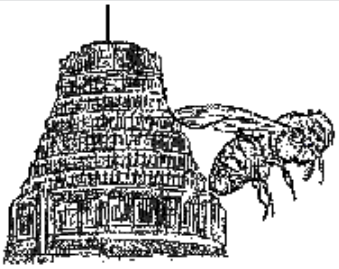

Wellington Beekeepers Association

Support and encouragment of beekeeping and beekeepers

Tips & Advice - Mead Recipe

Mead Recipe
Now that the honey harvest has come round once more, it would be a good time to try making some mead. If you are pleased with your results, remember to save a bottle to enter into the club's annual mead competition in July.
Ingredients: Honey, Water, Nutrient Salts, Tannin, Yeast.
Initial proportions are 2 litres of water to 1 Kg of honey (or any multiple of these quantities).

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Initial proportions are **2 litres** of water to **1 Kg** of honey (or any multiple of these quantities).

Heat the water and dissolve honey. Stir constantly while adding honey to avoid honey burning on bottom of receptacle. Bring mix to simmer. **DO NOT BOIL!!** Skim off any impurities what rise to surface and discard. This can take some time, but it is essential to ensure the best quality of the finish product.

When all impurities have been removed, cool some of the mix and check specific gravity (s.g.) with a hydrometer. The reading should be 1120 - 1130. If lower, add more honey to the mixture (called the "must"). Only add small amounts, checking the s.g. after each addition. When desired s.g. is obtained, allow must to cool to 20oC - 25oC. Add tannin at 1 teaspoon per 4.5 litres (mix it first with a small amount (50 - 60 ml) of hot water, add nutrient salts at 2 teaspoons per 4.5 litres (also easier if first dissolved in small quantity of warm water). Start yeast as per instructions on packet and add to must.

Fit airlock to fermentation vessel and place in warm place. (I use a wardrobe with a small thermostatically controlled fan heater to maintain a constant 24oC). Fermentation time will depend on temperature, with lower temperatures taking longer. Yeast becomes dormant at 10oC (50oF). At completion of fermentation (i.e. when there are no more bubbles passing through the airlock, check the s.g. again. The drop in s.g. between the original reading (1120 - 1130) and the reading taken after fermentation, divided by 7.5 will give the alcohol content. For example, if the first reading was 1130 and the second was 1010, the difference of 120 divided by 7.5 indicates an alcohol content of 16%.

After fermentation, if mead is considered too dry to suit individual palate, honey may be added to obtain the degree of sweetness required. Mix honey and water 50/50 and simmer to remove impurities as before. Ad in small quantities to mead, taste testing as you go, until acceptable taste is obtained. A further s.g. reading at this point will give you the level that you can work towards obtaining in any mead that you produce in the future.

Mead can now be left to clear naturally, which may take some considerable time, or finings can be added to the mead to clear the drink in 1 - 3 days. If mead does not clear, it is probably because not all the impurities were removed from the initial honey/water mix, or from the mix used to increase s.g. after fermentation.

Mead can be drunk at any time after fermentation has stopped, but will improve with age.

Yeast (Gervin Wine Yeast Varietal E Strain K1), Tannin, Nutrient Salts, hydrometer, fermentation vessel and airlock are all available at a reasonable price from "Great Expectation" in Wellington or Petone, or from any other brewers supply outlets.

Bill Allan