




Splitting, Swarming, and Acquiring a Swarm

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5th Year Beekeeper (swarming in year 2)



Why Do Bees Swarm???

- A) They want to create problems for the BeeKeeper
- B) Everybody wants new digs
- C) Upgrading to a better neighborhood
- D) This is the way they perpetuate the species
- E) All of the above

Why Do Bees Swarm???

- A natural process to propagate the species
- The Organism is the Hive NOT the Bee
Queen, Workers, and Drones are like cells in our body
We can lose some and no problem
- Social Insects like Honey Bees and Ants can reproduce individuals in the Hive but this is not sufficient for survival of the species

What to Do to Prevent Swarms

Split your hives when there appears to be too many bees

Nothing! The Hive is a “Superorganism” and needs to divide to survive

How do you know your hive will swarm?



Presence of Queen Cells on the bottom of frames

How do you know your hive will swarm?



Excessive number of bees in the Hive

How to Split your Hive to Prevent a Swarm

Lots of different methods: Here's the one I like best!

- 1) Set up a new hive with 2 Hive bodies next to the hive to be split
- 2) Take the top hive body off from the new hive, and set it aside
- 3) Put the top hive body from the hive with the bees on the new hive
- 4) Put the top hive body from the new hive onto the hive with bees
- 5) Check to make sure that both hives have eggs – CRITICAL
- 6) Rotate the two hives so that the entrances face each other
- 7) Foraging bees will be confused and will enter both hives
- 8) That evening after all foragers have returned, move one of the hives to a new location

What to Do to Prevent Swarms

Demaree Method

- Step 1: Remove the hive from its bottom board and replace with a new box with 8 drawn frames
- Step 2: Locate the queen and place her with 2 frames of sealed brood in the center of the new box
- Step 3: put a queen excluder on the box and place 1 or more supers on top of the excluder
- Step 4: Put remaining hive bodies on top of supers
- Step 5: Inspect hive in 7-10 days and destroy any queen cells in the top brood box



What Does a Swarm Look/Sound Like?





How to Capture a Swarm

1. Don't Panic – You have lots of time!

- A typical swarm will stay in location from 2 hours to several days

- Scouts locate possible new hive locations

- Scout promotes new location

- Must convince other scouts to check it out

- ~ 80% of the Scouts have to agree on a site

- This takes LOTS OF TIME

2. Gather your equipment (even better if you have it ready now)

- Ladder (don't try to go too high)

- Box for the Bees

- Branch Loppers

- Small Saw

- Brush

- Protective Gear



Swarm #1 2013



Swarm #2 2013



Swarm #3 2013







**2015 Swarm Capture
NOT RECOMMENDED!**



Sometimes you gotta say

What the



Line attached to the branch so that when
It's cut, we can lower it to the ground gently!



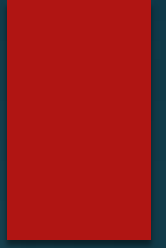


Line BROKE – Branch fell – Great CATCH!!!!

Crowd Goes Wild!!!



Shake the bees into a Nuc







Pour them into the prepared hive









Another Happy Customer!



An Easy One This Time









After the Capture (What not to do)



Migration back



What to Do

1. Place a frame of brood into the new box
2. Put in a feeder with sugar syrup
3. Frames (either new or drawn) – leave 3-5 middle frames out
4. Shake bees from the box into the Hive Body
5. Replace the 3 middle frames
6. Pat yourself on the back (because your spouse won't)