

Simplified Guidelines for Preparation of Honey and Wax for Exhibition

by Keith Mathers Vice President
of Victoria's Capital Region Beekeepers' Association

If you have never entered in a particular class of exhibit before, you should enter as a novice; otherwise you must enter as part of the "open" group. There are several categories that are easy to participate in and with some basic knowledge and care you stand a good chance of winning a ribbon. Here are some recommendations:

LIQUID HONEY: Your entry must have five (12oz. or 500gm) jars. The jars are to be free of patterns or designs. The lids can be white or gold but must all be the same. You must determine which class/colour (white, golden or amber) the honey falls into. If unsure, use a classifier to check the colour. After you have bottled your exhibits make sure that the jars and tops are absolutely clean (pristine!) Remember, the judges will be looking for scratches and smudges.

TIPS:

- (1) Let your honey settle as long as possible - the longer it settles the clearer it will be.
- (2) The level of honey in each jar should be identical- about a quarter inch down from the top.
- (3) The colour in all the jars should be the same - all from the same batch of honey.
- (4) There should be no air bubbles - place the jars in a warm water bath to help remove the bubbles.
- (5) The honey should be entirely free of debris - no crystals, no dust, lint, etc.
- (6) Make sure that you use honey that has been extracted from capped combs so as to ensure that the moisture content is below the maximum 17% water content limit.

COMB HONEY: Your entry can be either in a deep or a Dadant shallow frame (deep frames take precedence over shallows). The frame must be wrapped with plastic wrap or similar and any scotch tape used must be as discrete as possible.

TIPS:

- (1) Only use frames having new foundation.
- (2) Choose frames with a complete fill and having white cappings.
- (3) Make sure that you select a new frame that can be cleaned of any propolis and wax.
- (4) Look for uniformity in the texture of the comb and that there is no pollen stored in the cells.

CHUNK HONEY: Your entry should consist of three wide mouthed 12oz jars. The contents of the jars should be a combination of chunks of honeycomb and clear liquid honey. Note: the liquid honey should not form more than 40% of the contents of the jar. There should be three chunks of comb in each jar. The comb should be thin mid-rib and well capped.

The chunks of comb can be arranged with one large and two smaller pieces placed in the form of a cross OR three pieces cut in a triangular shape with the larger side of the comb facing out. The comb should be free of pollen and stains and the liquid honey should be free of debris and air bubbles.

BEESWAX: Your entry should consist of two identical cakes of one pound each. The cakes should be made in a smooth mold having no pattern or design. The colour and cleanliness of your exhibit are most important, for this is where most of the points are given. The colour should be straw to canary yellow and the surface should be free of honey or oil. The smell should be sweet. Signs of shrinkage or cracking will cause loss of points.

TIPS

- (1) Use only wax from cappings and, if possible, from white comb.
- (2) Drain any honey from the cappings and then wash the cappings as soon as possible in warm water.
- (3) Place cappings in a container of clean water and melt them. Do not boil the water. Heat just enough to melt wax. Note: Keep the wax away from any open flame - beeswax is very flammable!
- (4) Let the mixture of wax and water cool. Most of the foreign material will be in the water. After you have removed the wax from the water you will have to scrape off any debris stuck to the bottom of the wax.
- (5) Re-melt the wax in a double boiler. Avoid any open flame.
- (6) Strain the wax through a sheer nylon cloth and pour into your mold.
- (7) Allow the wax to cool down as slowly as possible so as to minimize shrinkage and cracking.

MEAD: Your entry should consist of one clear bottle with a plain/simple label. The label should state "Mead" and the source of honey, if known.

For further details, it is recommended that you consult with experienced beekeepers and or refer to the book "Honey Shows!" by Roger and Mary Lou Morse.

Best of luck with your entries!



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