

Firm Foundation

Bee-keepers who have secured an extractor and are using it for the first time should take special precautions to have it placed on a very firm foundation. It is absolutely essential for it to be so fixed that it cannot rock when being used; otherwise it will be certain to break the honey combs, and it is also likely to break the extractor itself. The smaller the extractor, the more necessary it is to secure it firmly.

As a rule, beginners start with a two-frame extractor. This is large enough for an apiary of up to 30 colonies, but when the apiary grows to 50 or more it is advisable to procure a larger one. Therefore, if it is the intention to increase to more than fifty hives, it would be best to procure a four-frame extractor in the first place.

If, however, expense has to be taken into consideration, a two-frame extractor will be quite sufficient for a while, and, as there is always a fair demand for them, they can generally be sold second-hand at a reasonable price when it is desired to purchase a larger machine.

Best Position

The extractor should be fixed in the most convenient position in the room. If the floor is of wood, see that it is set over a pile where the floor is firm. If necessary, extra support should be given to the floor, as, when the heavy frames of honey are being revolved at a high speed, the extractor will shake if the floor is not firmly built.

If the floor is high enough off the ground the best plan is to cut out a small well just where the top of the extractor is to come, and high enough to take with ease a larger bucket or benzine tin. The extractor can then be fixed to the floor. This arrangement saves much lifting of heavy supers of honey, which is necessary when a raised platform for the extractor is built. The well for the bucket should be lined so that no bees can gain admission through it under the floor.

If, however, it is found desirable to build a platform, it must be built of very stout timber and well braced to keep it absolutely rigid when the machine is in motion. Stout screws should be used to fasten the base to the boards, as well as three anchor rods equally spaced and fastened securely

to the floor and the top of the extractor. These rods are made so that they can be tightened by a screw adjustment.

Holding Tanks

It will also be necessary to have tanks to hold the honey when extracted. These should be made of tinned steel, and should have a capacity of at least a ton. They can be purchased from the suppliers of bee materials. These tanks will need to be raised high enough to allow a 60 lb. tin to be placed below the tap.

Straining the honey when taken from the extractor will also need consideration. Some bee-keepers have a double strainer or two strainers, the top one being of a fairly coarse or open mesh to strain the larger particles of wax and broken comb, and the lower one of finer mesh to separate the pollen, etc.

A good plan is to have a piece of cheese cloth stretched over the top of the tank, and over this an empty super, to the bottom of which is fastened a piece of wire cloth. This is kept above the tank by two long pieces of wood nailed to the sides, long enough to reach across the tank and resting on its top edge. The honey is then lifted from the extractor and tipped into this box strainer. All these preparations should be made in advance of the extraction season.

Keep Room Bee-proof

It is essential to prevent bees or other insects from gaining admission. It is almost impossible to avoid having a few bees carried in on the combs, but windows and doors should be covered with wire cloth in such a manner that bees can escape from the room without admitting any robber bees. There is little or no danger in this respect while the honey flow is on, but should the honey flow cease because of bad weather conditions or late extracting, then the bees are looking for every opportunity of robbing the honey.

As far as possible, the honey tanks should be kept well covered. Nothing is more discouraging than to find that, through some person leaving the door open or through some unexpected crack, the bees have gained admission and started to rob the honey extracted.

It is not so much the loss of the honey as the great loss of bees that

may occur through their being drowned in the honey tank or extractor.

—G. V. WESTBROOKE, *Apiary Instructor, Hastings.*

Section, or Comb Honey

WHEN making a start with only a few hives, many bee-keepers who do not have sufficient to warrant the purchase of a honey extractor find it more profitable to raise comb honey in one-pound sections. The successful production of this class of honey is not merely a matter of putting on a super or half-super of sections and leaving them until filled. To raise a payable quantity requires a very strong force of young worker bees, and to get the colony up to this condition necessitates having a young, vigorous queen and plenty of room in the early stages to allow her to raise the maximum number of bees. Care must be taken to prevent them swarming out and so weakening their numbers.

When the hive is well filled with worker bees one super of honey or brood may be taken off and replaced by a super of sections. By this method the bees are forced to the sections through lack of room, and if the honey is coming in freely they will at once begin to draw out the foundation wax and fill the sections rapidly. As soon as the sections are capped over they should be removed from the hive and new ones put in their places. The full frames which are removed may be placed over another hive which is being run for extractor or strained honey, or, if mostly brood, they may be given to build up a weaker colony.

Careful Handling

Section honey requires very careful handling, and care must be taken to avoid bruising any of the capping and causing the honey to leak. When removed, they should be carefully cleaned by scraping off all the propolis or wax that has become attached to the wood. Nothing is more likely to prejudice the buyer than to see dirty-looking sections of honey. When well cleaned they should each be wrapped in white cellophane, and then placed on the market in a neat and appetising style.

By paying attention to these details one makes an attractive article which will appeal to the public and so increase the consumption of honey.