

BEE EXTRACTIONS

By Lucky & Amy Streich

Types of structures

Buildings – Houses, businesses, churches, schools– occupied or unoccupied

On the roof, chimney, inside, outside, under the building - trees

Pretty much anywhere you can think of, bees can build a hive.

Assess the job

Always go look at the job first so you will know what is involved before committing to do the job

Inspection equipment - ladder, flashlight, camera scope, heat sensor, stethoscope

See where bees are flying in and out - look for propolis

Once you have looked at the job then decide whether you will do the job for the bees/honey wax or for payment

Meet the owners – give price or have documents signed, explain how you intend to do the job

Equipment

Bee suit and general beekeeping supplies

Ladder(s)

Generator (if needed)

Bee vacuum with extra cylinders and extension cords

Buckets - for wax & honey with lids

Coolers - one for cold water, one for brood

Large sharp knife or machete for cutting wax out

Tarps



Equipment cont.

Proper lighting

Any safety equipment you may need

Plastic to cover hole upon completion

Tools

Saws (if needed) – hand, circular, sawzall

Hammer

Pry bar

Cordless screwdriver

Extracting

Find the point of entry and start small. Open up gradually if possible, vacuuming as you go, watching for queen. The queen is usually one of the bees because she is running for cover the entire time.

Outside extraction bees are going to be more aggressive, inside more docile.

Make sure vacuum suction is low – may need to modify vacuum with screens over intake holes and foam inside cylinders for a soft landing

Check cylinder periodically to make sure bees are ok and to see how full – change as needed – this time will also give the bees in the hive time to regroup so you can vacuum more.

When changing the cylinder be prepared with duct tape to put over entrance hole on cylinder – turn vacuum off when changing out – put cylinders in a comfortable place for the bees – spray cylinder with sugar water/Honey B Healthy mixture to keep them hydrated and calm.

Queen, Brood, Honey & Wax

Queen:

If you find the queen and are planning to start a new hive, isolate the queen in a queen clip or marking cylinder – put her in cylinder with bees.

Once you have vacuumed up most of the bees (you won't get everyone) you can begin cutting out the comb separating the brood, honey and comb.

Brood:

Place in a warm cooler in sun until you have time to tie them into frames. Make sure you set them in the cooler right side up the way it was in the natural hive and tie them in the frames the same way.

If you must, you can cut the brood to fit into the frame. Tie or rubber band into empty frames and place in closed cooler in the sun to keep them warm until you can get them home and put them in a hive

Honey:

If there is any honey you see fit to extract, place in a separate bucket to take home to strain and bottle. Freeze prior to extracting. There is not always honey to be had.

Wax:

Put empty comb or comb with nectar into another bucket to be melted down in a solar wax melter. Wax with nectar or honey may be placed in front of your hives so the bees can clean it out for you.

FREE BEES (OK – with a little work – nothing is free)

If you find the queen you can start a new hive with her. Starting a hive is a little more work because you have to watch when the bees in the frames that you tied up emerge so you can remove that comb ASAP. Otherwise the queen will begin laying in it again and it's a mess.

If you are not sure you have the queen put all of the brood in the top box and all of the bees in the bottom box with a queen excluder between the boxes. That way the majority of the bees will go up and take care of the brood so you should be able to find the queen in the bottom box easier.

If you don't find the queen you can still start a new hive if it's early enough in the year. If there are eggs you can let the bees draw out a queen cell and raise their own queen or you can order a queen.

If you don't find the queen you can add the bees to an existing hive using the following technique:

- Take the top off the existing hive brood box and place a sheet of newspaper on top of the frames cutting a few slits.
- Place an empty brood box on top of existing hive on the sheet of newspaper
- Put entire cylinder of bees in the empty brood box – open top of cylinder and put top on box
- Bees will come out of cylinder and gradually introducing themselves to existing bees by chewing through newspaper. This technique cuts down on bees fighting and drifting