

STAHLMAN BEEKEEPING

NOTES FOR 2023

Issue # 37 September 9-30-2023 More on Wax



(What do you do with it?)

I was asked this question. I really have not been much of a person to enter wax making events. To me, the question was how can I make use of it in my beekeeping business.

- It is another potential income source in addition to honey.
- One could also develop a hobby of making and showing wax mold castings such as skeps, candles, etc.
- First – it has value and I could sell it. I could also exchange it for wax foundation from some businesses making foundation.
- One can also sell it locally to hobbist making soap and various wax products.
- Prices vary depending on the grade (purity of beeswax). The price for raw beeswax is less than the price paid for products made from beeswax.

Many beekeepers use their own bees wax to make products that sell for much more than raw beeswax. This is just a small list of how one can use beeswax:

- beeswax candles – The wax burns slowly almost smoke free and has a good smell.
- beeswax molded items such as one ounce bars which can be used for food wraps and it is commonly used to coat cheeses.
- Cosmetics – soaps, lip balms, hand creams, lotions etc.
- Lubricants -- waxing skis, nails, stuck zippers.
- Polishes -- any number of polish formulas use beeswax.

Because beeswax has so many uses, it offers a good business opportunity to the hobby beekeeper who is lucky enough to have some.

Grades of Beeswax: Raw beeswax is often intermixed with fine particles of dirt and debris which are almost impossible to see. The color of beeswax also varies from almost white to dark brown. Dark colored beeswax has contaminants that can be removed by filtering and bleaching.

The grade of wax is usually determined by purity and the color of the wax.

But back to the question: What do I do with it?

IMPORTANT POINTS

Beeswax really put one company manufacturing bee equipment out of the business of selling woodenware which they were known for from the 1870's.

What could possibly cause a company founded by A.I. Root to cease the manufacture of woodenware made to the highest standards the beekeeping community knew.

In 1991, John Root, great grandson and president of the A.I. Root Company announced that beeswax Alter candles sales forced the company to expand its production space. Thus, the company closed its woodmill and ceased manufacture of wooden products.

The company continues to publish **Bee Culture Magazine** and is the world's largest producer of **Alter Beeswax Candles** and decorative candles in a variety of colors and fragrances.

If in Medina, Ohio visit the factory store.

The Number One thing I do with beeswax is recoat plastic foundation that I power wash and get ready to re-use.



This is a frame prior to power washing. I do take my hive tool to scrape as much comb as possible off the frame and foundation.

The frames are then placed in a 30 gallon garbage can to soak for 3 days or more.

I power wash the frames with the foundation in them. This not only removes much of the stuff still remaining on the foundation, the power washer also cleans the wood frame parts around the foundation.



A frame after power washing. Note that not only is the plastic foundation clean, the wood frame is also clean. If a frame is in bad shape, I remove the insert – clean it and then install it in a new frame.



All that remains to be done is roll beeswax onto the clean foundation. One must make sure the foundation is dry. If the foundation is wet the wax will not stick.

When doing just a few frames, I use the small paint rollers from the Dollar store. A paint brush would also work.

It takes about half an ounce of wax for standard deep frames on both sides if applied lightly.

On melting beeswax: Break large blocks of wax into smaller sizes. Liquid beeswax is hot -- more than 148°F. A hot plate to heat the wax works fine



for me. I use welding gloves to handle containers holding hot wax. As shown above, I place the hot plate on a work bench that is stable. That is important!

One does not need to put a heavy coat of wax on the foundation. Just roll quickly to coat the tops of the cell walls.

It is far less expensive to re-purpose frames like this than burn frames. It is one way to cut expenses. Bees build new comb on these frames so one would never know the plastic foundation was recycled.



There are problems for some who try using plastic foundation. Most of this I think is a result of a violation of the bee space rule:

“The concept of bee space was critical in the development of movable frame beekeeping, since the proper between-frame distance not only is important for proper colony functioning, but also in preventing workers from constructing brace and bridge wax for easy bee movement between combs.” (From *The Hive and the Honey Bee* published by Dadant & Sons, Inc. 1992 ed.)



This photo illustrates too much space between frames.

The surface of a frame may look like this

Or this:



This is not the fault of the foundation! Too much space between frames caused this problem with both drawn comb as well as foundation.

This is just an example of what honeybees do when a gap or space is left between frames. In both situations the plastic foundation can be saved and some bees wax recovered.

For those beekeepers that want to make their own beeswax foundation rather than buying it, I found the following:



Have one to sell? [Sell now](#)

420*220mm Beeswax Foundation Sheet Mold Machine Beekeeping Tool Casting mould sj

Mechsonic (3476)
96.2% positive · Seller's other items · Contact seller

US \$651.00

or Best Offer
Was ~~US \$700.00~~
Save US \$49.00 (7% off)

No interest if paid in full in 6 mo on \$29+ with PayPal Credit*

Condition: New

Sale ends in: 2d 9h

Quantity: More than 10 available

Buy it Now

Add to cart

Make offer

[Add to watchlist](#)



\$39.99

Silicone Beeswax foundation Mold - 5.3 mm Nest Foundation

1221ApiaryLLC ★★★★★

✓ Arrives soon! Get it by Oct 4-5 if you order today

Add to cart

Item details

Shipping and return policies

Meet your seller



Hugo

Owner of 1221ApiaryLLC

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I checked on line and the cost to buy a mold or a press to emboss the cells for foundation ranged from \$39.99 to almost \$700.00. Natural beeswax foundation may seem very expensive but the above methods could be used if one has time and beeswax. I might mention that either of these methods are a bit messy and getting uniform foundation is an art.

[33 Uses For Beeswax That Go Beyond Candle Making](https://www.ruralsprout.com/beeswax-uses)

<https://www.ruralsprout.com/beeswax-uses> This link may provide more information for you.