



A Beginner's Guide to Keeping
Bees Thriving in the Boston Area

Beekeepers School

BABA Beekeeper's School 2026



BABA Beekeeping School

Week Four Setup





What is Covered in this Lesson

- Week 3 Recap
- Announcements
- Agenda
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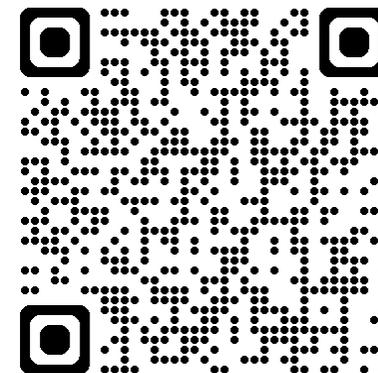
Welcome to Week 4

□ Week Four

- Week three Recap
 - Colony Bees, Queen, Drones, and Workers
 - Sourcing and Selecting Bees
 - Packages and Nucs
 - Apiary Design
- The focus was on learning about the inhabitants of the colony, procuring bees, and setting up your apiary



Presentation Materials



- **Presentation Materials Available**
 - Presentations can be accessed at this link
<https://managedmentoring.com/baba-bee-school>
- **Presentation Access Going Forward**
 - Each week the presentations will be added to that page
 - As we start each week, the weeks lessons will be available



This weeks Agenda

- **Colony Growth and Operations**
 - This week we focus on **local and state regulations**
 - We overview **installing packages and Nucs**
 - We will overview the equipment needed as you progress
 - We will finish with **the finer points of performing a hive inspection**



- **Questions**

Q&A





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Bringing Bees into the Community

Lesson | Adherence to Regulations



What is Covered in this Lesson

Adherence to Regulations

Proximity to Others

Education & Registration Requirement

NJ Cottage Law

Right of Inspection

Management Requirements

Beekeeper Responsibilities

Resource Links

Own It

- **The responsibility is Yours**
 - It is incumbent upon the beekeeper to learn and adhere to laws and regulations.
 - It is better to do this up front, and not get into uncomfortable situations

- **Strive to be defensible**
 - If you do not follow rules, you cannot count on allies to help you.

Comb Examination

Modern, Moveable, Frame Hives

□ Hives must permit inspection

- This is commonplace in the U.S.
 - It is customary that hives must allow for thorough inspection of every comb.
- Primarily.... Inspection is for detection of, and determination of the presence of bee diseases.

Since we recommend you start with Langstroth Style hives. This will mean all hives are compliant.

Hive Density

Number of hives on the property

This is shared to demonstrate that there should be common sense about how many colonies you host

- **Starting out, you should only have two hives**
 - We have already stated that two is the preferred number for various reasons
- **It is common that regulations dictate how many hives one can have on a property**
 - In NJ there is a regulation that stipulates colony density:
 - 1/4 acre or less – No more than 3 colonies
 - 1/2 acre or less – No more than 6 colonies
 - 3/4 acres or less – No more than 9 hives
 - 1 acre or less – No more than 12 hives and so on....



The guidance to follow comes from this Ordinance Document

An Ordinance Regulating the Keeping of Honey Bees

Be it ordained by the City of Boston, as follows:
SECTION 1.

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, Chapter 16, Section 1.27, shall be created as follows;

16-1.27 Honey bees

a. Purpose

- i. The purpose of this ordinance shall be for the regulation and enforcement of keeping honey bees.

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a. Purpose

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b. Definitions

- i. Hive - a manufactured receptacle or container prepared for the use of Honey bees that includes movable frames, combs and substances deposited into the Hives by honey bees.
- ii. Honey bee - a subset of bees in the genus *Apis*, primarily distinguished by the production and storage of honey and the construction of perennial, colonial nests out of wax.
- iii. Colony - means a natural group of honey bees having a queen or queens.

c. Registration; Fee

- i. Keeping of honey bees shall require registration with the Inspectional Services Department pursuant to the regulations set forth in Section 16-1.27(d).
- ii. The application fee shall be twenty-five (\$25.00) dollars.

d. Regulations

- i. The maximum number of Hives on any given lot or roof shall be five (5).
- ii. No Hive shall exceed six (6) feet in height and twentyfour (24) cubic feet in size on any lot or roof. No Hive will be placed on a roof that is not designed, intended and permitted by ISD for access and occupancy.
- iii. Where there is a wall, fence or similar barrier between the subject property and adjacent property, no setback from the property line is required. Where there is no wall, fence or similar barrier between subject property and adjacent property, Hives shall be set back five (5) feet from the property line.
- iv. Hives shall not be located in the front yard or in a side yard that abuts a street in all residential and commercial zoning districts and subdistricts.
- v. No Hive shall be located closer than ten (10) feet from a public sidewalk.
- vi. For any ground level Hive that is within twenty (20) feet of the doors and/or windows of the principal building on an abutting Lot, either of the following conditions must exist:
 1. The Hive opening must face away from doors and/or windows; or
 2. A flyway of at least six (6) feet in height comprising of a lattice fence, dense hedge or similar barrier must be established in front of the opening of the Hive such that the honey bees fly upward and away from neighboring properties. The flyway shall be located within three (3) feet

Hive Density

Boston

- **The maximum number of Hives on any given lot or roof shall be five (5).**
 - No Hive shall exceed six feet in height and twenty-four cubic feet in size on any lot or roof.
 - No Hive will be placed on a roof that is not designed, intended and permitted by ISD for access and occupancy.
 - Hives shall be set back six feet from the edge of the roof.

ISD = Inspectional Services Department (City of Boston)

Setbacks Boston

- **Setback Stipulations**
 - **Where there is a wall**, fence or similar barrier between the subject property and adjacent property, no setback from the property line is required.
 - **Where there is no wall**, fence or similar barrier between subject property and adjacent property, Hives shall be set back **five feet** from the property line.

Property Placement Boston

- **Property Placement**
 - Hives shall not be located in the front yard or in a side yard that abuts a street in all residential and commercial zoning districts and subdistricts.
 - No hive shall be located closer than **ten feet** from a public sidewalk.

Ground Level Placement Boston

- **Ground Level Placement**
 - For any **ground level hive** that is within **twenty feet** of the doors and/or windows of the principal building on an abutting Lot, either of the following conditions must exist:
 - The Hive opening **must face away** from doors and/or windows;
 - Or a flyway of at least **six feet** in height must be established in front of the opening of the hive such that the honeybees fly upward and away from neighboring properties.

Roof Placement Boston

□ Roof Placement

- For any **roof level hive** within **twenty feet** of the doors and/or windows of the principal building on an abutting lot, either of the following conditions must exist:
 - The Hive opening **must face away** from doors and/or windows;
 - Or a flyway of at least **six feet** in height must be established in front of the hive so the honeybees fly upward, and away from neighboring properties, and safely secured.

Ground & Roof Flyways Boston

- **Flyway Placement**
 - The flyway shall be located within **three feet** of the entrance to the Hive
 - It shall extend at least **two feet** in width on either side of the Hive opening.
 - It will be comprised of a lattice fence, dense hedge or similar barrier

Terminology

Flyway: Typically, this refers to some form of barrier placed in front of the hive entrance

The premise of a flyway is that the bees will have to fly up and over the barrier

Note: Bees once up at a certain height, of remain that high as they fly away from the hive

Beekeeping Practices Boston

- **Beekeepers shall adhere to appropriate beekeeping practices including:**
 - Maintaining bee colonies in hives that are kept in good working condition.
 - Ensure a constant and adequate **water** source.
 - Responding and taking immediate action as to any bee swarms
 - Seeking to remediate any nuisance conditions.

Applicable Laws Boston

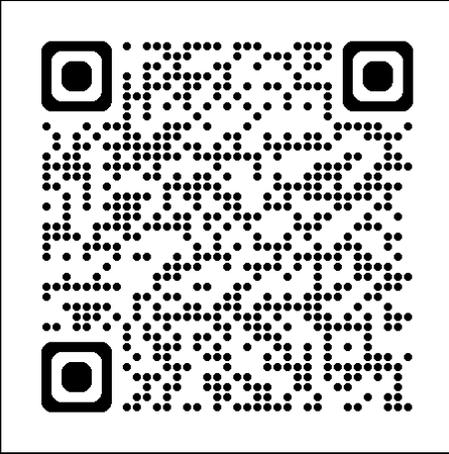
- **All beekeeping shall comply with applicable State laws and regulations.**
 - Nothing about this ordinance is intended to waive or amend the requirements of CBC 9-9.13 Regulating Access to Roof Areas of Buildings with Residential Units.
 - To the extent the provisions of this ordinance conflict, CBC 9-9.13 shall control.

General Adherence to Regulations and Laws Massachusetts

- **Be Defensible – Know the applicable regulations**
 - No matter where you are, Boston, or any of the surrounding area, know the applicable regulations
 - Know before you start
 - Consider seeking guidance from State and Local associations first
 - *Knowledge of experience often shows that...*
 - Asking municipal officials is often an exercise in frustration and can lead to complicated situations when they are forced to address questions, questions they do not have answers to
 - The Boston Rules are enforced by the **Boston Zoning Commission**, and they can be sought for clarity on stipulations

Community Density

- **Consider the Neighborhood**
 - Supporting hives peppered around the community
 - One might be surprised, at the number of hives tucked in and around properties these days
 - Consider the hive density of beekeepers keeping bees in the neighborhood, in the context of forage available.
 - Be considerate of established Commercial Yards
 - Commercial operators often prefer that local beekeepers not crowd their established apiaries.
- **Common Sense**
 - If a situation seems forced, consider other options.



