

## Installing Packages & Nucs by Rick Olson, LCBA Member



LCBA's early educational talk this month was going to be on installing packages and nucs. Rick has written up the following information on this topic. Slide show presentation to go with his talk is posted on our website under "LCBA Talks".

You need to be prepared when you are planning to install a package of bees. The following are important points to **BEE** prepared.

Have all your hive boxes together and ready. Know where you are going to locate your apiary following any regulations in your area. Be knowledgeable of the predators that may be problematic for your particular site, such as bears, skunks, rodents, yellow jackets, and also kids, who think throwing rocks at a hive is fun. Hive stands will help the bees defend off predators. An electric fence is recommended if you live in an area with bears.

Paint your hives uniquely and do not place hives in a row, as this can lead to drifting between hives. Remember to have a continual source of water, adequate pollen and nectar sources in the area.

Your bees will appreciate a wind break, as well as shade on the west side when the afternoon sun can heat up the hive significantly. Face the entrance to the south or south east to take advantage of the morning sun, helping bees to begin to forage early in the day.

It is best to also have your "Integrated Pest Management" strategy planned. This can include screened bottom boards, drone comb and sticky boards for monitoring mite drop.

I recommended each beekeeper obtain a copy of the **Best Management Practices for Hive Health: A Guide for Beekeepers**. You can download the 80-page document at [honeybeehealthcoalition.org/hivehealthbmps](https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/hivehealthbmps) or pick one up at our next beekeeping meeting.

After picking up your package, place them in a cool, dry area. Allow them to rest for overnight as they have been stressed by the journey to the location of your purchase. You need to mist them with water as they likely will be thirsty. To install a bee package remove feeder can and queen cage. Make sure your queen is alive in the queen cage and remove cap or cork and install gummy bear or marshmallow if the queen cage does not have a candy plug. Remove four or five frames from the deep or western, place queen cage in hive with screen facing out and the candy plug up. Pour small amount of bees on queen. Pour the rest where frames were removed. Gently replace frames and then install inner cover, feeder and empty deep, and use an entrance reducer. Place the package in front of the hive to allow the remaining bees to enter the hive. The queen should be out of the cage by 7-10 days. When she is released, leave the colony alone for at least ten days. Resist the urge to over-examine. Remove queen cage after 7-20 days, don't disturb bees for two weeks. It is important to feed your bees with sugar syrup, 1 part sugar to 1 part water. Keep feeding until they do not take it up any longer.

**For NUC installation** place nuc box on hive stand and remove plug. The next day if weather permits, set nuc aside and place new deep on stand, lightly smoke, install brood frames in in exact order as nuc plus foundation. Look for brood, eggs and brood pattern. Install inner cover and lid. Place nuc box in front of hive with lid off. Leave for two weeks. You will need to feed your bees.

Some of the things you need to look for during the first two weeks; undertaker bees removing dead bees, guard bees at entrance, orientation flights, forager bees bringing in pollen, bees fanning to cool the hive and scenting with their nasonov gland.

Do your first inspection in two weeks, temperature should be 70 degrees plus. Smoke the bees, wait a few minutes, then try and to be out of your hive in 15 minutes. Look at frame #3 which usually is the most indicative of your hive. You should see drawn comb, eggs and larvae, compact brood pattern and honey and pollen stores.

“Keys to success” are:

**Understand bees, pests & diseases**

- Join clubs
- Attend classes
- Find a mentor
- Read, read, read

**Inspections (~ every 2 weeks)**

- Choose your days
- Know bee temperament
- Handle drones for practice

**Treat / Medicate**

- Know what to look for
- When to look for it
- What to do about it

**Monitor & document – be observant**

**Available YouTube Videos for Your Use**

**Posted on LCBA Website**

[“Installing Package Bees”](#)

[“Introducing Nucs”](#)

[Package Bees Slide Show in pdf format](#)



Shaking bees into the hive



Package of Bees



Queen Cage