

Guidelines for Installing a Nuc

If this bee your first Nuc, Welcome to the Art & Adventure of Beekeeping!

WHAT IS A NUC?

A Nuc, short for Nucleus Colony, is a small family unit, containing all that the Honey Bee family needs initially. There is a laying Queen, her brood or nursery (resultant of the Queen laying eggs in the comb), and enough food stores (honey & bee bread), to sustain for a few days. And, oh, some Honey Bees, mostly worker bees, perhaps 10,000, maybe more!

BEEWARE TILTING YOUR NUC BOX:

The box sturdy, the bees more rugged than one would imagine, yet, the movable frames, well they just may move, risking the lives of the inhabitants within. Langstroth's frames become fused together with propolis by the beloved bees as they become established. The frames within once were fused. That is, until our last inspection, likely earlier on day of pick-up or day before, when we pulled out frames, ensuring that all is well with your family. And so, Bee Mindful! Hence if there be a need to tilt the box, tilting end to end acceptable as the frames run the length of the box; tilting side to side, NOT ACCEPTABLE! Bees are also not fond of bangin' & vibration unless they be good vibrations. Let the family rest for 5 minutes, time enough to forget the bouncy journey.

Now that you got your Nuc home, and unless you were briefed on any urgent matters when picking-up your Nuc... There bee very little needing to bee done when you arrive at the Honey Bee families new location...

EXCEPT THE FOLLOWING 2 TASKS

which should bee done immediately:

- 1) **PUT THE NUC BOX IN PLACE**: Upon reachin' "The Girls" final destination, put the Nuc box precisely on top of their hive stand, with the door oriented the same as the entrance of their bottom board. The Nuc box can reside on top of the woodenware that will become their new hive, or not.
- 2) **OPEN THE NUC BOX DOOR**: Your obligation, regardless of the weather, time of day, or your apprehension is to **OPEN THEIR DOOR!** This bee one of very few tasks I will carry out without a lit smoker. A smoker may bee counter-productive. If the door is left shut, the bees will very likely overheat.

Their door has a tab. Pull up on the tab and release, creating somewhat of a tunnel. Push tab back from whence it came at a 90 degree angle and their door is locked open. Simultaneously back away directly. Not at all the best time to watch their coming and going.

NUC PRE-INSTALLATION PREP

Our procedures are geared for those with 10 frame new equipment, in particular frames with foundation. To those with drawn comb, the principles remain the same and the growth of the Nuc benefits. Frames of honey are an added bonus. If available, have 2 on site.

Beefore installing, have on hand...

- **All necessary woodenware:** bottom board, deep shell, 4 frames (2 if your equipment is 8 frames, as opposed to 10 frame), a division board feeder, and an inner and outer cover. A top feeder can be substituted for a division board feeder; we are not fans of boardman feeders.
- **Gallon of light 1 to 1 sugar water**
- **Smoker Lit & Hive Tool** handy
- We also recommend having a 'True to Bee **Pollen Pattie**' bagged/prepared

Prep Woodenware to Accept Nuc:

Place bottom board on hive stand, deep shell on bottom board.

Place two of your frames on one side of the shell, put the division board feeder against the other wall of the shell. Put another of your frames beside feeder. You will now have room for six more frames in the middle, if using 10 frame equipment.

THE NUC INSTALLATION PROCESS

- 1) Smoke entrance of Nuc box lightly, & move Nuc box off stand.

Drum Roll Please...

- 2) OPEN YOUR NUC BOX: The top of the Nuc box is hinged and opens easiest under warmer conditions. Our Nucs be strong, oft times with burr comb securing the top bars of the frames to the lid of box. Puff the entrance lightly with your smoker. With your fingers, manipulate along the edge of the lid, convincing the lid to open. If the girls had sufficient time and resources to secure their lid with burr comb or propolis, a puff into partially open lid and minor prying with thy hive tool may become necessary. Once opened, 3-4 small puffs directly across top bars should calm the girls if there was any vibration resultant from opening the lid. Take a breath and observe where the bees are. Practice a time or 2 with the smoker; puff gently across the top bars and watch the bees go down. A little smoke goes a long way. Smoke them not too much, as this will only agitate them.

