

## ***Hiving bees from packages:***

For a lot of beekeepers this information may be pretty basic but I hope that there is something in here that might increase the survival rate of the new bees for even the old timers. One of the important things to remember is that every bee that goes into the colony increases your honey crop. There has been a lot of news attention to the "no child left behind act" and Alaskan beekeepers follow the "no bee left behind act" when emptying a package. Bees that are left in the package often do not make it into the hive even if they are only a few inches from the entrance. If a bee is colder than about 45 degrees it is very difficult for them to move. Our hiving temperatures are frequently near this temperature or even colder.

Package bees are under a higher level of stress and as beekeepers we need to do as much as possible to help them establish a new colony. The new home needs to be as clean, dry, and as draft free as possible. A few frames of drawn comb are very useful if the hive is new and the bees are starting on foundation. They also need a food source right away so that energy replacement is easy to obtain. Giving your bees a spray of sugar water prior to hiving helps out with the dehydration as well as the energy levels.

If the packages are not to be installed right away they should be kept in a cool dark place and occasionally sprayed with sugar water. Make sure that the bees have lots of air circulation and are away from potential air pollutants of chemicals and exhaust. A practical limit of about 5 days is about as long as you can expect to hold them prior to installation.

Spray the package with sugar water again prior to installation to keep the bees from flying too much and to give them some of the energy that they will need as they get to know their new home.

When you get ready to shake the bees out of the package you might want to have an extra super on hand (an empty one) to act as a guide for the bees to land on the top bars of the hive. Place the empty super on top of the hive after removing several frames to make room for the bees. This will make a short wall around the top of the hive and prevent bees from ending up over the edge and down on the ground.

Speaking of things down on the ground, don't forget to wear some tall boots or take measures to prevent bees from getting lost up inside your pant legs. A simple wrap with tape will help a lot.

Keep the queen protected from the elements during the hiving process and remember that it takes a few days for the bees to get used to their new queen. Letting her hang in the cage inside the super is a good idea. Make sure that the other bees can feed her and place the cage so that the feeder jar does not drip on the queen. Release the queen into a calm hive in a few days.

Once the bees have been hived feed them continuously with supplemental sugar syrup and provide pollen substitute unless a pollen bloom is well underway.

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