



Mite Lifestyle and Why Drone Trapping Works

This is a great way to reduce Varroa Mites during the brood rearing season, even if honey is being produced. This process works because of the mites' life cycle and their preference for drone brood. The female mite enters the cell 2-3 days before it is capped. She will wait for 60 hours after the cell is capped, then begin laying eggs at a pace of 1 every 24-30 hours. It takes approximately 7.5 days for a female mite to fully mature and only mature female mites will emerge with a drone. On average, 1.8 mature mites will emerge with a worker bee, but 2.8 mites will emerge with a drone. Studies have shown that, by removing your drone brood, the number of mites in your hive will be greatly decreased.



How to use a Drone Frame

The USDA worked with Pierco to develop and build the mold for this new hard plastic, beeswax coated frame for use as an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) technique for combating Varroa Mites. The Pierco Drone Frame is colored bright green so it is easily identified when looking in the hive. You should place your Pierco Drone Frame near the center of the nest (position 2-4). By doing this, the bees will accept the frame and build comb more quickly than if it were in the first position, against the wall of the hive body. Bees instinctually want to build 10% drone comb. By using the Pierco Drone Frame, you can better control where that comb is built. This reduces their tendency of converting the smaller

celled worker foundation to drone comb.



Ideally, you should have two drone combs for each hive so you can rotate these frames. For best results, be sure that the majority of the cells are capped, which takes about 2.5-3 weeks. Replace the full frame, in your hive, with the clean frame to continue the cycle. Place the capped frame in the freezer for 48 hours to kill the pupae and mites in the comb. After freezing the frame, don't clean it off. Simply place it back in the hive and the bees will take care of it.

If you have limited freezer space, there are other cleaning options. Simply scrape the capped cells off of the frame and let the bees rebuild the comb each time. You can also blast the frame with your garden hose to clear the cells of pupae and mites; the comb will remain intact. Once the frame is sufficiently flushed, shake off the excess water and reinstall the frame in your hive.



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