

Richmond and District Beekeepers' Association



Annual Honey Show Exhibitors' Guidelines

Reference

Adapted from extracts: "A GUIDE FOR
JUDGES AND EXHIBITORS OF HONEY AND
BEE PRODUCE"

TO HELP PREPARE YOUR ITEMS FOR THE SHOW

Containers

Extracted **Honey** should be exhibited in standard clear glass **454g** squat jars with plain gold coloured screw top lids (preferred option in show) or gold coloured twist lids. To ensure a full 1lb weight, no air gap should be visible below the lid. No tamper or other labels should be affixed other than those issued by the Show Secretary. (Please see the attached sheet for photo reference). Both jars and lids should match.

Mead should be exhibited in punted clear glass wine bottles, without decoration or fluting, and closed with a cork stopper with a plastic flange. The surface of the liquid in the bottle should be no more than half an inch below the base of the cork stopper.

Attachment of Class Entry Labels

- Class entry labels affixed to Honey jars and Mead bottles should be no less than **12mm** and no more than **15mm** from the bottom of the container to the lower edge of the label.
- A shallow or deep frame should be in a dust-proof display case with frame easily removable for judging. One label should be affixed to the top right-hand corner of one of the side viewing glass panes and the second at the right-hand end of the top bar of the frame itself.
- For cut comb a single label on the right-hand top corner of the lid(s) or see-through part of the dust-proof containers.
- Labels for wax blocks should be affixed to
 1. The underside of the wax.
 2. The display plate (or similar).
 3. The protective cover.
- Class labels for candles should be affixed near the base and on any associated holder.
- Where a plate (or similar) is provided for cake classes, one label is to be affixed to the plate.
- For “Any Other Item” or Photography classes, one label is to be affixed to the item as appropriate.

Liquid Honey - Classes 1 and 2

(Entry = 2 x 1lb jars)

The aroma and flavour of honey is most important and honey which is in the slightest way offensive will be disqualified, no matter how well it is presented. A bright highly viscous honey is an impressive looking product, but Judges will examine such honey with special care and satisfy themselves that, in the preparation of the honey, its aroma and flavour have not been sacrificed. The Judges will not hesitate to prefer a new but less viscous honey of good aroma and flavour to a more viscous honey which lacks these qualities.

The following points will be checked as the examinations proceed:

- (a) Correct colour of the honey in each exhibit
- (b) Uniformity of colour of honey in each exhibit
- (c) Absence of foreign material, i.e., wax particles, specks of dirt, hairs, parts of bees, etc. disqualifying if there is any gross contamination.
- (d) Brightness, (dull, muddy looking samples are suspect. The honey may be starting to granulate or ferment and will be disqualified as appropriate)
- (e) Lids will be gently eased before testing for aroma.
- (f) The presence of scum, bubbles or froth on the surface of the honey will be looked for.
- (g) Lids and jars will be examined and checked to make sure they are clean and from the same manufacturer.

Once the Judge has completed all the above examination stages the remaining samples (after those that have failed the tests have been eliminated), will be examined for the following:-

- (h) Viscosity
- (i) Aroma.
- (j) Flavour

The second jar will be compared with the first jar to ensure they are identical.

Colour Grading

Exhibitors are responsible for entering liquid honey in the correct class. Show secretaries may hold grading glasses to assist exhibitors in entering the correct liquid honey class.

Naturally Crystallised (Granulated) Honey – Class 3

(Entry = 2 x 1lb jars)

Judges will look for firm granulation of smooth, fine texture, good uniform colour, cream to white, and the absence of coarse granules. The honey should be free from streakiness or solid air scum. The jars will be rejected if specks in honey are showing on the sides or bottom of the jar. There should be a clean dry surface with no signs of scum or fermentation and no undue shrinkage from the sides of the jar or heavy frosting. It should have a good aroma and taste.

Soft Set Honey – Class 4

(Entry = 2 x 1lb jars)

The honey should have a "butter" texture with no movement in the jar. There must be uniformity of colour, cream to white, with no air spaces or bubbles at the sides of the jars. There should be a clean dry surface with no signs of scum or fermentation and no undue shrinkage from the sides of the jar or heavy frosting. The honey should have a good aroma and taste.

