



## Brewing your first batch of mead

'Brewing' mead is as simple as stirring honey and water together and adding yeast! To choose how much of each of the two main ingredients to use (honey and water), decide upon a target gravity. This is not hard. A standard mead has a starting gravity of 1.080 - 1.120. In a 5-gallon batch of mead, 14 –16 lbs of honey should bring you up to this starting gravity.

### Procedure

**First**, pour the warm honey in the sanitized fermentation bucket. **Second**, stir in the warm (80F) water until the 5 gallon mark is reached. **Third**, after the honey and water have been thoroughly homogenized, take a gravity reading. Add honey or water to raise or lower the starting gravity. **Next**, add yeast nutrient and pitch yeast.

Ferment in the primary fermentation bucket until most of the alcohol production is complete. Rack to glass when the gravity approaches 1.020. Make sure very little head space is present in the secondary during this conditioning phase. Bottle when fermentation is complete. Remember, honey ferments SLOWLY – this could take up to a year, give or take a few months. To ensure a healthy, vigorous, and complete fermentation, be sure to store the fermenting mead between 67F to 70F or as close as you can get. Bottle in appropriate bottles for either still or sparkling mead.

The relative pH of the honey wort is an important factor in creating meads truly able to stand up to the test of time. A good starting pH for most mead is 3.8 - 4.2. You may need to reduce acidity in order to achieve the necessary range; Calcium Carbonate should prove effective for this. Please refer to Schramm's book or other resources for more information.

### Additional Notes/Tips

- At Siciliano's Market, we sell raw, unfiltered, unpasteurized Star Thistle honey from Cherry Hill Honey in Montague, MI. Take advantage of Siciliano's symbiotic relationship with Cherry Hill, who's bulk honeys sells for under \$3 a pound straight from the honey pot at our store. Steve the beekeeper from Cherry Hill has offered his email ([cheryhillhoney@aol.com](mailto:cheryhillhoney@aol.com)) and phone number (231-893-6418) to any mead makers wh have questions about either his honey or mead making.
- Besides **honey**, gather quality water, **yeast nutrient** and **yeast**. There are many choices for yeast, some made specifically for dry or sweet mead. As with cider making, there is no one "right" yeast. For your first batch we recommend Lalvin's

K1V-1116 as it is a strong fermenter with a neutral profile. Since the food yeast needs to ferment does not naturally occur in raw honey, be sure to add some yeast nutrient.

- Along with the necessary ingredients, the mead maker needs fermentation equipment. Here's a short list of the necessities: **Fermentation bucket, glass carboy, air-locks and bungs, siphon equipment, stirring spoon, sanitizer, hydrometer, sample thief, stick thermometer**, all of which beer and wine makers already have.