

DRAUGHT CARD

April 2008

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Spent Grain - Bluebonnet 2008, Texas

Well Draughters...

The 2008 Bluebonnet Brew-Off awards started off the same way for the third year in a row for our Club. Keith Wright smoked the competition with his Peckerwood Lager. Congrats to Keith for his 1st Place medal and stein with his signature beer. His three year record for Light Lagers is; 2006 - 1st, 2007 - 2nd, 2008 - 1st. Not bad for an Edmond brewer trying to please his Peckerwood card playing buddies. Things slowed down a bit after that, but our good friends up in Tulsa pulled down about 4 medals, including one 1st Place for Pete Polycynski.

All was pretty quiet in the beer categories until the Old Boss came up with some last minute heroics and pulled a 3rd Place medal for his Hot Chile Beer. As the awards progressed into meads and ciders, Mike Kiester garnered a 1st Place medal for his Braggot, which was a mixture of honey, and Keith's Peckerwood Lager. Hey, when looking for success, go with a proven performer. Keith also took 3rd Place in Best of Show.

All in all, a decent showing from the Draughters and our brethren at FOAM. The smallest TX homebrew Club - Red River Brewers, once again had the BBBO Homebrewer of the Year - Richard Dobson, his 3rd HBOY award in a row, and 4th HBOY in 7 years.

A great time was had by all, and that included 20-22 Draughters that made the trek to Dallas - a very fun group indeed. One other thing of note was the work that Charles Weaver did on the new frame that holds the Club banner. We now have a PVC frame of various adjustable heights to hold the banner in place. This is a free standing structure, lightweight, and when wrapped in golden crepe paper, it has the look of beer in the making. Great job!!! Thanks CHARLIE!!!

— Many Thanks to Gary Shellman (Old Boss) for providing editorial on this year festivities at Bluebonnet.



The Grain Mill - Next Meeting

Our next official meeting will be held in April on the 18th at Learn to Brew, time 7:00 to 10:00.

The Schoolmaster will be presenting on Water so bring your pencils and notepads Draughters cause no doubt we could all use a few tips and tricks with this.



Hi, Ho the merry-o a HOP is what we'll grow....:

The hop (*Humulus Lupulus*) is a hardy, perennial plant which produces annual vines from a permanent root stock (crown). Vines may grow up to 25 feet in a single season but will die back to the crown each fall. In addition to the true roots and aerial vine, the crown also produces underground stems called rhizomes. Rhizomes resemble roots but possess numerous buds and are used for vegetative propagation. Thus propagated, all plants of a given variety are genetically identical.

Hops are dioecious, which means they have separate male and female plants. Only the female produces the flowers that are used for brewing or medicinal purposes. Male plants have no commercial value, but are used to pollinate females. Pollination stimulates higher yields by increasing cone size and seed set, but because brewers prefer seedless hops, males are only grown with other wise poor yielding female varieties. Hop seed from a pollinated female is only planted when a cross between the male and female is desired to obtain a new variety.

Hops are native to the temperate zones of the northern hemisphere. They are found wild in western Europe, Asia and certain parts of North America. Commercial hops are generally grown between the 30th and 50th parallel north or south latitude and at various altitudes. Therefore the ability to grow hops is usually not limited by your location on earth. The health of the vine is more dependent on the grower's ability to provide proper growing conditions and care. Under good conditions, hops are a prolific vine, will produce from 1/2 - 2 pounds of dried flowers per plant, and will be a joy to grow and utilize.

Planting

The soil should be tilled to create a weed free area. A strong support system is needed for the plant to climb on. Look for space along fences, garage, or property lines. Plant in early spring once the threat of frost is gone but no later than May. The soil should be worked into a fine, friable condition prior to planting. In cold climates you can plant rhizomes in pots and transplant in June. Plant 1 rhizome per hill with the buds pointed up and cover with 1 inch of loose soil. Hills should be spaced at least 3 feet apart if the hills are of the same variety and 5 feet apart if they are different. The first year the hop plant requires frequent light watering.

