

Double Brood Box Inspection

Many Beekeepers talk about the difficulty in inspecting a double brood box as a reason for not employing such a hive arrangement. This is not case if the inspection is performed in a standard manner.

Running a double brood box has several advantages:

- Swarm prevention
- Facilitates comb change
- Only need 10 frames per box leaving space for manipulations
- Source of bees/frames for splits
- Queen rearing

To inspect the colony, you will need a second roof and possibly a spare crown board.

Sean covers the crown board holes in his hives so removing a roof from a hive does not disturb the colony.

- Place the spare roof to one side of where you will be working
- Remove the hive roof and place the supers on it, covering the supers with the crown board
- Remove the queen excluder, after checking for the queen, place it to the front of the hive so the bees can climb back into the hive
- Unless there are many bees on the queen excluder there should be no need to shake the bees off at this stage

When inspecting a colony on a double brood box always inspect the bottom box first, if you start with the top box you will drive bees into the bottom box, overcrowding it and making it near impossible to inspect.

- Lift the top brood slightly and smoke in the crack between the boxes
- Remove the top brood box and place it diagonally across the spare roof
- Cover with a crown board if necessary, e.g. robber bees around
- Inspect the bottom box
- If you need to find the queen and she is not in the bottom box inspect the top box in situ
- Otherwise return the brood box to original place and inspect

Clear the bees from the queen excluder and replace.

Return supers to the hive before inspecting.

Before replacing the top brood box and the super smoke under the box and check if there are hanging bees that might be smashed as part of the manipulation.

Footnote on covering crown board holes:

Covering the holes has no ill effect on the colony, the fact they generally propolis the hole cover indicates this.

It helps the Beekeeper in keeping a clear space above the crown board.



1 Double Brood, Beekeeper and spare roof



2 Smoke the crack between the boxes



3 Place top brood box on spare roof



4 Inspect bottom box first



5 Inspect second box on roof or back on stand



6 smoke under box to clear hanging bees



7 Put hive back together