

Text & photos supplied

“If the bee disappeared off the face of the earth, man would only have four years left to live.” – Maurice Maeterlinck, *The Life of the Bee*

As creators and owners of Simply Bee, the mission of Helena and Pierre van der Westhuizen is not only to cultivate awareness of the benefits of using natural beeswax products, but also to aid in bee conservation.

Simply Bee's beehives, as begun by Helena's father, Derick Hugo in 1954, have provided the family with the foundation to create a range of natural beeswax products, whilst allowing them at the same time to continue with a proud family legacy.

Simply Bee's selection offers over 50 all-natural, handmade products, free from harmful chemicals, synthetic fragrances and parabens, making it safe and environmentally friendly.

The products range from 100 % pure organic fynbos honey, cosmetic products for ladies, babies and gents, to a range that include a wide variety of healing ointments, balms and liquids. And, as there is no limitation on the value of using beeswax, Simply Bee also produce leather and wood polishes, horse-hoof balm and swarm lure.

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Bees are their passion, so in conjunction with their show room at Simply Bee, they have now also opened an all new Simply Bee Observation Centre, right next door to the show room at 31 Church street, Hopefield.

At the Observation Centre, Simply Bee offers an informative, educational and interactive way of learning everything about the incredible life-cycle of bees, how bees make their honey and how Simply Bee produces such a high standard of organic honey and propolis, whilst maintaining responsible beekeeping practices.

“The colonies of bees at our hives are from the Cape Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera eapensis escholtz*), a subspecies of the western honey bee, *A. mellifera linnaeus*, that occurs naturally in the Western Cape region of South Africa,” says Helena van der Westhuizen.

The centre also offers a wonderful glimpse at the origins of their family history and the beginnings of their unique business.

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Top: The glass-enclosed observation room. **Below right:** A close-up of one of the glass beehives inside the observation room. **Below left:** The information display area. **Opposite page:** Part of the information area that is devoted to the honey badger.






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The Observation Centre proudly boasts the West Coast's first glass bee observation hive with 2 live bee colonies. The hives have glass panels which offer a safe opportunity to view a bee colony in their natural environment, and to learn in an unobtrusive way about the incredible work ethic and processes of how bees feed their young, make their honey and communicate with each other. The glass hives are safely behind a glass wall, so visitors and their children can really get up close without disturbing the bees.

The Simply Bee Observation Centre will be offering special age-appropriate educational packages for school or study groups.

Children will also be able to observe closely how a beekeeper removes honey from the bee hives, taste honey and see a full size honey badger taxidermy mount. Being a near-threatened species, Simply Bee supports the fact that more should be done now to ensure the long-term survival of the African honey badgers before they reach a critical status on the IUCN Red List. All of Simply Bee's hives are placed on badger-friendly stands.

Simply Bee offers special package deals for tour and school groups, which include the entrance fee, picnic packs & drinks. Bookings essential to ensure demonstrations by a bee keeper. 

SIMPLY BEE OBSERVATION CENTRE

Trading Hours:

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Mondays - Fridays
10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Saturdays
(Entrance free - donations welcome)

Public Holidays:

Please contact Simply Bee for confirmation

Visitor Information:

Group Bookings: Special rates apply and bookings are essential to ensure demonstration by beekeeper.

Walk-ins: Same educational information available - beekeeper demonstration not guaranteed.

For more information about Simply Bee, and for your complete online shopping experience, please visit the website at www.simplybeeswax.co.za

For bookings and related enquiries, please phone **022 723 0568** or email Simply Bee at info@simplybeeswax.co.za.

The Humble Honey Bee...

Miracle



of Nature

At Simply Bee we are very fortunate to only use our own Fynbos honey, beeswax and propolis in our products.

We cherish this gift of Nature, lovingly creating gentle products that soothe and nurture you – body and soul.

Situated in Hopefield, our shop offers a delightful range of natural bee products. Do stop by and try, smell and feel any of our skin products, all made right here with the utmost love and care, using fynbos honey, beeswax, and/or propolis, mixed with local essential oils.



simply bee Natural Beeswax Products

Simply Bee Building & Shop
31A Kerk Street, Hopefield, 7355.

Phone Pierre or Helena on
072 802 3634.

Email: simplybee@rocketmail.com

