



The Managed Mentoring Program on getting started in beekeeping.

# Managed Mentoring



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## Spring Feeding

Lesson | Feeder Types and Process



# What is Covered in this Module

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Spring Sugar Solution

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Filling Internal Feeders

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Feeding in the Spring

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Avoid Overfeeding

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Volume and Timing

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Providing Water

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# Spring Feeding

**Feeder Use and Instructions**



# Mixing Sugar Solution

## □ Spring Feed is a 1:1 Ratio

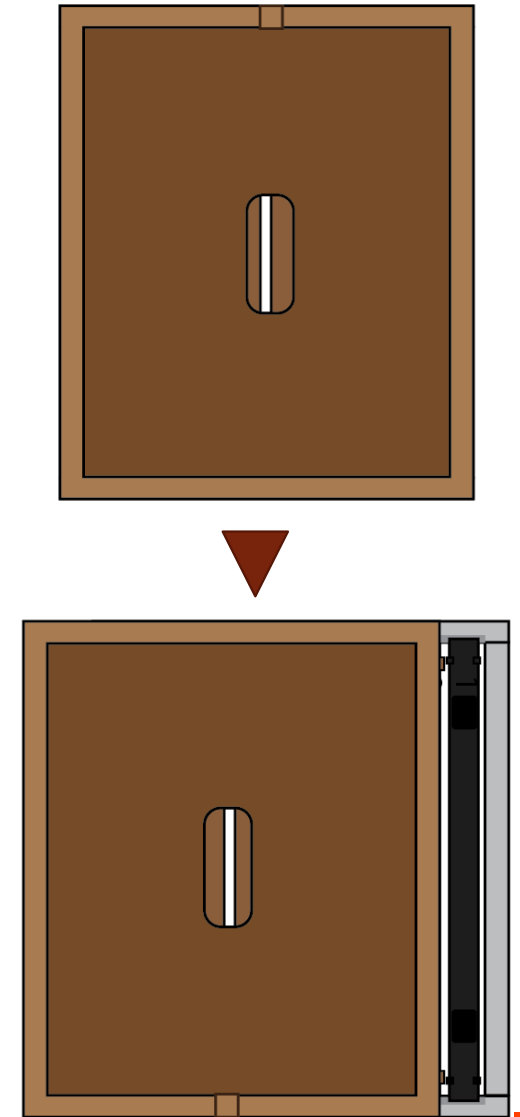
- *One part water and One part Sugar*
  - By weight or volume, it does not matter
- *Making up your solution*
  - Mix warm water and sugar until the sugar is dissolved
  - Move into vessels that are conducive for conveyance and pouring
  - Make up only what you will use in the short term
    - If it is left to long, especially in warm weather, it will grow mold, ferment, and spoil
    - Bees will not take to cold or spoiled solutions



# Feeding the bees

## *Minimal interruption*

- **Feeding 1:1 solution in the inner feeder**
  - Have everything ready; staged
  - Light the smoker, put your gear on.
  - Lightly smoke the entrance
  - Wait a 5 count, remove the roof, smoke in hole.
  - Using your hive tool, pry up the inner cover
  - Move the inner cover to expose the feeder, but leave it covering the top bars
  - Fill the feeder. Slide the inner cover back.
  - Return the roof, being careful not to crush any bees



# Feeding in spring

## *Feeding during the nectar flow*

- **What of feeding during a flow?**
  - Keep doing it.
    - *It is said that bees prefer nectar over sugar solution*
    - *Sometimes the bees will not take syrup and sometimes they will.*
      - In spring, with an active nectar flow, they may ignore it altogether.
  - Why are we feeding in the first place?
    - *Sugar solution and/or nectar provides carbohydrates*
    - *Bees need significant carbs to build comb and fill reserves*



# Feeding in spring

*Feeding during  
the nectar flow*

- **What of feeding pollen?**
  - What about pollen substitutes/supplements?
    - *It is not necessary.*
    - *There is plenty of pollen at this time of year*
    - *Natural pollen is far superior then what you'll feed, especially in the spring.*
  - If you insist
    - If you do put pollen patties on, keep them small – deck of cards sized.
    - Just place it on the top frame, **right over the brood nest.**
      - Make sure the inner cover sits flush on the rim of the hive body





