

DIY: From Smoking Problems to Vaping Problems

By Peter Coxon

From 'Smoking Problems' – my previous DIY Apiarist article, to vaping problems ... I'm moving with the times you see ...or more correctly a few words on using Gas Vaps to sublimate Oxalic acid in certain types of hive.

In my apiary I have WBCs with copious landing boards and Pol Nucs for which I made stands . . . with copious landing boards.

At the Little Horsted Apiary which I look after we have Paynes Poly Hives, which . . .have copious landing boards made from polystyrene and Poly Nucs which Steve Davies made luxurious stands, with accommodation for a varroa inspection boards and ... you guessed it ... landing boards! (There's a theme developing here!!)

Many of us these days use sublimation of anhydrous oxalic acid to control varroa in our colonies. In years gone by, this was mostly done using a heater on a stick powered by a 12V car battery and although these worked well, carrying around a 12V car battery is not a lot of fun and if like me you have set the WBC porch height to ~6mm to limit the entrance and thereby stop mice without using a mouse excluder (more expense ...did I mention I don't like spending money) in which case they don't fit through the entrance.

Some 3-4 years ago, however, a clever chap came up with the idea of the Gas Vap ... so simple, obvious, transportable and cheap to make ...I wish I had thought of it. It won prizes at the National Honey Show, in fact.



The Gas Vap

However, have you ever tried to use one of these on a hive with a landing board? Even with the extension tube, going in through the entrance to any extent is all but impossible and if you try it on a Poly Hive, chances are



It works fine with a regular Correx inspection board as well.



Problems at the landing board


If you have a regular Correx inspection board...same thing!

I have also done the same with my WBCs
Works like a treat

On the subject of that extension tube - a further tip!
The tube is supposedly heated by the blow torch heating the evaporation bowl, but in cold weather it doesn't get hot enough to prevent the oxalic acid vapour from re-condensing inside the tube and blocking it. It is easily unblocked with a stick or better still by heating it with another blow torch but beware of the vapour that will pour out even after the bowl is empty. Better still, pre-heat the tube before use and avoid the problem altogether!

you may well melt big holes in the landing board. Previously we have tried pulling out the inspection board and grovelling around under the hive to squirt the vapour up through the gap created, but it's not much fun in the wet.

So, this year I had the bright idea of simply drilling a hole in the upstand of the inspection board (see image below) and through the polystyrene so that the Gas Vap can simply be poked in through the back. You still need the extension tube but a 10mm hole will provide a snug fit around it such that you can simply poke it in.

And if you're feeling unconcerned because you don't have landing boards and don't believe they are necessary, have a chuckle [at this video](#) I took some years ago showing how the bees struggle when landing (it takes a while to load.) 



Drill a hole in the upstand of the inspection board.