Apiary Registration

- **Yards registrations are typical**
 - Initial, and then Annual renewal is often required
 - MASS bee registration is voluntary, but 'highly recommended'.
 - The City of Boston is adopting a hive registration process
 - It is important that you know the information and adhere to it
 - [Apiary and Colony Registration Form | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/forms/apiary-and-colony-registration-form)
<https://www.mass.gov/forms/apiary-and-colony-registration-form>

Adherence to Cottage Laws

- **Cottage Laws**
 - Many locations have Cottage Law legislation that impacts beekeepers
 - Mass Cottage laws **do not apply to unprocessed honey**
 - Additives to honey will likely be subject to cottage (aka Retail Food Sale) laws and oversight
 - Example, mixing in nuts, garlic, spices (like cinnamon, etc.), fruits, seeds, flavorings – *these are all likely subject to cottage law rules*
 - If you venture into **production of, and sale of, products** of the hive you could be subject to oversight by the state's cottage law.
 - Recommend you **do some research** – starting with your local beekeeper's association

Education Requirement

- **Some areas have education requirement**
 - For Example, state law in New Jersey requires you take training within one year of hosting bees
 - Training will consist of a beginner/general beekeeping course from an accredited college or university, the State Apiarist, or a local beekeeping club
 - Review your local area stipulations to see if there is a requirement and if you meet it
 - Chances are this course will fit the bill

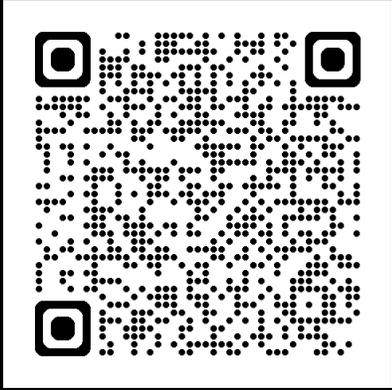
Right of Inspection

- **Apiary Inspectors can inspect (laws vary)**
 - Laws are in place to allow apiary inspectors permission to access apiaries for inspections.
 - Often the officer or agent can come on your property to inspect – they do not need permission.
 - It could be illegal for you to interfere with their duties.
 - Additionally, they often have the right to ask you to provide necessary paperwork and enforce laws for conduct in the operation.
 - Marked hives, recordkeeping, training, etc.

Other Requisites

Colony Oversight

- **In all there are stipulations for oversight of colonies beyond the Boston Ordinance**
 - You must address colonies that are shown to have American Foul Brood
 - It is a requirement to report the colonies if AFB is found
 - There are stipulations for management during transport, especially across state lines and for bees that are sold
 - In some places colonies must be adorned with an ownership tag or mark so if something comes up the owner can be contacted



Bee Sale Certificates

- **Sellers of bees likely have rules**
 - It would address shipping bees, raising bees, etc.
 - This is more germane for you **as a purchaser**

When purchasing bees, know that:

- Many states have laws that require the seller to hold a certificate if they are selling you bees
 - The certificate ensures that they have been inspected
 - It also assures that the operation was free of disease at the time of inspection.

<https://www.mass.gov/forms/shipment-notification-of-honey-bees-and-beekeeping-equipment>

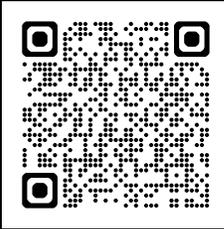
Beekeeper Responsibility

- **It is on the beekeeper to comply**
 - It is incumbent upon the individual to learn and follow applicable rules.
 - This module was not meant to be comprehensive; it was designed to be illustrative to the more common laws and regulations that one will find.
 - Before getting started, **and periodically**, one should invest the time to become familiar with applicable laws.

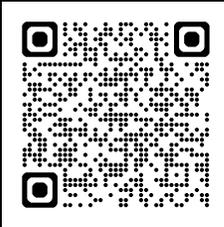
Your local beekeeping association and state apiarists are good resources for consultation and clarification.



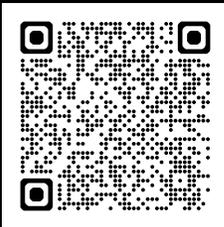
Laws



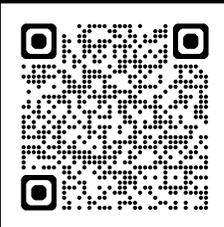
Regulations



Mass. Beekeepers Assoc.



Honey Bee Health Coalition



□ Massachusetts Resources

- There are no state laws or regulations that permit or prohibit beekeeping
- There are state [laws](#) and [regulations](#) that pertain to honeybees and beekeeping – *See QR codes to the left*
- There may be local rules or ordinances for your town/city that pertain to honey beekeeping so inquire with your local government office to learn more.
- To learn more about the basics of apiary establishment, check out these Best Management guides from the [Massachusetts Beekeepers Association](#) and the [Honey Bee Health Coalition](#). *See QR Codes to the left*

- **USA State and Territory Laws and Regs**
 - The Apiary inspector of America provide a web page with links to each state's laws

Web Address:

<https://apiaryinspectors.org/state-laws>

MASS Apiary Program Page Resources:

<https://www.mass.gov/apiary-program-honey-bees>

**More
Resources**

- Questions

Q&A





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Bringing Bees into the Community

Lesson | Being Good Neighbors

What is Covered in this Lesson

Placing Bees

Respecting Setbacks

Adherence to Regulations

Avoiding Contentious Situations

Planning Colony Flight

Being Neighborly

Alternative Hosting Options

"Bee" a Good Neighbor

Placing Bees

- Taking a moment to consider the impact of bringing bees into a place **where they were not.**

Placing Bees

Honeybees are everywhere we live

- **Bringing Bees into a property is a conscious decision**
 - When you make the choice, you introduce something into the landscape in a scale that was not there before.
 - This requires some consideration / evaluation
 - Bees are not domesticated, and part of their existence is to seek resources, to forage.
 - They will not be constrained to your property
 - As such, it is wise to stop and consider how they will impact the ecosystem around you.

Plan for Flight Paths

- **Route your bees in the best way**
 - Part of being neighborly is understanding where your bees will fly
 - Consider the adage: **Out of sight, out of mind.**
 - Bees often fly toward the sun or open sky
 - Think of where they will fly...
 - Will they fly over your neighbor's pool or patio?
 - Will they be flying over a nearby sidewalk?
 - Will they be flying over, and pooping on automobiles
 - Employ barriers (Flyway fences) to direct bees up and over, if applicable.
 - Be neighborly and do not force a situation.

Considering your neighbor relationships

- **Relationships vary**
 - The first thing to consider is that people have different notions about bees; and that they are stinging insects
 - Some who may be the most rational individuals you interact with react negatively when it comes to phobias about bees.
 - Make a disclosure decision: open, moderate, or closed
 - You can decide if it is right to openly share your plan to keep bees on the property
 - No matter what your plan is however; safety comes first and if there is a risk to family or neighbors, the right thing to do is to take the high road.

Considering your neighbor relationships

- **Discretion**
 - Reactions to news of a neighbor deciding to keep bees runs the gamut.
 - Some are thrilled and welcome the prospect.
 - And some truly feel threatened and disdain the presence.
 - You should weigh the perceptions on a case-by-case basis.
- **You are within your rights but consider:**
 - **A bad neighbor relationship does not get better with added friction.**
 - Bad situations sometimes blow up, causing scrutiny on local/municipal levels for other beekeepers.

Being Neighborly

- **Final comments**
 - Being a good steward of bees, especially as it relates to your neighborhood is about awareness
 - Consider the impacts and make the right choices.
 - Educate yourself on the biology of the livestock in your care and learn the behaviors and patterns of bees in a location
 - Follow recommended practices, adhere to guidelines, and take the high road when it comes to your choices.
 - Use the opportunity to promote beekeeping and pollinators
 - In time it will be likely that you will become known as the resident expert in the neighborhood

- **Questions**

Q&A





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Package Installation into Hive Equipment

Lesson | Package Transport & Installation



What is Covered in this Lesson

Transport Prep

Handling Packages

Driving with Stray Bees

Staging Bees

Install Preparations

No Need to Treat Packages

Install Overview

Install Instructions

Post Installation Care



Package Installation Cadence

- **Several important considerations in the overall process**
 - Package Ordering
 - Package Pickup & Transport
 - Holding Package (when required)
 - Package Installation

Let's walk through
some of the
details so you can
plan



Ordering Packages

- **Find a vendor; make your purchase**
 - How it typically progresses
 - A provider brings a trailer load of packages up from the south
 - You get in with others to buy the packages
 - You meet up with others by driving to a pickup point
 - You pay ahead of time (or sometimes hold on deposit)
 - You pick up your package(s) and transport them back to your apiary

Consider the logistics before you sign on (cost, date, time, location, etc.)

Do this early

Sometimes demand is high, and you would need to secure your spot in the order



Considerations for Stray Bees

- **Prep supplies to secure the packages in your vehicle**
 - Payment
 - Bring payment as required
 - Tape, straps, bee suit, water spray bottle, etc.
 - Tape to close off any unexpected holes
 - Straps to hold things down in transit
 - Water, with some sugar, to spray on bees as needed



Considerations for Stray Bees

- **Anticipate loose bees hanging around**
 - It is almost a guarantee that bees will be loose and flying in the area where bees are being distributed
 - There are almost always stray bees
 - Consider Netting (Garment bag works)
 - Maybe consider a large garment bag your package in
 - Cinch it up, brush off any strays, and place in your vehicle.