THE NUC INSTALLATION PROCESS continued

- 3) **PULL OUT YOUR FIRST FRAME:** Take note of which outer frame is less secured to the box wall. Typically, the frame closest to you, furthest from the hinge, will be your first frame to pull. Give a gentle puff across that frame. Pull with your fingers and/or pry with thy hive tool the box wall away from your targeted first frame to pull. With your hive tool, separate the first & second frames on both sides. Give 1-2 gentle puffs across all top bars. Pry under the left side of the top bar of your first frame with the flat side of thy hive tool. With the left side elevated, hold this side up with your fingers whilst you repeat on the right side. Gingerly, lift the frame absolutely straight up. Holding this frame by the ears of the top bar with two hands allows you to observe first one side, then the other.

- 4) **INSPECT YOUR FIRST FRAME, VERIFY A LAYING QUEEN/EGGS:** Take a moment to absorb the beauty of the nursery enveloped in bee bread & nectar. Now then, what are we looking for? T'is always nice to see the Queen, yet, not mandatory. Finding eggs justifies her presence, at least in the past three days. And so, be certain you have eggs on at least some of your frames. If you do not see the queen on the frames, it is ok, she may still be in the Nuc box after you've installed the frames into your equipment. We will cover that scenario a bit later in these instructions.

THE NUC INSTALLATION PROCESS continued

- 5) LOOK FOR QUEEN CELLS: Whether it be this Nuc, or any other colony, as part of spring management, one must always look for Queen cells! We likely inspected this Nuc in the past day or three, and, if we had found a swarming impulse, we noted such on the box. Your task is to have a second look for any Queen cells. Follow not your first impulse of removing any Queen cells before first confirming that the colony is Queen right!

Queen cells are the honey bees way of raising a new Queen if one is needed, and so if the hive needs a Queen, you would not want to destroy their Queen cells! If the hive already has a Queen, then Queen cells indicate that the hive is under a swarm tendency, and so you'd want to remove these Queen cells to prevent swarming. Queen cells can also be handy to make a split, re-Queen another colony, etc. Perhaps none of this is appealing to you at this time, removal is your best bet if Queen-right.

PLAY CELLS: All hives have what we call play cells, the base of a Queen cell. It remains a play cell unless it is adorned with an egg. With the proper nutrition, this egg will become a Queen Bee in 16-17 days.

THE NUC INSTALLATION PROCESS continued

- 6) PLACE FRAMES INTO WOODENWARE: After observing both sides, place the frame in your equipment on the appropriate side to continue installing frames in the same order. You may need to scrape the sides of the sidebars on these frames if you want to get 10 frames, including feeder, into your box. Smoke the top bars in the Nuc box gently. Pry frame #2 away from frame #3, first one side, then the other. Puff this frame again, lift straight up, inspect, and place beside frame #1. Do the same for frame #3. Now separate frame #4 from frame #5 & #5 from sidewall, smoking as need bee. Position frames in Nuc box equidistant from each other and the sidewalls. Watch as many of the girls on the side walls climb onto the frames. Install frames 4 & 5, puffing the bees along the way.

- 7) FETCH BEES LEFT IN NUC BOX: If there be a lot of bees left in the box, take the frame next to the feeder, put it in the Nuc box close to the majority of the bees. When the point of diminishing return has been reached, put the frame back next to the feeder. This should leave you with one of your frames to install. Glide this frame between the last two installed.

THE NUC INSTALLATION PROCESS continued

- 8) FETCH EVEN MORE BEES LEFT IN NUC BOX If that previous method did not take care of most of the stragglers, and you've still got a lotta bees in the Nuc box... Other style boxes lend themselves better to dumping remaining bees in before adding inner cover. Do not attempt with these Jester Boxes! The corrugated nature of these boxes collects water, adding insulation. Dumping will drench! Set box in front of hive, lid propped open with bottom board. Give them a bit of time. A bit of smoking may help.
- 9) FEED YOUR BEES: Fill your feeder with a gallon of light 1 to 1 syrup. The girls will thank you for a Phatty True to Bee Pollen Pattie. Inner cover on next, notch down and to the back, or so I've been told. Then, put on your top cover and pull back for proper ventilation through notch. Add sufficient weight on top cover.
- 10) DID NOT SEE QUEEN ON FRAMES / LOTS OF BEES LEFT IN NUC BOX? If you saw not the Queen during installation, & there be a cluster of bees remaining in the Jester Box, the Queen is suspect of being in the center of the cluster. Disrupt the cluster with smoke to get The Girls moving. Look for queen.

REPEAT.