Puget Sound Beekeepers Association

Kathy Cox  
Journeyman Beekeeper  
Dawn Beck  
Apprentice Beekeeper

Spring Management:  
I have my bees installed... Now what?!
Feeding Your Bees

• **Spring/Summer**
  – 1:1 sugar/water (mixes cold)
    • Additives to prevent mold & fermentation (optional)
  – Pollen patties for spring build up
  – Generally not when honey supers on unless building wax on new foundation

• **Fall**
  – 2:1 sugar/water syrup in fall after honey supers removed if nectar dearth or bees low on stores (needs heat to dissolve)
  – Remove feeder when temps get low, the bees won’t take it any more anyway

• **NOTE:** *DO NOT* feed your bees honey from the store or from unknown sources, it can contain foulbrood spoors. Also do not feed brown sugar, molasses or high fructose corn syrup

Inspecting Your Hive(s)

• Have a plan – what is your purpose for opening the hive(s)
  – Yes, It’s possible to love them too much
• Bring tools & a notebook (or online device) to record your inspection
• Get your woodenware ready ahead of time
• Only manipulate frames if over 55 degrees F
• Work your hive from the back or side – don’t block the entrance
• Avoid opening hives while it’s raining or windy
• Best to complete all inspections during the afternoon while foragers are in the field
Exterior Inspection

• Watch at front entrance
  – Observe foragers and note whether/what percentage are returning with pollen
  – Are yellow jackets or someone else’s bees trying to get in?
• Orientation flights occurring?
• Have ants or beetles on outside?
• Observation/Sticky boards
  – Wax debris determines size & location of cluster
  – Dead mites?
  – Wax moth, SHB or mouse droppings?
• Sound (quiet buzzing or loud roaring)
Inspecting Inside Hive(s)

• Light smoker & use smoke sparingly
  – A few puffs in the entrance, then in the top when you crack open the inner cover
  – Smoke yourself if necessary to reduce defensiveness
  – Smoke masks alarm pheromone

• Don’t worry about finding the queen
  – If there are eggs and larvae, there is a queen

• Gently stack boxes you are not working

• Work gently/slowly from one side to the other
  – Avoid sudden movements
  – Be careful not to smash your queen

• Keep gentle bees – if your bees are consistently defensive for no reason, re-queen immediately

• Record what you see & create your plan for next time
What It Should Look Like Inside

Photos Courtesy of Randy Oliver, http://scientificbeekeeping.com/

Learn to read whether your bees are hungry
What Am I Seeing?

**Workers**

**Drones**

**Supercedure Cells**

**Swarm Cells**

**Caution:** Your queen died or your workers feel she is defective. Best to let them do their thing.

**Action** needed to prevent a swarm (if it’s not too late already)!

Consider a split
WHAT’S ON YOU MIND?