Pickup and Transport

- **Pickup, Pay, Secure, and Transport**
 - Place the bees with consideration in your vehicle
 - If you are placing them in the interior
 - Give space for some airflow.
 - Do not place them tight to each other, as heat collects together where they touch. If they are nestled together, they can overheat on long rides.
 - Bees are like little heaters; they can generate a lot of heat and need airflow for excess heat to dissipate.
 - Avoid Vibrations and Loud Noises
 - Avoid swaddling them and closing them off from refreshing air.

Direct Transport

Do your best to
to drive straight
through from
pickup to your
destination



Pickup and Transport

Avoid leaving bees in a vehicle while you stop off to do something

Do your best to plan to drive straight through to your destination

- **Pickup, Pay, Secure, and Transport**
 - Place the bees with consideration in your vehicle
 - Interior Temperature
 - Temps vary and if the car is hot inside (warm day), ensure it is well ventilated and comfortable. Consider air conditioner and open windows if it is hot inside.
 - If in a pickup bed
 - Keep them covered and protected from drafts
 - Of course, be sure to secure them during transport



Install Right Away if Possible

□ Install in a Timely Manner

- For various reasons, quick installation is recommended
- The longer the bees are in the box, the lower the success post installation
 - It is possible to hold bees for 3 to 7 days in proper storage, but it is best to get the colony in a box and get the queen laying eggs as soon as you can, so avoid prolonged storage.
 - A queen that does not lay eggs, or give off pheromone is subject to replacement.
 - The longer she is not laying, and the older the bees are (even days count), the less optimal things get.



Holding / Staging

- **Holding** (if the situation requires it)
 - Sometimes you pick up the bees and it is **raining**.
 - Bring them home and store them somewhere until you can install.
 - Keep them in a place where you are comfortable
 - Spray them with a light mist of sugar water here and there
 - Remember they have a can of food and can do fine without feeding
 - If this happens you will need some insight and a plan
 - If it keeps raining, and raining, install under an umbrella
 - Staging for Installation
 - Prepare the apiary for a place to hold the package(s) as you are going through the installation.



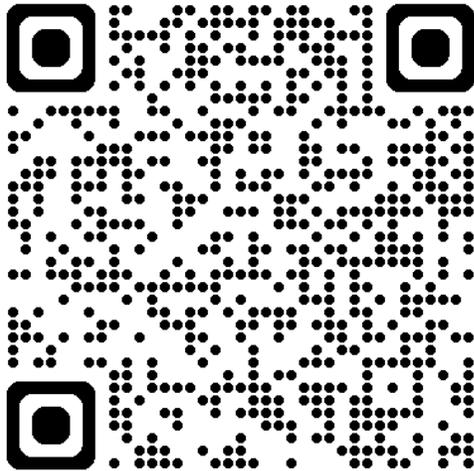
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Package Installation into Hive Equipment

Lesson | Package Transport & Installation

Lesson 17

| [Installing Bees- Package Bee Install](#)



What is covered in this lesson

- Transport Prep
- Handling Packages
- Driving with Stray Bees
- Staging Bees
- Install Preparations
- No Need to Treat Packages
- Install Overview
- Install Instructions
- Post Installation Care



Managed Mentoring

Package Installation into Hive Equipment

Lesson | Package Transport & Installation

Supporting Information

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IN SUPPORT OF THIS PRESENTATION

Video:

[Managed Mentoring Package Installation Video Demonstration](#)

Document:

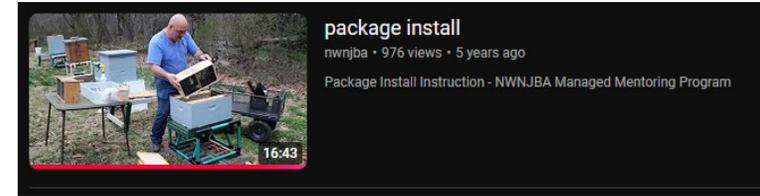
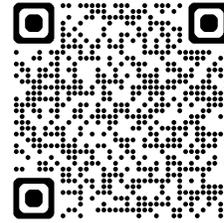
[In-Depth Package Installation Guide](#)

PRESENTATION LINK

[Presentation PDF](#)



Approach



- **Learning the install method by watching**
 - Our Install Process Video
 - We shot a video to demonstrate how to install a package
 - It shows you step by step how we do a 'dump method' installation
 - It is meant as a compliment to this lesson and we will have the link to the video in the final slides.
 - Next, we will cover some items to get you baselined on what you are going to see and introduce some of the topics for installation preparation



Process Steps

- **Prep the Hive for receiving the package**
- **Open the package**
 - Pry the lid off, pull the can, check & secure the queen
- **Dump the bees, Place the queen**
 - Dump the bees in the hive, Pull the cork, expose the candy. place the queen
 - Replace the frames, Set the package box in front of the hive
- **Close up and Monitor**



Dump the Package Bees into the hive

- Use the tap down/shake method shown in the video





Do not forget to remove the Cork

- *Probably the most common mistake is to forget to remove the cork*
- *It is not catastrophic, but it does slow things down*





Queen Cage Placement

The queen cage is placed with the screen sides facing the end bars.

The candy plug is facing toward the top bar of the frame, so dead bees fall to the bottom

Candy Plug is Facing Up!

Cork Removed From this End

Screen side(s) facing end bars



After Dumping the Bees



Place the 'empty' package container in front of the hive

- Any stray bees will smell the other bees and go inside the hive



Process overview – Before, During, AFTER

Leave the bees alone

- Leave the bees to settle in for a period (undisturbed)
 - In the following days the bees will release the queen and start to build wax on the foundation – this will take anywhere from a day or two – to a week's time
 - Going in the hive too soon can cause discontent in the colony. At the extreme it could result in the colony absconding or even lead to rejection of the queen.
- Watch the entrance
 - Observe the bees from the entrance – look for coming and going
 - Orientation flights are a good thing to see
 - You may even see pollen coming in and out on some forager bees



Process overview – Before, During, AFTER

- **Check on the bees in time**
 - The Next Day Retrieve the empty package box – tap out any stragglers
 - Day 2, Day 3, check the bees – look for normal operation
 - Bees will orient to the location and foragers will explore the area
 - Day 3, 4, or 5 - Checking for Queen Release
 - If not released, review and follow up until released



Post Installation

□ Feed and Monitor

- After the bees are installed, they will get to work
 - They will build the first vestiges of honeycomb.
 - The queen will lay eggs, and a brood nest will coalesce.
 - The workers will continue to build out the comb as the population increases
 - The foragers will actively pursue resources (nectar, pollen, water, and propolis)
- Feed periodically – look for growth milestone
 - You will monitor their progress and prepare for addition of the second box when the time is right (covered in a future lesson).

- Questions

Q&A





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Nucleus Hive Installation

Lesson | Transfer of Nuc into Equipment



What is Covered in this Lesson

Nuc Transport & Prep

Working with the Provider

Preparatory Steps

Nuc Placement and Transfer

Post Install



Nuc Installation Cadence

- **Several important considerations in the overall process**
 - Nuc Ordering
 - Nuc Pickup & Transport
 - Nuc Staging
 - Nuc Installation



Ordering Nucleus Colonies

- **Find a vendor; make your purchase**
 - You must figure out who to buy from
 - You pay ahead of time (or sometimes hold on deposit)
 - Typically, you go into an apiary and carry the Nuc out
 - You pick up your Nuc and transport them back to your apiary
 - Consider the logistics before you sign on (cost, date, time, location, etc.)
 - Sometimes you transfer into your equipment and **bring their nuc boxes back** to them
 - Often Nucs are sold in temporary containers or occasionally they give you the Nuc box to keep

Do this early

Sometimes demand is high, and you would need to secure your spot in the order



Transport Logistics

- **Pickup, Pay, Secure, and Transport**
 - Place the bees with consideration in your vehicle
 - Follow the same guidance given in the Package Bee Transport instructions
 - Preparing and Transporting
 - Provided for Payment Due on Receipt (if Applicable)
 - Prep supplies to secure the packages in your vehicle
 - Tape, straps, bee suit, water spray bottle, etc.
 - Plan for loose bees during transport > we'll give you pointers
 - Ensure that the bees will be protected from harm (Heat, Cold)



Check with your provider

- Open the hive and inspect?
 - Some providers do this, others do not. Experiences Vary case by case.
 - Many times, providers have multiple Nucs setout for pickup and they do not take the time to take you through the colony.
 - You arrive, make payment, and leave with your Nuc.





Nuc Inspections - Treating Nucs

- **Check with your provider**
 - Open the hive and inspect?
 - Some providers do this, others do not. Experiences Vary case by case.
 - Many times, providers have multiple Nucs setout for pickup and they do not take the time to take you through the colony.
 - You back up, make payment, and leave with your hive.



Nuc Inspections - Treating Nucs

- **Check with your provider**
 - Most Nucs have been cared for in anticipation of sale and are ready for installation
 - TREATMENTS:
 - Ask your provider what was done for treatments, and ensure you take timely notes (write it down)
 - Sometimes you will find treatments in the Nuc (perhaps an Apivar Strip)
 - Ensure you find out how long it has been in there, and when it should be removed.



