

Starting with Bees



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Preparation (before bees arrive)

- Buy all equipment and put it together
 - Paint the outside only
- Bee protective equipment and tools should be on hand on B-Day



Preparation (before bees arrive)

- Location
 - Sun exposure or hiding from neighbors?
 - Easy access
 - Good ventilation
 - Low humidity
 - Off the ground
 - Protected from wind



Preparation (before bees arrive)

- Hard to relocate after installing the bees



How Many Hives?

- One?
- Two?
- Ten?



- Two would be the minimum recommended
 - More could be too much work for a beginner
 - One is at risk in the case something goes wrong
 - Second hive is the cost of the hive and bees (no tools)

Bees and Equipment Master Program Recommendations

- Race matters: Italian or Carniolan?
 - Carniolan
 - Langstroth, Warre, Top Bar?
 - “Standard” or Langstroth
 - 8 or 10 frames?
 - Deep or Western?
 - New or used?
 - New (when possible)
-
- Make all decisions before buying bees.



Buying Bees (or not)

- Nucs
 - Langstroth deep only
- Package
 - Any hardware
- Swarm: Free bees!
 - You need to have the hardware ready ahead of time



Package vs Nuc

Package

- No hardware disease (fresh start)
- Need to make comb and introduce queen
- No food in the hive so the bees depend on the beekeeper

Nuc

- Hardware may bring disease
- Laying queen with comb increases faster
- Frames contain some honey, pollen, eggs and larva (sometimes)

Nuc Installation



Package Installation

- 3 lbs = 10,500 bees
- If syrup can is empty, sprinkle syrup on screen
- Protect from extreme temperatures
- Allow air circulation (they regulate themselves)



Package Installation

- Use one deep box or two Western boxes for installing package
- Install the bees late in the day to prevent
 - other bees bothering them
 - Bees drifting to other hives



Package Installation (cont.)



Package Installation (cont.)



Package Installation (cont.)



Package Installation (cont.)



Package Installation (cont.)



Package Installation (cont.)



Package Installation (cont.)



Working the Bees

- Wait about one week before checking the hive thoroughly!
- Bee Suit and gloves - Start fully protected



