



# Bee Package Installation Instructions

Congratulations on your new package of bees from Betterbee! While there are many ways to install your bees, we found this way to be the easiest and simplest to explain for beginners.

**Good luck!**

Your hive should be assembled, painted and located at their site **BEFORE** the bees arrive so they can be installed without delay. Bees will do best if installed a half hour before dusk. Meanwhile, store them (for up to a day) in a cool, dark area and spray lightly with water or sugar syrup.

## Getting Ready

You will need:

- Protective clothing of your choice (veil, jacket or suit, gloves, boot bands, etc.)
- Hive tool
- Rubber band or Queen Cage Holder
- Feeder and syrup (Pollen Patties are optional)
- Syrup in a spray bottle
- Hive set up on a hive stand (hive stand, bottom board, one deep with **ONLY** 5 frames, feeder, inner cover and outer cover). You will only need 4 frames if using 8 frame equipment.
- Your package of bees!

## Step 1: Preparing your Equipment and the Bees

When you are ready to install, lightly spray the package with sugar syrup (one-part white sugar to one-part warm water). This will help calm the bees before installing them into the hive. Spraying them will also make the bees less likely to fly.

With your equipment in its location, open the hive to expose the frames. Take one of the five frames out and place the rubber band vertically (up and down) around the frame. Set aside. This will be used to hold the queen cage in place once you remove her from the package.

## Step 2: Get Equipment Ready to Receive Bees

With your equipment in its location, open the hive to expose the frames. Take one of the five frames out and stretch the rubber band vertically (up and down) around the frame. Set aside. This will be used to hold the queen cage in place once you remove her from the package. Another option is the Betterbee Queen Cage Holder.

<https://www.betterbee.com/marketing-tools-and-queen-cages/qch-queen-cage-holder.asp>

NOTE: If you are using all medium boxes, place a second box on top to make room for your package. There should be 5 frames in each medium 10 frame box (4 in each 8 frame box).

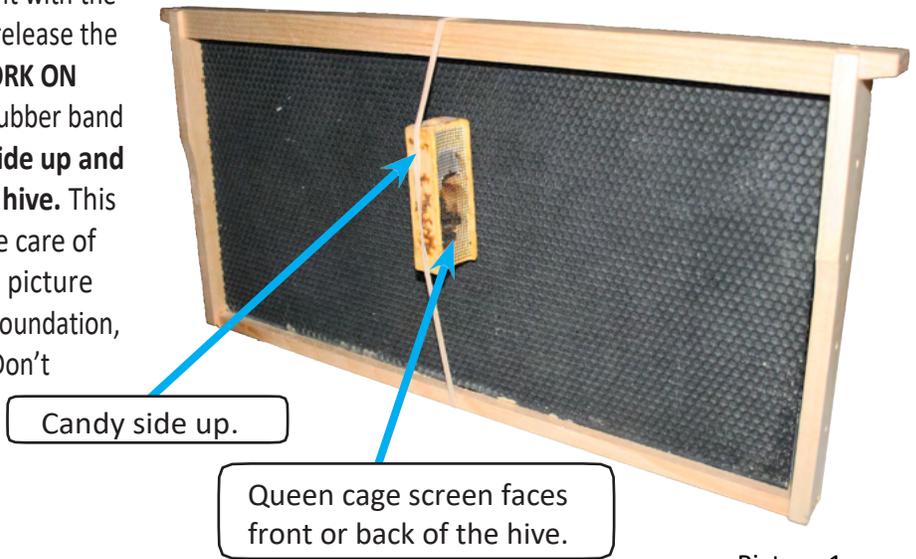
## Step 3: Opening the Package and Removing the Queen Cage

Put on your veil. At this time, there is no need for the smoker. With the hive tool, pry up and remove the thin wooden cover from the top of the package. Now you will see a metal tab and the can of syrup exposed. Carefully pull up the queen cage by grasping the metal tab. Replace the wooden cover so that bees do not exit from the hole left by the queen cage. If a few come out, don't worry. Examine the queen cage and verify that the queen is alive.

#### Step 4: Installing the Queen Cage on a Frame

One end of the queen cage contains soft white candy. If there is a metal disk on the candy end, remove it with the hive tool. Bees will eat through the candy and release the queen in a few days. **DO NOT REMOVE THE CORK ON THE OTHER END.** Place the cage between the rubber band and the frame you prepared earlier, **candy side up and so the screen faces the back or front of the hive.** This is very important to ensure the bees can take care of the Queen while she is still in the cage. (See picture 1.) If your frame already has comb, instead of foundation, the queen cage may deform the comb a little. Don't worry; bees will repair this depression late.

