

Yeast Harvesting: A Novel Approach?

I began washing and harvesting my own yeast about a year ago. I got excited and harvested 4 jars from 4 batches in the first month, leaving me with 16 jars of 4 different yeasts. Since I usually brew twice per month, I had a ton of yeast just sitting in my fridge. After using some of this stored (aka old) yeast in beers that came out less than perfect, I began tossing it - hours of work, down the drain. Then I had an idea - why can't I just harvest clean yeast directly from my starter? After trying out a few techniques, here's the process that seems most efficient:

Step 1: Make a starter (3 days prior to brewing) that is .5 liter larger than you need for your beer. Since the majority of 5 gallon batches require no more than a 1 liter starter, a standard 2000

mL flask or even gallon growler will work great. In the photo below, I needed a 2 L starter for a 10 gallon batch, so I made 2.5 L.



Starter on stirplate

Step 2: A couple days after making your starter, sanitize a 500 mL (1 pint) mason jar using the sanitizer of your choice. I prefer Iodo-phor.

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Next Meeting: Nov 17th, 2012

**Location: Chris Steinkraus' house
6840 N Chestnut Ave
Fresno, CA 93710**

Schedule:

10:00 All Grain Brewing Demo (Dry Stout)

12:00 Club Business

12:30 Style Lecture— Bock (Category 5)

01:00 Open taps

Important: this month is elections for the 2013 board, please come and vote!

Please bring a side dish to share at the potluck and some homebrew or some nice commercial brew to share with the other beer lovers.

Hogtoberfest 2012

Hogtoberfest 2012 was another successful yearly event. There were plenty of people to go along with the great beer and food and of course lots of friends to share with.

Thank you to all who made this even possible and especially Steve and Katheryn Seitz along with Chad Snyder for their awesome BBQ, Joe & Donna Vangroningen for the many things they contributed and Tom Kallos for his DJ work.





Worthog of the year 2012

Worthog of the year 2012 went to the brewer that brewed the best American IPA that was judged by nationally certified judges. That prestigious award went to none other than Sean Woods for his excellent IPA.

Congratulations to Sean, keep making good beer, you just might want to use a smaller glass.

For those interested in becoming the Worthog of the year 2013, start brewing, the first of 4 entries will be due at the January 2013 meeting and will be the category of dry stout (13A).



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Step 3: Fill the sanitized mason jar directly from the starter - if you use a stir plate everything will be in suspension, otherwise shake it up a bit prior to pouring.

As you can see, I poured about 500 mL of wort/slurry from my starter into the mason jar. After just a few minutes, you can already see the creamy white and very clean yeast settling to the bottom of the jar.



Step 4: Place the capped jar in the fridge over night to crash the yeast.

If you plan to use the yeast within a week or so, you can decant the "beer" and pitch directly from this jar. However, if you like to use different yeasts and won't be returning to your freshly harvested yeast for awhile, you will want to store it in a more hospitable environment. Steps 5 and 6 address how to do this.

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Step 5: Fill a 250 mL (1/2 pint) mason jar halfway with tap water then microwave it (without the lid!) for 2 minutes to sterilize and de-oxygenate the water

Remove the very hot jar and put the lid on (using pot holders... it's HOT!), then shake it up to sanitize the lid with the boiling water. Let this sit over night to chill to room temp. I usually do this right after harvesting my yeast from the starter.

Step 6: The next day, decant about 80% of the beer off of the pre-harvested yeast in the larger mason jar, making sure to agitate to release the yeast from the bottom of the jar. Then simply pour the yeast directly into the previously boiled water in the smaller mason jar.

Cap tightly and place in the fridge. Within a couple days you will have very clear water on top of a clean and compact yeast cake. When you want to use this yeast, make a starter as usual, decanting most of the water off the yeast, leaving just enough to help break up the cake.

Some of the benefits I see to this method include:

- The yeast is un-hopped and as clean as it's ever going to be. In fact, this is basically how White Labs and Wyeast grow their yeast.
- Since you're only making one jar of yeast, you won't have to store a ton of yeast (some people won't like this point).
- You don't have to go through the "washing" process, which is a pain in the arse if you ask me.
- You can brew any beer you want, even a barley wine or RIS, and still harvest yeast, as you're getting the yeast prior to it fermenting the beer you will ultimately brew. I guess you will need a pretty large flask, though.

I hope this helps. I've used the same strain multiple times very successfully. I'll never go back to washing yeast again.

Cheers!
Marshall

