

Basic Mead Making

University of Minnesota Instructional Poster #158, Gary S. Reuter, Department of Entomology

This is one method. There are many more methods and recipes.



1. Equipment needed: 2-Carboys, vapor lock & cork, siphon hose, racking cane with bottom cap, sauce pan, candy thermometer, funnel, ladle, bottles and labels.
Ingredients: Honey, yeast, Fermaid K.



2. Honey and yeast are the two main things that effect the taste of your mead. Try different varieties of honeys as well as different yeast. Wildflower honey with Cote des Blancs yeast is a good start.

Recipes

1 Gallon
3 pounds honey
1 Pkg. Yeast
Fermaid K
3 quarts water

5 Gallon
15 pounds honey
2 Pkg. Yeast
Fermaid K
4 gallons water

3. Typical batch sizes are 1 or 5 gallon. Obtain glass carboys to hold the size of the batch you want to make.
In the following descriptions the 1 gallon amounts will be given in text and the 5 gallon amounts will be in [].



4. Sterilize all equipment before use. Use a sterilizing agent from a wine supply store or household bleach. Follow directions on product.
If water is not sterile, boil first then cool. Do not use distilled water.



5. Stir 3# [15#] of honey with 2 cups [2 quarts] water in sauce pan and heat to 160°F. Remove from heat and let cool for 15 minutes.
Put 1 quart [1 gallon] cool water in carboy.



6. Pour honey & water mixture slowly into the carboy. Add cold water to bring level to 1 gallon [5 gallons].



7. Put 1 or 2 teaspoons of water in the vapor lock and put it on the carboy and wait until temperature falls below 80°F.



8. Add Fermaid K (or combination of yeast energizer and yeast nutrient) according to package directions. Shake vigorously then put vapor lock back on.



9. Prepare yeast. Have 1/4 cup of water at 100-105°F. Sprinkle yeast on top and let set undisturbed for 15 minutes. Then stir. For best results when using more than 1 package, do them separately.



10. Pitch the yeast. Remove the vapor lock and pour the prepared yeast into the carboy. Replace the vapor lock.



11. Put the carboy in a safe place (where it won't get broken) at cool room temp (60°F - 75°F). Within 48 hours there will be bubbles coming from the vapor lock. This means the yeast is working.



12. When bubbling stops and sediment appears on the bottom (1-3 months) you should rack the mead. This is the process of siphoning the mead off the top into a clean carboy leaving the sediment behind.



13a. Place the full carboy on the counter. Place the empty sterile carboy on a chair. Sterilize siphon tube and racking cane and fill with water.

13b. Hold finger over the end of tube, place cane in full carboy (bottom cap should hold it off the bottom), place end of tube over a glass and release. When water is out of tube and mead reaches the end place the tube into empty carboy. Lift cane to stop flow when sediment begins to enter. Put vapor lock into new carboy and return to safe place.



14. When sediment appears again (2 weeks) rack the mead again. Continue this until no more sediment appears. Rack one more time into carboy then in 2 weeks you can rack into bottles and label.

15. You can taste your mead at any point along the way. Do not be disappointed if it does not taste great. Mead will usually take at least a year to be drinkable and up to 5 years to be good.