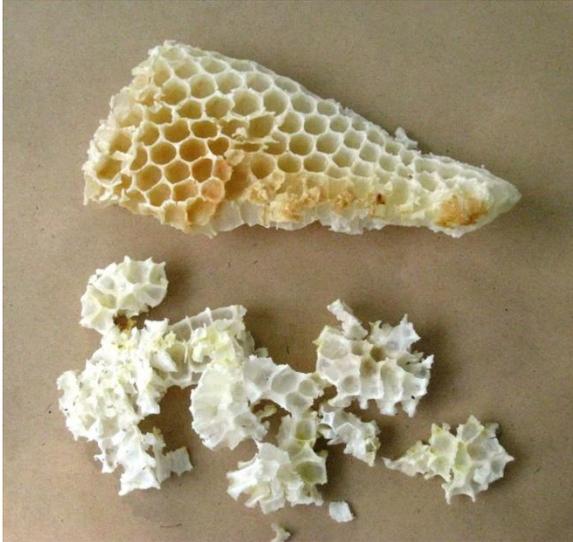


## Information Sheet

### Beeswax preparation:

All comb is made by the workers out of the wax they excrete from their 8 glands on the underside of their abdomen. At this stage the wax is virtually colourless, white when lumped together. Brood comb is then polished with propolis each time the cell is used. Therefore, any reclaimed wax from brood comb will generally be spoilt and discoloured, making it look muddy.



**New 'white' beeswax**



**Cappings draining through a sieve**

Comb for honey storage is used in its pure wax state, although gets dirty with age. The cappings on honey comb is probably the best wax worth processing as it is freshly applied each year. It is these that are used for candles and blocks for sale. The wax will be a lovely colour, pale yellow through to orange/yellow. From here, I am only referring to the use of cappings and other very clean comb. Other beeswax will be useful for the "wax exchange" with producers of foundation.



**Solar wax extractor, loaded ready to melt**



**Extracting finished, debris left**



**Wild comb**

**Extracted wax blocks**

To achieve a really clean wax there are two processes:

1. **To render the cappings down**, clearing out most of the debris. At this stage, these blocks are good for the “exchange” for foundation.
  - a. A solar wax extractor is the best way and will result in blocks of good wax with small amounts of debris on its underside which can be scraped off before the next process. Solar extractors will only work between June and August. It is amazing how much debris is left behind.
  - b. Using a steam system like the one on our apiary produces wax and cleans the frames. This is not something that we can do at home.
  - c. The other way is to boil the wax in a large saucepan (old and for this use only!) with some water. You must stand over this throughout, otherwise it could boil over. Your hob will never be the same again! Once melted, let it cool and cut the debris layer off. This method can be very mucky, I gave it up many years ago. (safety warning: hot wax gives off inflammable fumes, so a gas hob could set it alight)

Heating wax in your kitchen has to be done in a controlled way. Cleaning up after wax spillage is a nightmare, to be avoided at all costs.

2. **To filter the wax through cloth**, is best done in a modern electric oven at 70-80 degrees C. I use a 2½ litre varnish tin with the bottom removed with a tin opener. The cloth (2 layers of pillow case material) covers the bottom of the tin. Use an elastic band to hold the material around the tin while you tightly tie either string or thin wire around it. The other end, make a wire handle that can be hooked through the oven shelf. This tin is hung in the oven, over a clean container to collect the wax. I use a baking tray lined with foil. Break up your wax blocks and feed them into the tin. Do not over fill it. This process takes time, nearly all day to end up with 2½ lbs of clean wax.



**Filter being attached to the tin**



**Baking tray lined with foil**



**Oven fitted up, ready to melt and filter wax**



**Beeswax broken up ready for the filter**



**Squeaky clean beeswax**



**Filter after use – propolis has blocked it**