

Tupelo Beekeeper's Association

Field Day Guide to Making Splits

What is your purpose of splitting your bee colony?

- Have a backup colony(s)
- Decrease production
- Grow your apiary
- Raise queens
- Requeen
- Prevent swarming
- Increase production
- _____

Adapted from bushfarms.com

Walk Away split

Split the mother colony into a smaller colony. The queenless colony will raise a new queen. Walk away. Check in 4 weeks to see if the queen is laying.

Pros	Cons
Free (besides hardware materials).	Colony without a queen will take longer to build.
Desired queen traits passed to new queen.	Night time temperatures need to be 50's.
Do not have to find the queen. Relatively easy.	Split to late and bees cannot build up for winter.
	Need plenty of drones in the area.

Even Split

Split the mother colony into two equal colonies. Set the new colonies side by side where the mother colony was; this allows field bees to enter either colony. In a week switch the colonies positions to equalize the drift of bees.

Pros	Cons
Two somewhat equal hives	Two smaller colonies
Reduces swarm urge	
Grows the apiary	
Same as Walk Away Split	Same as Walk Away Split

Fly Back Split

Make a split, place queen colony somewhere else in the yard, and foragers fly back to the old location. Newer concept. Not a lot of information on the pros and cons.

Swarm Control Split

When queen cells are present in the mother colony, put the old queen into the nuc with a frame of honey and a frame of brood. Split queen cells into other nucs and leave one behind in the mother colony.

Pros	Cons
Help prevent swarming	Colonies still may swarm
Increases colony	

Cut Down Split

Remove open brood, pollen, honey, and queen into a new hive but leave all capped brood, a little honey, and a frame of eggs with the mother colony. Give the mother colony two supers; this amps up honey production while removing the urge to swarm. Another way to do this, leave the queen in the mother hive and remove all the open brood. This variation helps to prevent swarming.

Pro	Cons
Great for comb honey production or cassette	Needs to be done early in the season
Minimizes swarming	
Increases production	
Increases colony	

Confining the Queen

Confine the queen for two weeks before the flow. Nurse bees can forage, not preoccupied taking care of the brood, and this is also a natural way to break a Varroa mite breeding cycle.

Pros	Cons
Increased Honey production	Finding the queen
Helps break Varroa mite cycle	Getting the queen caged
Do not want an increase in hives	
Keeps the queen with desired traits	

Cutdown Split/Combine

Do this with a colony too weak for a cutdown split. Set up two hives next to each other, as close as possible. Two weeks before the main flow remove all open brood and most of the stores from both colonies and the queen from one of the colonies. Put the hive in a different location adding the open brood and most of the stores. Combine all the capped brood, the queen or a new queen (caged), or no queen and one frame of eggs and open brood leaving bees raising a new queen.

Pros	Cons
Hive numbers stay the same	
New queen	
Good honey production	

Doolittle Split

Take five frames of brood and place in a nuc. Put a queen excluder between both boxes, put nuc or another box on top and nurse bees will go into the top within hours. Within 24hrs take nuc off and move elsewhere. Nurse bees will soon become foragers.

Pros	Cons
Relatively easy	Have to find the queen
Gives a break in the brood cycle which decreases Varroa mites cycle	Needs warmer weather when removing nuc
Increase in honey production	

Snelgrove from <http://www.barnsleybeekeepers.org.uk/snelgrove.html>

No Increase – When increasing the amount of hives in an apiary is not desired and no queen cells were allowed to develop, either:

- Relocate the top box beneath the queen excluder to make double brood or,
- Remove the board allowing the remaining brood to emerge over the next couple of weeks. After this, the top box can be removed.

If a queen has been allowed to develop and becomes successfully mated, she can be used to requeen the main colony by uniting the two colonies. Despite there being a mesh between the two colonies allowing the scent to pass through, it is still advisable to use a sheet of newspaper to unite the colonies. The doors to the Snelgrove board should be left alone to allow the queen to fly.

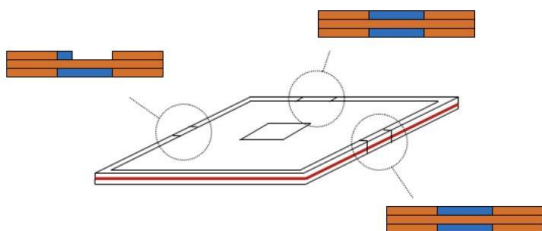
Making Increase - If the intention is to raise a new colony from the top box, the entrances to the Snelgrove board should be left alone for the new queen to emerge. Assuming that all queen cells were removed on day 1, any new queen cells will have been raised from that point onwards. Any new queen will emerge 14 to 16 days after the initial hive split (depending on whether an egg or larva was used) and no further manipulation of the doors to the Snelgrove board should take place. Once the queen is mated and laying, the top box can be relocated to form a new, separate colony.

If more than one queen cell was left in the top mother box in order to make up nuclei, these would need dealing with once the queen cells have matured to the point of being sealed or almost sealed and indeed before they emerge.

The Snelgrove board is useful for making increase. Although it can be used purely to prevent swarming, the separation of the mother colony from the queen often leads to the production of multiple emergency queen cells. If the bees are naturally due to swarm, then the queens raised will generally be good ones. If the procedure is performed too early in the season, the emergency cells are more likely to result in poor queens.

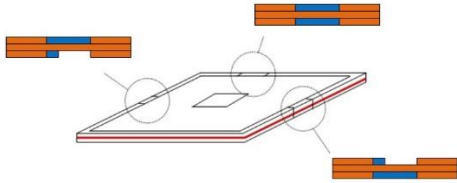
Day 1

1. Have prepared a second brood box with foundation and (or) drawn comb.
2. Remove the roof, supers, etc from the mother colony and find the queen (hold her in place with a marking cage to prevent losing her during subsequent manipulations).
3. Place the second box on the old floor and remove a couple of frames from the center to make a gap.
4. Place the queen on a frame containing unsealed brood in the gap in the second box, ensuring there are no queen cells on this frame. Remove the marking cage, close up the gap and add a spare frame to the edge.
5. Check the mother box for queen cells and (if any) remove all queen cells.
6. Rebuild the hive with the queen excluder followed by the supers, Snelgrove board, mother brood box, crown board, and roof. Locate the Snelgrove board so that the side without an entrance faces the front (same side as the main hive entrance).
7. Open the top left entrance of the Snelgrove board and close all others (the flying bees will return to the main entrance at the front of the hive).



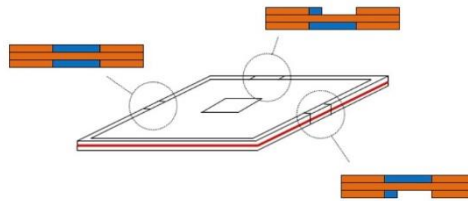
Day 4 or 5

1. Without opening up the hive, close the top left and open the bottom left and top right.



Day 9 or 10

1. Inspect the top, mother box for any queen cells which may have been created and remove all but the best ones required for developing a second colony or for making up nuclei (or remove all if no increase is sought). At this stage, the bees have no viable eggs or larvae from which to make any further queen cells.
2. Close the bottom left and top right entrances and open the bottom right and rear top entrances.



Pros	Cons
Help prevent swarming	Finding the queen
Can increase colony/hives	Takes preparation
Can increase honey production	Takes active involvement of the beekeeper