

ADVICE TO COLLECT PROPOLIS



The Propolis has become a full-fledged product in the Beekeeping Production. For long time, it has been considered as a waste, but lately, it gained in reputation thanks to its positive influence on human health and its financial impact for Beekeeping companies. Collecting Propolis has become lucrative, provided that certain principles are respected.



Collecting Period:

Winter is the ideal season to collect the Propolis because it will tend to come off more easily from its mounting (frames, grills...). You also are more available since your bees require less attention. Moreover, while you scrape off your frames you ensure the cleaning of the hive.



Means of Collecting:

They are quite basic: either **scraping** or **trapping**.

For the ones using **Propolis** traps, the process is a bit tricky.

We will have to collect the traps which were installed on the top of the hives and we will store them in a freezer in order to make the Propolis easily breakable and to take it off its support without too many difficulties. It is advised to work in a cold room, because at room temperature, as soon as we will take out the grills from the freezer, the Propolis will become soft straight away and it will be more difficult to remove it.

Another annoying detail for this technique: some pieces of Propolis remain stuck to the top of the frame. Therefore, we will also have to scrape it to retrieve as much Propolis as possible...

For people who balk at buying traps, the laying of alimentary plastic sheets on the top of the frames can be an economical alternative. After a while, the sheets bend and the bees plug the cracks. The Propolis being stuck on the top of the hives, it is easy to remove it with a simple scraping.

Both sources, scraping and trapping, collected with sheets or traps, produce a Propolis of very good quality with an identical freshness (as it is harvested once a year every year). Some people trust nothing else than the Propolis coming from traps, thinking that its quality and its virtues are better than the Propolis being scraped.

This analysis seems a little simplistic since the trap is just a means of collecting. The most important thing is to collect the Propolis every year to prevent it from aging.

Otherwise, for people who collect the Propolis by scraping the frames, a stainless steel scraper is adequate. You have to work in a clean space, wash your hands properly and avoid coughing near the product (it is ideal to wear a mask while you are dealing with the Propolis).

The Propolis will be collected in a plastic alimentary tarpaulin, then it will be packaged rapidly in plastic bags of 4/5 kgs displayed flat and not in a ball. The storage has to be done in a cool, dry and dark room but a cold room would be ideal in order to avoid the growth of tinea and to preserve all the active ingredients of the Propolis.



The Cleaning Phase

You might wonder what the purpose of cleaning Propolis is and we understand that. This phase is only necessary if the Propolis contains **too much wax and dead bees**.

A transition to a cold water tub enables the undesired wax to surface, you can then “skim it off”.

It has to be **perfectly dried**, otherwise moulds will develop rapidly in the impurities contained by the resin and they will spread on the entire product... which will become impossible to sell!

But, as we said, we would rather have a “raw” Propolis, not cleaned, as water dissolves some ingredients of the Propolis and impoverishes it.



Purchasing Price

We buy the **French Propolis**, coming from scraping or trapping, from all the **beekeepers of France**.

It is currently more and more interesting to collect Propolis, for there is now a real demand in France and from abroad.

This demand is highly beneficial for you as it tends to increase the purchasing price. We have noticed that the purchasing price of **conventional Propolis is negotiated around 55€** as it will be between **70 and 100€ for Organic Propolis**.

We are very selective regarding the quality of the Propolis we purchase and we refuse to buy products which go against our ethics. The quality of brands Propolia and Bee’Nice depends on it.



Selection Criteria

A good Propolis is above all a **healthy Propolis**. Considering the proximity of its sampling with the body of the hive where the prophylactic treatments are made, it is very important that the latter are performed in the best possible way. “Homemade” inserts composed of Amitraz or Fluvalinate, as well as sprinkling Rotenone or Coumaphos have to be banned because of the risks of contamination for beehive products whether it is Honey, Beeswax or Propolis. In order to avoid this drawback, we recommend the use of official medicine for which residual tests have been made. In any case, favor treatments made of natural substances such as the Thymol, Essential Oils or Formic Acid. In order to obtain a better efficiency of your treatments, do not forget to use alternation.

Anyway, a good **Propolis** is a **resinous** Propolis, that is to say, sticky, containing the least impurities possible and without an excess load of wax. It has to be collected on the top of the hives only, especially if chemical treatments have been made at the heart of the hive.

**We wish you a good Propolis collecting!
Thank you and see you soon.**

Marc Alain BERNARD
Chief Manager, Beekeeper