

Auckland Beekeepers Club Hire Extractor.

The club has an extractor kit for hire to members.

It is a 4 frame hand operated, wire basket inside a plastic drum with a lever tap (called a honey gate) and a metal stand with bungee cords.

Also included in the kit are a capping removal fork, a straight knife with a plastic jug (for hot water), a yellow plastic uncapping tray, screen and collecting tray. There is also a metal drip tray, a bucket with a honey gate, a metal grid for standing a bucket on and several strainers of various sizes.

Setup.

Usually the extractor will be assembled but if not the metal cage fits into a metal bearing at the bottom and secured by two fittings through the top brace and secured by two wing nuts. Please do not lose these. Place the extractor onto the stand with the open side facing forward (to allow a bucket to fit under the tap.) The bungee cords run from the hook at the top under the metal braces on the stand. This may take some experimentation but should be quite tight. A bucket is placed on the metal grid inside the drip tray. A coarse meshed sieve is placed on the bucket under the honey gate. Don't forget to close this.

Uncapping.

The frames are balanced with the sidebar on the nail with the left hand (usually!) . The frame facing you leaning slightly forward. Take the knife (warmed in hot water) in the other hand and cut the wax cappings from the center upwards or downwards, resting the knife on the edge of the frame. Tilting the frame slightly forward will allow the cappings to fall into the tray. The areas that are too low for the knife to get under the wax layer must be uncapped using the uncapping fork. The fork is slid under the wax and flicked upwards. Spin the frame around on the nail and repeat with the other side. An optional electrically operated "hot knife" is available . Keep the knife on the triffet to stop burning tables or the plastic tray.

Operation.

Open the cover and insert the frames into the metal cage. The notch of the top bar fits into a small gap in the bottom right of the cage. If this is fitted correctly the frame will sit straight. When you have installed 4 frames close the cover ,brace yourself and turn the handle. What direction? The cells in a comb are set at a 7degree upward angle (to stop unripe honey from dripping out) so that the as the frame rotated the honey must be allowed to trail out , or to put it another way the bottom bar must be the leading edge. On our extractor this corresponds to a clockwise direction when viewed from the top.

Spin for a minute or so (say 20 times), stop, turn the frames end to end and repeat spin until you get tired—it should get easier as the honey spins out and runs down the sides. Stop and reverse the frames again ,spin until no more honey comes out. The reason for the short first spin is to reduce the weight and improve the balance. When setting up the frames you should endeavor to have frames of equal weight opposite each other. Excessive shaking and "walking" indicates unbalanced frames.

One source of imbalance is thixotropic honey (ie. Manuka) which stays in the comb even when you spin the thing so hard the wax pulls off the wires or even off the plastic frames. To an extent this can be solved by banging or pricking the frame cells with a stiff clean hair brush (ask spouse first!).but you may have to scrape the honey off .

Open the honey gate and drain the honey into a bucket. If the honey level gets too high it will have a braking effect on the spinning cage making it very hard to spin.

Filtering.

I have found it is easier to use a coarse sieve on the bucket , sieving the wax out a little later concentrating on getting the frames uncapped and spun out.

Cleaning.

The best way to clean the extractor is to take it outside onto the grass ,disassemble it (wing nuts) and hose it down. Take care not to get water into the top bearing as this may cause corrosion. Keep pets away as the washed out honey will attract foraging bees. Wax and propolis can be very hard to remove and there was probably some on you when you received it but do your best as long as the honey is removed it should not be too attractive to pests such as ants.

Take care not to damage the honey gate as they are quite expensive (\$40)

Cost.

The cost is \$10.00 per day or part.

The “Hot Knife” is \$5.00 /day. It is a very expensive luxury and great care should be taken with it. Especially keeping the thermostat clean (the lumpy bit) with a rag. If you are unsure about using it then don't.

Payment should be paid direct to the treasurer at the club meeting,by cheque, or by direct internet credit (Preferred method).

Collection & Dropping Off.

Pick up should be arranged with Paul Walsh (6366911) 021 111 0318 (Text please as I don't answer voice mail). Best but slow would be to e-mail the club.

Drop off at the club or to the next customer may be a better option.

Any problems contact Paul Walsh or e-mail the club.