

Beekeeping Equipment

Basic Hive Parts

Outer Cover

This is sometimes called a telescoping cover because it overlaps the rim of the inner cover. The outer cover is usually made of wood and is sometimes covered with aluminum or tin.

Inner Cover

The inner cover is about 1/2 inch thick with an oblong hole in the center. This hole serves to rid the hive of excess moisture.

Shallow Super

The shallow super comes in various depths from 4 13/16 inches to 7 5/8 inches. The most common super is 6 5/8 inches. Several of these supers can be stacked on the hive to collect surplus honey.

Queen Excluder (Optional)

The queen excluder allows the worker bees to pass through it, leaving the larger queen and drones behind. This is useful in preventing the queen from laying her eggs in the honey supers.

Brood Chamber

The standard hive body is 9 5/8 inches deep. Ten full-depth frames are placed inside the body. This is where the queen lays her eggs to keep her colony strong.

Screen Bottom Board

The screen bottom board provides ventilation and helps in the treatment of varroa mites

Entrance Reducer

The entrance cleat is used to reduce the entrance to the hive in the winter time. The reducer (with 1/2" wire cloth attached) will prevent mice from gaining entrance to the hive and setting up housekeeping. The reducer is also used in the spring to prevent robbing when feeding sugar syrup. The bees can come and go through the opening, but the guard bees only have to protect the small opening rather than the regular full opening.

Hive Stand

The hive stand is used to raise the bottom board off the ground.

Frames

There are ten frames in a standard brood chamber or super. The frames hold the foundation straight up and down to guide the bees in building out the comb. Without the frames, the bees would fill the chambers with a rough uneven amount of wax and honey. It would be almost impossible to extract honey, not to mention remove the bees.

Foundation

Foundation is a thin sheet of beeswax impressed with the hexagonal shape of a worker-sized cell. This sheet is set in the center of a frame and wired or pinned into place. When put into a hive, the bees will use the foundation as a base to draw out the walls of the cells. When the cells are completely drawn out they are known as drawn comb.

Beekeeping Equipment

Veil

A veil is a must. Although photos appear in beekeeping magazines which show beekeepers working without a veil, this practice is discouraged. Stings on lips, scalp, or inside the nose or ears are extremely painful.

Suit

Bee suits should be white and have plenty of pouches and pockets to carry tools, matches, etc. The suit will protect against stings and keep regular clothes clean. A bee suit should be jump suit style with no holes for the bees to find entrance. The collar of the suit should be turned upward before putting on the bee veil. The cuffs of the sleeves and pant legs should be designed to close tightly. The material of the suit should be light weight because it will usually be worn during the hottest part of the day.

Gloves

Many experienced beekeepers do not wear gloves, but for the beginning beekeeper it should be considered a must. The gloves must fit comfortably, and should be washed frequently to remove the scent of bee stings. After gaining experience working with the bees, a beekeeper may consider wearing sleeve gauntlets which keep the hands free but offer added protection to arms.

Hive Tool

The hive tool is used to pry the supers apart and also to help lift and clean frames. This tool should be painted a bright color because it has a tendency to be misplaced.

Smoker

The smoker is a metal cylinder with attached bellows in which a fire is lit. Smoke blown from the smoker's nozzle is directed into the hive and between frames to encourage the bees to gorge honey. Once engorged, bees are more docile and less prone to sting.

Bee brush

A brush for brushing bees off combs is a handy tool. It can also be used to brush a swarm off the side of a tree, fence post or the side of a building.

