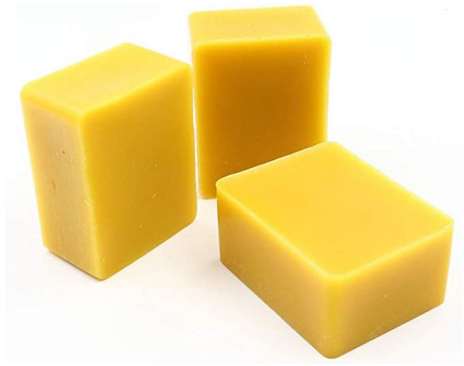


New Westminster Beekeeper's Association
19 Things to Know about Beekeeping
Module 17a – Beeswax Processing – cleaning, storing, and uses

This module was prepared for members of the New Westminster Beekeeper's Association and is intended to be augmented by hands-on experience in a classroom.



Beeswax Properties

Other than honey, beeswax is the most sought-after product from the beehive. The aroma is calming, and the uses many, from candle-making to antique chrome plating of automobile bumpers.

Beeswax is produced from eight glands on the underside of a honeybee abdomen, secreted after the honeybee ingests honey and hangs for 24 hours in the colony, called festooning. During the 24-hour period, the water-soluble honey converts to water-impermeable beeswax. When secreted, the wax is clear, with no odor or colour, and is inert. Beeswax is highly absorbent and shortly after it is sculpted into honeycomb, gets its smell and colour from stored honey, pollen, and propolis.

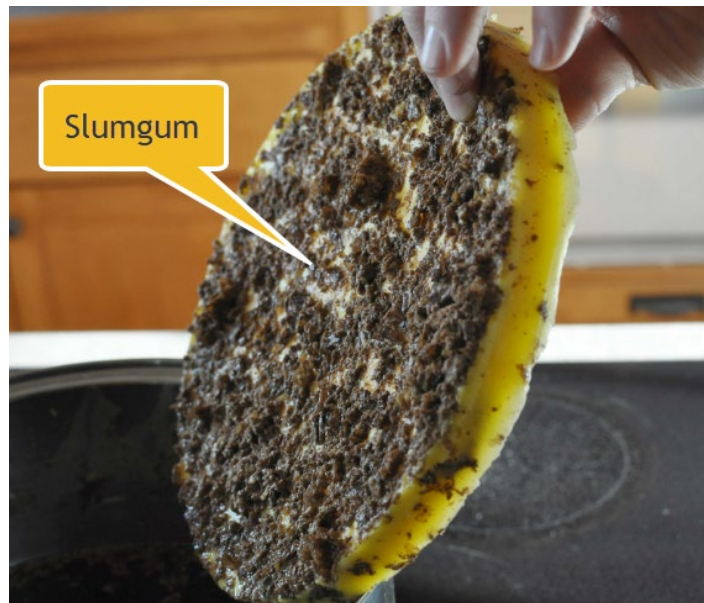


The melting temperature is 65 C.
High heat, over 100 C, discolours beeswax and damages the aroma.

Beeswax Rendering

'Rendering' means to process hive scrapings and cappings into blocks of clean beeswax. There are several ways to go about it, but the simplest is a two-step method:

Step 1: Melt the beeswax in hot water (70-80C), then ladle off the molten wax into a nylon strainer that can be purchased from a paint store.



Step 2: Remelt the beeswax in a double boiler (70-80C). The debris sinks to the bottom. It is called slumgum and consists of bee parts, cocoons, propolis, wood bits. Slowly pour off clean beeswax into molds, while being careful to keep the debris at the bottom of the pot.



Uses of Beeswax

There are about 40 uses of beeswax, the most common being candle-making, followed by use as a firming agent in cosmetics. Uses include:

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| • Candles | • Un-stick wooden drawers |
| • Component for mustache creams | • Keeps zippers moving smoothly |
| • Lip Balms | • Seal documents |
| • Furniture Polish | • Surgical bone wax |
| • Salves and ointments | • Coat hemp strands |
| • Covering cheeses to protect from spoilage | • Make dreadlocks |
| • Coat nails and screws to prevent wood from splitting | • Glass etching |
| • Egg painting | • Bookbinding |
| • Batik | • Basketry |
| • Waterproof leather | • Cuticle cream |
| • Waterproof tent seams | • Emergency dental filling |
| • Sculpture/casting | • Weatherproof tack and whips |
| • Crayons | • Reduce friction on bow strings |
| • Tarnish prevention when used on bronze | • Harden your soap recipe |
| | • Coat hand tools to prevent rusting |

end