

Establishing and Managing your Colonies

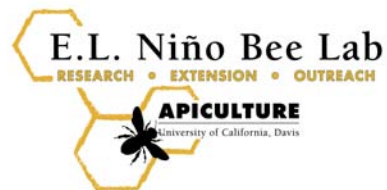


Bernardo Niño



University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Cooperative Extension



Welcome to the University of California, Davis
Department of
ENTOMOLOGY

What do you need?

- Equipment
 - How many hives do I want?
 - Get extra
 - Protective gear
- Location
 - Water source
 - Floral sources
- Honey Bees
 - Which type of honey bee?
 - Specific races or breeder lines?
- Goals
 - Why are you keeping bees?



How do I get honey bees?

- Packages
- Nucs
- Splits
- Swarms
- Gifts



Packages

- Typically 3lbs of bees (~9000 bees)
 - Mated queen included (costs extra, marked costs even more)
- \$100-130
- Literally shake bees onto your equipment
- Always feed!
 - Syrup (sucrose, ProSweet etc.)
 - Pollen or supplement



Package Video



Nucs

- 5 frames
- 3 frames of bees
- Mated queen
- Usually build up faster than packages
- \$150-180



Splits

- Split a colony into multiple
- Re-queen naturally
- Add queen cells
- Buy a queen
- FREE!!!!... Kind of



Swarms

- Capture a swarm
 - Make sure to get the queen
- Special equipment
- Just a hive box
 - Open brood frame
- Beware!
 - Africanized bees



Accepting hives from a beekeeper

- Always inspect everything!
- There are lots of problems you can't see
- BEE careful!!!
 - Scrape old wax, bleach equipment



Going through your colony

- Give your bees the attention they need
 - Not too MUCH or too LITTLE
- Depends on the season
- Depends on your goals, style and time



Don't ignore problems or create new ones

- Feed bees what they need when they need it
- Manage pests
- Keep an eye out for signs of disease
- Keep an eye on your queen
 - Laying pattern
 - Don't squash her!
- Add space or split if getting crowded



Helpful Websites

- eXtension

http://www.extension.org/bee_health

- UC Davis

<http://beebiology.ucdavis.edu/> (under construction)

http://elninobeelab.ucdavis.edu/apiculture_newsletter.html

- Oregon State University

<http://honeybeelab.oregonstate.edu/>

- Pennsylvania State University

<http://ento.psu.edu/extension/bees>

<http://beekeeping101.psu.edu/> (Beekeeping 101 class)

Questions???

Let's Keep Some Bees



February: Give Your Bees Some Love

Existing Colonies

- Check for healthy brood and a good laying pattern*
- Check for stored food

New Colonies

- Order packages
- Order Equipment
- Plan



March: Bee Prepared



Existing Colonies

- Remove robbing screens
- Check for adequate space for expanding the brood nest

New Colonies

- Build equipment
- Paint
- Plan
- Pick your sites



April: Things are Buzzing

Existing Colonies

- Adequate space for expanding the brood nest is critical
 - If new frames – feed sugar syrup to promote comb building
- Split strong colonies
- Plan queen rearing
- Monitor mites (treat)

New Colonies

- Install packages
- Pick up nucs
- Check queen quality
- Feed light syrup



May: Busy Bees and Beekeepers



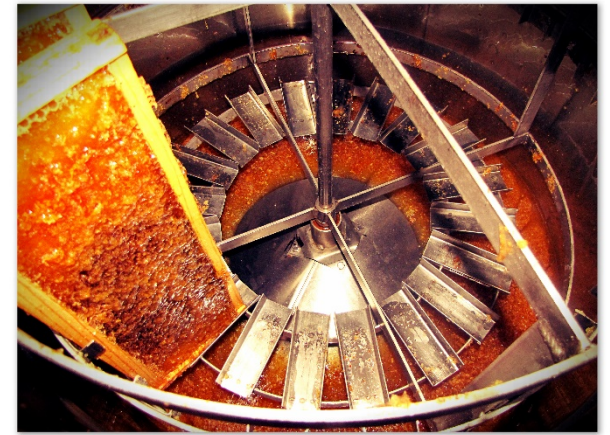
Existing Colonies

- Continue to examine the combs for adequate space for significant brood rearing
- Split strong colonies
- Check for adequate stores of honey and pollen

New Colonies

- Install packages
- Continue to feed light syrup
- Check frames are being drawn out properly
- Monitor space
- Monitor queen laying pattern

June: Show me the honey!



Existing Colonies

- Monitor honey production
- Monitor mites and respond accordingly
- Split strong colonies (early)
- Add cluster box (optional)

New Colonies

- Likely add a super
- Monitor mites and respond accordingly
- Check frames are being drawn out properly
- It's unlikely honey can be extracted from first year colonies

July: Bee Smart

Existing Colonies

- Be sure there is adequate space for nectar and honey
- Keep the brood combs empty of honey for brood rearing
- Remove cluster box from beneath brood chamber
- Do not split colonies

New Colonies

- Add space as needed
- Monitor queen laying pattern
- Start monitoring amount of adult bees



August: Nectar Flow Slows



All Colonies

- Remove boxes of comb that are not likely to be filled
- Treat for mites if so inclined
- Winter bees are being reared now and have to be healthy to make it through the winter

Existing Colonies

- Harvest the honey if the flow is practically over

September: Remember to Feed

- Rearrange the combs
- Some time during the month forage will pretty much dry up for the winter
- Robbing will start (mid-August in Davis)
- Hives should be opened for the shortest time possible to prevent robbing
- Hives should be equipped with robbing screens of some sort



Late Fall/Winter: OCT-JAN

- Feed Heavy sugar syrup to colonies are light on stored honey
 - Pro-sweet
 - Corn Syrup (if fresh)
- Provide a little bit of hive top ventilation
- Check amount of adult bees
- Clean up old equipment
- Check, occasionally to see that covers have not been blown off
- Read and plan for the next year



Hot Tips

- Number your hives
- Mark your queens
 - Markers, number tags
- Keep your equipment clean and in good shape
- Ask lots of questions

Data Management and Records

- Hive Tracks
- Beetight
- Excel
- Note Cards



Safety in the Hives

- Honey bees are stinging insects and people can develop an allergy!
 - If you get stung let us know!
- Wear long pants, closed-toed shoes, light-colored clothing, veil, use a smoker!
- “Bee” calm when going through the hive
- Stay calm, if bees are bumping you walk away quickly

Questions

