DIY: Economy Uncapping Tray

By Peter Coxon

We recently performed the Association honey extraction at my house with the assistance of Keith Obbard, Malcolm Wilkie, Paul Lindstrom, Steve Davies, and Talha Dinc ... and much appreciation is due to all. It is a valuable revenue stream for the association.

Steve arrived well-armed ... would we expect anything less? And although I have never owned an uncapping tray, never felt the need for one (when a cheap baking tray will do) and am too mean to buy one anyway, I did experience some uncapping tray envy when Steve got out his very nice Man Lake uncapping tray, but am still too tight to buy one.

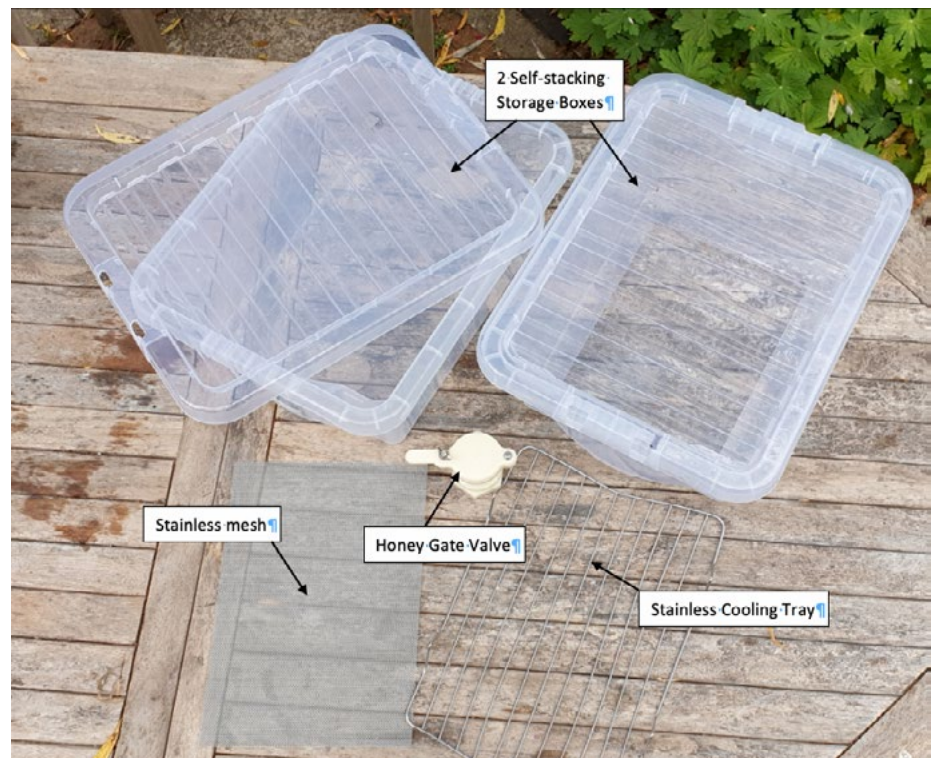Looking at how his was made I had an idea to make my own as described below.

Voilà – a reasonably cheap uncapping tray.

Ingredients:

1. two self-stacking storage boxes preferably slightly bigger than a super frame (available any DIY store~£4.00 each, Amazon etc)
2. one honey gate valve (optional) (any of the bee equipment suppliers and Amazon ...of course £3.60)
3. one stainless steel cooling tray – sized to suit box (cooking shops ... but easier to get the right size on ... guess where Amazon ~£9.00)
4. One piece of stainless mesh – size to suit box 210mm x300mm in this case ~0.4mm pitch (Amazon ...yet again ~£9.00 for 6 sheets (I have 5 spares if anyone should anyone want one 😊)

This is what you need.

Recipe:

1. If using a honey valve, make hole near the bottom of one of the boxes to take the valve – typically 45mm diameter using a hole saw or craft knife, but note it will need to be a good fit otherwise it will leak. Probably not really necessary. I also added some small stainless brackets to mine to better support the top box and at the same height as the top of the valve nut, but these are not really essential either.

2. Cut the base out of the second box but leaving an adequate lip to support the cooling tray and stainless mesh.

3. Insert the cooling tray and stainless mesh.

4. And finally – place this box on the first. Place full super frames on top and get uncapping ... simple! 🐝