Some Consumer Housekeeping

□ Instructions and Consumer Protection

■ Some suggestions:

- Take a moment to absorb any information given to you from the seller – instructions, contact information, where the bees came from, treatment information, etc.
- Consider your options if the Nucleus is of poor quality
 - This is very rare, but it does happen.
 - A Nuc should be five well drawn-out frames of honeycomb, a full complement of bees, and resources
 - If you open a box and it of poor quality, you might even consider taking it back.
 - This is a rather serious decision, and we hope you do not have to face it. Ideally you have chosen a reputable provider as the best insurance against this.

Write it down as soon as you get into the vehicle so you can get the details right



Transfer on the Spot

- **Bring your equipment with you**
 - It might be considered unusual....
 - Some providers operate where you bring your equipment with you
 - You spend time with the provider transferring the colony into your box
 - Then you close off your box, take it home, and place it on the stand.
 - Open it, and let it get to work.
 - This is not very common.
 - Presumably you will know and prepare for this ahead of time.



Immediately Place the Nuc

□ Place the Nuc box

- Upon arriving home, take the Nucleus box and **set it on the staged bottom board.**
 - Open the entrance and let the bees fly for 24-hours
 - This allows the bees, in a comfortable setting within their Nuc box that they are acquainted with, to get oriented to the new location
 - They will fly out an anchor themselves to the spot.

You could install right away. We think it is better to wait a day, considering they were just transported from the provider.

They will likely be a little calmer during transfer if you give them a day to settle in.



Second Day

□ Prep for transfer

■ Bring your hive equipment out

- Single box, frames, inner feeder, inner cover, and outer covers
 - Optionally the hive entrance reducer

■ Don your protective gear, light your smoker.

- Lightly smoke the Nuc box at the front entrance.
- Pick up the Nuc box and set it alongside of your hive stand; in anticipation of the transfer. "Bee Aware" of it, don't kick it over, trip over it, etc. :-)
 - Note, bees will be coming and going to the spot where the Nuc was sitting prior to you transferring the bees into your hive equipment; this is expected.



Stage the Hive Equipment

- **Setup the box and move the bees**
 - Prepare the box you are setting up for transfer
 - Switch the frames into the receiving box
 - Push the frames together, close up the hive

- **Post Install**
 - The first week is simply about observation - They have food and a working colony, Leave them be, let them settle in.
 - Second Week - Inspect in a week or 10 days to see how they are progressing



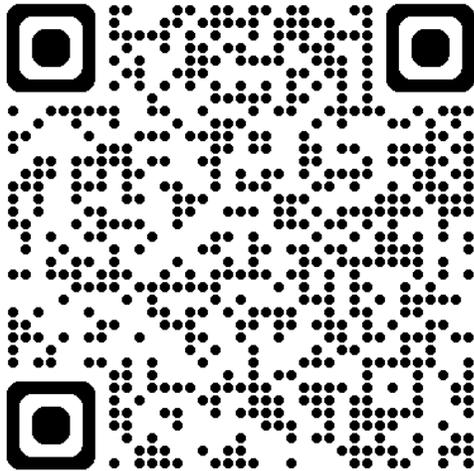
Managed Mentoring

Nucleus Hive Installation

Lesson | Transfer of Nuc into Equipment

Lesson 18

| [Installing Bees- Nucleus Hive Install](#)



What is covered in this lesson

- Nuc Transport & Prep
- Working with the Provider
- Preparatory Steps
- Nuc Placement and Transfer
- Post Install



Managed Mentoring

Nucleus Hive Installation

Lesson | Transfer of Nuc into Equipment

Watch on YouTube



Supporting Information

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IN SUPPORT OF THIS PRESENTATION

[How to Light a Smoker, And Keep it Lit](#)

PRESENTATION LINK

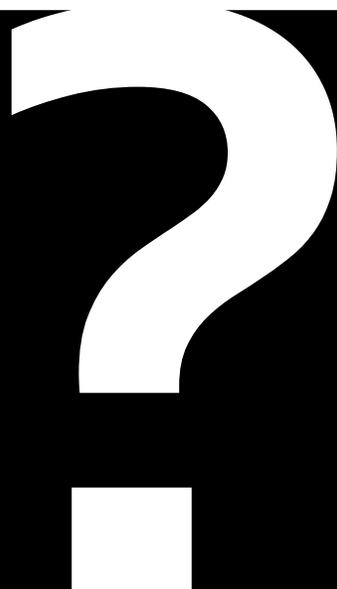
[Presentation PDF](#)

Our next topics cover how to care for your hive.

- Post Install Care – First Weeks
- How to perform Inspections
- Proper instruction for Using a Hive Tool
- A primer on Things You Will See
- Hive Inspections

- Questions

Q&A





A Beginner's Guide to Keeping
Bees Thriving in the Boston Area

Beekeepers School

BABA Beekeeper's School 2026



BABA Beekeeping School

Post Installation – First Check

Lesson | Package (and Nuc) First Week Checks

What is Covered in this Lesson

Purpose of Inspections (Early On)

How Many Inspections? How Often?

Inspection Objectives

Thinking About the Layout – Frame Reference

Package Queen Cage Exit

What to do when she is not out...

Early Package and Nuc Progressions



A Reason for Inspection (reminder)

- **Typically, you inspect for a reason**
 - Ensure the colony is queen right
 - Check progress of build out
 - Feed and move comb around

And so on

- For our first inspection – our reason might be to check if our package queen is out of her cage – so let's go with that as our example



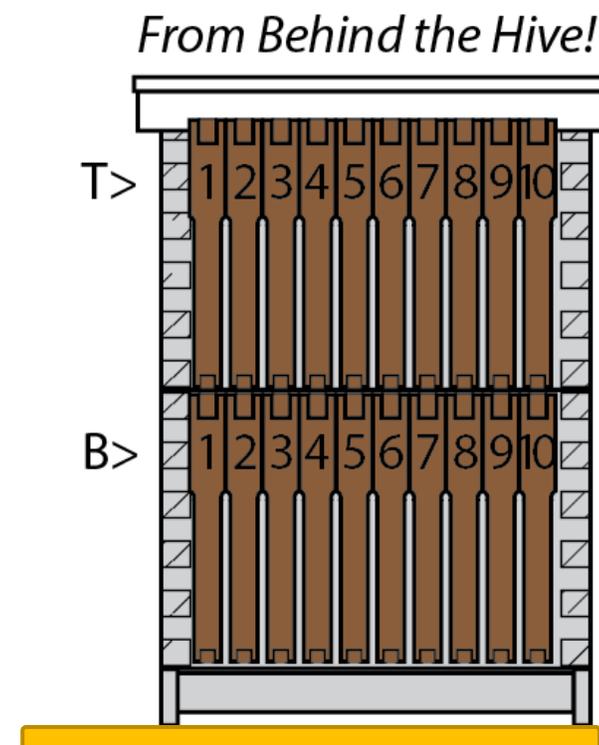
After one week

- **Once the package or Nuc is in place you see:**
 - The bees will be flying at the entrance
 - Bees will be orienting
- **Package: The queen should be out**
 - After one week, the next step is to inspect the colony for queen exit
 - Before describing that a quick primer / tool on the hive interior

Hive Numbers

A system for reference

- **This is great for taking notes**
 - Standing behind the hive, the frame to left in the bottom box is B1. B=Bottom, T=Top
 - *With the inner feeder, the first frame is really B2...



