

Harvesting the Honey

Obviously the whole reason to set up, maintain, and stock a beehive is to harvest honey. You will know that it is time to harvest the honey when you look in one of your hives supers and find that the frames are full of honey combs that your bees have covered with wax caps.

Now all you have to do is remove the honey combs.

Harvesting your honey won't be a problem as long as your put on all your beekeeping gear, wear light colored clothes (beekeepers swear that lighter colored clothes have a soothing affect on bees) and stay calm.

When the super is full of capped honey combs you are going to have to remove the bees from that super. There are chemicals available on the market that will make this easier. One popular chemical that beekeepers use to remove bees from the super is Bee-Go. All beekeepers have to do is apply Bee-Go to a fumer board. When the bees smell the Bee-Go they head to the bottom of the hive, leaving the super full of capped honeycombs empty for you to harvest. Another product beekeepers use to clear out supers is one called Fishers Bee Quick. Neither of these products harm the bees, the bees simply find the scent offensive and move away from it.

Now that you are in possession of the honey comb you need to prepare it to be extracted. The first step in this preparation is to remove the wax caps the bees have used to seal the honey into the honey comb. Many beekeepers prefer to use nine frames instead of ten in their supers. By using nine frames they give the bees enough room to draw the comb out, placing the cap right on the very edge of the comb. This makes it easier to remove the wax caps. Beekeepers use a metal knife to remove the caps, the knife works best if the knife blade is warmed, after all its easier to cut warm wax then it is to cut cold wax. You can keep the knife blade warm with frequent dunking in a basin that is full of hot water. Many beekeepers like to use their bread knife to remove the wax caps from the honey comb while others prefer an electrical knife that is designed just for beekeepers. What do you think bee's wax candles are made out of. Removing the caps from the dripping honey is easy, just use a piece of cheese cloth to empty the contents into a second pot, the honey will drain through the cheesecloth and the bee's wax caps will collect on the top.

Once the caps are removed from the honey comb the honey is ready to be extracted.

As you remove the caps, let them fall into a pot, do not just through them away.

You will notice that there is a surprising amount of honey attached to these caps, honey that can be processed and used. Also there is a market for the wax caps. Once the caps have been removed from the honeycombs the honey combs are ready to have the honey extracted.