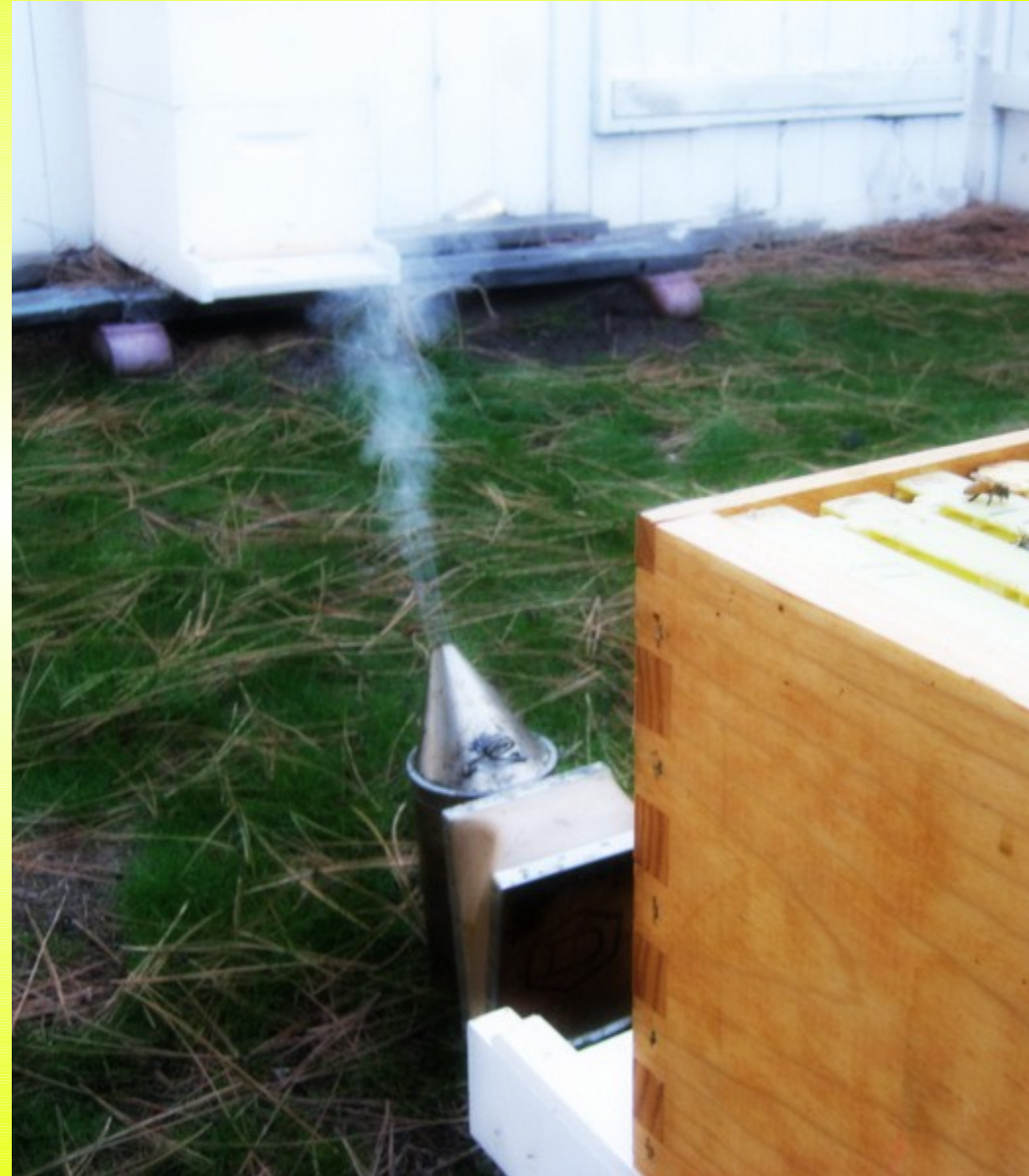
Working the Bees

- Move slowly and avoid hitting hive or dropping objects on the ground



Working the Bees - Smoke

- Smoker
 - Natural fuel is best
 - Light the smoker
 - Avoid flame-throwing
 - Keep smoldering for cool smoke



Working the Bees - Smoke

- Use little smoke in entrance and under the top cover
- Give time for smoke to work before opening



Working the Bees- Weather

- Bees are calm with nice weather
- >55F between 10am and 4pm
 - Forager bees will be outside
- Easier during nectar flow
- Avoid working before a storm
- If working under the rain, use cover
 - Water kills bees



Working the Bees - Sting

- Deal with sting
 - Only 0.5% children and 3% adults are allergic
 - Swelling, redness, itching are not allergic reactions and are normal
 - Scrape stinger off as soon as possible (it keeps pumping venom as long as it stays in the skin)



Feeding

- During the first week feed without disrupting the colony too much



Feeding (cont.)

- 1:1 Sugar:Water ratio for feed (any sugar)



What to Expect

- After one week, it's time to inspect the hive in detail
 - Amount of bees will be about the same than the quantity that arrived in the package (a small amount died in one week)
- Keep feeding as long as bees take it



What to Expect

- Need to confirm queen activity
 - Presence of eggs and larva is enough proof
 - No need to find the actual queen
- New comb in frames



Bee Journal

- Keep good records
- What to do different next year
- Mentor will need information of condition leading to an issue
- Options:
 - Write on the hive
 - Paper log/notebook
 - Online records
 - www.hivetracks.com



Requeening

- More details about queens in the next class



Requeening

- If there is a problem with the queen, it can be replaced following the same process used for installing a package.
- Bee Package vendors usually also sell queens



Questions?

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- Download this presentation from:
 - <http://beemaniacs.com/learn>
 - <http://www.wpbeekeepers.org/>

