

(Full hive) Artificial Swarm

Artificial swarming techniques should stop your bees from swarming. After learning the hard way*this design is both effective and with significant other benefits.

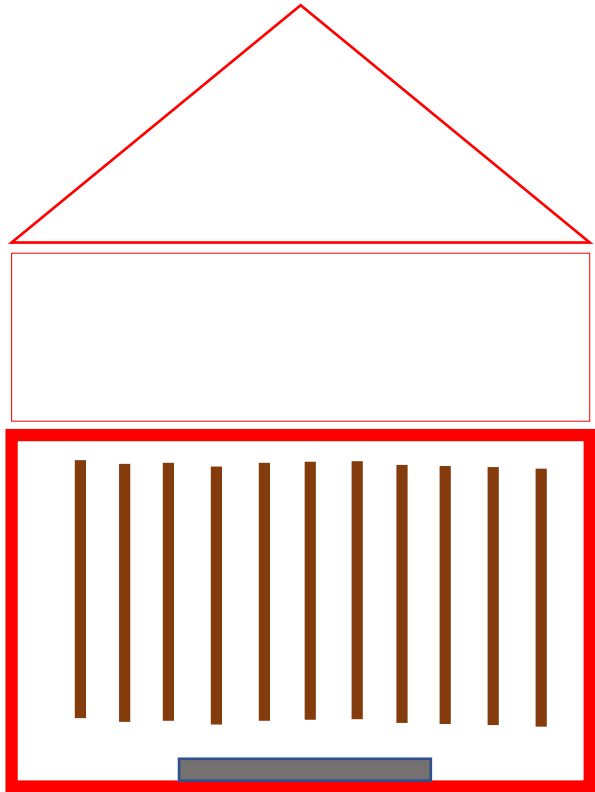
- Stops swarming
- Colony health benefits
(brood comb renewal, removes disease, residues and varroa)
- Emulates many aspects of a natural swarm
(wax building, comb renewal, brood break, reasonable mix of foragers/ nurse bees, new queen)
- Significant varroa reduction (without chemical treatment) in both the Swarm and Parent Colonies

* Past lessons

- 1) *The inclination to swarm can be so strong that they are hard to stop (without a little coercion="queen gate")*
- 2) *Wax wont necessarily be drawn when supers are on (foragers prefer to carry on adding nectar)*
- 3) *Putting brood with the laying queen can provide opportunities to make a new queen cell, leading to swarming*

Artificial Swarm technique DAY 1

- > You find queen cells
- > Panic a (little / lot)
- > Organise kit

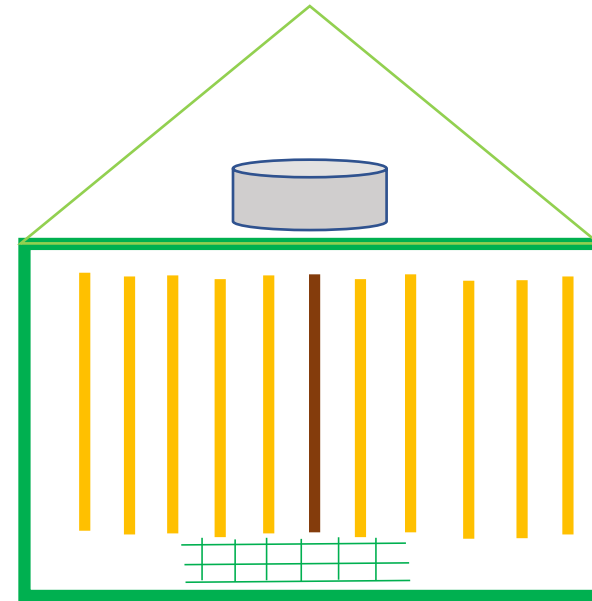


Parent colony

Kit required

Kit list:

- > Floor
- > Brood box
- > 10 frames foundation
- > 1x frame of drawn comb
- > Crownboard
- > Roof
- > “Queen gate” for entrance (cut plastic queen excluder)
- > Feeder / thick syrup
- > Hive stand

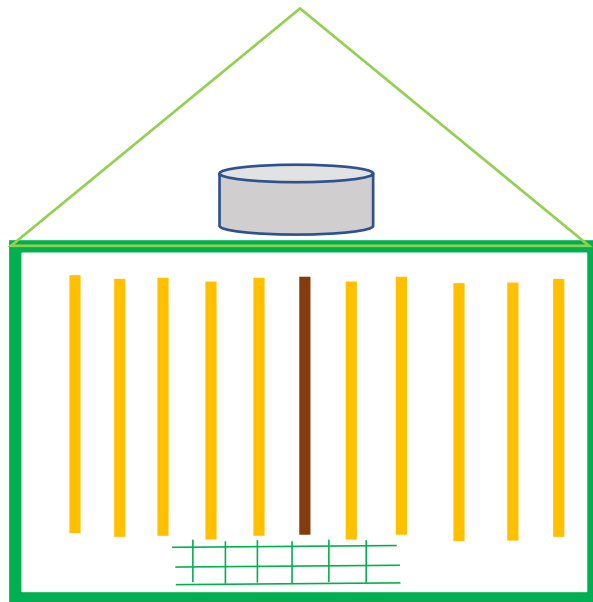


Swarm colony

DAY 1: Move Parent Colony & put Swarm Colony in its place

What's in the Swarm Colony?

