

Betterbee[®]

Beekeepers Serving Beekeepers

Propolis Trap

Propolis has gained popularity in many markets and is a great value-added product for beekeepers to offer customers. Propolis is a sticky substance that is a mixture of beeswax and resins collected from plants. It ranges in color and texture depending on your location and the sources the honeybees have available to them. You will often notice propolis when you are prying your hive bodies apart with your hive tool. Propolis can be sold as a raw product or be processed and added to medicines, tinctures, lip balms or skin creams. Using a propolis trap is an easy way to start collecting this wonderful product!

Place the propolis trap on the hive in place of the inner cover. Using a stick or shim, prop open the outer cover to allow light into the hive. This does not need to be a large opening, just enough to allow light in. The bees will try to close off the light source by propolizing the trap. Bees are not able to pass through the propolis trap, so they cannot propolize the outer cover area.

The time it takes the bees to propolize the trap will depend on your area, the weather and the plant sources the bees are using to collect the resins from. Also some colonies of bees seem to collect more propolis than others. Once the trap is sufficiently full, remove the trap and the shim, returning your inner cover to the hive. Place the entire trap into a bag, usually a large garbage bag works well, and put in the freezer overnight. The propolis will become brittle when frozen. Once frozen, remove the bag and trap from freezer, leaving the bag on, bang the trap on a tabletop or floor. The brittle propolis will fall off into the bag. Sometimes twisting the trap works but may cause a little more of a mess.

Freezing and banging the trap will sufficiently clean the trap. You can then place it back on your hive if you would like to harvest more propolis or store the trap for future use. Store the trap in a cool, dry place away from pests that might damage it such as mice.

If you are unable to use all of the propolis you have collected, there are several markets that will purchase raw propolis, including medicinal herb and natural remedy manufacturers.