

Spears Bee Farm

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NUC Installation Instructions

Thank you for ordering your nucleus colonies from Spears Bee Farm. We are dedicated to our customers and will be available for questions while you are installing your NUC into their permanent home.

Step By Step:

Taking your NUC colony home

- Remember that it is easy for the bees to overheat in the closed NUC. This can damage the queen and affect her ability to lay.
- They will be OK in the back of a pickup.
- If inside a car, either run the air conditioner or open the windows to create air-flow.
- You may want to net the NUC to better contain the bees. Some people get nervous if honeybees are flying around inside the car while driving.

When you get home with your NUC

- Jostling around in the car can upset the bees. When you get them home, set the NUC in the shade for 1-2 hours (still closed up and as close as possible to where their permanent home will be) so they can calm down. (no longer than 2 hours).
- Place the NUC in the exact place where the permanent hive will be. Make sure the NUC entrance is pointed in the same direction you will be pointing the entrance of the permanent hive. If at all possible, a South or East direction is preferred.
- A trick we have learned is to cut a small branch from a tree and prop it in front of the entrance. (When the bees come out of the NUC, they will react as if their tree was blown down and re-orient to the new surroundings.)
- Open the NUC entrance. Wait at least 24 hours before installing the NUC into the permanent hive. It gives the bees time to orient to their new location before having their hive environment changed. As long as they have a little room to expand in the NUC, they can stay in it for a few days. Don't leave them too many days or they might begin the swarming process. Waiting for them to orient before moving them reduces the chance that they will abscond (leave their new hive). We have had really good experience with this and using branches in front of the entrance when moving bee colonies.

- **Planning** - It will be easiest for you if you install the NUC into your hive boxes when most of the foragers are out working - usually between 11AM-2PM.

Next Day – Installing the NUC

- Move the NUC to the side of the hive location and put the empty nest box where the NUC had been.
- Gently smoke the entrance to the NUC. Remove/open the top of the NUC and smoke them a little more.
- Beginning with an outer frame, **carefully** move each frame from the NUC to the nest box, making sure to keep the order and orientation of the frames the same. (Same order and turned in the same direction)
 - Quickly check for the queen, scanning around the outside of the frame and then scan the center. Turn to the bottom of the frame, and then continue to the other side, continuing to scan for the queen. Repeat on each frame, looking for queen and noting the contents of the frames.
 - It is not unusual to not be able to see the queen. Seeing young larvae and eggs is a good indicator that the queen is in there. Don't delay the process too much looking for the queen. Your Queen will be marked with the color for her birth year. White=2021 Yellow=2022.
 - Get rid of any queen cells they may have started. Being cramped in the NUC may have triggered a swarming response. Moving to a new location and getting rid of any queen cells should stop this process.
- Center the frames from the NUC in the nest box and finish filling the hive.
 - If you are using an in-hive feeder, place it on one side of the box and add 1 to 1 sugar syrup. (Equal amounts of water and sugar, either by weight or by volume.)
 - Add your empty frames, preferably drawn comb, or wax coated frames that have been spritzed with sugar water. The frames taken from the NUC should be in the center and the empty frames and feeder go to either side, on the outside of what came in the NUC box.
 - There will still be bees in the NUC box after you have removed the frames.
 - If you know that the queen has been moved to the hive, you can bump down the remaining bees, then bump them to one end, and then shake them out on top of the frames in the hive. Give them some smoke so they go down between the frames.
 - If you have not found the queen, look in the box. If you still cannot find the queen, place the inner cover on top of the brood box and invert the NUC box on top of the inner cover, place a brick or rock on top the inverted NUC to keep it from falling over, and leave it overnight. Next day, remove the NUC and replace with the lid. (Inner cover must have a hole in the center for this to work.)
- Add the inner cover. (This is when you would invert the NUC if you haven't found the queen.)
- Add the hive lid.
- Reduce the hive entrance to 3 inches with the entrance reducer that should have come with your bottom board.

Follow-Up

- Check the hive in a week to see that the queen is laying and that they are not running out of room.
 - A bee colony can grow rapidly this time of year. To prevent swarming, it is important to add another brood box before they run out of room.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call Randy or Linda at Spears Bee Farm 641-224-2233.