

# Use Those Queen Cells

## Simple Queen Rearing & Queen Introduction



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# You have a “Nice Hive” and your about to inspect it.

A colony that is;

- healthy, gentle, calm on the comb, etc.
- Preferably near native.





# You Open Your “Nice Hive” & Find This





## What Do You Do?

- Knock them all down & leave one?
- Go back 5 days later & do the same again?

**Now your colony depends on;**

- that queen cell being ok,
- her flying off & mating well.

**But what if this fails?**

- You have a queenless colony, so it's potentially doomed.





**What if rather than destroying all those queen cells, you used a couple to raise a queen or two?**



**Then you would have a safety net, if the single queen cell / queen mating didn't work out.**

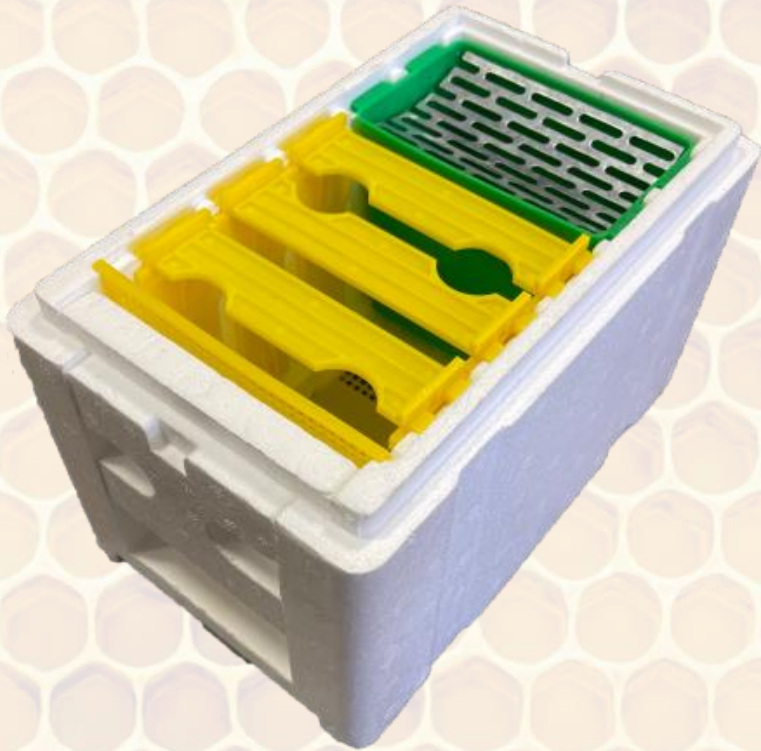


# So what kit do you need to do this?

## Is it expensive?

- **A bucket**
- **Empty carton – an old yogurt cup**
- **Penknife or other small knife**
- **Small pieces of foundation**
- **Some fondant (or syrup)**
- **Drawing pins &/or marker pen**
- **Cocktail or match sticks**
- **Strong peppermints or an essential oil, e.g. lemongrass**
- **A mating hive – £15 to £40**
- **Spray bottle of water – £1.50**
- **A couple of Q introduction cages – £1.00**

# Mini Mating Hives



**Thornes  
CP Mating Nuc  
£10 in sale**



**Apidea £39**



# Prepare Your Kit Before You Find Q Cells

- Fit some foundation starter strips into the mininuc frames – *the most fiddly bit.*
- Fondant ready to put in the feeder.
- Fill your empty carton with 300 ml of water and mark the water line.
- Gather the other bits & pieces into your bucket.
- Take it with you when visiting your bees.



## So You Have Found Some Sealed Queen Cells – How Do You Use Them?

- The colony has possibly swarmed but look for the Q to check she has gone. For this talk we will assume she has.
- Look for those Q cells that are a nice size, shape, undamaged. Don't shake the frame they are on, smoke bees away or sweep them off gently if need be.
- Pick the one Q cell you are going to leave and mark the frame it is on (pen, drawing pin).
- Cut out several Q cells and take a decent piece of wax with them where they are attached to the comb, place them in your tool box.
- Remove/ destroy all the remaining Q cells, except the one you are leaving in the hive.