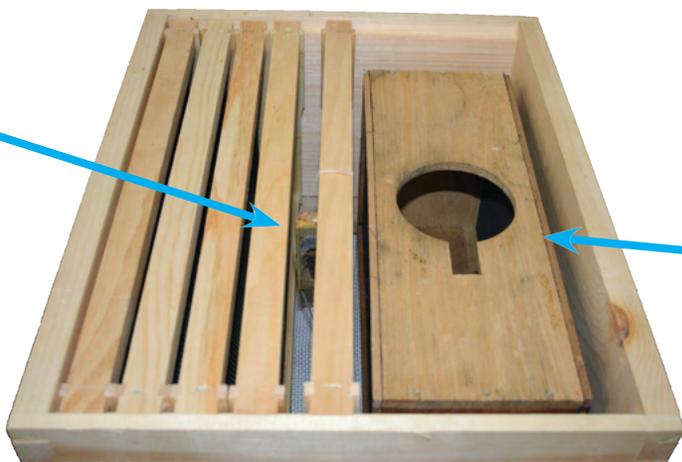
Place the frame in the hive as shown (See Picture 2.)



Picture 1

**Please Note:** *If using plastic frames or foundation we recommend adding an additional layer of wax to increase acceptance by bees. We offer a waxing service for assembled frames. You can also wax frames yourself.*

Frame with Queen is place here, with cage in between frames. This is where you will dump ~ 1 cup of bees



Place package and remaining bees here.

Picture 2

### **Step 5: Installing the Remaining Bees**

Firmly bump the package on the ground to dislodge bees from the syrup can. Remove the syrup can using your hive tool. Shake/pour about 1 cup of bees directly over the queen frame. Place the entire package in the open space in the box. (See picture 2.)

**NOTE:** If you are using all medium boxes, place a second box on top to make room for your package, OR dump all the bees in and place in additional frames to fill out the box. If additional bees are left, lean the package against the entrance of the hive.

### **Step 6: Feeding With Bees**

On new equipment it is important to feed, as it takes a lot of energy to draw out (build comb on) new foundation. Even with comb, it also may be necessary to feed syrup, since bees cannot fly to flowers to collect food unless it is 55 degrees F or above. So plan to feed syrup. When using liquid feed, syrup should be about 1 pound of sugar per 1 pound (pint) of cool water. There are many more ways to feed than can be explained here, but here are a few tips:

- If you are using any hive top feeder, DO NOT use an inner cover. These feeders have a large rectangular reservoir for syrup and cover the entire top of a hive box. They must be covered with ONLY the outer cover, to prevent access to the reservoir from above by bees. Bees will drown if they get in the feeder from above.
- USE an inner cover if you are using an in-hive feeder such as: pail feeder, Small/Large Plastic Entrance Feeder, or Boardman Feeder in the hive. Place these feeders on top of the inner cover so the bees can have access to the syrup. Next, place another deep box (or two mediums) around the in-hive feeder. Close the hole on the inner cover with duct tape to prevent robbing. NOTE: In cool areas, DO NOT use entrance feeders at the entrance, because bees will not access the syrup in cool weather. Use these feeders inside, above the inner cover, instead.
- Use pollen patties (aka Global Patties) when there is no pollen available from flowering trees and plants. Place patties on top of your frames and add a shim such as <https://www.betterbee.com/feeders/shim10k.asp>
- After feeding, close the hive with the outer cover. The size of the entrance at the bottom board should be reduced to an opening of ½ by 1 inch. Continue feeding the colony until combs are well drawn out (built). Add another box (deep or medium) once most of the frames are drawn out on the initial box (8 frames if using 10 frame equipment, 6 frames if using 8 frame equipment). When the bees have established 2 deeps or 3 mediums, stop feeding, remove the feeder, and add a super.

### **Three to Five days Out: Checking for the Queen**

Remove the empty package at this time. There may be a few bees in the package, but you can lean the package against the entrance of the hive. Check that the queen has been released. If she is still in the queen cage, carefully use a nail or matchstick to make a small hole in the candy to aid the bees in freeing the queen. Leave the queen cage in the same location if she is in the cage; remove if the queen is out. Install the frames which were removed for installation. All frames should be squeezed tightly against each other, which will leave a small gap at each wall. Plan to re-examine the hive 3 days later if the Queen was not released. At that time, if she is still in the cage you may choose to carefully remove the staple and screen on her cage to release her.

### **Two Weeks Out: Checking for Eggs**

You now can examine the colony to verify that the queen is laying eggs. You should see eggs and larvae at this point. It is not necessary to find the queen; you know she is present by simply observing eggs and larvae. If you do not see either eggs or larvae, **give us a call** and we can help further diagnose your situation.