Heather Honey – Class 5

(Entry = 2 x 1lb jars)

This class should be clearly defined as Ling heather. There are two kinds of heather honey, Ling and Bell. When the kind of honey is not specified in a show schedule, Ling is implied. Bell heather honey should not be shown in a Ling heather class. There is often some doubt concerning the class in which bell heather honey should be entered. It should be entered in the appropriate liquid honey class, either medium or dark. Ling heather honey has a bitter-sweet taste and is rich red to amber in colour. The aroma is reminiscent of a strong scent of Ling flowers. It is gelatinous (thixotropic) in consistency, with a good even distribution of air bubbles. Absence of air bubbles or very small air bubbles or poor thixotropic condition suggests that the honey has recently been bottled (less than three weeks). A honey light in colour sometimes suggests that it is not good quality Ling honey, usually it is mixed with other flower honey from the moors, such as rose bay willow herb, blackberry or gorse. However, care must be taken as there are some southern moors that yield a Ling honey of amber colour. A dark honey suggests that it has been overheated to remove flower honey granulation, which must not be present.

A jar of Ling heather honey will be turned on its side by the Judge and the honey should not run out of the jar. The Judge will scratch the top of the exhibit with a honey taster and see how long the groove in the honey takes to disappear. Bell heather honey is not gelatinous, the colour is of port wine with a rich brightness.

1lb Section Honey – Class 6

(Entry = 1 x 1lb wooden section (flower or heather honey))

Square sections of approximately one pound in weight should be enclosed in white section show cases with not less than 3¼ inches square of comb visible on each side of the case. Section show cases can be made either from wood or cardboard and must be clean. Worker cells are more attractive than drone cells. (**Only** if this class is in the show, round sections of approximately 8oz in weight should be closed with transparent covers on both sides). The cells should be filled with honey with few empty cells. The comb should be well attached to the section wood for square and the plastic for round and there should be no pollen or propolis present. There should be no seeping or signs of braula, varroa or wax moth under the cappings. Signs of travel stains will lead to downgrading. The honey will be tested for quality and granulation. In the case of dull, dead cappings the feeding of sugar syrup will be suspected.

Shallow or Deep Frame Honey – Class 7

(Entry = 1 x frame comb (flower or heather honey))

The Judges will note the suitability for uncapping, evenly drawn out on both sides and the evenness and cleanliness of the comb surface. The use of new foundation is preferred to the use of old foundation and the comb should be attached to the frame all round on both sides. If wired, the frame should be properly wired. Cells should be well sealed with few empty or uncapped cells. The judge will test for aroma and sample honey from a cell. The judge will examine the comb against a strong light to confirm the honey is uniform in colour with no granulation, fermentation, pollen, propolis or evidence of sugar syrup feeding.

The Judge will take account of the cleanliness of the frame woodwork any weeping of honey or any brace or burr comb. The show case should be glazed on both sides, undecorated, neat and tidy, bee proof, clean, free from propolis and any extraneous aroma. The frame must be easy for the judge to lift out of the show case.

Cut Comb Honey – Class 8

**(Entry = 1 x 8oz (minimum weight) pack
(flower or heather honey))**

In general, the points are the same as for “Shallow and Deep Frame Honey”. Cut comb honey is usually exhibited in standard plastic containers, purchased from beekeeping equipment suppliers. The cut comb is to have a gross weight between 227g (8oz) and 340g (12oz). It must be well drained and must not contain honey that has granulated or fermented. It should not have any additional material in it such as pieces of wire, foreign bodies, braula, varroa, pollen, propolis or any evidence of wax moth. The honey will be judged for aroma and flavour. Light honey is to be preferred to dark honey. New thin worker foundation is also preferred to drone foundation. The foundation must not be wired.

Travel stains will downgrade the exhibit. The cut comb will be removed from the container to enable checks to be made on the lower surface and for evidence of wire, packing, granulation, fermentation, thickness and position of the midrib, aroma and flavour.

Chunk Honey – Class 9

(Entry = 1 x 1lb jar)

The object of Chunk Honey is to present a chunk of honeycomb within a jar of liquid honey, so the chunk must be clearly visible. Therefore, use the largest piece of comb that will fit into the jar. It should be perfectly capped, with cells clearly defined and sitting on the base of the jar, **not** floating. Care in transportation is essential.

Rules for the liquid honey is the same as that for the liquid honey classes, and light honey is to be preferred to medium or dark. The piece of comb should be placed in the jar upright and in the same position as it would have been in the frame, so when viewed from the side, the cells are slopping upwards from the midrib. When adding the liquid honey, some particles of wax caused when the comb was cut, will float to the surface. These, together with any air bubbles, must be removed.

