



Betterbee

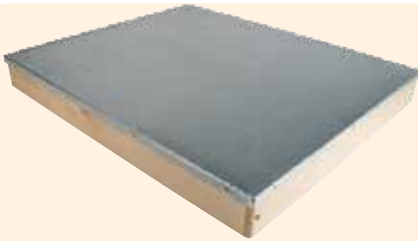
Preparing Double Nucs

Overwintered nucs are an excellent method for Northern beekeepers to minimize their dependence on package bees. These allow the beekeeper to prepare nucs during the summer to overwinter and provide nucs for sale or use the following spring. Colonies overwinter in 8 frames in a four frame over 4 frame configuration. The following spring you will have a young productive queen that has taken her colony through winter. The nucs then are available for expansion, replacing winter losses, or harvesting early queens.

The technique we use was taught to us by Mike Palmer of French Hill Apiary in St. Albans VT. Mike has been raising queens and producing nucs in northern Vermont for many years.

Equipment

The kit includes all components pictured below except outer cover, frames and foundation. Each item is also available separately.



Outer Cover

(Not included in the kit) The double nuc boxes use a standard telescoping outer cover or a BeeMax outer cover. We recommend installing a 1" foam insulating board between the inner covers and the standard outer cover for wintering.



Inner Covers

The double nuc notched inner covers are placed directly above the brood on the supers. The ventilation notch is placed up. When preparing the hive for winter place the notches down towards the brood to provide an upper entrance and ventilation for the colony.



Four Frame Supers

The four frame supers are set in pairs above the double nuc box as both colonies expand. They continue the partition of the two hives to create a four over four frame hive on each side of the box.



Divided Deep Super

This partitioned deep super is divided down the center. This creates the space to set four frames on both sides. There is plenty of room to install queen cages or cells.

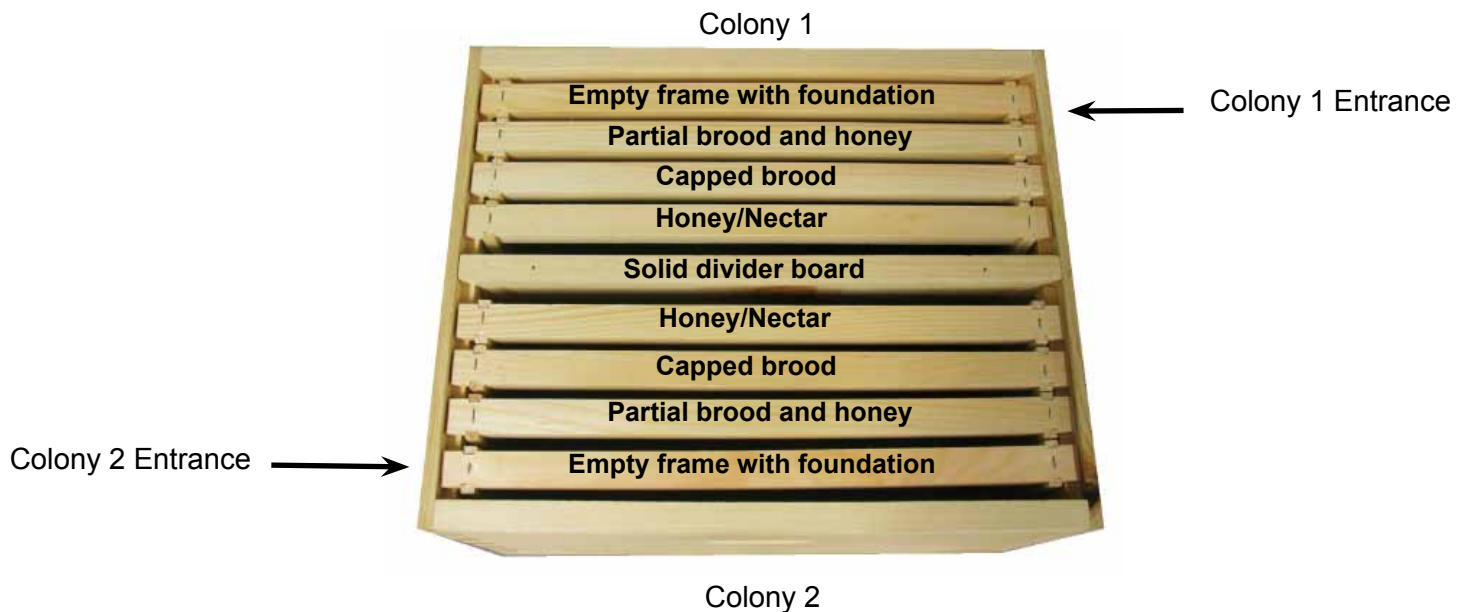


Divided Bottom Board

The double nuc bottom board begins the partition for the two hives. Each end of the board has an hive entrance. In fall we recommend stapling a piece of hardware cloth over the entrance to act as mouse guard.

Preparing the overwinter nucs

Double nucs are started in June or early July. The resources of honey, bees, and brood for the nucs are harvested from unproductive healthy colonies.



Frames of bees are transferred so that each nuc gets a frame of honey, a full frame of brood, a frame with partial brood and honey and a frame of foundation. The next day each nuc receives either a laying queen or a ripe queen cell. As the young colony expands, they are given a second super so that by fall, the colony is in 8 frames in a 4 over 4 configuration. It is important to make the strength of the nuc sufficient to allow build-up by fall, but not so strong that the nuc swarms.

Tips and Ideas for Double Nuc Management

Use multiple hives for making double nucs. Mix brood frames from different hives on each side of the nuc box when making the nuc colony.

Double nucs can be fed using feeders above the inner covers by placing an empty super on the double nuc to prevent robbing.

The spacing in each nuc easily allows installation of queen introduction cages or queen cells without needing to remove a frame.

Monitor colonies for robbing in late fall. Install robber screens if needed.

When preparing for winter install 1" foam board over the inner covers when using standard outer covers (not needed with BeeMax outer covers). Place inner cover notches down toward brood chambers to provide ventilation and upper entrances for winter.

Staple ½" hardware cloth over entrances for mouse guards.

Monitor nucs in the early spring. Feed on top bars if need using winter feed patties or sugar. We begin adding a ¼ of a pollen patty in mid March.