



TRANSFERRING BEES

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It is sometimes necessary to transfer bees from one piece of equipment to another, or to remove bee colonies from houses, trees or other natural dwellings. Colonies that inhabit box hives, log gums or other equipment in which the combs are crosswise should be transferred to hives with movable frames.

It is best to transfer bees during the spring. Colony populations will be smaller and the bees will have less honey stores and brood comb than later in the year. Transferring a colony early in the active season will also allow the bees time to build up their colony population following transfer to collect sufficient stores for successful wintering.

TRANSFER BY EXPANSION

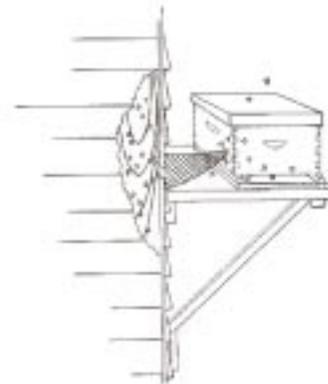
The easiest method to accomplish transfer of bees into standard movable comb equipment involves placing a standard hive body with drawn comb, or foundation if comb is not available, on top of the container with the bees you wish to transfer. Close all entrances except through the standard box at the top. Eventually the colony below will expand upwards and begin rearing brood and storing honey in the upper hive body. By fall the upper hive body should be nearly filled with honey for wintering, and the cluster of bees will gradually move upward over the winter. Before spring buildup, most of the bees will be in the upper hive body and the lower crosscomb hive or box can be removed.

DRUMMING

Another method of transferring bees is by drumming the bees out of the old hive. Turn it upside down. Place a new hive with drawn comb or foundation on top of the inverted container containing the bees you wish to transfer. Beat vigorously with a rubber mallet, stick or hammer on the side of the old hive continuously for eight or ten minutes. This causes the bees and queen to move upward. Smoking the colony before drumming is also helpful in starting the bees upward. When most of the bees have moved up into the new hive, a queen excluder is then placed between the new and old equipment and an upper entrance provided. After several days the new hive can be checked for evidence of the queen. If the queen is not above, the queen excluder must be removed and the drumming process repeated. Three weeks later, after successful transfer and all the brood had emerged below, the old hive may be removed and discarded.

REMOVING BEES FROM TREES AND BUILDINGS

Removing bees from buildings or trees should be tried by every beekeeper at least one time. If the beeswax combs cannot be exposed and the bees and comb transferred directly into a hive, the adult bees may be trapped into a dummy hive. To trap a colony, close all entrances except one. Fashion a screen cone over the single remaining entrance that will permit the exit but not a return entry of the bees to their old home. This cone can be made of wire screening and should extend 12 to 18 inches outward narrowing from 8 to 12 inches to an outer opening of 3/8ths inch. Place a dummy hive supplied with foundation or preferably one or more drawn combs adjacent to the screen cone opening and hold it in place by a temporary scaffolding (see below). The adult population will exit and adopt the new hive. You need to supply a queen or a frame of mixed brood so the colony can rear a new emergency queen. Eventually the colony inside will weaken and can be later exposed for comb removal.



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