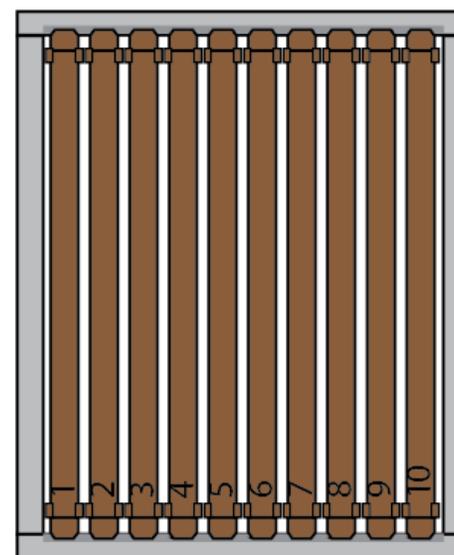
Conceptual Frame Numbers

*A system for
reference*

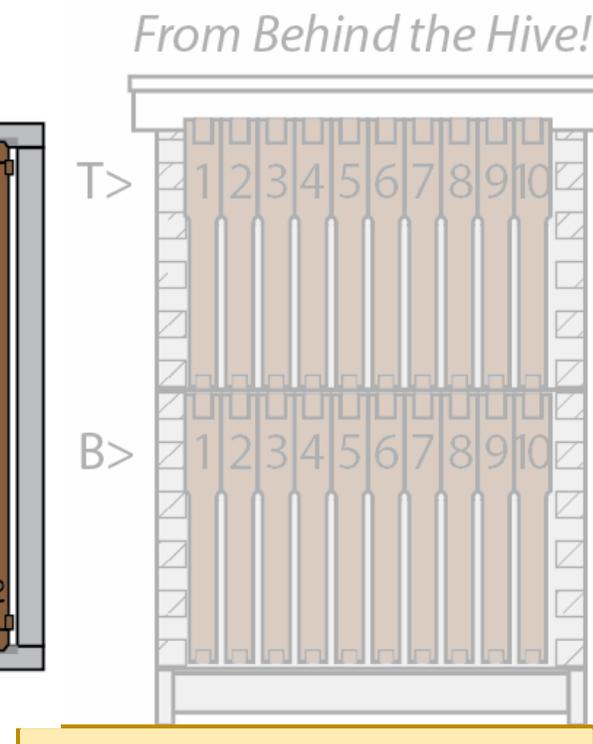
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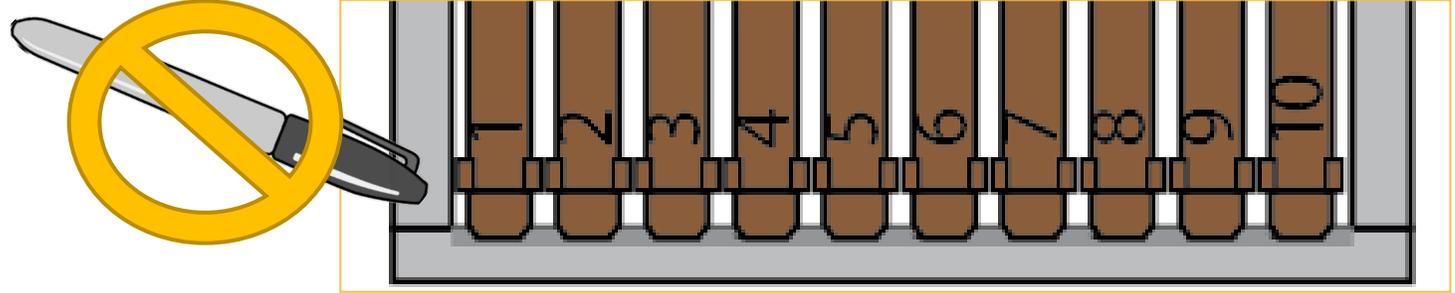
- The frame in the box furthest to the right is B10
- When you have a second box – T1 to T10



Back of the hive



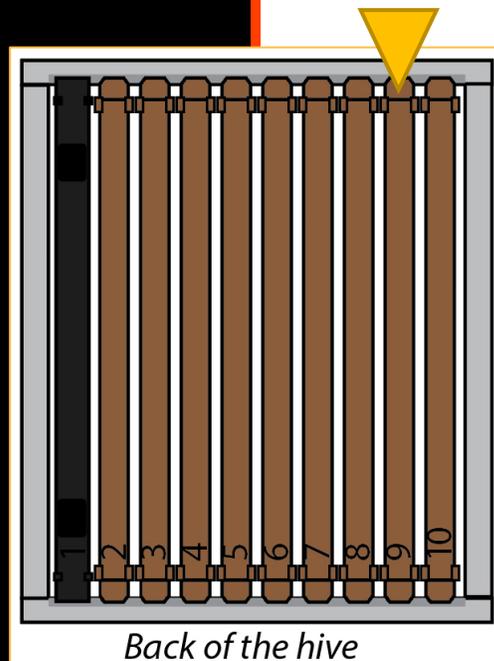
No Real Numbers



■ Not Literal...

- To avoid confusion, we will say this out loud
 - *Do not write numbers on your frames*
 - *It is common, over time, to change location of frames*
 - *If you write numbers on your frames, and then change frame locations – swap in frames from other hives, etc.*
 - It will end up being a mess and confuse things.
- Theoretical numbers, not real numbers.

The First Week for the Hive

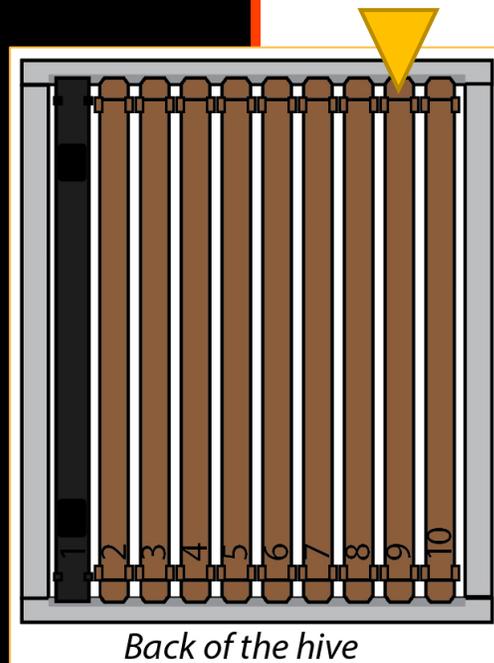


□ Check for queen exit

■ Within one week of installing a package check for the queen release

- Smoke the front entrance of the hive
- Take off the outer cover and give a puff of smoke in the hole.
- Take off the inner cover
- Separate frames and pull frame #9 (or #2 if your feeder is on the other side)
- Pull the frames into the gap to separate the frame where the queen is
 - Pull #8 into the gap where #9 was, then pull #7 into the gap; keep going until you get to the frame with the queen cage

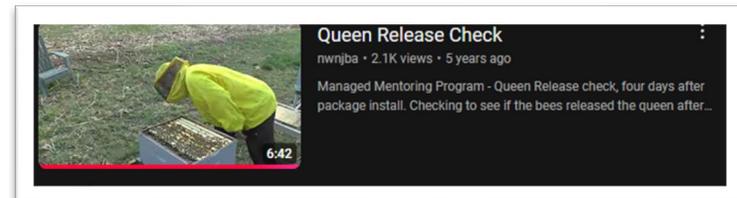
The First Week for the Hive



□ Check for queen exit

- Within one week of installing a package you should check for your Queen Release (continued)

- Pull the frame with the queen cage and look to see if the queen is out
 - Check the candy end and see if it is open, look for queen in the cage
- If she is out, remove the cage
 - May have to use a hive tool to dislodge it if the bees have waxed it to the foundation
- Check your feeder and top it off
- Close the hive and leave them alone for another week



What if the Queen is Not Out Yet!

- **First things first**
 - This is not an emergency.
 - Recall that the cage faces front and back so the workers can take care of the queen, even if she is still in the cage.
 - What to do
 - If it has been a week, help it along by doing the following:
 - Open the hive following the process outlined earlier
 - Take a nail and poke the candy plug some to loosen it up and maybe even make a small hole
 - Of course, do not poke through and injure the queen
 - Place it back in the hive, leave it a few days, and come back. She will be out.

What if the Queen is Not Out Yet!

- **What if I pull the cork on the far end?**
 - We suggest you do not do that.
 - You might be tempted to remove the cork on the open end, **we do not recommend that.**
 - You are holding her outside of the hive and if she comes out and flies away it will be an emergency.
 - Place the cage back into the frame and be patient- they will release her.

What if the Queen is Not Out Yet!

- **I need to pull the cork...**
 - If you do subsequent checks and she is not out
 - Then you may have no choice....
 - Use a pair of needle nose pliers, making sure that you cover off the hole immediately when you pull the cork
 - It is possible that she will dart for the hole and surprise you.
 - Get the cage to the top bars quickly
 - Place the cage on the top bars, still covering the hole;
 - Tilt the cage so the open hole is facing a gap between the top bars
 - Be patient and wait until she walks out and (hopefully) walks down into the hive.
 - This may take some time as she could walk around in the cage for quite some time before she finds her way out – be patient

Your Hive Today

Package

- **Package Progression**
 - Queen Release
 - The queen should be out of her cage by now.
 - Building Comb
 - You may even see the bees building comb by this weekend.
 - As soon as they have any semblance of comb, the queen should be laying.
 - Foraging
 - Should be a steady stream of bees coming and going at the entrance
 - Should see bees with pollen going in
 - Notebook
 - Should have two entries, install and queen release check by today

Your Hive Today

Nucleus

- **Nuc Progression**
 - Your Nucleus colony will move quickly
 - It comes supplied with a full complement of bees
 - The young wax producers will build out comb in harmony with the foragers who bring the resources to support the wax building operation
 - Different colonies proceed at different paces. Some are very fast, and others take time to muster.
 - At each check you can monitor their progress until they build out the first level.
 - Keep feeding this colony as feeding stimulates growth

Hive Check

□ **Just Checking the setup**

Better Safe than sorry on the basics

- Screened bottom boards closed (Early Spring)
- Entrance reducer on the hive – small or medium hole
- Feeder with food in the first position
- 9 Frames with foundation
- Weight on Top, Hives are strapped
- Hive is level side to side, slight forward tilt
- Hive is up off the ground
- Full Sun if possible, and facing the Morning Sun



What's Next

- **Build to first box Populated**
 - The bees will begin foraging in earnest
 - Bees will draw comb on the foundation frames (or plastic if you are using that)
 - Once there are wax cells, the queen will lay eggs
 - The colony will be populating the hive with bees and resources
 - This is underway when you see pollen collected at the entrance
 - The hive will build out the frames from 2 to 9

- Questions

Q&A





BABA Beekeeping School

Initial Inspections

Lesson | Performing Inspections



What is Covered in this Lesson

Purpose of Inspections (Early On)

How Many Inspections? How Often?