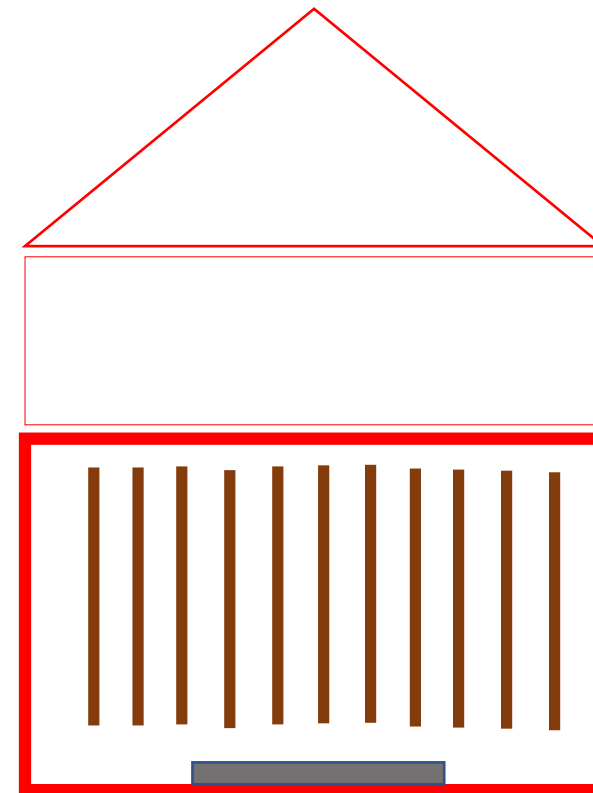
- > Transfer in laying queen
- > Foragers / drones fly back
- > Add nurse bees for balance (shake in 2x frames)
- > Foundation only (**NO BROOD FRAMES**)
- > 1x frame of drawn comb (if you have it, to capture varroa)
- > Feed syrup (2:1) to encourage wax drawing
- > Queen gate on entrance (cut plastic QX)



Swarm Colony

What's in the Parent Colony?

- > 1x open queen cell (mark frame)
- > Nurse bees
- > Frames of brood
- > Stores (honey / pollen)
- > Honey super(s) = access to food

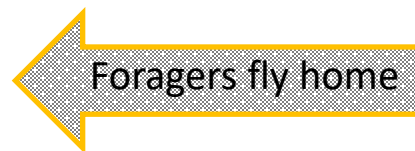


Parent Colony

Move Parent colony
2 metres

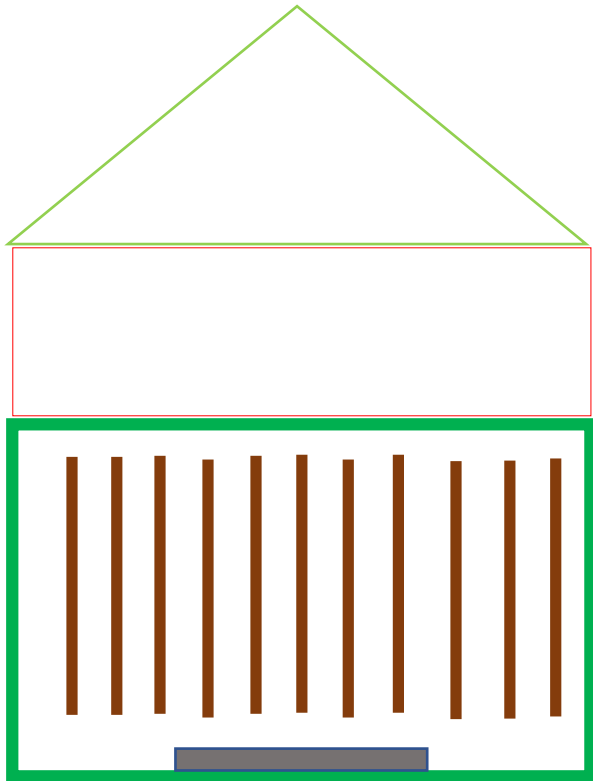


Foragers fly home



AFTER 1 WEEK

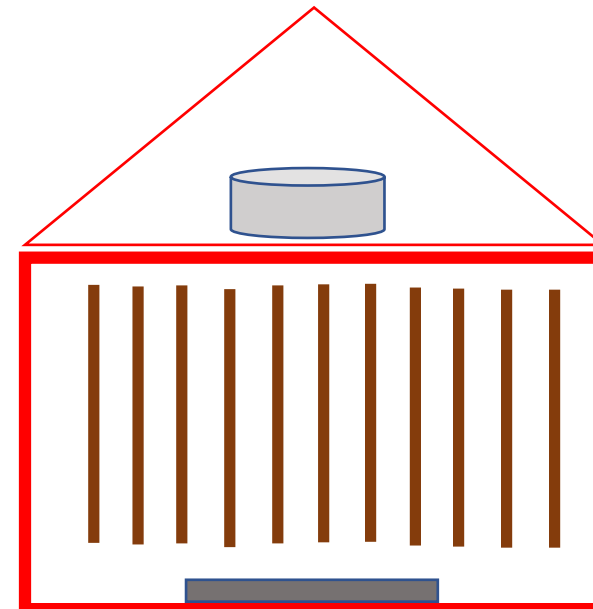
- > Wax will be drawn
- > Eggs and larvae laid
- > Take out 1st sealed comb (day 10+) to capture varroa
- > Take off feeder
- > Take off queen gate
- > Add back super(s) for foragers to fill up!



