

# **Nuc and Single Story Hive Transportation, Handling and Initial Management**

This is directions for picking up, transporting, installation, and initial management of your 5 frame nucleus (nuc) that you have purchased from Beekeeping Bliss. If you purchased a single story colony, a lot of info in this will pertain to you also, so read it all.

## **Initial Preparation**

Prior to nuc pickup, you should have purchased and assembled an empty hive (i.e. bottom board, medium boxes or deep boxes (6 5/8" in depth for medium nucs purchased or 9 5/8" depth box for deep frame nucs) , 3 or 5 frames with foundation and/or comb (depending upon if you have 8 frame equipment or 10 frame equipment), entrance reducer, inner cover, outer cover, empty boxes with frames and foundation to add on top as they grow, sugar syrup, and feeder should be assembled and prepared for installation.

The hive should be located at the apiary site, sheltered from North winter winds, good air drainage, a southern sunny exposure and no danger of flooding. If the empty hive contains comb and/or frames of honey, it should be screened or made bee-tight, or stored inside prior to installing the nuc so other bees in the area aren't attracted to it and/or don't rob the honey prior to installing the nuc.

## **Pickup**

If you are coming to my location to pick up your nuc or single story colony, the ideal times to pick up are early in the day, during the evening, or during rainy weather since the field bees are within the nuc and temperatures tend to be cooler, for optimal transport. If I am delivering to you or a designated meet point, I will contact you and arrange that place and time. If you come to my place and we are transferring the nuc into your equipment, (not recommended as you lose lots of bees in the transfer process) bring protective clothing and veil that you feel comfortable working in. Your equipment will need to be secured so the bottom board will not fall away or shift from the box, and the inner cover needs to be secured with a screen taped over the center hole and be tacked down to the box. A screen the length of the whole entrance, plus 3 inches wide needs to be available to close off the entrance to allow plenty of ventilation. I also supply a PRO-NUC box that you can transport your nuc home to install yourself. (recommended)

## **Transport**

Adequate ventilation is very important in order to prevent overheating and suffocation of bees and brood. The Pro-Nuc box has many great ventilation features that help to keep your bees cooler but you must manage them properly in your transport to your location.

When loading nucs on or into a vehicle, make sure they are stable and will not shift or topple, and ensure that the vents aren't obstructed by another nuc or other items in your auto during transport. At times it may be necessary to separate nucs with side vents via pieces of lumber or

strapping. When transporting nucs in a car or van, turn on the air conditioner if the bees become noisy or if the vehicle gets too warm. **Do not transport nucs long distances or during warm-hot weather without adequate ventilation. And go immediately home or to your location. Don't stop somewhere to shop, or other errands. They must have air flow at all times.**

## **Arrival**

If the nuc was transported within a vehicle, remove it prior to smoking. Unload the nuc and place it next to or on top of the empty hive it will inhabit and slide open the front entrance. Depending upon the weather and time of day, the nuc can be installed the same day or delayed till the next day. Please install them as soon as possible. If everything is prepared, it will not take but around 5-10 minutes to install into your equipment.

**The most important things to accomplish upon arrival are moving the nuc to the exact location where it is to be hived and removing/opening the front entrance screen or raising the entrance on the nuc so the bees can fly.**

## **Installation**

Put on protective gear, light a smoker and gently puff the nuc entrance with two or three wafts of cool smoke. Gently smoke the nuc entrance with three or four puffs of cool smoke. Place the nuc beside the empty hive if it had been set atop it on arrival day. Remove the outer and inner cover of the hive, insert the entrance reducer and remove two or more frames of foundation or comb and lean them on the side of the hive opposite the nuc. Spread out the remaining frames of foundation/comb to the edges of the hive body. Gently release the cover off the nuc and gently waft smoke over the bees and top bars of the nuc. Use minimal smoke so the bees aren't agitated and so the queen is less likely to leave the comb and hide on the bottom or wall of the nuc box.

While standing next to the nuc, remove the outermost frame (one near you) by gently pulling the frame straight up in order to avoid crushing the bees on this frame and the adjacent frame. This first frame will probably contain honey and pollen Pry apart and remove the frames of bees from the nuc and **situate them in the hive box in the same order and orientation as they had been in the nuc.** Center the transferred nuc frames and slide the remaining frames in the hive body toward the nuc frames. Replace the remaining frames of foundation and/or comb on either side toward the hive walls. If there are frames of comb and foundation available at nuc installation time, situate the comb on either side of the nuc frames and place the frames of foundation toward the walls. If only foundation is available, place it on either side of the centered nuc and shove them tightly together.

Before placing the inner cover on the transferred nuc, check the remaining bees on the bottom and walls of the nuc box for the queen. If she is still among the bees remaining in the nuc box, gently thump the rear corner of the nuc box on the ground. The bees can then be poured into the hive by inverting the nuc box over it and giving it a shake so the bees fall into the hive. If the queen isn't visible, still perform the same procedure to remove the remaining bees from the nuc box. After the remaining ("shook") bees have moved off the top bars down onto the combs, place the inner cover on the hive. If the bees are slow to move, gently apply smoke.

**Feeding:** If you don't have an internal frame feeder, place an inverted feed jar, can or bucket of 1:1 sugar syrup directly above the inner cover hole so the bees below have direct access to holes or screen on this feeding container. Place an empty hive body (or supers) above the inner cover (for protection of syrup) and outer cover on top. Put the empty nuc box in a shed, etc., away from the hive.

After a few days, check syrup consumption and feed if necessary. Additional syrup will be needed according to container size, weather and flower conditions. After one week, check the hive. Assess queen and brood conditions and add a second box with frames and foundation when the bees have drawn two-thirds of the foundation into comb. In most 8 frame medium equipment, I recommend to go ahead and add the second box on the day of installation. On my website, [www.beekeepingbliss.com](http://www.beekeepingbliss.com) follow the directions for adding boxes and situating frames on the "Hive Arrangement" pdf that is on the "Information" page of the website.

Necessity for additional feed will continue to be influenced by weather and plant conditions. But realize the more you feed the quicker they will build up and fill out the main boxes that you will winter the bees in, the brood boxes. Sometimes in strong nectar flows, the bees will not take up syrup, as they prefer the flower nectar. There is also a balance of not feeding them too much so they don't store too much syrup in open brood rearing cells. An inspection every week will show you how things are progressing.

## **Single Story Colony Management**

As above, have your location and extra equipment prepared before you get your bees. Place the colony when you get it home, where you want it to permanently be, and lightly smoke the entrance with cool smoke and pull away the folded screen I will have across the whole entrance for transport. Only open this screen where there is about a 3" entrance till the bees get used to their new location. About 24 hours later you can totally remove this screen and install your entrance reducer.

When you get your single story colony, it will immediately be ready to add the next box with frames and foundation. Don't wait to add this box as if you wait, your bees could make swarm preparations and swarm. On my website, [www.beekeepingbliss.com](http://www.beekeepingbliss.com) follow the directions for adding boxes and situating frames on the "Hive Arrangement" pdf that is on the "Information" page of the website. For better success, feed your bees as indicated above till they get strongly established.