

It's time to...

It's time to start preparing for next spring.

Coweta Beekeeping Method – Making Increases, Week One

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It's time to start making new colonies if you have empty nucs and hives. Now, because the hives are strong with many frames of brood. The nectar flow will end sometime in the next two weeks and the developing brood will not emerge in time to help increase honey production. In June after the nectar flow ends the queen will reduce egg production reducing the amount of brood in the hive.

The two skills you must have to raise queens are:

- Find the queen
- Identify larvae that are less than 36 hours old

Select a hive with good qualities

Pick a hive that has good attributes such as; good honey production, calm bees during inspections, not aggressive or any other quality you like. You will be starting your genetic line of bees that are survivor stock for your area. You are selecting for qualities you like. Do not use colonies that are weak or have other problems.

After selecting the hive you like. Make sure there are six frames of brood or more. This is how to determine the hive is strong and will be able to raise excellent emergency queens. Two frames are used in the split with the queen leaving four frames of brood. Four frames of brood is the minimum required to raise excellent emergency queens.

Make a split with the queen

Find the queen.... If you can't find the queen today inspect tomorrow or the next day and look for her again. Make a split with the queen, two frames of capped brood, and shake the bees off one or two brood frames in to the split. I try to find brood frames for the split that do not have young larvae, saving them for queen production. Move this split to another bee yard or not. If you leave this split in the bee yard a robbing problem may develop. Reduce the size of the entrance to a very small, one inch, opening.

Raise some queens

You have now made the colony queenless. They will raise queens but they need some help. A worker larva less than 36 hours old can be raised as a queen but the horizontal worker cell must be cut away (notched) to allow the workers to make a vertical queen cell.

All queen producers use young worker larva to raise queens. Most queen producers use a grafting tool to move the larva into cups and then into a starter hive to start the queen rearing process.

Using the emergency queen rearing process has the added benefit of killing Varroa mites because of the broodless period created.

Notch the cells of young larvae

Remove a frame of brood from the deep super. Shake the bees off the frame into the hive, you may want to brush any remain bees off the frame. Walk away from the hive about 30 feet or more. You must be able to see young, less than 36 hour old, larvae which will require reading glasses unless you have excellent eye sight up close. I remove my veil so I can see well. This can get you stung on the face so you may not want to do this.

How do you know you are selecting less than 36 hour old larvae? They are tiny not much larger than an egg. Typically they will be next to cells with eggs. They are the smallest you can find in the cells..

Remove the bottom 1/3 of the cells all the way to the foundation. Don't touch the larvae. I use a razor blade to cut thru the cocoons in dark comb. Notch about 6 cells in each frame.

After notching each frame with young larva return it to the hive. Place the notched frames in the middle of the deep super. Add more frames to replace the frames used in the split with the queen. Typically these will be frames of foundation.

Reassemble the hive and let the workers raise the queens.

Wait 7 days.

The next **It's time to...** will use the queens to make splits.



Coweta Beekeeping Method- Splits



Larva

NOTCH
Bottom 1/3 cell
to foundation