# Switching from Inner to Top Feeder

## Mann Lake Style

- **We recommended the Mann Lake feeder**
  - Can feed from the top of the hive, no need to open
  - We recommend you switch to this **when the weather is consistently warmer**
    - *It is the right time if you consider the weather will not chill the food so much that the bees will not take it.*
    - *It replaces the inner cover and sits directly on the hive*
  - Use of the feeder
    - *Take the outer cover off*
    - *Fill with liquid; careful not to spill*
    - *Return cover*
    - *Do not overfill. Recall that you have to take it off to inspect the bees*

Photo Credit  
Mann Lake Co.



Note: You can put your inner cover above it.  
Be sure to close off the notch and hole though to prevent robbing



# Mann Lake Feeder

*It can get heavy...  
Syrup can go bad...*





# Arizona Ice Tea Jugs





## ❑ Too much of a good thing

- *It is possible to over feed bees*
  - When this happens, the bees will store excess in the brood area
  - This will stunt the colony as the queen will have no place to lay
- *Inspect for over feeding*
  - When you see your brood nest loaded with nectar/sugar solution slow down or pause your feeding.
  - Bees recover from this quickly, and you can resume feeding – just slow down what you are giving them.
- *What does it look like*
  - Nectar in the cell looks like hard, black shiny glass





# What does it look like?

*Backfilling the brood area*





# Way too much of a good thing

*This beekeeper wanted to know why their hive swarmed*



The poor queen was isolated to the top of the frame in this case.





# When and How Much?

- **Quart a week, then check progress**
  - Assume you are putting bees in the box when the best nectar flow period is going. Do you need to feed?
    - *If there are flowers on tree, the answer for us in NJ is no.*
  - If you are feeding, how much and how often
    - *Gallons are not required. We saw what the problem is there.*
    - *If you are going to feed, consider how big the colony is and how much could they really need!*
    - *A quart to start, then up it if they are not backfilling.*
    - *Be patient or risk problems from overfeeding*
    - *As the nectar flow tapers off (<July 4<sup>th</sup>) then you can feed more if they are behind.*



# Where to get Sugar

- **Supermarkets, Wholesale Stores, other**
  - Some simply by sugar at their local grocery stores
  - Other opt to head to the sugar isle at their local Costco, Walmart, Restaurant Stores, Sams Club, Beekeeping supply houses, and more.
    - *They sell larger quantities, often at discounted prices*
    - *Some of them offer a large enough discount to possibly even warrant a membership*
  - Each community is different, and some have luck at local bakeries.





# How Long am I going to feed?

- **Two full boxes built out, and then some**
  - At least until the two boxes are fully built out
    - *Then, depending on when this is done, you may want to try to have them build comb in a medium honey super*
  - Ballpark finish date > July
    - *Estimates of how long this takes is not hard and fast.*
    - *Each colony grows like a child – at a different rate.*
    - *Ideally, we will get colonies built out before the summer dearth in early to mid July.*



# Giving Bees Water

## Reminder

- **Water is critical for bees**
  - *If there is no natural nearby water source, provide water*
    - We recommend a bucket with holes and floaties
    - Place in 30 yards or so from the hive
  - *Feed water at the entrance*
    - You can provide water at the entrance
    - The only good use for a boardman feeder
  - *Early has an added benefit*
    - Do this early and bees will come to your water source, not your neighbors
    - Consider some salt or fragrant oils.
      - Enough salt so that the water has just a touch of salty taste to you.



# Closing Comments

## ■ Customary Close

- Where we stand, where we are going...
  - *This lesson hits the highlights of feeding a new colony. We will have some more feeding guidance as the year goes on. Our next topic takes us to some items to look after as the hive progresses to summer.*
    - Record Keeping
    - Equipment Prep for Future
    - Graduating from one box to two
    - The Calendar of Summer



# Q&A

- **What Questions did we not anticipate?**
  - If you have feedback, you can leave a constructive comment; but be nice.
  - You could also send an email to [comments@managedmentoring.com](mailto:comments@managedmentoring.com)
    - *Please refer to this video in the subject so we know what the reference is.*

