



## **Instructions for use of DSBA's Heather Honey Press**

Please note that this guide does not cover any of the hygiene regulations that must be followed.

On collection of the press and Smith cutter/scrapper from the apiary please check for damage and cleanliness and note any problems before accepting loan. On return, items will be checked in against the collection report. We appreciate that breakages can occur, however, please report these to allow repairs to be carried out. The units must be returned in a clean condition.

Before use, the cutter and press should be washed thoroughly and then dried. Any water remaining will adversely affect the moisture content of your honey.

If at all possible, the frames should be removed (with the prior use of a clearing board) and honey extracted in one process. If this is not possible then a warming cabinet is required to reheat the frames to the recommended temperature (see table at rear of DSBA The Basics of Beekeeping). Attempting to process frames that have cooled down will not release all of the harvest and can damage the press.

### **Equipment required**

In addition to the press you will require to have the following (not supplied).

- Sterilised linen scrim bag (or similar material) suitable for the diameter of the press
- Double stainless steel or nylon honey strainers (to remove wax and bee parts that have squeezed through the press bag)
- Large tray or a honey bucket with "Bucket Bar" (workstation to strip the comb from the frames)
- 30lb (13.6kg) (or larger) plastic honey buckets and lids (at least one bucket with a honey valve)
- Refractometer (to check moisture content of the honey)
- Sheet plastic (to cover the floor)
- Basin of cold water and clean towels
- Low table to place the press on to allow the honey to run into honey buckets
- Method of numbering and logging the honey buckets to the colony that produced the contents

### **Preparing the frames**

If you do not have a honey house to process the honey then the kitchen can be a good second choice. Place a plastic sheet over the floor to catch any drips of honey and create a triangle between honey supers, work surface for stripping the frames process and the press. Use your chosen method of removing the wax and honey. If using a bucket bar then locate the frame lug in the hole of the bucket bar and cut or scrape the wax and honey into a clean empty honey bucket using a Smith cutter. If using the tray method then carry out the same process with the frame flat on the tray turning it over for the second side. In both cases, care should be taken to only cut down to the foundation leaving it in the frame for future use.



### Loading the press/Extraction

The press should be placed on a solid level surface to allow the honey to run out. You must tuck all loose clothing in and tie long hair back (and remember hygiene) in order that it cannot get caught in the press. Place the honey bucket below the press spout with the honey strainers over the bucket. Take the wax/honey mix that has been removed from the frames and load it into the bag which has been placed within the press cage. Fill the bag/cage level with the top of the cage. To stop the mixture from escaping, twist/roll the remaining bag material and leave on top of the mixture. Ensure that the two outer hand screws on the frame are hand tight. Slowly screw down the T-bar handle until it is hard to turn and stop. Please do NOT use a tube on the T-bar handle for extra leverage as this will bend the cross bar (this unfortunately has happened in the past). Wait for a few minutes and then tighten the T-bar and stop. Continue to do this until all the honey is squeezed out. Please note that the time period between tightening the T-bar will lengthen as the honey is extracted and the wax gets more compact. Whilst pressing/extracting, keep an eye on the level of honey within the honey bucket. When honey stops flowing, screw the T-bar handle back up, remove the bag from the cage and keeping the top closed, roll the bag to mix up the wax inside. Place it back in the cage and wind down the T-bar to see if you have managed to displace any honey trapped within the compressed wax. Remove the bag again. If you have a second load to extract then either fit a clean second bag to the cage or remove the bulk of the processed wax from the now used bag and refill. If using the same bag, then retain the wax in a clean container. Number the honey bucket and keep your records in order that you can trace back to see what colony is producing what quantities and also traceability should there be a problem with quality. Buckets should have air tight lids fitted and stored as recommended (see DSBA The Basics of Beekeeping).

### Wet frames and Wax

You will now have honey supers loaded with sticky “wet” frames. Place them somewhere bee proof until later in the day (evening when foraging bees are home is best to prevent robbing) and then give them back to the bees (try and give the frames back to the colony they were removed from) and overnight you will have clean foundation. These frames are now stored in a mouse and bee proof store for use as required. All of the wax should be retained and the wet bag(s) can be placed in water to make a solution which can be used for Mead production. If not mead then the wax can be fed back to the colony (again in the evening) in a round 4 pint rapid feeder (placed over the hole in the crown board) with the centre cone removed to allow the bees up to the cappings. When the wax is dry, remove from the colony and store this wax for your winter projects.

### Cleaning Up

Tidy all the equipment up and wash using cold water. Place the press and cutter in a sink and again wash with cold water paying particular attention to crevices. Dry all surfaces.

### Returning after use

Arrange to take the press and cutter back to the apiary. Please bear in mind that it will be going out to another member and it should be in a clean condition. When it is returned it will be inspected and if not clean you will be asked to clean it and as there is no running water at the apiary you will incur a double journey and the next member may not be able to get it if it is a back-to-back loan.

**Prior to arranging loan, please ensure you have suitable cage bag(s).**