## Set Up Your Mini Mating Nuc

- Take your bucket and empty it out beside you.
- Check your mating hive entrance is closed, turn upside down & open the floor.
- Pick a frame from the brood nest, this is where young house bees will be, tap it to encourage the older flying bees off, then shake the bees into your bucket. If need be, do it with another couple of frames, so there is an inch or two of bees.
- Bump the bucket to keep the bees in the bottom then give them a couple of mist sprays of water. This keeps them clumped together.
- Take your empty carton and scoop up bees to the fill line, tip them into the mating hive and close the floor & turn it the right way up.
- Tip the remaining bees in the bucket back into the hive.



## Set Up Your Mini Mating Nuc

- Take a queen cell and insert it into the hole in the crown board of the mating hive, securing it with the tab of wax.
- Take the mating hive home and place in the dark, a cool shed or garage. Give the ventilation grill a couple of mist sprays of water.
- Each evening and morning, give the ventilation grill a couple of mist sprays of water.
- After 3 days, set the mating hive out and open the entrance to let the Q fly & mate.
- Leave alone for a couple of weeks then check for eggs/ larvae.
- Likewise, apart from checking your hive for extra Q cells 5 to 7 days later, leave it alone for a few weeks, to let the cell hatch & the new Q mate.



# Now You Have A Spare Mated Queen



Use her to replace;

- The queen in the hive if the queen cell failed.
- A poorly performing queen.
- An early drone laying queen.
- The queen in a grumpy colony.
- The queen a colony that is trying superced her.
- An old queen, etc.



# How do you introduce her?

## Option A – Newspaper

- Place a piece of newspaper over a hole in the crown board, put the mating hive over it and slide back the floor.
- Wait 3 or 4 days, lift the mating nuc and see if the paper has been eaten away. If so, check the mating hive to see if the new Q has gone into the hive and if she has, empty the rest of the bees in and remove it.
- If the Q is still in the mating hive, place her on a frame and watch to see the bees reaction. If calm, let her join them, if aggressive, pop her in a cage and try Option B.

# How do you introduce her?

## Option B – Introduction Cage

- Find the Q in the mating hive and pop her into an introduction cage, with a fondant plug and the plastic cap in place. She doesn't need to have any attendants.
- Place the cage between the frames, hanging it there from a cocktail or match stick.
- Check the cage a couple of days later and if the bees seem calm around it, remove the plastic tab, so the bees can eat the fondant and release her.
- The bees in the mating nuc are now queenless, so will make one or more emergency queen cells. If wished, you can leave one and see if she hatches and mates ok, to give you a second queen.



# How do you introduce her?

## Option C – Introduction Cage (quicker)

- As Option B but when you initially place the cage between the frames, remove the plastic tab, so the bees can eat the fondant and release her.
- This saves you having to check a couple of days later and is usually fine.



# How do you introduce her?

## Option D – Quickest Method

- Separate the brood frames in the hive and give the two either side of the gap, with their bees, a mist spray of a light scented syrup. Place them back into the hive.
- Take out a frame from the mating hive, give the bees on both sides a spray then shake them off into the gap in the hive. Do the same with the other 2 frames and spray inside the mating hive and shake in the remaining bees.
- If you see the queen when doing this, give her a good squirt of the scented syrup and run her into the gap in the hive.
- Take out the food container from the mini mating hive, spray and shake any bees into the hive.
- Close up the hive and check it the following week to 2 weeks' time, to see if the Q is still there - eggs/ larvae.





# Job Done

You now have a  
new mated queen  
heading up the  
colony







**Thank You  
For Your Time**



**Any  
Questions ?**

