

Information Sheet: Bailey Comb Renewal

Purpose:

The maintenance of fresh brood comb is recognised as a way to avoid diseases such as foul brood and nosema. Brood comb renewal should be applied every year or two. For maximum effect it should be started in early spring when the brood nest is compact and the process completed before the main flows.

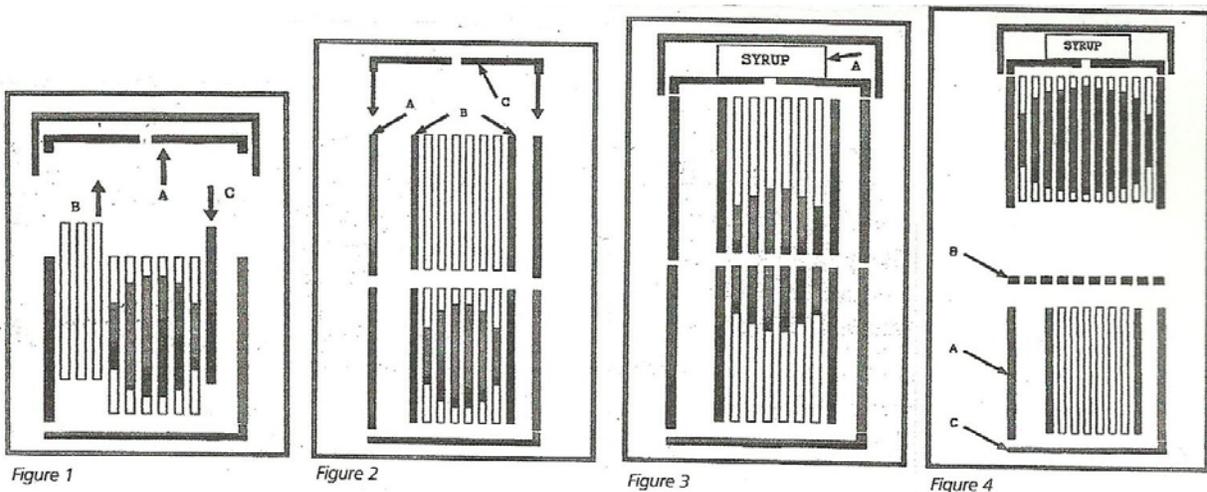
Secondary Purpose:

This can be used to change the size of the brood frames between standard & 14" x 12" frames if using BS frames suitable for National, WBC, Dartington & Beehouse hives.

Method:

All new/additional hive parts should be new and/or sterilized.

1. Remove all unoccupied peripheral brood combs, without disturbing the brood nest. Insert dummy boards tight to each side of the brood nest. (wax & any left over stores can be recovered) **Figure 1**
2. Place on top of the old brood box, another brood box with new brood frames with fresh foundation (the same number as there are existing below) with dummy boards each side. The new frames must be exactly above the old ones. **Figure 2**
3. Feed the bees with thick sugar syrup in a contact feeder until there is a nectar flow. This helps the bees to produce wax for comb building. (small quantities at a time to avoid too much syrup storage). "Fumidil B" may be added to the syrup if Nosema is a problem. **Figure 3**
4. The bees should now start to expand their nest upwards into the new frames, and extra frames can be added to accommodate the expansion.
5. Once the queen is laying well in the upper box, separate the 2 brood boxes with a queen excluder, ensuring that the queen is in the upper box! **Figure 4**
6. 21 days later, the worker brood will have hatched out from the original frames, so the old brood box & queen excluder can be removed. Put the new brood box on a new/clean floor. (it is not worth the while sterilizing the combs or trying to recover the wax)
7. Keep feeding if necessary.
8. Now revert to your normal beekeeping practices.



Merits:

- a. new comb = healthy comb
- b. mimics the natural wild colony process of new comb building
- c. improved colony build up
- d. good for the wax builders & can delay swarming
- e. end product = a vigorous, healthy colony

Alternative method is to use the Shook Swarm method – see information sheet