliferation of undesirable microorganisms. Stingless bees can also produce large amounts of propolis with peculiar characteristics, but was never systematically studied and quantified. The aim of this study was to test propolis production of the stingless bee *Frieseomelitta varia*. Three colonies were used and the production was compared with other three colonies of *Apis mellifera*. The propolis was harvested from colonies every 15 days and repeated three times in each colony. The propolis traps were made of wood with gaps of 2cm high in two of the sides, positioned between the lid and the hive. *F. varia* traps were 22x22cm long and *Apis mellifera* traps were 50x40cm. The study was performed in Belém, PA, between April and May 2012. *F. varia* produced in average 15,9 g ( $\pm 3,9$ ) of propolis, total of 143,28 g; whereas *A. mellifera* produced 2,9 g ( $\pm 4,1$ ) in average, total of 28,8 g. Propolis production in *Apis mellifera* was much lower than reported in literature, which is generally around 20-100 g per month. But it can vary a lot according to the local characteristics, period of the year, kind of propolis trap and use of selected colonies for propolis production. On the other hand, *F. varia* colonies were kept at the same environmental conditions and even though produced five times more propolis than *A. mellifera*. These results show that stingless bees have great potential for propolis production.

**Apoio:** EMBRAPA Amazônia Oriental

**Área:** Produtos das abelhas

**Palavra chave:** *Frieseomelitta varia* - useful products - propolis trap - meliponini - meliponiculture