

Combined Uncapping Can and Cappings Press

ALL methods of uncapping bee combs for extraction of honey entail the removal of a considerable quantity of honey with the wax cappings, and heat is usually applied to separate the honey from the wax. Where honey and wax cappings are dealt with in this way there is a danger of overheating the honey and spoiling its natural colour and flavour. In this article D. Roberts, Apiary Instructor, Department of Agriculture, Auckland, describes a combined uncapping can and cappings press used by Mr. B. G. Sharp, of Matakana, North Auckland, to deal with cappings without injury to the honey. The press has proved most effective and economical to operate and is easily constructed.

THE materials required to build the press are:—

One tinned metal tray 22½ in. in diameter x 6 in. deep fitted with a standard-type honey gate with a 1½ in. outlet.

One circular bottom board 21½ in. in diameter made of 1 in. timber with 5 supporting crossbars each ¾ in. x ¾ in. attached to each side of the board. The board is covered on one side with a piece of Chrysler queen excluder.

One wooden follower 19½ in. in diameter, 1½ in. thick, and strengthened by wooden slats on each side ½ in. wide and ½ in. thick and set ¼ in. apart as illustrated below. The follower is also covered on one side with a Chrysler queen excluder.

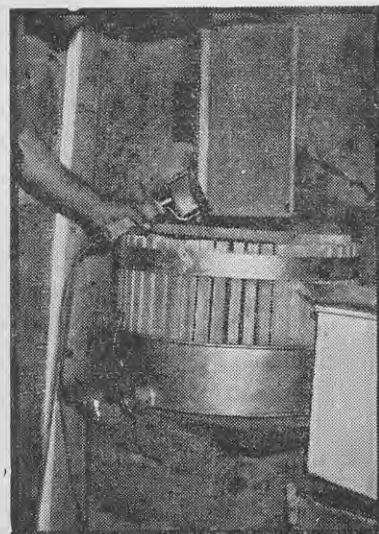
One basket 21½ in. in outside diameter and 12 in. deep. This is constructed of top bars of Hoffman frames with the grooves widened to ¾ in. and deepened to ¼ in. and is supported and held in shape by two tinned metal hoops each 2 in. wide.

One uncapping bar 22½ in. x 2 in. x 1 in.

One screw jack of the type used to lift lorries or tractors and with not less than 12 in. lift. A tractor jack with an extension welded to the top is quite satisfactory.

One steel disc 9 in. in diameter to sit between the foot of the jack and the follower.

One piece of 6 in. x 4 in. timber of good quality. The length will depend



Comb in position for removing cappings into the basket and tray of the uncapping can and cappings press.

on the space available. In the original design a length of 12 ft. has given excellent results.

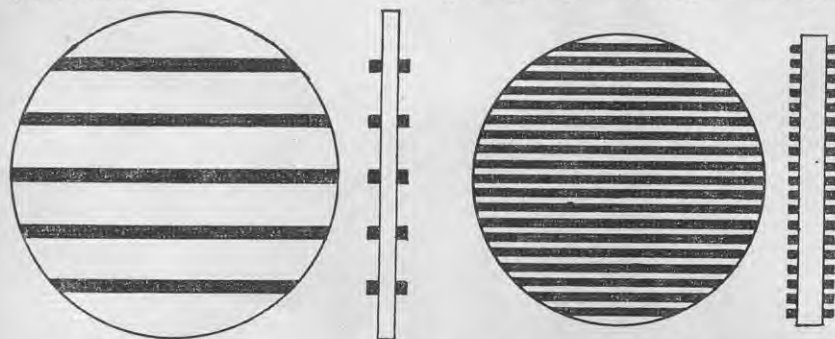
Sufficient steel 2 in. x ½ in. to anchor the pivots of the beam securely to the floor. Apart from the tray, for the construction of which the services of a tinsmith or plumber will probably be required, the manufacture of the circular bottom board, follower, and basket should be well within the capabilities of any beekeeper who has simple wood-working machinery available.

Method of Use

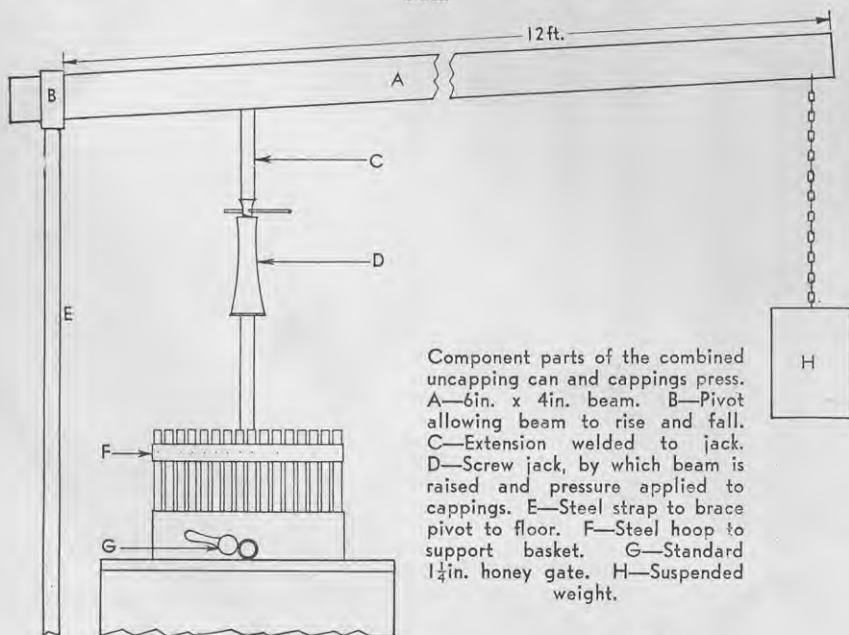
The circular bottom board is placed in the tray with the excluder side upward and the wooden slat basket set on top of the board. The basket is then lined with well-washed scrim or hessian and the uncapping bar is placed in position. Cappings fall directly into the basket, which is of sufficient size to hold the cappings of from 20 to 25 supers, about 4 hours' work for one man. The follower is placed in position with the excluder side downward and pressure is applied with the jack until the free end of the beam is lifted to its upper limit.

No further attention is required, as the weights attached to the free end of the beam exert continual pressure. An hour is sufficient for the separation of the honey from the wax and at the end of this period the wax can be removed from the basket. It may be more convenient to use two smaller baskets than one large one, but this is not important, provided the work of uncapping is not hindered.

The pressure exerted in the press is governed by the length of the beam and the amount of weight suspended from the free end. For satisfactory separation it has been found that a total pressure of from 3 to 5 tons is required.



Left—Plan and sectional view of circular bottom board with supporting crossbars. Right—Plan and sectional view of wooden follower, showing arrangement of wooden slats.



Component parts of the combined uncapping can and cappings press. A—6 in. x 4 in. beam. B—Pivot allowing beam to rise and fall. C—Extension welded to jack. D—Screw jack, by which beam is raised and pressure applied to cappings. E—Steel strap to brace pivot to floor. F—Steel hoop to support basket. G—Standard 1½ in. honey gate. H—Suspended weight.