

Hank Speaks... So Listen Yeast Salvage and Starters

by Hank Bienert

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Tis traditional to celebrate Hogamany with music and so here's the original Scottish version of The New Year's Song:

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And *auld lang syne*?"

CHORUS:

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup of kindness yet,
For auld lang syne!

And surely ye'll *be* your *pint-stowp*,
And surely I'll be mine,
And we'll tak a cup o kindness yet,
For auld lang syne!

We twa hae run about the *braes*,
And *pou'd* the *gowans* fine,
But we've wander'd *monie* a weary *fit*,
Sin auld lang syne."

Some of the words are a bit confusing but if this was being sung by an authentic Highlander, all would be confusing. And what old acquaintance is more worthy of end of year recognition than good old *saccharomyces cerevisiae* that has given us so many wonderful cups o kindness? So let's honor our faithful worker by keeping it around rather than throwing it away after one use. The advantage of reusing yeast is not just loyalty to an old compadre and not the minuscule money saving but the reportedly superior results in generations two to four. The easiest way to do this is to transfer the good part of the wort to a secondary, cover the primary and rebrew within a few days and pitch onto the yeast cake.

...CAUTION - don't let small children or animals near because these yeast are MOTIVATED!! Short of this we can harvest the yeast for future use. A search of the Internet will show ways of doing this that range from plating a few cells in Petri dishes to freezing test tubes, down to the simple collection which I prefer.

Microwave-boil a Mason style quart/pint jar filled 2/3 with water, cover moderately tight and invert a few times to wash the top and then before it cools, completely loosen the top. If the bottom of the primary has lot of liquid you can simply pour that into the jar which you empty of water just before you fill it with the trub. If your primary is a glass carboy and has lot of gunk on the neck then pour most of the water in the jar into the carboy and swirl it around to thin the trub. Your original Mason-style jar is then fitted with a rubber stopper (#12) into which is imbedded 2 Cu tubes.

System A runs from Cu tube in stopper to plastic hose to pickup tube (Cu tube or old SS pickup tube harvested from a Corny key). While System B goes from the other Cu tube in stopper to a Harbor Freight hand pump (4-6 bux.) As the pump on Tube B draws, the vacuum created in the jar produces a nice suction in Tube A to bring the yeast up. An overnight stay in the frig will drop the yeast and the excess water can be thrown away and the top loosely tightened. If you wish you can also transfer the remaining yeast into a smaller jar prepared as described.

The yeast is good for ??? months - I have gone nearly 9 months. Of course a starter is needed to wake up the survivors and in my opinion a stirplate is the wisest way to rebuild a colony. I built a stirplate

last year and the results have been outstanding; makes the miracle of the loaves and fishes seem second rate. I wish I had done it years ago. A report in the newsletter of the Maltose Falcons describes cell growth of starters.

Count after 48 hours =

Air lock 20 million cells/ml;

Shaken x six times/day = 55 million cells/ml;

Aerated x six times/day = 90million cells/ml;

Stirred = 270 million cells/ml

Looks like a BIG increase to me!!

- The recent cool weather has inspired some brewing. The beer frig contained Irish Ale trub from the Heinerbrau brewoff this spring, a White labs Budvar best dated November 2009 and a Wyeast London ESB (1968) best dated December 2009; the last 2 were obtained last year when Aaron Hyde had a general discount sale. All of them did GREAT using the stirplate.

- About old Wyeast. The virtue of their product is the package. After you slap it, disown that little person who you once were who aggravated your parents with "Are we there yet". Be patient. The packs expand quicker with gentle warming such as tucking it in your waistband. One is discouraged from wearing it at all times in public to prevent situations such as being in the crowded food court of Lakeside Mall on a Saturday and being arrested for constantly groping an expanding crotch.

- An electric heating pad set very low is also a good approach. I happen to have the laziest dog in town and like all dogs has a base temp higher than humans so for the Wyeast mentioned above he slept atop the smackpack every evening -

- There are nice discussions about making a stirplate on the Web; especially Youtube or you can buy one – a worthwhile addition to your brewing inventory.

- More than 4 uses (some say 6) brings up the mutation issue unless one studies the cells under the scope or washes with acid which is a bit too much for me . . . and before this entire discussion becomes a bit too much I will end it...

As always, if anyone has ANYTHING either pro or con about anything (except my apparel *I will NOT submit to the tyranny of fashion*) please send it on to the Hopline. The more we discuss brewing the better our club will be.

Hank