

MAKING HONEY VINEGAR

By James Brogan

To make good honey vinegar, that you are sure will keep and improve with age, which means that it must contain at least four per cent. acetic acid, it is absolutely imperative that the person undertaking the task has at his or her disposal the means of ascertaining the amount of honey in the gallon of syrup, which must be tested almost immediately after the honey is dissolved in the water, or if the slightest ferment sets in it, it is impossible to test the honey contents with any instrument. An egg is a very unreliable tester, and the Baums Hydrometer is the only instrument that I know of that is for sale and suitable for this purpose. Whatever instrument is to be used, the operator must be well acquainted with the various distances the indicator will project above the surface of the syrup; and to learn this important point it is necessary to make a gallon of each strength of syrup, using good honey—not adding the honey to a gallon of water, but having the honey contained in the gallon of syrup, when water and honey are blended. Don't use the one gallon for all the tests by adding more water or honey to it, but be sure and make a separate gallon for each strength that you wish to test. Make the test when the syrup is about the same temperature as the bulk of your syrup will be when you are making the vinegar. Always wash the instrument after being used, or the honey will dry on it and make a difference when used again. After you are well acquainted with the vagaries of your tester in the various strengths of honey syrup, you may proceed to begin making honey vinegar, making sure that you have good clean casks that never have contained spurious vinegar of any sort, for you never can expect to make good vinegar in such a cask. In purchasing casks direct from the maker, I recommend that they be made of white beech with galvanized

hoops. If using second-hand casks, special attention needs be given to making bung-holes (whether large or small) vinegar-proof, always using wood bungs even in the smallest holes that may be in the casks. A good plan is to saturate the bung in molten wax before driving home. Vinegar will find its way through the minutest opening. When removing the end of the cask—which had better be the least substantial-looking end—be sure and mark all hoops so that they can be put back exactly as they were, and try and keep the removed end together, as it will make an excellent cover to put over the hessian while the vinegar is making. Do not fill the cask any closer than four or five inches of the top, and remember that the least vinegar syrup to the air surface the swifter the lot will “go over” into vinegar. If white ants are to be feared, it is advisable to give the bottoms of the cask a good coating of coal tar. Place your cask in the position most likely to conform with all that is required to promote the best results from the ferments that is to take place, having special regard for the welfare of your vinegar during very hot weather, say when the temperature approaches 100° Fah. The next move is to fill your cask with honey and water, which mixture I will forthwith call vinegar syrup. There seems to be a great diversity of opinion as to how much honey is required in each gallon of vinegar syrup, some advocating two pounds, others one and a half pounds, while some say that one pound in the gallon will make good vinegar. My experience is that it takes two pounds of honey in the gallon to make a good strong vinegar that will compare favorably with the best imported malt vinegar, and that in a climate like that of Tamworth, N. S. W., it takes two years to make. A lesser quantity of honey may do in cooler climates, but the colder the climate the slower will be the progress of the ferments that result in vinegar.

entrances. Again, on the supers, any trying to alight in the board on the front entrances are advise the use of a card on the bottom; fall would then be safely. So after consideration, I prefer the entrances; but I believe to my disadvantage to be deceived on the supers. The bees use the entrances as Autumn sets in. The bees use the entrances freely as the back entrance on the way with all the back entrances. I don't think there is any use of them, and is scraped off the going through the entrances the bees lose the (Australasian Bee-

PIARISTS

I. Handbook

Department of Agriculture to assist the beekeepers at Dominion. For the apiculturist has work has greatly moreover the past, which is administrative, has helped out the foul-brood attending to destroy over 35,000 on bee culture and a further edition now been printed. Edited by Mr. Isaac is to the department on modern half-tone and line very valuable pro-