Mead – Class 10

(Entry = 1 x bottle (sweet and/or dry))

The type of mead and the bottle used, including the cork or stopper, must be in accordance with the show schedule. There are usually two classes for mead at honey shows, dry and sweet. Usually the bottle specified is clear, colourless, punted (shallow punts are acceptable), round section of approximately 26 fluid oz. capacity, with rounded non-sloping shoulders (Sauterne type) and without any lettering, fluting or ornamentation of any kind. Bottles to be corked with cork stoppers with white plastic flanges or as specified in the show schedule. No alcohol or flavouring, such as herbs or fruit is to be added, but additions such as acids and nutrients may be used. Colour may vary according to the honey used but the mead must be clear and bright, free from sediment. It must not leave an aftertaste of yeast, mustiness or flatness. It should bear a pleasant bouquet and good flavour.

In a dry class the Mead should be smooth with good alcoholic content with no trace of acetic acid. In a sweet class the Mead should have a mellow flavour and not be excessively sweet.

Beeswax – Class 11 and 12

(Entry = 1 x (minimum) 8oz cake beeswax and/or 6 pieces beeswax)

The weight and thickness should be according to the show schedule and the colour is between pale primrose and orange, preferably the former. Purity and uniformity of preparing the wax exhibit should be checked, no wavy or uneven surface should be evident. The exhibit should be translucent when light from a torch is shone through. There should be good plasticity and texture. Any signs of chemical adulteration or bleaching will be heavily penalised. Each exhibit should be shown in a transparent cover to eliminate dust. It is recommended that plastic bags be used. Sometimes the aroma of the wooden cover with glass or plastic lid is transferred to the beeswax. The wax should be polished with a lint free cloth. For the 6 x 1oz bars, they should be uniform in size, colour and weight.

Honey Cake – Classes 13 and 14

Entry = 1 x 7-inch honey cake (plain and/or fruit)

All recipes, when given in the schedule, should state the amount of honey used and no sugar should be used. The weight of the cake and the size and shape of the cake tin should be in accordance with the recipe and the schedule. The centre of the cake should not sink, and the outside should be well baked but not burnt. The inside of the cake should be a soft, close even texture with no cavities. The honey and fruit (when used) should be well distributed and not at the bottom. The cake will be tasted for honey flavour and the aroma noted. Judging covers aspects such as external view, internal view, fruit distribution, cooking, aroma, texture and flavour.

Beeswax Candles – Class 15

Entry = 1 x pair of candles by any method

Candles are usually exhibited in pairs. Candles must be made of pure beeswax (rendered and processed from the exhibitor's own bees). Moulded, dipped, poured or rolled may be specified. Where there are two candles in a class, they must all be matching in every respect. Surface flaws, bubbles, scratches and dirt embedded in the wax, especially at the tip of the candle will downgrade the candles. The show schedule must be read carefully to see if there are any special conditions. Usually, a clean pale yellow to orange filtered wax is preferred. The wax should also have a pleasant scent.

The wick must be of the correct size for the diameter of the candle, and the characteristics of the wax used. It should be pre-waxed to make it easier to light. To check the correct size of wick the show schedule usually states that the Judge must light one candle and allow it to burn long enough for an assessment to be made by the Judge of the correctness of the size and type of the wick. (Square braided wick is usually preferable to flat braided wick when burning beeswax.) The candles should be mounted in suitable sized holders, made of metal, glass or ceramic material and lit in a draught proof, but ventilated, room for about 20 minutes (**this may be restricted by a venue's fire regulations**). If allowed, then candles should be burnt at room temperature – approximately 22°C. There should be no smoke and the wicks should not bend over too far to form a 'pig tail' or develop a mushroom of unburnt carbon at the tip of the wick, if they do the candles will be downgraded. The candle should be blown out and the wick should not smoulder or glow for longer than about 15 to 30 seconds (depending on the size of the wick). After 10 minutes the candle should be relit, and the ease of relighting noted.

