HONEY EXTRACTION

New River Valley Beekeepers’ Association

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HONEY EXTRACTION

Honey Types
Extraction Timing
Harvest Methods
Extraction Location
Extraction Methods, Etc.
Clean-up
Bottling
Labeling
HONEY TYPES
Based on Desired End Product

Liquid Honey
*Cut Comb Honey

*Be sure to freeze comb to kill larva/eggs before selling
HONEY TYPES (Cont’d)

*Chunk Honey

*Honey Cassettes

*Ross Rounds

*Bee-O-Pac

*Be sure to freeze comb to kill larva/eggs before selling
EXTRACTION TIMING

- Can extract almost anytime provided bees have or will have sufficient honey for winter (60-90 lbs)
- Most beekeepers extract once or twice/year
- Common: Early July & Mid-August
  - Most mite treatments require “no honey supers”
  - Take most and leave fall nectar flow for the bees’ use
- Common: March thru Early May
  - All remaining honey is surplus to winter requirements
HARVEST METHODS

- Fume board (good method for med-large # of hives)
- Shake and brush (acceptable for small # of hives)
  - Requires empty super box

Regardless of method, plan to extract immediately, or store harvested frames in warm location (80+ deg F)

Viscosity of honey at 72 deg > twice that at 82 deg

Harvest criteria for ripe honey: frame ~80% capped provided firm shaking dislodges no droplets

Want moisture content in the 17-18 percent range

Can harvest individual frames, not just entire supers
Harvest?

Yes

No, unless cells are empty
EXTRACTION LOCATION

Requirements:

- Clean: Free of dirt, flying dust, pet hair
- Good lighting
- Running water (preferably utility sink w/hot water)
- Sealed off from bees

Recommend:

- Plastic sheeting on floor w/runner to outside doorway
- Shoe covers or easily removable footwear to expedite easy travel to rest of house
EXTRACTION METHODS (Small scale)

Crush & Strain: small # of frames & top bar hives
Decap & Centrifuge (mechanical extractor)

NRVBA’s Extractor sets include:

- Heated decapping knife and cappings scratcher
- Extractor (holds 6 shallow/medium frames radially, or with special basket, 3 deep frames tangentially)
- Five? each 5-gal buckets, gated and non-gated, & lids
- Two filter sets (coarse, medium, and fine)
- Ratchet strap
- Food grade lube
EXTRACTOR SET-UP & OPERATION

- Set extractor on sturdy surface and ratchet down tightly to minimize “walking”
- Set up table w/decapping and holding stations
  - Include wet rags and hot pad for uncapping knife; wipe knife every few frames to minimize scorching
- Arrange gated bucket(s) under extractor gate

There are many set-up options; next slide shows an example.
EXTRACTOR SET-UP & OPERATION

- Decap six frames, load extractor, and turn on at low speed, then slowly increase speed
  - Must increase speed more slowly for wax foundation
- It helps to have two people—one to decap, and one to monitor/speed control/hold the extractor
- How long should frames spin? Long enough to decap the next six frames ~ 15-20 minutes
  - Recommend at least 5 minutes after reaching max speed.
OPTIONS/INNOVATIONS

Pizza pan “very coarse” strainer (add window screen)
OPTIONS/INNOVATIONS

Tupperware/Rubbermaid decapping tub w/window screen

- Wash and dry window screen, place in tupperware tub
- Cut off cappings
- When done extracting:
  - Elevate one end of tub
  - Clamp or pin window screen to “high” end
  - Cover all w/plastic wrap overnight
  - Ladle out honey into strainers
OPTIONS/INNOVATIONS

Deep, nested tubs w/screen mesh and honey gate (add window screen)
CLEAN UP

Bees are great at clean up of:

- Strainers/filters/clogged window screen
- “Wet” supers (can put on hives or leave out)
- Empty honey buckets & lids
- Extraction tank/reel
- Cappings

NRVBA’s filters and all extractor parts will still require **OUTDOOR** washing w/hot soapy water, then rinse and dry before returning.
HONEY BOTTLING

After straining/filtering to your desired degree:

- Let honey stand in buckets in warm room for 7-10 days
- Skim off wax particles/air bubbles that have risen to top
- Fill honey jars/bottles as needed

- Store buckets/bottles/jars of honey in warm room
  - Cool honey crystallizes more quickly than warm honey
  - Re-liquify crystallized honey by gently warming to ~120 deg
    - Hot water bath works well for unlabeled jars; do not overheat or apply heat directly to honey containers
    - Warming belt/blanket works well on 5-gal buckets
HONEY LABELING

- The word “Honey” is sufficient to describe contents
  - “100%”, “Pure”, “Raw” not required, but OK
  - Must identify any other added ingredient (e.g., flavor, scent)
- Name, address, and (if room) phone of producer required
  - Can be name of farm or business
- Weight in imperial (lbs/oz) and metric (g/kg)—not volume
- If you process your own honey and sell < 250 gal annually, processing site doesn’t require state inspection, but does require the following exact wording/capitalization:

  “PROCESSED AND PREPARED WITHOUT STATE INSPECTION. WARNING: Do Not Feed Honey to Infants Under One Year Old”
**Chunk Honey**
Borger Apiaries
1260 Running Buck Rd
Christiansburg, VA 24073
(540) 382-1798
www.borgerapiaries.com

PROCESSED AND PREPARED WITHOUT STATE INSPECTION.
WARNING: Do Not Feed Honey to Infants Under One Year Old

Net Wt. 24 oz (680 g)

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**Honey in the Comb**
Borger Apiaries
1260 Running Buck Rd
Christiansburg, VA 24073
(540) 382-1798
www.borgerapiaries.com

PROCESSED AND PREPARED WITHOUT STATE INSPECTION.
WARNING: Do Not Feed Honey to Infants Under One Year Old

Net Wt. 24 oz (680 g)

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**Honey**
Borger Apiaries
1260 Running Buck Rd
Christiansburg, VA 24073
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Net Wt. 24 oz (680 g)

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**Honey**
Borger Apiaries
1260 Running Buck Rd
Christiansburg, VA 24060
(540) 382-1798
Net Wt 8 oz (226 g)

PROCESSED AND PREPARED WITHOUT STATE INSPECTION.
WARNING: Do Not Feed Honey to Infants Under One Year Old