Swarm colony

←
Return honey super(s) for foragers

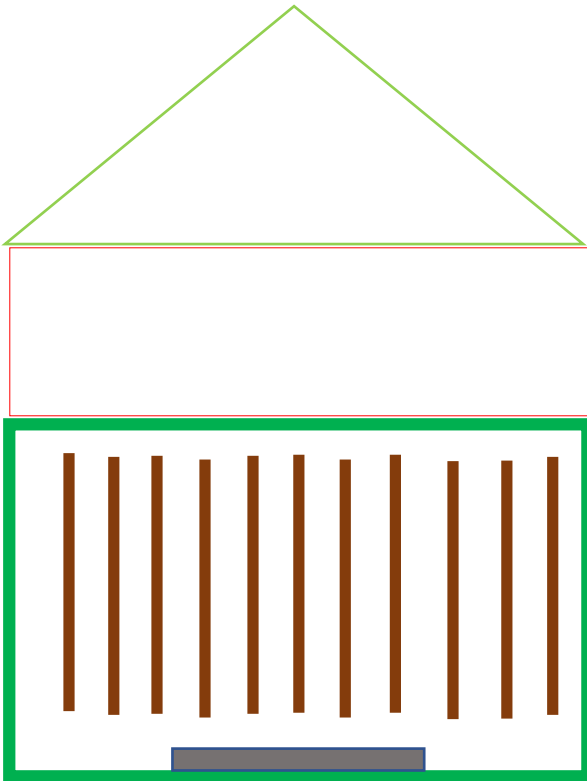
- > Check for additional queen cells and take down
- > Feed if necessary



Parent colony

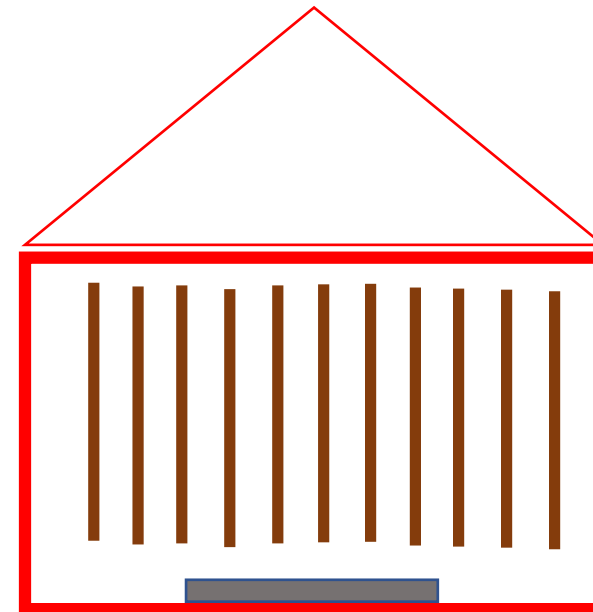
AFTER 3 WEEKS

- > Normal functioning colony
- > Very low varroa: 1-2% mite reduction per day during brood break
- > Fresh wax in brood area



Swarm colony

- > Virgin queen should be mated (weather dependent)
- > Looking for signs of eggs / larvae
- > Natural brood break will reduce varroa load
- > Take out first sealed frame of brood to remove remaining varroa (who go there to breed)



Parent colony

FAQ

Q Why not transfer brood with the queen?

- A i) Because they could make another queen cell and swarm
- ii) There's no brood in a natural swarm

Q Why leave only 1 queen cell?

- A Leaving more often leads to caste swarms where the virgin queens leave with a smaller swarm

Q Why leave an open queen cell, not sealed?

- A You know it is alive – a sealed one just may be a dud

Q Why leave the super(s) on the Parent colony?

- A i) They need stores (mainly house bees)
- ii) Swarm colony wont necessarily draw the wax foundation (they just keep foraging)
- iii) Natural swarm starts from scratch (no comb and only stores they bring in their honey crops)

Q What could I do with other spare sealed queen cells?

- A Pop into a nuc with 2 frames of nurse bees and hope they hatch and get mated (or into an incubator)

Q Why a “queen gate” (piece of queen excluder) across the entrance?

- A This stops them from swarming in the 1st week, if their instinct is to go, until they have invested in the colony with brood and comb

Q Does the “queen gate” stop drones from coming & going?

- A Yes, for that week, but they are good at charming their way into other hives (Or you could play gate keeper for a few hours a week)