

Betterbee[®]

Beekeepers Serving Beekeepers

Queen Bee Installation & Care

Congratulations on the purchase of your queen bee. Betterbee offers New World Carniolan queens sourced from Strachan Apiary in California and Northern-Raised Queens, raised near Greenwich, NY. When installing a new queen into the hive, first consider your goals; are you re-queening to get new genetics into the hive or are you replacing a lost queen. Read option 1 for installing a queen into an already queenless hive. Read option 2 for removing an old queen and replacing her with a new queen.

UPON ARRIVAL

Your queen will arrive in a three-hole queen cage or a California queen cage with attendants. Check to make sure the queen and attendants are alive and active. Transport is very stressful on the bees and we want to ensure you are installing a healthy queen.

Please call Betterbee immediately after arrival if the queen appears lethargic or has not made it through shipment alive. In order to provide a replacement or refund, we must be contacted within 24 hours of the bees arrival and before installation.

Place a very small drop of water on top of the cage upon arrival. The queen can be kept in her cage for several days if needed before installation. If you are not ready to install the queen immediately upon her arrival, place her in a cool, dark place. Do not expose her to excessive heat.

INSTALLATION

Option 1: Queenless Hive Installation

If your hive has been queenless for more than 48 hours, you can install your queen immediately upon arrival. The queen may have been shipped in a three-hole queen cage or a California queen cage. For a three-hole queen cage, check to make sure the cork has been removed from the candy side (white side) before installing.

Install the queen in the middle of the brood area, towards the center of the hive. We recommend using a large rubber band around the entire frame to secure the queen cage. Install with the candy side facing the top of the hive. This ensures any dead attendants will not block the candy entrance.



Option 2: Re-Queening Installation

Re-queening a hive requires a slightly different technique than a regular installation. The old queen must be located and removed from the hive. We recommend removing the old queen after the arrival of the new queen. Shipping delays could lead to issues if the hive is queenless too long. Leave the hive without a queen for 24-48 hours. After this period, you can install the queen with the method listed above. Check on the queen in two-three days to see if she has been accepted by the hive. The brush method can be used to check acceptance.

The Brush Method

This is an excellent method to check acceptance of a new queen, especially in a hive that has had an old queen replaced. One to three days after installation, open the hive to examine the queen cage. There should be nurse bees around the cage. Gently brush your gloved finger across the top of the cage to move the bees aside. If the bees move aside, it is a good indicator that the hive has accepted the new queen. If the bees cling to the cage and act aggressive towards the queen, it is likely they have not accepted her. In this situation, you will need to leave the queen in her cage and recheck the next day for acceptance.

INSPECTION

It is extremely important to check on your hive frequently after installing a new queen.

Three Days After Installation:

The initial inspection should be done two to three days after installation to see if the queen has been released. If she has not been released from her cage, perform the brush test to gauge acceptance. If the queen has been accepted, you can carefully use a nail to create a hole in the candy. This will help to expedite the release.

Seven-Ten Days After Installation:

Your new queen should be released and laying. Do a thorough hive inspection and look for the presence of a queen. If you have trouble locating the queen, look for eggs. This is a strong indicator that the queen is active within the hive.