

In the event that you missed Rich Herout's presentation on extracting at Thursday's Lake County Beekeepers meeting, Rich has made his notes available to the group.

Tips for honey harvesting and extracting your honey.

HARVESTING

- 1) The month before honey harvest
 - a) order Fishers Beequick, so you have it
 - b) order or make your own fume board
 - c) order a bee brush if you don't have one

- 2) The day before you are going to harvest the honey (pull supers)
 - a) out at the hives remove the outer and inner cover
 - b) Pry apart the honey supers, if you have two honey supers on pry also pry up the one just above the hive bodies.
 - c) this allows the bees about 24 hours to clean up the mess for you
 - d) put back on the inner and telescoping covers
 - e) I use the brick system. I look at the supers when I pry them apart, peek inside and see how the capping is coming along. If one super is ready I put one brick on its end, if two are ready I put two bricks on end. That way when I go out there the next day I don't have to think or poke around too much, just harvest.
 - f) Clean and sanitize all of the equipment you will use. Buckets, extractor, uncapping tub, strainers etc. This will allow the equipment to be dry when you go to use it the next day. I use chlorox and water and chlorine test strips to check the concentration when I mix up sanitizer. (its approximately 1/2 of a chlorox bottle cap per five gallon bucket) also use luke-warm water not hot water.
 - g) **VERY IMPORTANT:** make sure your neighbors aren't having a backyard party and are having a bunch of people over. Bees really don't like it when you take away their honey stores. So check with your neighbors first, on what's up with them.

- 3) The day you go to pull off supers
 - a) Accumulate all your tools, fume board, bee quick, bee brush , lit smoker, etc.
 - b) Bring extra supers out to the bee-yard with you, at least one empty box without frames and one box with frames.
 - c) When you pull off supers from a highly populated hive, give them another empty super for them to get working on.
 - d) Bring something clean with you to put the supers on and something to cover up the boxes with after you remove them from a hive. If you don't cover the harvested supers, you will not like what happens. It can get very beezy very quickly.
 - e) Do your harvesting work between 11:00 am and 2:00 pm. most of the bees are out foraging and you will have less bees to deal with.
 - f) Make sure its going to be a sunny day as the fume board works best when its heated up by the sun.

- 4) Prepare the fume board
 - a) I spray an x-pattern on the fume board and a couple extra sprays in around the perimeter of the fume board.
 - b) Lightly smoke the entrance and the inner top of the hive (not a lot of smoke here)
 - c) Remove the telescoping cover and the inner cover and place the fume board on top.
 - d) Place the fume board a skew a little bit (rotated so some of the comers are open. some of the bees never seem to go down but will come up and fly out through the open corners.
 - e) Go get a drink of water and sit down for a couple of minutes to let the board work, sometimes up to five minutes.
 - f) Lift the fume board and peek inside and check on the progress. Most of the bees should already be gone.
 - g) Note that if you have brood in the super, I don't care what you put on the bees they will not leave. You will have to brush those nurse bees off one frame at a time. This is where having an empty super comes in (tip 3b). You can load the empty super frame by frame, as you brush the bees off.
 - h) Pull the super and place the fume board back on if you are harvesting two supers. If you only pull one super then repeat process on the next hive.
 - i) You don't need to spray the fume board for each super removed. Sometimes I use it that way (one spraying of bee quick) for up to two hives.
 - j) While im working on preparing the second hive, I wait a few minutes before I add a super or close up the first hive so that most the fumes leave the hive. After the fume board is in place on the second hive then I will close up the first.

EXTRACTING (this is just what "we" do every time "we" extract you can do more if you wish)

Place your harvested supers on something clean, elevated off the ground with an air space below the supers.

Using a refractometer check moisture content of the honey (should be between 16 & 17 percent moisture).

All honey above 18.6 will ferment all honey below 18.6 might ferment. It's best to be around 16.5.

If the honey moisture content is to high, run a dehumidifier and a fan to circulate the air through the supers until the moisture lever comes down.

Set up for extracting , use a triangle pattern for process flow and efficiency

WASH YOUR HANDS with sanitizing soap. Sing "old McDonald had a farm" and one verse of "and on his farm he had a dog" , that's usually long enough time washing your hands. I use unscented soap because I do not want to flavor the honey with any soap smells. I also usually wear latex gloves (cheap throw away) and a hair net while im extracting, I think it's the right thing to do. I also sometimes wear a white lab coat that has snaps (No buttons). (Not always just depends on how hot it is in our honey house) . Also, don't touch your face with your hands while working. If you do, wash your hands again. Goes without saying , don't lick your fingers as tempting as it is.!

Uncap honey with a pick or knife. (I use a pick, use a hot knife to clean up the frames afterward)

Put frames in extractor and spin slow at first and gradually spin up to higher speed
Put a medium mesh strainer on a bucket and place it under the honey gate on the extractor. Use a one-gallon nylon paint strainer to catch the large wax chunks coming out of the extractor before they get to the bucket strainer. This will save you time because the bucket strainer will clog up pretty fast without one.

I extract with the honey gate on the extractor open and a bucket below the honey gate.

After the bucket under the extractor looks full, I replace it with a new bucket.

Take the full bucket of honey and strain it again through a fine mesh strainer that is placed on your bottling bucket. Very important here is to make sure the honey gate on the bucket is closed and secured.

This takes a while but is best done while the honey is warm, other wise it takes forever to strain through. Cover your buckets to protect from dust and insects.

Continue until your done extracting all the frames.

I clean up the frame with my electric knife. They just look better going back into the boxes and gives the bees less work to do before they can refill them for us.

You can strain out the uncapping tub honey the next day after the cappings have had a chance to drain. I usually give this honey away to a friend who bakes homemade wheat bread.

Put your wax cappings in a plastic bag and into a bucket (or cardboard box) for later in the year when you have time to deal with them.

And this is the hardest part because you are tired, clean up all equipment then its ready for next time.

Let your bottling bucket settle for about one week before bottling the honey. Air bubbles and tiny wax particles will float up to the top of the bucket giving you a very clear and bright honey.

Remember , this is just what WE do. You can always do more !!!!!!!