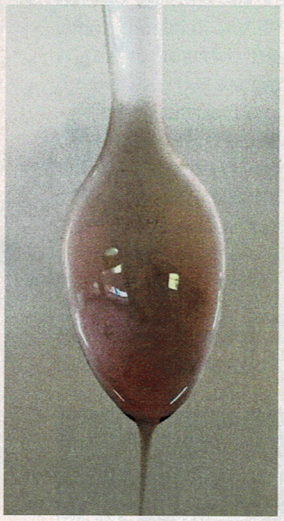
Reactions

Letters to the editor

Honey and bees

A fan of Newscripts, I could not help but notice the photo of "blue" honey in the July 3 issue of C&EN (page 40). It looks a lot closer to Wolfpack red (a brand color of North Carolina State University) than Carolina or Duke blue (brand colors of the University of North Carolina and Duke University). Even accounting for the possibility of poor photographic reproduction, purple is not a color associated with either Duke or UNC. I say it's closer to Wolfpack red!



The caption for this photo in Newscripts asked if this type of honey, which comes in purples and blues, could signal support for Duke University or the University of North Carolina.

Bryan J. Gentsch
Goldthwaite, Texas

I'm writing about Laurel Oldach's "The Buzz about Town" story. Loved it! Newscripts is always my first stop when I crack open a new issue of C&EN!

Interesting about the products observed in hive debris. But perhaps it is not only scientists and honeybees that are collaborating. It seems that in Venice, Italy, the wood rot fungus might be collaborating with the honeybees too: bees spread spores, and the fungus helps bees fight viral infections.

For more on this, have at look at Stamets et al. (*Sci. Rep.* 2018, DOI: 10.1038/s41598-018-32194-8), which describes how fungi extracts can significantly reduce levels of apian viruses. It seems that bees deliberately forage fungi! I first learned about this work in Merlin Sheldrake's *Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds, and Shape Our Futures*. It's a great book and worth a read.

Keep up the great work!

By the way: Regarding the June 19/26 editorial ("What's the Right Frequency for C&EN?"), I am one of the folks for whom C&EN is *the* reason for keeping American Chemical Society membership at premium level. I love my print copy and always turn right to Newscripts!

Rose Pesce-Rodriguez
Elkridge, Maryland

Silicas in toothpaste

The Synthetic Amorphous Silica and Silicate Industry Association would like to offer a correction to the July 10 C&EN article "What's That Stuff? Toothpaste Tablets" (page 20). The silicas commonly formulated into toothpastes are synthetic amorphous forms, not crystalline. The silica particle morphology is manipulated in a way that commercially relevant silicas do not cause excessive tooth wear and at the same time provide adequate removal of the pellicle (the clinical benefit). In terms of tooth wear, there are two main parameters: abrasivity toward enamel and abrasivity toward dentin. The abrasivity toward dentin is measured and controlled by the silica manufacturers to provide a safe product. Authoritative bodies like the American Dental Association have restrictions on how abrasive a toothpaste can be in order to keep teeth healthy for a lifetime use of toothpaste.


Features
CONSUMER PRODUCTS
What's that stuff?
Toothpaste tablets
Originally a niche product for the zero-waste crowd, these pressed powder pills are the latest in a string of popular tooth-cleaning options
CRAIG A. BETTENHAUSEN, C&EN STAFF
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Joel F. Carpenter, executive director of the Synthetic Amorphous Silica and Silicate Industry Association
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Thallium and hair loss

Thank you for the article on thallium poisoning (C&EN, July 17, 2023, page 13). It reminded me of the third edition (1972) of F. Albert Cotton and Geoffrey Wilkinson's *Advanced Inorganic Chemistry*, which states (page 280), "Thallous solutions are exceedingly poisonous and in traces cause loss of hair," with a reference not to a toxicological publication but to Agatha Christie's *The Pale Horse* (1961).

Frank Kroh
Marion, Ohio

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