Inspection Objectives

Thinking About the Layout – Frame Reference



Inspection Cadence

- **Need for Inspection**
 - Really, checking the hive is for your benefit
 - If after the first week or so things look normal, it is highly likely that if being fed they will chug away and build out with no further intervention
 - Checking is prudent
 - Still, making sure is a trust but verify posture



How Often

- **How Often**
 - First Inspection Within One Week
 - Future Inspections - Package
 - Then every 10 to 14 days
 - Check the food
 - Monitor comb progress – building quality comb, no oops...
 - Review the queen laying patterns,
 - Ensure no queen replacement cells
 - Future Inspections – Nuc
 - After nucleus install – ever 7 to 10 days
 - Same checks as the package list above



First Inspection

- **What is the objective**
 - For the first time, we will help you out.
 - Objective = queen operation and food
 - How are the bees doing at building out wax
 - **Is the comb well formed?**
 - Are they building out any errant comb in ways, or places, that they should not be?
 - How is the queen doing: Is she laying? Is there a brood nest yet?
 - Are there any problems?



First Inspection

- **Before you go in**
 - Consider the conditions
 - Heavy forage time, when it is full sun, during the middle of the day, and with a nectar flow is the ideal time
 - Weather swings are the wrong time, especially with storms coming
 - Conditions to avoid:
 - In the early morning
 - At dusk
 - When it is cold
 - In the first few days after installation

Use common sense and avoid these if you can



Where things are located matters

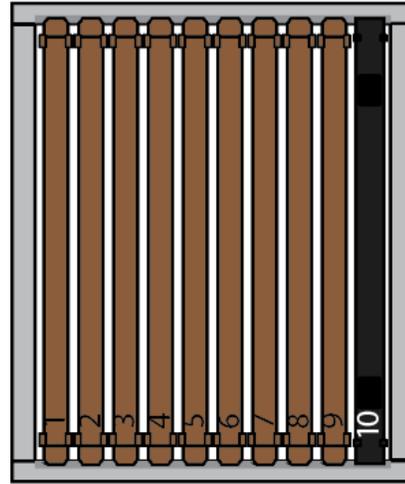
- **Know before you go in**
 - The population of bees in the nest are in the hive
 - And the queen is likely there too.
 - If you go in the frames, nest first, you chance killing bees by rolling them on the comb
 - As you pull a frame, it can rub (also smash) bees against the combs adjacent.
 - Start where the population is lower (normally the outside frames)

Start where the population is lower:

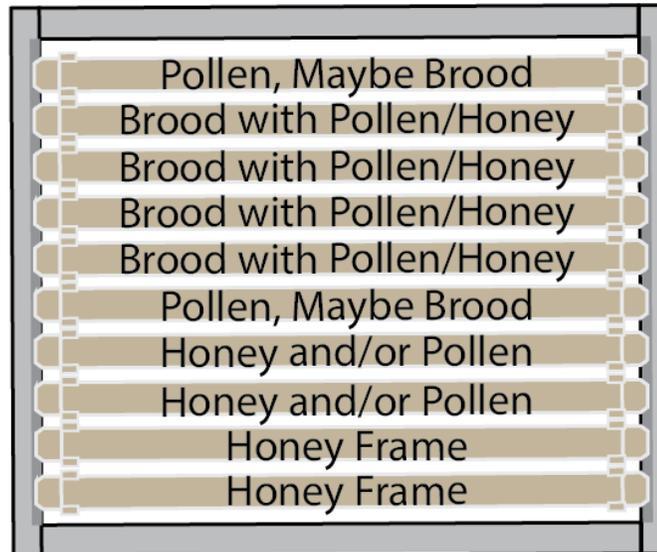
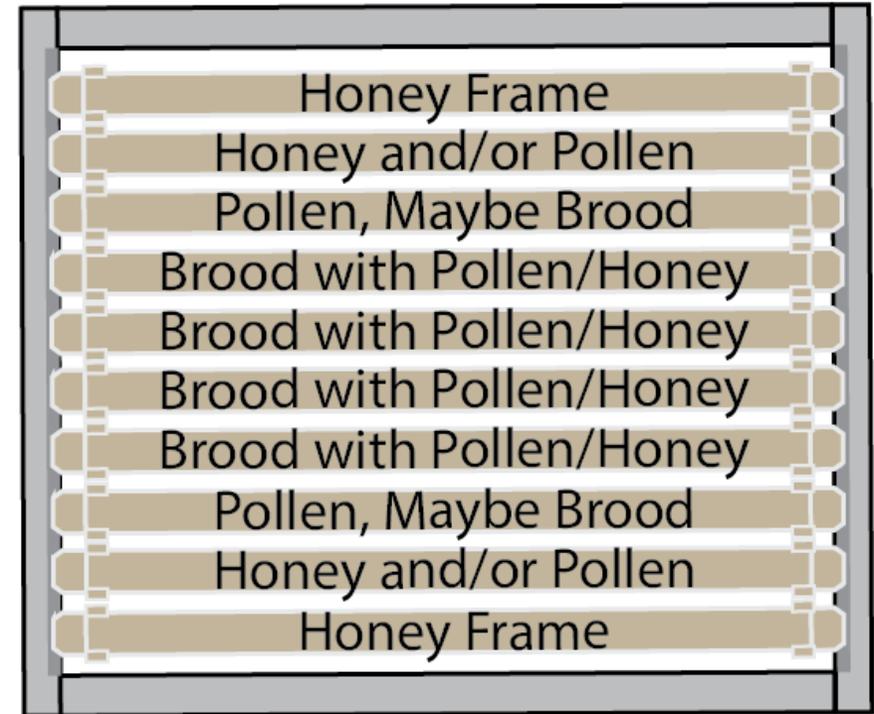
normally lower on the outside frames (Frame 1,2, 9, and 10)

↓ Ideal Layout

A typical colony layout



Back of the hive

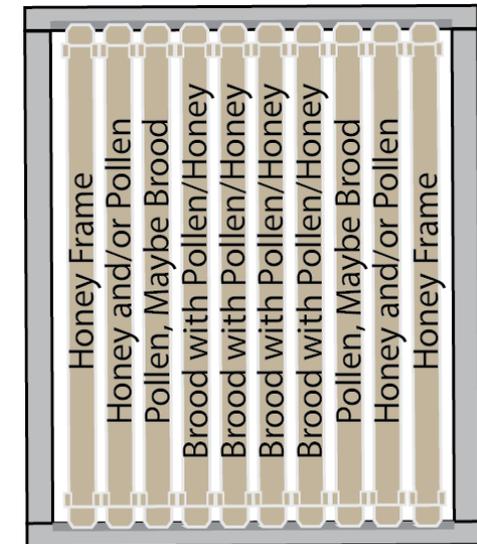


< Do note that sometimes it looks like this...

Brood shifted to one side

Prepping Entry

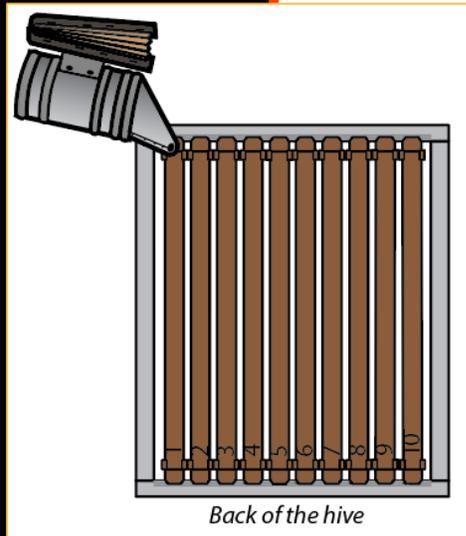
- **A basic inspection... described**
 - Observe the conditions and entrance, take notes
 - Light the smoker. Don your gear. Smoke the entrance.
 - ***From the back of the hive...***
 - *Do not work the bees from the front; that is in their flight path and in front of the guards*
 - *Pull the roof, set it alongside the hive, upside-down*
 - *Smoke the hole on the inner cover, pull the inner cover*
 - *Quick glance on the bees on the underside of the inner cover, check for the queen*
 - *Place the inner cover alongside the hive*



Back Side of the hive

More specific details about using a hive tool are coming up in the how to use a hive tool lesson

Entering the hive



□ A basic inspection, continued

- Smoke the end bars FRAME #2 first, both ends,
- Place your hive tool between the FRAME #1 and FRAME #2, blade down, and give the tool a 1/4 turn.
 - This separates the 2nd from the 1st and makes space.
 - Do the same between FRAME #2 and FRAME #3
- Place the blade end of your hive tool under **FRAME #2** and pull one end up. Grasp the top bar with your fingers
 - If you can lift it out do so, If you cannot, use your hive tool to lift the other end so you can extract the frame.
- As you pull the frame, hold it over the hive.
 - If the queen or other bees fall off, they fall into the hive and not into the grass.