Growth Cycle

In this discussion of hops, I will be referring to the female of the species. Being a perennial, the hop lays dormant during winter and is rather unaffected by freezing temperatures. The time of year when the annual vines break ground, when they flower and when they die back is very much determined by local temperature and day length. The vines will not break ground until soil temperatures have risen to the point where most spring flowers appear. A minimum of 120 frost free days are required for the hop to fully ripen a crop of flowers. Once out of the ground the vines need to be supported off of the ground. Vegetative growth continues until approximately mid-July when most hops are either past bloom or in full bloom depending on location and variety.

At this "burr" stage the flower is approximately 1/4 inch in diameter and is composed of many florets whose styles give it a spiny appearance. This is when the flower is receptive to pollen and if males are present, wind-borne pollen will fertilize the female flower and result in a seeded female hop cone. Regardless of pollination, the styles eventually fall off and miniature petals grow which eventually result in a cone-like structure.

Most female flowers develop and ripen predominately between mid-August and mid-September depending on location, weather, and cultural practices. Commercial growers actually delay flowering by removing the earliest vines in the Spring in order to enhance re-growth and encourage a higher yield of flowers. After the flowers ripen, the vine will continue to build reserves until it totally dies back with the first freezes of Fall.

Production

Because hops can produce such a large vine in a matter of months, they will use a large amount of solar energy, water, and nutrients. It is not to say that the hop will not grow under less than optimum conditions, only that the vines will be smaller. Hops prefer full sun and rich soil, preferably light textured, well-drained soil with a pH of 6.5 - 8.0. If drainage is a problem, small mounds can be built using surrounding top soil mixed with organic matter. Because the hop is a perennial, it's not a bad idea to dig holes about one foot deep so that some manure and other slow release organic fertilizers can be mixed with your soil and replaced into the hole. This puts the nutrients in the root zone.

Rhizomes should be planted vertically with the bud pointing up or horizontally about 1" below the soil surface. First year hops have a minimal root system and require frequent short watering much like any baby plant, but do not drown it with too much water. Mulching the soil surface with some organic matter works wonders in conserving moisture as well as helps control weeds. (Continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 3)

Once the hop is established after the first season, less frequent deep watering is best, preferably drip irrigation. Try not to soak the vine during watering, as that will sometimes encourage diseases. Each Spring apply a hearty dose of manure as a top dressing or fertilize with a balanced chemical fertilizer that is recommended for garden vegetables. Don't expect very much in growth or flowers the first year because the hop is basically establishing it's root system. Full growth and maximum crops of flowers will be achieved during the second year.

Pruning

When the young vines are about 1 foot long, 2 to 6 vigorous vines are selected for each hill and the rest removed. 1 to 3 vines are trained clockwise on a string which has been staked to the hill. Hops mainly grow vertically, but lateral side-arms extend from the main vine and produce flowers. The main concern is to support the vines and prevent side-arms from tangling. Most cones are produced on the upper part of the plant.

In July, the lowest 4 feet of foliage and lateral branches can be removed to aid in air circulation and reduce disease development. The removal of lower leaves (stripping) must be done carefully to avoid breaking or kinking the main stem. In August allow additional bottom growth to remain to promote hardiness of the crown and the plant vigor for next year.

At the end of the season you can bury healthy bottom vines for propagating new plants the next spring. Simply bury the vines in a shallow trench and mark their location. In spring dig them up and cut them into pieces about 4 inches long. Make sure each new cutting has an eye or bud.

Spacing and Support

Space between plants varies from country to country and is mainly based on the need to have enough room to allow tractors to get between the rows. In the United States, hops are grown on 7' by 7' grid with an 18 foot tall trellis. In a home garden, the main concern is just to get the vines off the ground and possible to keep different varieties from getting tangled up with each other. Plant mixed varieties at least 5 ft. apart. Identical varieties can be as close as 3 ft. if you don't have much room. Hops mainly grow up if they can, then lateral side-arms extend off of the main vine. Hops don't have to be grown on an 18' trellis. Some of the less vigorous varieties will yield more if they are limited to 10' - 15'.

Actually just about anything over 6 feet will work, the vine will just become bushier. The vines are easiest to grow and deal with if they are trained onto strong twine. This twine can be supported by a trellis wire, pole, tree branch or building. Small diameter poles, lattice and chain link fence also work but require more hand labor. Keep in mind that the vine does die back each Fall. In the First year vines can be established with a 6 foot stake.

