

A Guide to Using the Hive Record Sheet

Every time a hive is opened, record the activity.

It's very important to record the progress of every hive. Quite often it's the little things that show a hive is in trouble and if picked up early, the hive can be repaired.

Hives should be inspected every seven to 10 days in the spring.



Varroa Treatments: while 2 treatments (spring and late summer) are the norm, if the mite count is above the desirable less than 1% additional treatments will be necessary.

Weather / Temperature: Important as an indicator of conditions. Bees really get flying at 15°C

1. Entrance observations for 1 minute: Gives an indication of colony strength and wellness of the hive, i.e. dead bees at the entrance could be nosema, lots of pollen coming in indicates brood rearing, bees with distended bodies full with nectar, drones flying, bees guarding, etc.

2. Number of boxes of bees: When taking the hive apart, count the frames or boxes covered with bees, (look underneath as well). An expanding colony needs 10 frames covered in bees at the beginning of October to reach 40,000 bees by December.

3. Food - frames of honey: Never let a colony's food reserves go below 3 full depth frames of honey (a week's supply). Begin sugar feeding 1-1 sugar water until a week before the honey flow starts.

4. Frames of pollen: Pollen in frames indicates good nutrition is available. Are the young lava being fed - swimming in royal jelly, (dry indicates poor nutrition). Two or more frames of pollen in October (spring) indicates queen problems.

5. Queen present: E = eggs seen, Q = queen seen – (it's not necessary to see the queen). Brood at all stages and eggs present indicate a healthy queen is in the hive.

Queen colour marking: Year ending - 1 or 6 = White; 2 or 7 = Yellow; 3 or 8 = Red; 4 or 9 = Green; 5 or 0 = Blue

6. Queen cells: E - egg found in queen cell, L = larvae found in queen cell, C = queen cell capped. Indicated you must artificially swarm the hive. **Never kill a queen cell until you have established why the hive has produced that queen cell.**

7. Quality and number of frames of sealed/capped brood: Spotty or patchy brood indicates a problem. The number of frames indicates the development of the hive. Eight frames of capped brood is an indication the colony is preparing to swarm. Space requirement - bees emerging from one frame require three additional frames of space - super early. NB 3/4 depth frames have 2600 cells per side, full depth frames have 3800 cells per side.

8. Frames added or removed: 30% replacement of dark/drone frames each season for good colony health.

9. Disease: American Foul Brood, Deformed Wing Virus, Nosema, Chalkbrood, Sacbrood.

10. Mite Count: Mite fall indicates varroa in the hive. Alcohol wash/ sugar shake indicates the percentage of mites in the hive. Keep below 1%