



Foeder Crafters of America

Congratulations on your purchase of a foeder! Below is a short guide with best practices for the care of your new vessel. With proper treatment, the foeder will turn out delicious beverages for decades. If you have any questions, please contact us at www.foedercrafters.com.

Set up

As with any handcrafted wood item, there may come a time that the foeder will need a repair. We recommend having a clearance of 18" or the ability to move the vessel for access. The foeder stand can be shimmed a couple degrees toward the dump port to aid draining.

Blowoff

Foeder Rule #1: DO NOT PRESSURIZE! The vessel must be vented at all times, even after fermentation is complete. The best way to vent the foeder is to run the blowoff tube into a sanitary solution, to prevent air ingress. The sprayball must also be removed after use – it can clog very easily and cause pressure buildup.

Filling/hydrating

Once the foeder is in place, it should be filled as soon as possible. A holding solution of 3oz/bbl of powdered citric acid will keep the foeder clean for up to three weeks. If the holding solution will be used longer than three weeks, we recommend adding 1oz/bbl of sodium metabisulfite to the solution.

When preparing to fill the foeder, drain the holding solution and rinse with hot liquor through the sprayball.

Keep the foeder as full as possible – doing a partial fill will allow the tops of the staves to dry. There is no need to flood the top of your foeder; hydration from the inside is sufficient.

Rehydrating

If the vessel has sat empty for an extended period, expect leaks. Don't worry – these leaks should remedy themselves once the vessel is properly hydrated.

The best way to rehydrate the foeder is a 4-hour cycle with a steam generator. However, hot liquor through the sprayball will also work. Recirculate the hot water for a minimum of 8 hours, then refill with water. If you do not have access to hot water, you can run cool water through the sprayball for an extended period (24-48 hours). If you notice any bands out of place, tap the bands back into appropriate location. Once fully hydrated the foeder will grow at least 1" in circumference and the bands will tighten. If the foeder is still leaking after a few days, contact us.

Cleaning

Our clients have used several different methods to clean and/or sanitize their foeder between fills. Strong caustic solutions should be avoided as they will degrade the wood. Here are some methods our clients have used successfully:

- Steam generator: Hot water cycle with the sprayball, followed by heavy steam for at least 6 hours. Steam should be input through the sample port, and the dump valve kept open to drain condensate. **Note for cone-bottom foeders:** fill the cone with cold water prior to steaming. This will prevent the metal from expanding and breaking its seal with the staves.
- Citric acid: 3oz/bbl citric acid solution through the sprayball, followed by a cold water rinse.
- Alcohol: 1gal of bourbon or grain alcohol recirculated through sprayball, followed by a cold water rinse.
- Powdered oxygen bleach: Hot water cycle through sprayball, followed by solution of food safe bleach (such as Acto140) and a cold water rinse.

If for some reason the foeder develops mold or black metal stains on the interior, use the same cleaning methods as above. The buildup can be scrubbed clean or sanded off.

If rust develops on the manway or stainless parts, they can be lightly sanded and spot-passivated.

Exterior maintenance

If outside develops mold, mildew, or black stain (caused by reaction of metal and liquid) it is safe to remove with an alcohol based cleaner and a scrub brush. If the stains are severe, a light sanding may be in order – contact us for matching stain. Please try to avoid sitting water. Good air circulation from a fan will prevent growth in most cases.