

Mead: Tips for a Predictable Fermentation

By: Harold Gulbransen

Mead = Honey Wine = Ambrosia = Nectar of the Gods

Refer to the BJCP website for definitions of various types of mead <http://www.bjcp.org/stylecenter.html>

Melomel [fruit]; Cyser [apples]; Pyment [melomel using grapes]; Metheglin [herbs & spices];

Braggot or Bracket [malted grains]

Strengths - Sack, Standard or Hydromel

Sweetness - dry, semi-dry, sweet

Carbonation - still, petillant, sparkling

Making Mead [5 gallons]

"Must" = Honey + Water [carbon filtered or bottled] + Nutrients + Oxygen + Yeast [my favorites are: Lalvin 71B-1122 (Narbonne), Red Star D47 (Cote du Rhone), Lalvin RC212 (Burgundy)]

Equipment - similar to extract brewing plus a "mix stir" for agitating must

Heat or No-Heat [All equipment must be sanitized carefully]

DAY 0

4 gallons water [chlorine free]

15 - 18 lbs of Honey [semi-sweet / sweet mead] approx 1.120 - 1.140 OG

[dissolve using "mix-stir" and an electric drill]

Nutrients - provide a source of free amino **nitrogen** [FAN], carbon, **phosphate** & sulfate

1 gm DAP [diammonium phosphate] = 0.25 tsp

0.5 gm Fermaid K [Lallemand's micronutrient blend] = 0.125 tsp

Oxygenate thoroughly

2 pkgs [10 gms] Yeast rehydrated [104 F water + 12.5 gms of Go-Ferm]

Go-Ferm by Lallemand is an organic nutrient, dosed @1.25 gms of Go-Ferm/gm of yeast

pH - keep this above 3.8 [preferably 4.0 - 4.2]

DAY 1

Stir mead with "mix-stir"

Check pH

DAY 2, 4 & 6

Stir mead with "mix-stir"

Add 0.5 gms DAP & 0.25 gms Fermaid K

Check pH - if too low, buffer with KOH or CaCO₃ [add 0.5 tsp at a time and check pH again]

DAY 3, 5, 7

Stir mead with "mix-stir"

Check pH

If adding fruit, consider adding a day or two after must is actively fermenting [checking pH as fruit can be acidic] Spices can be added anytime

When fermentation is complete, rack and after 6- 12 months, perform an **acid balance test**. I prefer to balance my meads to slightly lower than dessert wines [sweeter]

Special Thanks to **Kris England** [St. Paul Homebrewers] for an excellent Mead presentation at the 2008 AHA conference in Cincinnati ☺