Commercial hop farmers do not train up the first shoots of spring but prune them off mechanically. Hardier shoots are trained onto the string about 4 weeks later (early to mid-May in Oregon). Only 2-3 vines should be trained onto each string with 2 strings per plant. All subsequent vines, which can be extensive with older plants should be cut off. Vines are ready to be trained when they are about 12" long and must be gently wrapped clockwise onto the string without kinking. Once trained, the vine will take care of itself unless you want the vine to grow horizontally, this must be done manually.

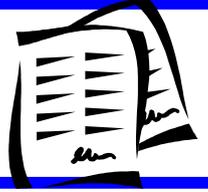
Harvest

Because most hops are produced out of reach from the ground, it is safest to lower the vines in order to pick the hops. The harvest date varies with variety and location but will become evident as you gain experience as a hop grower. At maturity, the hop aroma is at its strongest and is measured by crushing a cone and smelling it. The yellow lupulin glands in the cone become much more evident and plump looking when magnified.

The cone will develop a drier, papery feel and in some varieties a lighter color as it matures. Some browning of the lower bracts is a good sign of ripeness. Squeeze the cones as they develop and you will notice they become more light and resilient rather than green and hard. The actual picking is self-explanatory and this is where you want the flower cones, not the leaves. I don't know why raw hop cones are occasionally called leaf hops, when the idea is to not pick the leaves.

Drying

Drying can be done in a good dehydrator, custom made hop dryer, well vented oven, or they can be air dried. If you use heat, the temperature should not exceed 140 degrees F. Cooler temperatures take longer but a higher quality hop is obtained. Under dry weather conditions, I suggest taking a screen off of your house and setting it up in a wind protected area, elevated on each end. Spread the hops as shallow as possible and fluff daily so moist inner cones are brought to the outside of the pile. If weather is dry and the pile is not too thick they will dry in about three days. A high moisture content in the cones will adversely affect storability and recipe formulation. The hops are dry when the inner stem of the cone (strig) is brittle and breaks rather than bends. The strig takes much longer to dry than the bracts, so be patient. Pack the hops in an air tight container and store in a freezer until used.



YEAR 2008 DUES

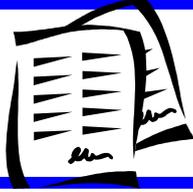
Club dues for the 2008 calendar year are payable at the January meeting. Single dues are \$12 per member, or \$20 gets you the family package. Remember to bring your checkbook Draughters. We use the dues to help defray the cost of room rentals for technical meetings, and for such things as the Club Room at Bluebonnet.

Club T-Shirts and Glasses

Club t-shirts are available for \$11, with a design similar to that seen in the header of the first page. Sizes available range from medium to x-large. Ramrod reports we have several in stock. Club glasses with a gold rim and a golden embossed Draughters emblem are available for \$5 each. There are also several of these in stock. If you want either the shirt, the glass, or both, contact Ramrod (Joel May) or Trail Boss (Dan Shore).

And don't forget to get in touch with Trail Boss if you want in on a "Hops and Barley" Hawaiian shirt.

- www.draughters.com/taproom_okjn9/ currently has 60 users and is growing. Users make an average 3.86 posts per day. Keep it up Draughters.
- **Man 'chose beer over dying girlfriend'** (March 28) - Australia - A MAN attacked his girlfriend and then refused to go to hospital to see her before she died because he had not finished his beer, a Sydney judge has been told.
(<http://www.news.com.au/story/0,23599,23446368-1702,00.html>)
- **Yeast goes wild in Orval Trappist ale** (April 1) - Canada - Without a clumsy duchess, one of the world's great beers might never have been born. Thanks to an overzealous cleaning crew, it was almost killed.
(<http://www.thestar.com/Food/Drinks/article/408765>)
- **Take a Ride Through New Belgium Brewing's New Virtual World** (March 24) - Colorado - New Belgium Brewing invites the world to experience life at the brewery with the click of a mouse. Just log on to www.newbelgium.com, jump on the animated bike and take an interactive tour.
(<http://www.bignews.biz/?id=1511&keys=New-Belgium-Brewery-Beer>)
- **Eight Healthy Reasons To Drink Beer** (March 17) - Forbes - But a number of studies are showing that moderate consumption of alcohol, including beer, can have similar heart healthy effects, including making men 30 to 35% less likely to have a heart attack than those who abstain.
(http://www.forbes.com/lifestyle/2008/03/14/beer-drink-health-forbeslife-cx_avd_0317health.html)
- **The Cellar Wine and Spirits introduces singles.** The Cellar has upped their game and is now offering all normal stock beers as singles. Look for the wall of beer at the back, still in the beer section. It truly is something to behold.
- **Learn To Brew holding "Sensory Analysis" classes.** Being offered at two separate times: April 17th and April 24, at 7:00pm both nights. This class is for anyone who wishes to improve the quality of his or her beer. The class will run approximately 3 hours. Call in advance to check availability of seats. (405) 793-BEER.



