

General Hints and Tips for Showing Honey

General Comment

Check that your exhibits conform with the schedule, otherwise they will be rejected. Bear in mind that honey is a foodstuff, so it must be fit for human consumption. It will be rejected if it is not clean.

Clear (Liquid) Honey

Make sure that the colour is uniform throughout the exhibit.

Brightness is important. A dull appearance may be due to incipient granulation or fermentation and the exhibit is likely to be downgraded.

The cleanliness of the exhibit is very important. The judge may reject the exhibit if it contains any foreign material such as black specks, hair, parts of bees or earwigs.

Presentation of the exhibit can make a big difference. Think about your jars and lids. The judge may deduct points if:

- jars and lids are not identical (if the class requires more than 1 jar);
- jars are not filled to the correct level (Generally, there should be no air space visible between the lower rim of the lid and the top of the honey, depending on lid type);
- there is rust or dents on the lid;
- the jars show signs of old labels, sticky marks, smears etc.

Set Honey

The colour should be uniform throughout the exhibit. If the class requires more than one jar, the colours of the individual jars should be identical.

As with clear honey, presentation is important. Make sure there is no extraneous matter or any black specks on the bottom or the sides of the jar. Shrinkage, light frosting or air bubbles on the shoulder of the jar will warrant downgrading by the judge. The surface should be firm and dry and the texture finely grained, not coarse and gritty.

Make sure that your honey isn't fermenting! As long as it was ripe when you extracted, it should be OK.

Comb Honey

Make sure that all frames, sections and cut comb are in accordance with the show schedule. Pay particular attention to the correct presentation and to the weight specification.

All combs should be well filled with few (if any) empty cells round the edge. Cappings should form a level surface. Any bulging, damp cappings or weeping will be downgraded by the judge. If blemishes such as Braula or wax moth larvae tracks are visible, then the comb is not suitable for showing.

The comb should be composed of either all worker or all drone cells, with preference given to worker cells unless the comb is for extraction where drone cells are preferred. You can use a strong light to ensure that there is neither a mixture of light and dark honey nor any cells with granulated honey, pollen or propolis in the comb. If these are present, find another comb!

Frames

If you are showing frames, the wood should be as clean as possible. Slight propolis staining should be acceptable to the judge. Generally, if it is for extraction, the comb should have been drawn from wired foundation and should stand proud of the frame to facilitate uncapping. If the comb is attached to the wood on all four sides then unwired foundation is acceptable unless the schedule specifically states "wired".

Sections

If you are exhibiting sections, then the wood should be clean and make sure that your presentation conforms with the schedule.

Cut Comb

If you are exhibiting cut comb, then the comb should be unwired and pre-drained before being placed into the container. Make sure that the comb isn't sitting in liquid honey. Try and make neat cuts, with as few as possible broken cappings round the edges. The judge will check aroma and flavour, so use fresh comb.

Judge's Comments

Colchester Beekeepers' Association	
Class.....	Exhibit No.
Faults	X = a fault
Cleanliness	
Viscosity	
Granulation	
Wax on surface	
Aroma/Flavour	
Fermentation	
Jar/Lid quality	
Other	
Indicated above are the principal shortcomings which I have found in this exhibit. I hope you find this information helpful.	
.....Honey Judge	