

Introducing Queens

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Early Queens

- To get early April queens, they must come from a warmer climate
 - Southern queens could have Africanized genes
 - Warm climate queens may not produce brood best for our colder climate
- Early May is about the earliest you can expect locally produced queens
 - Must have a good supply of drones to mate with
 - Cold wet weather can further delay queen production

Types of Queens

- Italian
- Minnesota Hygienic
- Russian
- New World Carniolians
- Buckfast
- Cardovan
- VSH (varroa sensitive hygiene)

Quality Queens

Resistance and Genetics

- What makes a quality queen
 - Natural resistance
 - Varroa resistance can be good if all Russian
 - Hygienic behavior
 - Ability of bees to detect disease in brood and remove that brood
 - Gentle
 - High honey production

Why Re-Queen

- Want to improve honey production
- **Want gentler bees**
- Want more resistance bees
- Want more hygienic bees
- Suspect queen is getting old
 - Low brood production

Queens Cages



Handling the Caged Queen

- Important: Avoid keeping queen cages in any room where pesticides are used, especially "NO PEST STRIPS"
- Also avoid leaving in sunshine. Keep at 65° - 80° F and avoid breezes
- For each day the queen is not installed in a hive, place one drop of water on mesh

Installing Queens

- Colonies tend to accept a queen quicker in a honey flow
 - Can be simulated by feeding 1 to 1 sugar syrup a week before introducing the new queen
- The old queen MUST be located and removed
- Check frames for swarm or supercedure cells and remove
- Allow hive to be queen-less overnight

Finding the Queen

- Use as little smoke as possible
- Queen will likely be on frames where eggs can be laid
- Carefully look over the frames with brood and open cells where she can lay eggs
- Look for frames with eggs
- If still no queen, check on side walls of brood box

Still Cannot Find The Queen

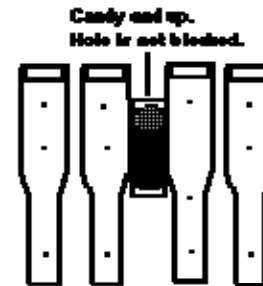
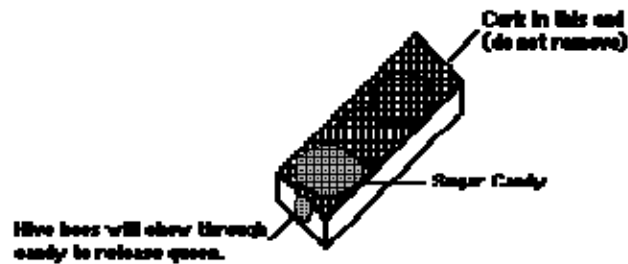
- Alternative method using two brood boxes
 - If already using two brood chambers, make sure most brood is in the lower box
 - Remove bees from box with least or no brood
 - Smoke the bees
 - Brush the bees from the frames
 - Sharp tap of frames on box with most brood
 - If not already there, place brood box with brood on bottom board

Alternative Method - continued

- Start removing frames with brood and shaking or brushing bees back into the box on bottom board
- After you have removed most of the frames with brood, place a queen excluder on the box sitting on the bottom board
- Then place the box with frames of brood but limited bees on top of the queen excluder
- Let the hive alone for a few hours
 - Most of the bees will move up to the brood but queen will be kept below excluder making it easier to locate her

Installing Queens

- If the queen cage has a cork in the candy end, remove it
 - Do not remove the cork from the other end which releases the queen immediately



Frames with Brood

- If no brood is present, place in the middle of the cluster

After Installation

- Bees should chew through the candy in about 3 days which releases the new queen
- I like to check in about 7 to 10 days to see if I can locate the released queen and find eggs or small larva curled up in bottom of cell