



## *R. Stephens*

APIARIST

“Golden Bee” Honey  
“Golden Nectar” Honey  
(Real Leatherwood)

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R. Stephens Apiary at Mole Creek was established by the late R. Stephens in 1920, and has progressed from a pre-World War 1 hobby of a few hives, to a successful apiary business of 2400 hives in the twenty first century.

### **R. Stephens specialises in two varieties of Tasmanian honey:**

Golden Bee Clover/Blackberry & Ground Flora Honey

Golden Nectar Real Leatherwood Honey

Today the thriving business produces approximately 35% of Tasmania's honey crop. These honeys are gathered directly from our hives and are packed in Quality Assured Premises at R. Stephens, a family operated apiary based at picturesque Mole Creek. The business, now in its third generation has been producing honey for over 80 years.

The history and growth of this factory is very much a part of Mole Creek's progress. The founder R. Stephens was the eldest son of the local Methodist Missionary, who looked after the original hobby hives at the back of the Church House whilst his son served in the First World War. Upon Robert's return in 1919 he turned his hobby into a living, purchasing the 2 acres of land where the factory and Apiary now stand.

In 1923, 50 hives were moved to Caveside by horse and cart. In 1929-30 an A Model Ford truck was purchased and two men employed to work 450 hives, which produced a bumper crop, only to result in very poor sales. During the Depression – 1930 the now famous “Golden Bee” label came into existence. Golden Bees gather this sweet nectar from the lush pastures of the Northern area of Tasmania. It is sold locally, mainly in the home state Tasmania.



In the summer of 1934 bees were transported to the Mt. Arrowsmith area of the West Coast for Leatherwood Honey. Owing to bad roads, poor transportation and the War, he did not return to that area until 1951. Retail outlets were then established for this unique honey and its distinctive "Golden Nectar". Real Leatherwood Honey label was designed.

70% of the production is harvested from the Wilderness catchment area of the Franklin River, which the Stephens' family approaches every summer through rough bush tracks a waft with the uniquely poignant scent of the Leatherwood flowers. These high rainfall forests, where this fine aromatic honey is gathered are entirely free from insecticides and artificial fertilisers. The area we work extends along the Lyell Highway from Mt. Arrowsmith to Gormanston, also Kelly's Basin, and Renison Bell, Strahan and Teepookana areas. Tasmania is the only place in the world where Golden Nectar Real Leatherwood Honey can be produced. It is gathered from the World Heritage Rain Forest Areas on the West Coast of Tasmania. The air has been accredited as being the cleanest air on the planet. The honey is now certified organic, registration no. for OFC is 0485, and USDA Organic.

This unique honey is sold in Australia, mainly in Woolworths Spread departments, Health Food, Gourmet, and Natural Food outlets as well as Tourist Shops and Supermarkets in Tasmania. Ever expanding shipments are made to the USA. Four to five men work the bees during the honey flow, with the honey being returned to Mole Creek for extraction, here another crew, use three 70 frame radial extractors and an automatic uncapping machine extracting 5-6 tonnes of honey per day. The honey is extracted in hygienic conditions, all stainless steel equipment, and pumped into stainless steel storage tanks in the modern packing room. The honey bottling and labelling machines are the best in Tasmania and the factory is the most up to date and efficient for its size in Australia. It now has TQA (Tasmania Quality Assured) and B'Qual (Australian Honey Industry Standard Quality Assured accreditation).

During October 1966 the present owner Ian Stephens took over the business and an updating and expansion began which continues with his three sons Ewan, Neal and Kenneth.

***A family business dedicated to bringing the finest quality honey direct to the consumer.***