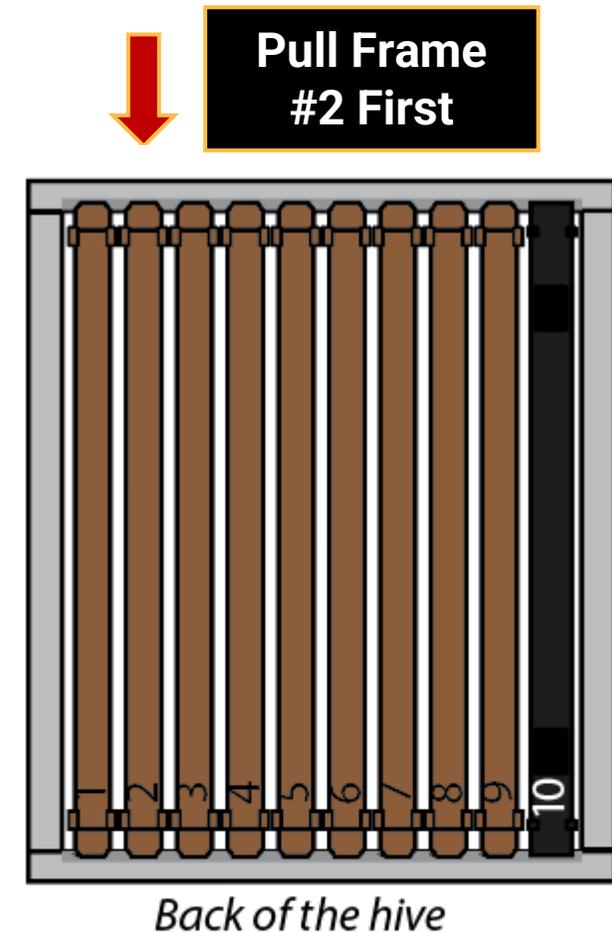


How to light
a Smoker Video



Why Frame #2?

- **Actually, the strategy is – *don't start with the outside frame...***
 - The outside frames, frame 1 and 10, have one side that faces the wooden box.
 - If you pull these frames, you risk 'rolling' bees on the comb against the wooden box inside and crushing them
 - Pulling frame #2 means there are FRAMES to either side
 - If the frame you are pulling comes into contact with another, it results in bees pushing on bees and rarely causes bees to be crushed or injured





Hang it on the Hanger

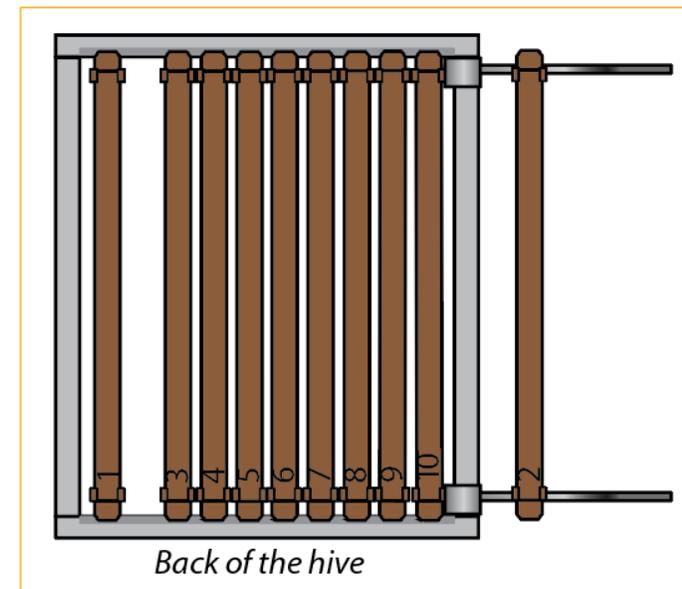
□ Use a Frame hanger

■ Inspections mean pulling frames...

- You can put a frame back each time, but we like the open gap for creating space. Use of a frame hanger aids in this tactic

■ We are big proponents of frame hangers

- Setting frames down in the grass is a common practice for many beekeepers.
 - This sometimes results in accidents: kick over the frame, step on frame....
- Take a moment to set a frame hanger and hang your frames instead
 - Keep the frame spaced away from the hive box so the bees do not move to the box exterior.





**Drone
Bee**

**Worker
Bee**

Your Comb

**It will likely
look like this**

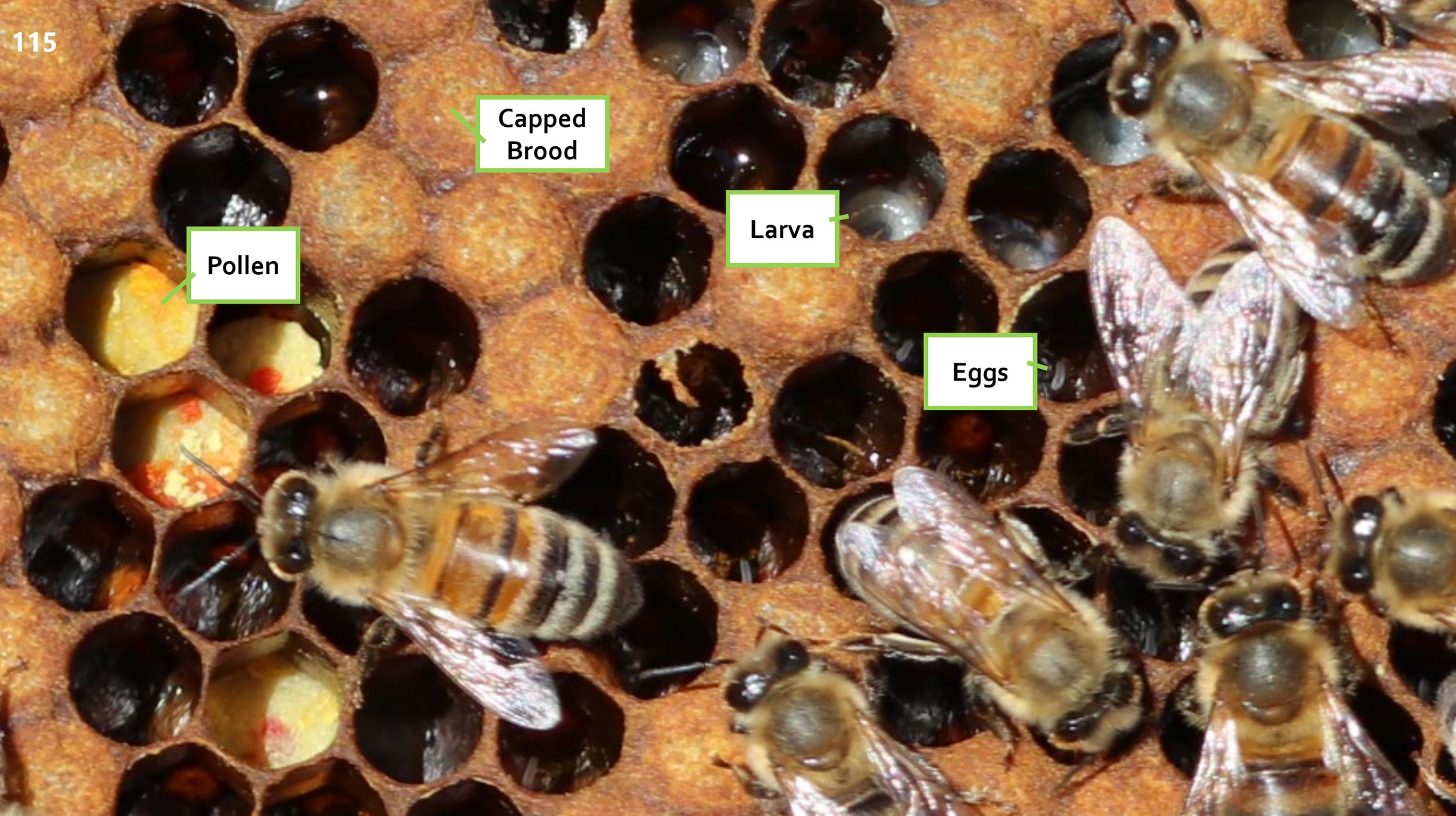


Inspecting the first frame

A basic inspection, *continued*

- Do a quick scan for evidence of new bees being created.
 - On this frame you may see eggs or larva...
-
- *Eggs look like small pearl translucent shapes in the bottom of the cell.*
 - *Initially eggs are standing on end when laid by the queen. They lay down, curling into a C shaped grub.*
 - *The grubs, know individually as larva, and collectively as larvae, are mass provisioned with food placed with them in the bottom of the cell.*





