

Installing a Package of Bees

Getting Ready:

1. Have your equipment ready-put together and painted and make sure that you have a feeder.
2. Have the spot picked out where your hive will reside
3. Have your hive stand in place-good ideas to remember are-keep it fairly low-as your hive gets tall it can be hard to manipulate. Good choices are cement blocks, cement pavers or Cecil likes to use pressure-treated timbers used in landscaping.
4. You'll need a small flat piece of wood or a piece cardboard that's about 6" by 6".
5. You may need a piece of duct tape or a tack to fasten your queen cage into the hive.
6. Have a spray bottle with sugar syrup ready. The syrup should be 1:1 by weight so that is 1 part water to 1 part sugar. You could just make up enough to add to your feeder since you'll need to feed your bees immediately. A four-pound bag of sugar to 4 lb. of water (1/2 gallon) is the correct mixture. Over the next month you should plan to feed your bees until the second hive body is completely drawn out. Quit feeding when you add your honey supers.
7. You will need your protective clothing and your hive tool. But you won't need your smoker until your next visit.

Taking care of your package until you can install it—

1. Check the feed in the can. The can is located in the center of your package. If you are not installing your package right away and your feed can is empty or low you need to take a spray bottle filled with syrup and spray your package with syrup. Be generous with the syrup but don't drown them.
2. Keep your package cool. Heat will kill a package of bees so fast. Keep it either in a cool garage or basement. Away from direct heat. If you have several packages spread them out. The packages of bees generate so much heat that they can over heat. Keep at least a foot (between each one. Inches)
3. It is normal for there to be some dead bees when you get your package if you have more than 1" of dead bees or your queen is dead on arrival call your bee supplier immediately and they will tell you how to proceed.

Okay now you are ready!

1. You are going to start with your bottom board, entrance reducer, 1 hive body, 10 frames, feeder, inner cover and lid. Set it upon your hive stand and remove the lid, inner cover and half of the frames.
2. Spray your bees with sugar syrup then bounce your package so the bees fall to the bottom of the package.
3. With your hive tool, pry out the metal can, set it aside.
4. Your queen is hanging, usually by a metal tab, in a queen cage. Remove the queen cage and the small group of bees hanging onto the cage. Now take a piece of cardboard or put your can back in to keep the rest of the bees from flowing out of the package. Let's get the queen in the hive before you put the rest of the bees in.
5. Check to make sure that your queen is moving—a sure sign that she is alive. Many U-tube videos and other websites will tell you to release your queen immediately. But I'm not going to tell you that and this is the reason why. These bees are a combination of bees from many colonies and they are not used to this queen yet. They have only been with her for a few days and they've been traveling in various weather conditions. Nothing normal to their way of life. You will be more successful if you

leave your queen cage with the cork still in it for 3-4 days. Honest, trust me on this. If the cage has candy DO NOT POKE A HOLE IN IT to release the queen sooner. Honest, trust me on this.

Hang the queen cage between two frames in the center of your hive-say between frames 4 &5. You want to make sure that the screen is either facing down toward the floor of the hive or out between two frames so that the bees and get to her to feed her and get used to her pheromones. See the examples below.





Now push your frames together -the bees will still be able to get to your queen to feed her. Make sure to put all of the frames back in—all 10 will fit with the queen cage in there.

6. Now bump your package again on the ground so the bees drop to the bottom and either remove your can or take off your piece of card board now you can just shake the bees into the empty space (shake some bees on top of your queen cage) in the hive where you removed your frames or you can set the package in that space and let the bees walk out. Either way works. If shaking, shake out as many bees as you can and then set the empty package in front of your hive and the last few bees will go into the hive. If you used the setting the package in the hive method go back the next day and remove the package and put in the rest of the frames. Push them all close together.
7. If you used the shake method, put your frames back in so that you have all 10 frames in (or eight if using 8 frame equipment) push your frames close together, feed your bees with whatever method you are using and put in your entrance reducer to the smallest entrance. If using an entrance feeder, then block your entrance with a brick or something so it isn't completely open.
8. Leave this hive alone for 3 or 4 days (except to feed). On the 3rd or 4th day go into the hive take out the frame that the queen cage is attached to. Using a small nail or pocket knife, take out the cork. Hold your finger over the hole until you are ready to release her. You can either hold the cage down into the hive and let her walk out or let her walk out onto the frame that you took out. If she flies, just stand there with the hive open. She'll usually come right back down into the open hive. Put your hive back together and leave the hive alone for at least 7 days, except to feed. Between 7 and 10 days you can go into your hive and look for eggs and young larvae! Always dress in your protective clothing and from now on use your smoker. If you see eggs and larvae-voila, you have a colony!
9. It is during this visit when you find your queen is laying and you have no sealed brood that we recommend that you treat with the oxalic dribble

Oxalic Dribble Treatment for Package Bees

Randy Oliver-Scientific American <http://scientificbeekeeping.com/oxalic-acid>

Winter broodless application **Oxalic acid is well researched for a Fall/Winter broodless application, or can be used in colonies made broodless by manipulation—such as (1) to treat package bees, or (2) to make “clean” nucs. Accurately measure 3-5ml of 3.5% w:w solution per seam of bees, and treat one time only, or you can harm your colonies. E.g., for a colony with 10 frames covered with bees, dribble a total of 30-50 ml of solution. Mite kill is 90% or greater!**

Be absolutely sure to calibrate your sprayer output to about 5ml per second. Unless you do, I guarantee that you will over apply it! Recheck from time to time.

<http://scientificbeekeeping.com/oxalic-acid-treatment-table/>

For packages, I suggest that you give any package a similar oxalic dribble treatment prior to Day 8 after installation (at which time varroa can begin to “hide” in the sealed brood). If the nuc has not been treated, I suggest the application of either a Hopguard II strip (considered an “organic” treatment, but less effective), or an Apivar strip (synthetic, but highly effective, since our mites have not previously been exposed to amitraz).

Brushy Mountain:

HOW CAN IT BE USED TO TREAT?

There are three approved methods to treat with Oxalic Acid:



Solution Method:

Note: To completely dissolve Oxalic Acid Dihydrate, use warm syrup.

Dissolve 35g of Oxalic Acid Dihydrate in 1 liter of 1:1 sugar water (weight : volume). Smoke bees down from the top bars. With a syringe or an applicator, trickle 5 ml of this solution directly onto the bees in each occupied bee space in each brood box. The maximum dose is 50ml per colony whether bees are in NUCs, single, or multiple brood chambers.

Alternatively, you could use powdered sugar to remove varroa from your package-Remove the queen from the package and your syrup can. Way far away from your hive (because the varroa will crawl to the hive) sprinkle in about a ½ cup of powdered sugar into your package cage, put your syrup can back in and roll the package to distribute the sugar. Set the package. Let it sit for a few minutes. Roll it around again and shake the package with the screen side down and the mites should fall through the screen. If you shake over a piece of white paper you should see them. This was a method suggested by Jerry Hayes at our Kansas Honey Producers meeting-

Note: do not set the queen in the sun while you do this!!!