If the wick is too small the candle will burn with a small flame and produce too much molten wax which will eventually run down the side of the candle (gutter). If the wick is too big the candle will burn with a large flame with a small pool of wax in the tip of the candle. When extinguished for the first time, the wick will continue to smoulder and make relighting difficult, (and may produce a large pool of wax which will again overflow and run down the side of the candle). If the show schedule does not state that one candle should be lit by the Judge, then the Judge is advised to do so but only if the show management can confirm that it is safe to do so (Fire regulations)

Any Other Item – Class 16

Any item or idea, designed and made in any material, by the exhibitor. It should assist, amuse or educate fellow beekeepers. Also, any hive product which is not included in the other show classes can be included in this class (e.g., honey sweets or biscuits). The judge will make sure the exhibit is in accordance with the show schedule.

Photography – Class 17

Entry = 1,2 or 3 photographs – max. size A4

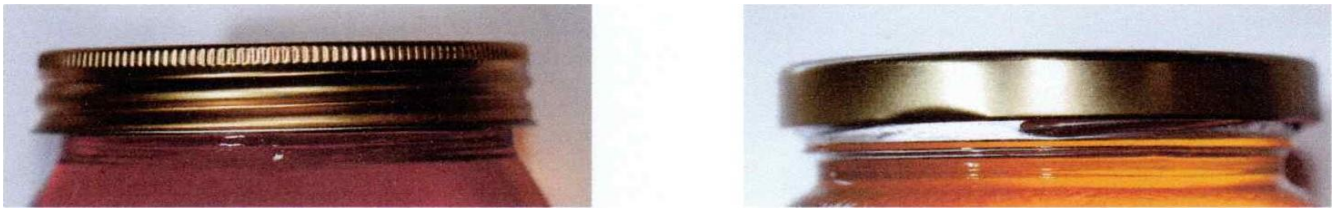
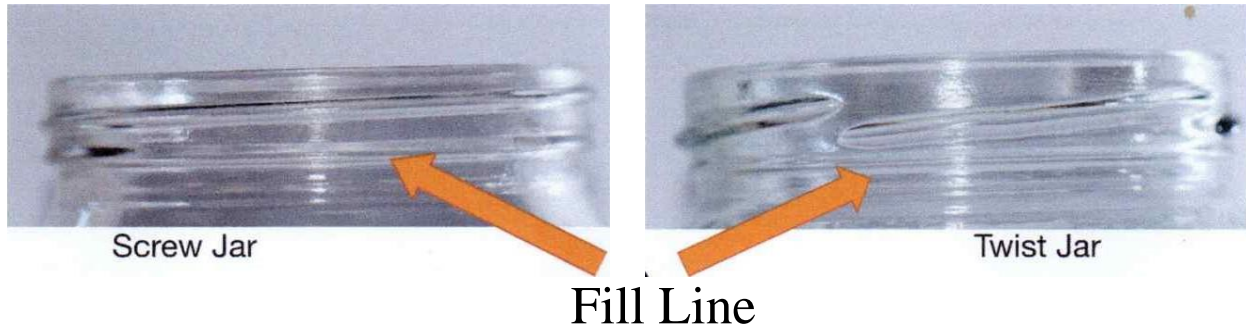
The photograph should be original work by the exhibitor. Any manipulation (“Photoshop” work) must be the work of the exhibitor. To protect the photographs from damage and for presentational reasons, the exhibitor should mount the photograph on plain card. An undecorated frame may be used. The maximum size of the photograph is A4. The photograph will be judged on apicultural interest and photographic quality. You may not enter the same work into future shows.

Notes for Exhibitors

- Entries may be from any year – although fresh, current year samples are preferred. They must not however, have been entered into any previous show.
- All honey, wax and other exhibits must be the produce of the exhibitors’ own bees, within the RDBKA District
- Exhibitors may make more than one entry into each class but not take more than one award in that class.
- It is not essential for each entrant to exhibit in every class.
- Points will be awarded for First (4 points), Second (3 points) and Third (2 points) in each class. The member with the most points will be awarded the Challenge Cup.
- Exhibits must not be labelled in any way. Official entry numbers and labels will be issued before judging.
- The judge’s decision will be final.

WEIGHTS

2 x 1lb squat jars of both the screw and twist lid are acceptable, although screw lids are preferred. The twist lids are not as deep as the screw ones and even when the jar is filled to the required volume, there can be an air gap between the top of the honey and the bottom of the lid. In order for the judges to know that the jar has the correct weight, all jars should be filled to at least the "fill line".



A few exhibits are marked down by the judges because of incipient granulation. Exhibitors are advised to use a torch to examine their entries to ensure clarity of the exhibits.



*Exhibitors are advised to use a check weight when preparing wax blocks.