Pollen

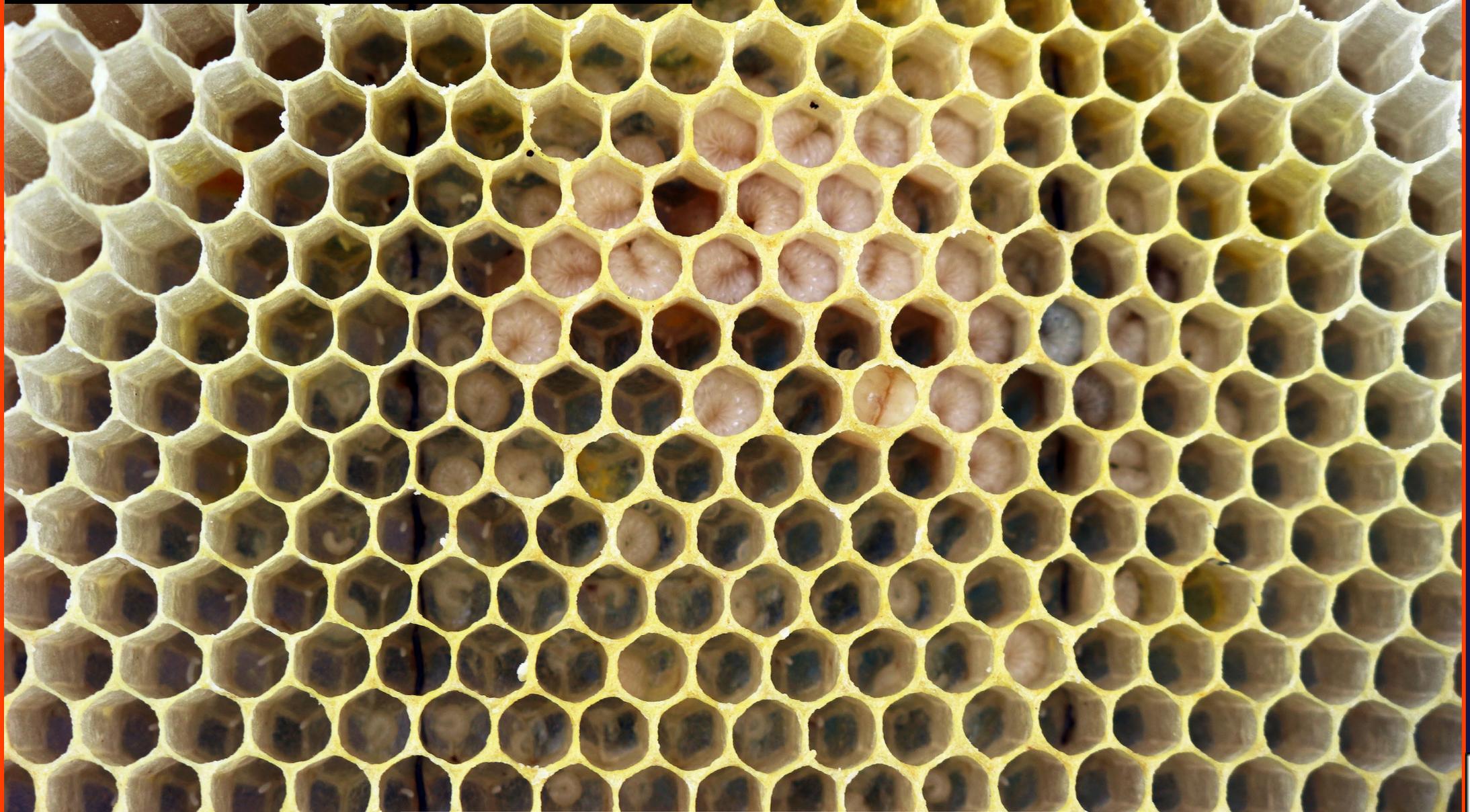
Capped Brood

Larva

Eggs



A More Typical Example



Progression of Eggs to Larva to Mature Larva

Things you don't have to see...

- ❑ If you have brood, you do not need to find the queen.
 - You have one, and she might be hard to find.





Inspecting the first frame

□ Evidence of Brood?

What do you know > Queen!

- Be done. Put the frame back in the hive and close it up.
- That's what we are after in your first inspection.
 - If you notice that they are building out cells, great, write it down to whatever extent you see for your notes.
 - If it is foundation, and/or some drawn cells but not much more, keep going.

□ Watch for the Queen!

- Do a quick scan for the queen on each frame
- **If you see her, gently put the frame back in the hive.**
- If you do not spot the queen, and there is no brood on the 2nd frame, take it out and set it aside and keep going.
- With your hive tool, pull #3 into the slot where #2 was.
- Keep going deeper into the hive until you find eggs or larva.



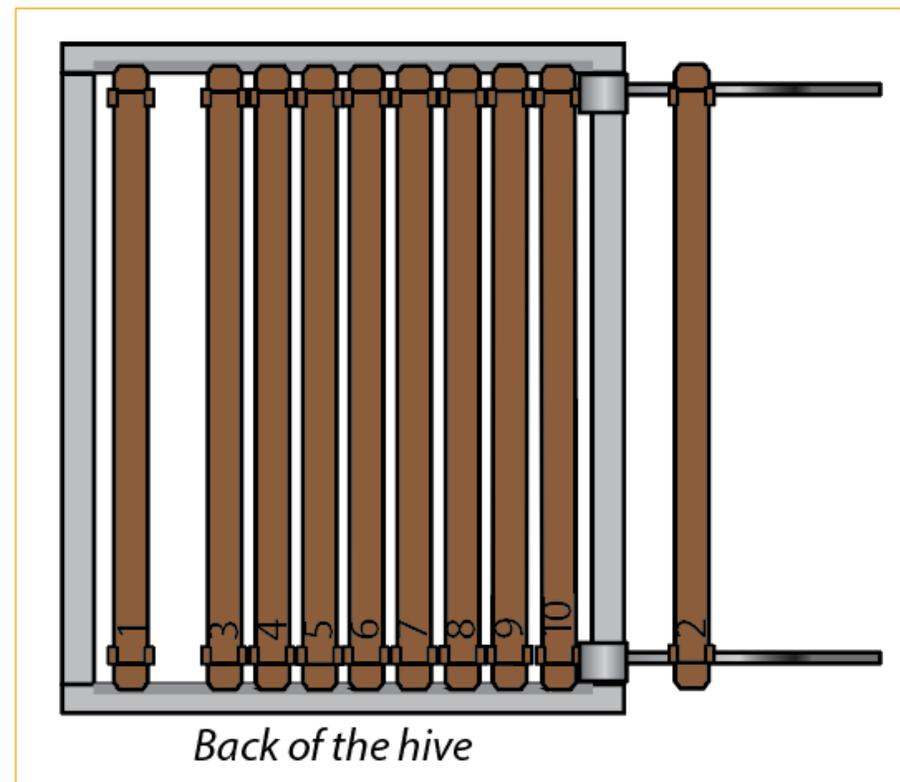
A basic inspection, *continued*

Going through the hive

- **Going through the hive**
 - Remove the 3rd frame, observe what is on it
 - If #3 did not have what you want, put it in slot 2, and pull it tight to frame #1
 - Then slide #4 into the gap, and inspect it.
 - Continue to pull the frames until you see what you need to meet your objective

We are going to go through this again next week

It is an important skill

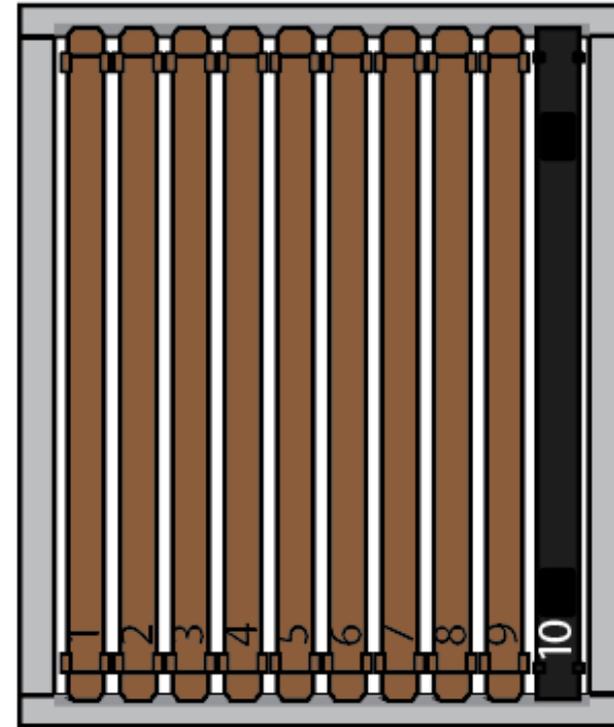




A basic inspection, *continued*

Going through the hive

- **Going through the hive**
 - Putting things back in order
 - Return the frames to their original positions by sliding back to the center of the box.
 - Leave the gap for frame #2 and pull it from the hanger.
 - Skootch all the frames tight together, center them between the walls, and close up the box.
 - Place the inner cover and roof.



Back of the hive



Roof and Inner Cover Bees

□ Bees on the Roof and Inner Cover

When you open the hive there are likely bees on the surfaces of the roof and inner cover.

■ What do you do about this?

- You can leave them on the devices. Place the covers nearby the entrance for safe keeping
 - Lean the inner cover against the bottom board at the front of the hive (not blocking bees coming and going. Slight disadvantage to this – *more in a moment*)
- You can dislodge the bees to clear the devices
 - Use the shake or knock/wrap techniques to knock them off (preferably into the hive)



Roof and Inner Cover Bees

□ Shake or Knock/Wrap Process

■ Shake Process

- Hold the piece up high in front of you (at eye level)
- Move the piece down in a rapid motion and execute a sudden stop
 - The force of movement overcomes the grip of the bees and they fall off.
 - Presumably you do this over the top bars so the bees fall into the hive. They land on the top bar and walk down into the hive. Sometimes they take flight, and in time fly to the entrance and walk in.

■ Wrap/Knock Process

- Deliver a sharp blow to the piece. The rapid force also breaks the grip.
 - Think of a hammer hitting a gavel; this case your fist in the hammer.



Avoidance of Crushing Bees

- **Take your time, clear the area**
 - Clear off the top edges of the boxes (use your smoker)
 - Set the inner cover down gently
 - A technique you can employ is to put a touch of pressure on the bees momentarily and then let them get out of the way.
 - They will move and you will be clear to put your equipment down (wood to wood)
 - Flick (scotch) the bees off with your fingers
 - Use your fingernail, not the soft flesh, lest you get stung.
 - Just scotch behind them with a moderate flick and they will often take flight and clear the area.



Inspecting Cells

- *Keep the light behind you, and tilt the frame so you can see into the bottom of the cells*

□ Questions

- Next Week....
 - Using a Hive Tool
 - Varroa Mites
 - Mite Monitoring
 - Mite Treatment Options

Q&A

