



BRIDGEND

BEEKEEPERS

GWENYNWYR PEN-Y-BONT

Fact Sheet 1.

Taking a Honey Crop and Extracting

1. Is the honey ready?

When the bees have filled the supers they will cap the stored honey as soon as it is 'ripe' and therefore will not spoil. You can check before removing a crop that a good 80% of the stores are capped. Any frames with fewer capped cells can be shaken to see if the honey stays in place. The shaking action is similar to shaking bees from a frame. If wet drops of honey fly out then that frame is not ready and should be returned to the bees until it is.

It is possible to make up a super for extracting by selecting frames that are ready from a number of supers. (this is commonly done when extracting OSR honey as there is a need to extract before the honey granulates).

2. Clearing supers.

It is possible to shake the bees from a small number of frames, or gently brush them from the super frames, but it is usually easier to put clearing boards on and remove the crop 12 to 24 hours later.

There are 2 oval holes in most crown boards that are the correct size to accept 2 Porter bee escapes; these are one way exits that allow the bees to go down and join the queen but prevent them from returning to the super.

Put the clearing boards under the supers for extraction in the evening then remove the bee free supers the following day. If the super fails to clear it will be because there is brood in the super or there were drones in the super that have clogged the exits or you put the escapes on incorrectly. Sometimes a gap

between brood box and super allows the bees access and this leads to robbing and the rapid emptying of the super.

3. Uncapping

Having transported your crop to your clean extracting room (often a kitchen) ,ensure that the bees cannot enter it.

The cappings can be removed with a long knife such as a sharp bread knife or a heated uncapping knife. The technique is to hold the frame at the top (carefully keeping your fingers tucked in) and brace the bottom of the frame on the bucket the cappings will fall into. Use the knife to cut upwards from the bottom of the frame leaning the frame over the bucket so the sheet of cappings falls away from the frame and drops into the bucket. A slight sawing motion helps and minimises the need to stop and remove hard pieces of wax that will get stuck on the blade of the knife. Take care to safeguard your fingers.

4. Extracting

Place the uncapped frames of honey into the extractor and spin until the honey has flown out. If you are using the four frame extractor you will need to spin half the weight of honey from the first side of the frame then reverse the frames and spin all the honey out from that side; then finally reverse the frames again to the original side and spin out the remaining honey.

5. Filtering

Straight away run the honey through the filters provided into a suitable size of bucket with a tight fitting lid. Keep the bucket of honey in a warm place for four or five days to allow all the bubbles to rise to the surface. This will give a fine white scum that should be carefully skimmed off and used for cooking.

Your honey is now ready for bottling.