



You have honey, now what?

The sweet side of beekeeping

BF 160: Beekeeping for beginners.

Introduction

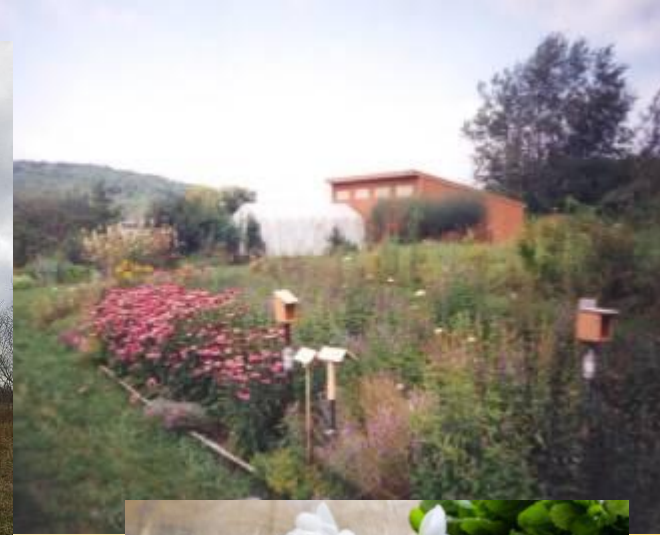


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Talk topics

1. Set your hives up to get honey
2. Take honey off
3. Get the honey out of the combs: “extracting”
4. Care of your equipment
5. Store your honey
6. Distribute your honey
7. Beyond honey

Goals ... why are you keeping bees?



Getting the most out of your flora

Understanding nectar flow - here are some “Southern Tier New York” flowers



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Spring



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Summer



H
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Fall

Not your grocery store honey



Fall

Spring

Summer

How do I “super” my hives?

Supering is the art of giving the bees just enough space -- but not too much!

You need to balance having enough space to keep the bees from swarming, but not so much that they can't defend against robbing bees and small hive beetles.

Know what you can handle -- a large number of beekeepers use medium supers, which can weigh 40-50 pounds when full of honey.

You want to super in advance of the nectar flow.

Should you use a queen excluder?

Talking with experienced beekeepers local to your area can be invaluable for this task.



Drawn comb versus not drawn (foundation)

As a new beekeeper you don't have drawn comb in your supers. So...

You probably don't need a queen excluder this year. During a nectar flow bees will draw comb as fast as they fill it with nectar (so she never gets a chance to lay in the comb)

Your bees will use a lot of honey drawing out your new foundation so your harvest will be reduced. They use seven pounds of honey to make one pound of wax.

Think 20% - 80% then 80% - 20%

Nectar has lots of water. Honey has little water. Bees will store nectar during the day and condense it into honey at night.

Put on supers if the brood boxes are 80% full
(8 of 10 frames used) if the flowers are blooming

Put on two supers if you think you can get one super of honey. They need to have working room.

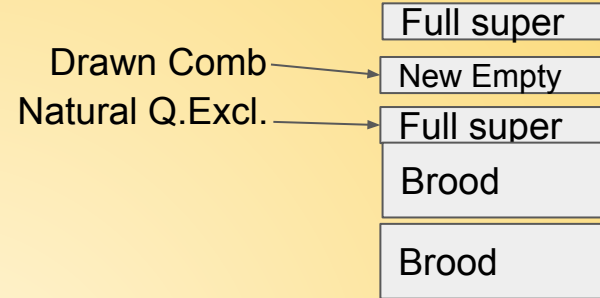
Some supering techniques

“Under supering”

Put the new empty super (especially one with foundation) on the bottom of the stack of filled supers - but above the brood boxes. Bees like easy access to open storage space; they may make burr comb rather than pass through multiple full honey super boxes.

“Honey barrier”

Keep a full super between the brood nest and any empty supers (especially empty drawn supers) it makes a natural queen excluder.



Some things to look for

Burr comb - new white wax with nectar stores (vs. drone brood) is a sure sign you've missed the start of the nectar flow and the bees have run out of room.



Some more things to look for

Backfilling the brood frames with nectar in the spring where you expect brood to go

(you want backfilling later in the fall)



Full blown swarm preparations - whoops!

