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Using an Octagon Hive

April 2011

Setup

1. Octagon hives need to be on a level base preferably a concrete slab.
2. The hive should be installed in a sunny open position which is south facing and free of wind.
3. The Octagon hive comprises
 1. An Open mesh Floor.
 2. Two standard octagon bodies fitted with top-bars and a plain entrance door which can either be closed or open.
 3. A base octagon body fitted with top-bars and a swivel door which can be either
 1. closed
 2. open
 3. open with a queen excluder mesh.
 4. An eke fitted with a Porter bee Escape.
 5. A quilt.
 6. A three litre plastic feeder.
 7. A roof.
4. To start your colony, you can either use a swarm or a British Standard 5-Frame Nucleus.

5. In either case
 1. Set up the base on your slab.
 2. Add the base octagon body.
 3. Cut the provided unwired foundation into 1cm strips.
 4. Remove the wedges on the top bars provided and using the wedges nail a strip of foundation into the middle of each top bar. Please see our instructions on using frames at <http://www.fragile-planet.co.uk/faqs.html> if you are unsure.
6. Replace the top bars with the strips into the base octagon body.
7. If you are hiving a swarm
 1. Move the entrance door so that the Queen Excluder is over the entrance. This prevents the queen from flying whilst the bees are drawing comb.
 2. Gently add the swarm to the box.
8. If you are using a Nucleus
 1. Replace the 5 full-length top-bars with the British national frames of your nucleus.
9. Place the eke on top of the base octagon box.
10. Remove the porter Bee Escape
11. Make up a solution of 2kg sugar to 1 Litre of water.
12. Place the feeder in the Eke above the base octagon box ensuring that the feeder holes (in the base of the feeder) are over the hole in the eke.
13. Add the sugar solution to the feeder
14. Place the quilt over the feeder
15. Place the roof on the hive.
16. Leave for one week.
17. Keep feeding for at least 3 to 4 weeks.
18. When you have finished feeding, place the quilt between the eke and the top octagon body.

Adding (nading) new octagon bodies

1. Inspect the colony at least weekly by opening the windows.
2. If the colony has filled the bottom octagon (which could be the base if there is only one body on) then you will need to add a new octagon base above the floor underneath the last body.
3. A filled octagon body has all its frames covered with comb and is between $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{7}{8}$ full.
4. If the colony has filled three boxes then you can extract the honey by
 1. Using the Eke and the porter bee escape provided to clear the top box.
 2. Cut the combs off the top-bars with a knife.
 3. Either crush the combs or cut the combs to use or sell as cut combs or alternatively you can place the combs into plastic mesh bags (satsuma bags are ideal) and gently spin these in a standard honey extractor.
 4. Replace the emptied octagon body at the bottom of the octagon hive as above.

Doors

1. Each Octagon body comes with a door. This can be left open on all three chambers or closed as required.
2. To reduce wasp attack in July and August then the base octagon chamber with the queen excluder door can be used to reduce the entrance even more. This will allow the colony to repel wasps as much as they are able.

Windows

1. Each Octagon body comes with two windows, normally closed by flaps. These allow you to view the colony with the minimum of disturbance. The windows do not replace the need regularly to inspect the colony for signs of disease etc.