MEMBERSHIP & OFFICIALS



Membership Drive

We're always looking for new members. If you know someone who's interested, turn'em on to the www.draughters.com link or bring 'em to a meeting. New faces mean new ideas, recipes, and good times.

The Draughters Want YOU!

We are actively looking for folks like you (yes, you) to enter beers and judge or steward at club-only competitions. A vast amount of experience is not necessary, just a willingness to learn, and participate in a learning experience. What better way to improve your beer-making abilities? What better way to find out how people like your stuff than to share it with friends?

The Draughters Web Site

I hope all Draughters are using the Tap Room section of the web site. It's there for us to use to improve communications among the membership, so please post your thoughts on beer or club-related things. You can jump in as a guest and post a note, or become a registered user and post things. If you want to register, it's not difficult. Next time you're on-site, hit the register button and our Web Masters will set you up.

High Plains Draughters Officers & Tech Support

The officers and technical support personnel of the High Plains Draughters are listed below with contact information. If you e-mail them, make sure the subject line is beer-related or your message might end up in the spam bucket!

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Supply Master - The Brew Shop

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Phone: (405) 528-5193

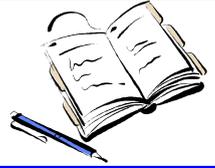
Supply Master - Learn To Brew

Chris Milum
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HIGH PLAINS DRAUGHTERS



2008 MEETING SCHEDULE



January	18th	Robert Burns night and Discussion for Bluebonnet Brew off (BBO) & Brew fest 5. Location TBD, times 7:00 to 10:00
February	15th	Technical meeting lecture TBD, continued discussions for Bluebonnet & Brew fest 5. Location TBD, times 7:00 to 10:00
March	No Meeting	Bluebonnet 2008 dates are the 28 th and 29 th . Location Dallas, Texas. Contact Gary Shellman (Head Examiner) for specific information.
April	18th	Technical meeting lecture on Water. Location: Learn To Brew, Time: 7:00 to 10:00PM.
April		KRXO Brew fest 5 with David Kelso location, date., and time TBD.
May	3rd	Big Brew Day 2008 is the 3 rd . Location Marty and Lillian Thee's, Mustang, Oklahoma, times 11:30 to 6:30.
May	16th	Technical meeting lecture TBD. Location: Learn To Brew, Time: 7:00 to 10:00PM.
June	15th	Technical meeting lecture TBD. Location: Learn To Brew, Time: 7:00 to 10:00PM.
July	No Meeting	
August	No Meeting	Mead Clinic 2 nd . Location TBD, times 12:00 to 4:00'ish
September	19th	Technical meeting lecture TBD. Location: Learn To Brew, Time: 7:00 to 10:00PM.
October	No Meeting	Oktoberfest - Location, Date and Times TBD
November	14th	Technical meeting lecture TBD and officer elections. Location: Learn To Brew, Time: 7:00 to 10:00PM.
December	No Meeting	Annual Christmas party. Location and time TBD.

HIGH PLAINS DRAUGHTERS



CLUB MERCHANDISE



Our Official tasting glass.
12 Ounces, Gold Leaf, \$5.00 each.
(Beer not included)



Official High Plains Draughters Tee
Sizes Medium—X-Large, \$11.00
(Model not included)

HIGH PLAINS DRAUGHTERS

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