

Package bees should be installed in a hive as soon as possible after their arrival. If your busy life or foul weather stand in the way, you can wait briefly but no longer than a day or two!

- Keep the package in an area of your home that is cool but not cold, dark, and quiet – a basement is usually best.
- Every few hours, give the package a misting of sugar syrup. Moisten all sides but don't saturate the cluster.

### Instructions for installing a new package of bees:

- Necessary tools and equipment
  - Spray bottle filled with 1:1 sugar syrup (1# white sugar: 1 pint water)
  - 1 deep or 2 medium hive bodies with comb or foundation frames
  - Filled syrup feeder and an empty super to enclose it.
  - Bottom board, entrance reducer, inner and outer covers
  - Hive tool and pliers
  - Veil and gloves (You may not need the gloves, but it's nice to have them nearby.)
  - **Bring a camera – your friends are going to want to see this.**
- Installing your package in fourteen easy steps:
  - Give the package one more feeding by misting with sugar syrup and try to find a shady spot for them while you get the rest ready
  - Place your hive at its site; remove the covers and half the total frames from the center and set them aside. (If using medium hive bodies, start with only the bottom body and add the second one, full of frames, at the end.)
    1. Put on your veil.
    2. Remove the cover from the top of the package to reveal the syrup can and queen cage strap. Pull out any staples or nails from both the box and the cover.
    3. Give the package a final misting of sugar syrup.
    4. Using the corner of your hive tool, pry up the syrup can just enough so you can get a grip on it with your strong hand.
    5. Grasp the top of the package with your other hand and thump it downward against the hive so the cluster falls to the bottom of the package.
    6. Remove the syrup can, set it aside, and remove the queen cage. **COVER THE HOLE IN THE PACKAGE WITH THE COVER YOU REMOVED IN STEP #2.**
    7. Gently shake or blow the worker bees from the queen cage into the hive. Check that your queen is alive and moving. \* Put her in a jacket pocket or in the shade.
    8. Thump the package downward again, remove the cover, and pour the bees into the space at the center of the hive. **Some of the bees will begin flying but most of them will pour out like sand; trust me.**
    9. You can give the package a shake or two but don't worry if there are some bees left in the package. Place it near the hive entrance and the bees will find home.
    10. Remove the cork **FROM THE CANDY END** of the queen cage. If you want a slower introduction, put a single piece of masking tape over the candy.
    11. Secure the queen cage (with tape or a tack on the top bar), candy side upward, screen away from the foundation or comb, and toward the front edge of one center frame.
    12. Place the frame with the queen, then the other remaining frames in the hive body.
    13. Add the second medium, if using all mediums, inner cover, syrup feeder, empty super, and outer cover.
    14. You're done. Watch your new bees and welcome them to the neighborhood. Toast them with a glass of mead and pat yourself on the back for a job well done.

\*If your queen arrives dead, please call the Honey Exchange – 773-9333 as soon as possible.



### IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- A package of bees is an imitation swarm; like a swarm they are not generally defensive and tend not to be aggressive and sting. Even if you bungle around, “Package Day” is usually lots of fun – relax and have a good time with it.
- Most of the bees in your package are young house bees; they want to cluster together and most of them don’t (or can’t) start flying.
- Once they’re in the hive, leave the bees alone for 4-5 days.
  - If you are using a slow-release (masking tape or delayed cork removal) method [*recommended for Russian queens*], check after 5 days to see if workers are accepting the queen in the cage. If they are not clinging to the cage, are not biting the wires, and are feeding her, she is safe for release.
  - If you exposed the candy on day 1 the queen should be released in 3-4 days. If she is not released (and the bees are accepting her, as above), gently poke a hole in the candy with a toothpick and wait another couple days.
  - As soon as the queen is released, remove the cage and tighten the frames up against each other.
- Bees need about 1 pint of warm (or room temperature) 1:1 syrup per day to draw wax well. Keep a feeder on *constantly* while they are drawing wax.
  - When the bottom hive body (or bottom 2 mediums) is 2/3 to 3/4 drawn, add the next box.
  - When the top hive body is 3/4 drawn, **REMOVE THE FEEDER** (unless the long-term weather prediction shows a protracted period of rain or temperatures below 40°).
  - When the top box has a border of honey along the top, add a honey super. Don’t use a queen excluder below a new super full of foundation – hives rarely draw wax above a queen excluder.