

How to split a Beehive

The urge to swarm in the spring is a response to the amount of room the hive has in its brood chamber. When a queen is close to fill all of the brood comb, she will be moving more rapidly from frame to frame in search of open comb to lay. At this point she will begin to lay eggs in the queen cups, or specialized cells that the workers have made along the bottoms of frames and along damaged or jagged comb.

Making splits is the best way to prevent swarming, since you're removing filled frames and making more room (and work) for the bees and the queen.

What do you need to split a hive

- A strong colony in two full sized brood boxes, with about nine frames of brood.
- Two full sized Boxes with either empty or drawn frames (9 or 10 frames)
- A Bottom board, Hive Mat and roof for the new hive
- A Queen excluder



When to do it

During spring and summer, when the sources of nectar and pollen are abundant in your local area.

How to do it

1. Go carefully through the parent hive, find the queen and secure her safely, check and select the frames for eggs, pollen and honey and arrange them in the new box as shown in the diagram below
2. Make sure to take at least four frames of brood with mainly eggs not older than 3 days from your old colony to add them to the new box.
3. Shake off all the bees into the old colony before moving the frames to the the new box.
4. **Make sure you leave the original Queen in the old box!**

As shown, the frames in the new box should consist of:

- A minimum of 4 frames of eggs in the centre
- One or two frames of pollen
- Two frames of honey
- Spare empty frames.

Have the honey and pollen on the outside of the eggs, the eggs should be in the centre of the frames.

SPARE
HONEY
POLLEN
EGGS
EGGS
EGGS
EGGS
POLLEN
HONEY
SPARE

You should concentrate on getting eggs that are less than three days old; these will make the best Queens.

Hive Configuration

1. This new box **with no bees**, but now full of frames with eggs, pollen and honey, becomes the queen rearing unit.
2. Add empty frames into the parent hive to replace the frames you have removed
3. Put the queen excluder onto the parent hive, place the new beeless box on top of it and close the hive.
4. Leave this for 24 hours to allow the nurse bees to move through the queen excluder up to the brood frames above.

Leave this configuration for 24 hours.



After 24 hours

1. The top box will now be full of young nurse bees looking after the frames of brood with the original queen below the excluder.
2. Take the new colony full of nurse bees from above the excluder, and move it sideways.
3. Move the old boxes to the side at least three or four feet away.
4. Place the new box in the location of the old hive, with a new bottom board and roof. This step will add some flying bees to the new colony.



Five Weeks Later!

1. Check that new box has a new laying Queen.
2. But.. be carefull,

If you open the hive prior to the five week period

you could endanger the whole operation.

