

YOUR FIRST ATTEMPT AT WAX & HONEY EXTRACTION (Apologies for sexist tones!)

After your first season, if all goes well, you might actually have a small harvest.

DO expect to be overwhelmed with wonder at your very first frames of honey.

DO expect your arm to fall off since the only extractor you could afford was a manual one.

DO expect to feel very possessive over the small amount of cappings wax left over. Even though it's an insignificant amount of wax, you'll still have fantasies about moulding your very first beeswax candle. But how to go about doing this? First you must separate the wax from the honey.

DON'T believe the beekeeping books which say that merely placing the wax in a pot of hot water will magically separate the wax into a nice mass floating on top of the water. The wax will melt, and it will float on top, but not as a nice neat mass – rather as a bubbly scum.

DON'T confidently assume that merely stirring the bubbly scum with a wooden spoon will help the wax to separate from the honey. All that stirring will accomplish is to coat the spoon with the scum too.

DO notice that, by the time you have figured all this out, the amount of boiling water in the pot has decreased and there is now therefore a ring of wax starting to form inside the pot as well.

DON'T confidently assume that you can clear all this up in a jiffy and no one will be the wiser.

DON'T think you can save the wax when you dump the water. In a moment of fuzzy thinking you might be tempted to pour the water/wax mixture through a strainer but

DON'T do this as you will hopelessly clog the strainer with wax.

DON'T have the strainer over the kitchen sink under the assumption that the strainer will catch all of the wax – it will not, by far.

DON'T bother trying to clean out the strainer since even repeated pourings of boiling water through it will not make it clean again **EVER**.

DON'T bother trying to explain to your wife exactly how her wooden spoon, her strainer and her kitchen sink, are now coated with beeswax (a substance that is notoriously hard to remove). There's really no good answer to any question that begins with the words, "How could you be so stupid?"

DON'T be surprised to find out that the big cooking pot (which is also now coated inside with wax) was your wife's "best pot".

DON'T be surprised to hear that it was also her "best wooden spoon" even though these things cost less than a pound anywhere. (How can you have a "best" wooden spoon?) Incidentally,

DON'T discuss the price of wooden spoons with your wife at this time. She will be strangely unreceptive.

DON'T bother trying to hide the strainer either. She will find it eventually anyway.

After breaking all these Rules **DON'T** be surprised when your beekeeping equipment is permanently banished from the kitchen.



Thanks to Bee Culture, Nottingham BKA and BEES