Lots of drone brood

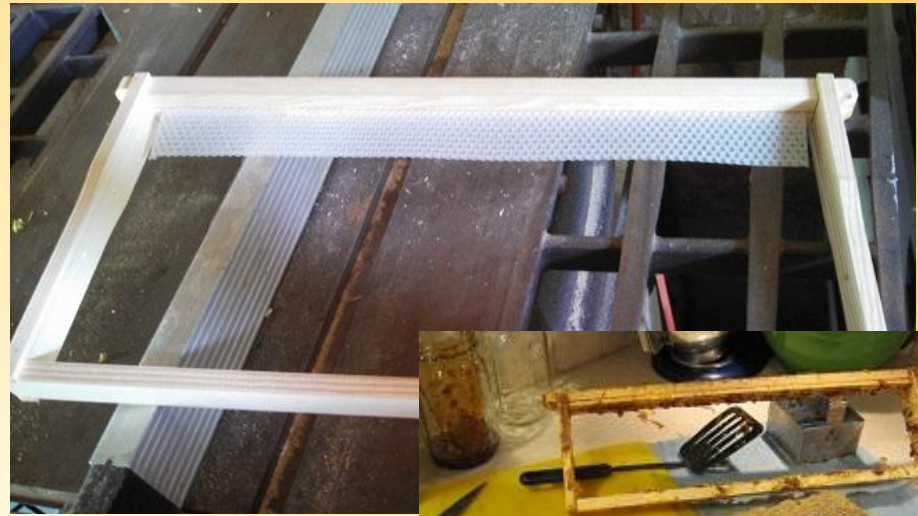
Queen cells with larva



Comb honey

Comb honey prep happens before flows.

Easy harvest, but the bees don't always oblige!



What about mite treatments?

Most mite treatments REQUIRE that you remove all honey intended for human consumption before treating the hive. Options in our area:

- Early August honey “dearth”
- Winter (Nov., Dec. broodless periods)

Formic acid treatment is an example permitted with both extractable honey and brood in the hive.



Taking honey off *(you thought we'd never get here!)*

When is it time?

How do you do it?

How much do you take?

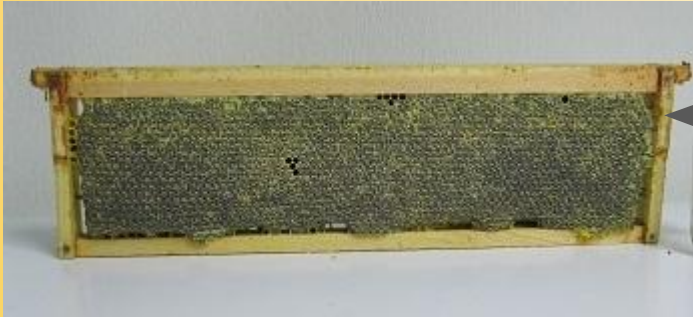
How much honey should you expect to get?



How much honey can I take?

Keeping an eye on winter stores

Keep an eye on cappings



You can't take
these ...

... if these are
not full



This is “capped” and ready to harvest. Bees know when the moisture level is low enough to store honey safely. You can test for this with a meter.

Taking the honey from the hives

You'll need:

- A strong back. Supers weigh 35+ pounds.
- A way to get bees off of the combs
- Your bee equipment (hive tool, smoker, etc.)
- A way to move heavy supers from the apiary to a closed location (garage, shed)



Getting honey out of the combs

1. Where to do it?
2. Uncap the comb
3. Spin
4. Strain
5. Clean your equipment, the wax cappings, your hands, your clothes, your floor, your countertops...
6. Let it settle for a day or two (air bubbles, wax and bee bits will float to the top)
7. Bottle and store



The beekeeper's toy store!



- Your own extractor (powered!)
- Several sets of sieves
- Buckets with bottling valves
- A tub designed for uncapping
- Flow hives
- Uncapping knives
- Bee escapes
- Blowers
- Fume boards....



Taking care of your equipment

What do you do with your wet combs?

How do you clean your equipment?

Dealing with the wax



Bad wax moths!



Bad bees!

Storing your honey --

Some like it hot... and others not



Honey distribution



Beyond honey

An overview of other products you can make from the hives.



Wax

Wax can be rendered to bricks, candles, “wood butter” and cosmetics, and used to “paint” plastic foundation.



Wax handling - getting wax from that sticky mess

Need to clean wax cappings before you can use them.

Boil it with water & strain
Build a solar wax melter
Make mead



Pollen

Sold as a dietary supplement or a way to desensitize seasonal allergies. You can also harvest to feed back to your bees in the spring. High in protein and carbohydrates

Be mindful of how much you harvest from the bees -- they're using it to make more bees!

Needs to be cleaned of debris, then stored frozen or dried.

There's a trap for that.



Propolis



That sticky stuff beekeepers sometimes curse when prying apart frames is useful commercially, but also for the bees.

Has antimicrobial properties for the hives.

Used commercial in tinctures and cosmetics.

There's a trap for that!



Venom

Desensitizing allergic reaction.

Anti-inflammatory (especially regarding rheumatoid arthritis).

There's a trap for that!



Royal Jelly

Dried and sold as a dietary supplement, with strong roots in traditional medicine.

Involves scooping out royal jelly from 3-4 day old larval cells by hand, freezing and drying.

(There's no trap for that.)



Bees

Queens

Pollination

Packages

Nucs



Questions?