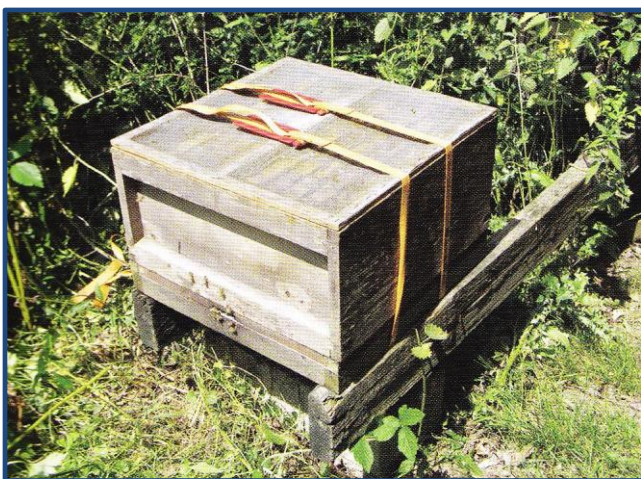


Moving Colonies

As soon as the bees fly out from a hive or nuc for the first time they fly around in circles for a while to orientate to their new location by sight and remembering landmarks such as hives and bushes. Next time they fly out they will return to the exact position of the hive entrance. If the hive is moved the homecoming bees may enter another nearby hive or be lost. So, if you want to move the hive sideways within your apiary you can do it by moving the hive in steps of up to a metre at a time. If you are moving the hive backwards across an open space you can move it about two metres at a time. You should allow a day or two of flying weather between each step to give the bees time to settle to the new position.

During the winter when bees have been confined to the hive for a week or two they may be moved gently to another part of the apiary in one step.



Hive with bees ready to move. Note the two straps side by side for extra security during the journey. A travelling screen is not needed if you have an open mesh floor. Make sure there is plenty of space underneath the floor to allow air to circulate to avoid overheating in the hive.

If bees are moved beyond their flight range of about 3 miles they will re-orient to their new location. There are a number of precautions necessary to protect the bees. One of the main dangers during the journey is suffocation due to overheating.

- If you are using a solid floor with your hive, you should replace the crownboard with a ventilation screen otherwise the bees will become overheated and suffocate. Hives with open mesh floors will be sufficiently ventilated but make sure there is a gap under the floor to allow plenty of air to enter the hive during the journey.
- Use two hive straps in parallel to securely fasten together the floor, brood box, supers and screen or crownboard with the feed hole closed.
- After the bees have stopped flying, close the entrance to keep them in the hive.
- Move the bees during the cool of the evening or early morning if you can. Spray with water if the bees become agitated during a long journey or during an unavoidable stop.
- As soon as you arrive at your destination place the hive on the prepared site without delay. If you have used a ventilation screen, place the crownboard on top and replace the roof. Open the entrance and retreat promptly because the bees may be quite agitated.
- Remove the ventilation screen and straps after the bees have settled during your next visit.