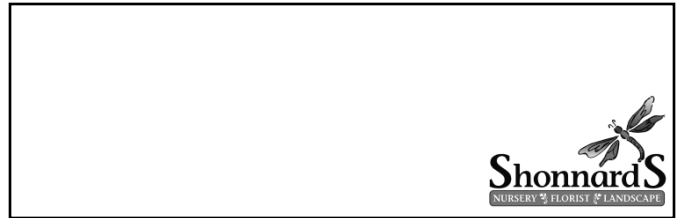


PACKAGE BEE INSTRUCTIONS



HOW TO HANDLE YOUR PACKAGE:

Your 3 lb. package contains live bulk bees and a young, mated queen in a cage. The queen cage is hanging from the top of the package next to a can of sugar syrup. You may see a few dead bees at the bottom of the package box – this is normal and not a cause for concern. The bees in the package are unrelated to the queen, and may appear to be a mixed assortment of colors (i.e. don't be alarmed if your Carniolan queen is boxed with lighter-colored bees). After a few generations of bees from your queen have hatched, you will begin to see a more consistent appearance and coloration among your bees. Please also note that color varies widely within bee races – ex: Italian queens can be light golden to darker brown. Carniolans tend to be darker than Italians.

TRANSPORT AND STORAGE:

There is inherent risk in transporting live bees - bees are stinging insects, so take care to protect yourself during transport, handling, and installation. Be aware that you may have a few loose bees on the outside of your screened box. Take care to secure the package in your car so it doesn't tip over. Inspect your package box for tears or other wear before traveling with it in your car. Keep the bees shaded and well ventilated during transport.

Keep your package somewhere cool, preferably between 50° and 60°. Garages or sheds work well. Don't leave the bees in direct sunlight, and ensure adequate air circulation. If you aren't installing your package immediately, you can mist the package with water or sugar syrup to provide additional hydration for your bees.

PREPARATION:

Have your hive equipment ready for your bees before they arrive. You will need a hive tool, bee brush, protective clothing and gloves, some 1:1 sugar syrup (made with one part sugar to one part water, by weight or volume), a spray bottle filled with some of the prepared syrup, and a flat thumb tack (or similar) for hanging the queen cage in your hive. Be sure to make the sugar syrup ahead of time – it must be at room temperature.

PACKAGE INSTALLATION (TRADITIONAL METHOD) – many other methods are available and found online

Install your bees in the late afternoon or early evening to allow them time to accept their new home overnight. You will install your bees into one brood box, and add an additional brood box when the bees have completely built out wax honeycomb on 7 of the 10 frame (the 70% rule). Start by removing three frames from one side of the brood box (this creates space for shaking in your bees).

1. Spray your bees liberally with 1:1 sugar syrup through the screened box, although this step is not really necessary, this can reduce flying and keep the bees busy with grooming during installation.
2. Thump the package firmly on the ground so that the bees fall to the bottom of the box.
3. Remove the feeder can, using your hive tool if necessary. Remove the queen cage (look for the flexible metal tab in the slit near the can opening). Then, return the syrup can to keep the bees within the package.
4. **IMPORTANT!** Remove the cork from the bottom of the queen cage, using your thumb to cover the opening so your queen doesn't escape. Replace the cork with the provided fondant plug or a mini marshmallow and set aside. Spray the bees in the package with syrup again if necessary.
5. Thump the package on the ground and remove the feeder can again.
6. Remove the middle five frames from your hive box and set aside. Firmly shake the bees from the package into the open space. Allow time for the bees to move up the sides of the frames and off the bottom of the hive, then slowly and carefully push together the remaining 3 or 5 frames and add the extra frames to the edges. This centers the package in the middle of the hive.
7. At the back side of the hive (opposite the entrance) spread the frames with your hive tool and hang the queen cage with candy plugged hole facing down, using the metal strip or by pressing the frames together. Be sure that the wax from the frames does not completely cover the screen on the queen cage when you press them together. Center the frames so that there is equal spacing on each side (this will stop the bees from building extra comb on the edges).
8. Close the hive and reduce the entrance to a small opening with an entrance reducer.

9. Consistently feed your bees, preferably with an inside feeder, and don't let the feeder run out of syrup until the bees are established and all of the frames in your first brood box are built up with wax.
10. For the best chances of queen survival and acceptance, don't open the hive again for several days, except to refill the feeder. After a week or so, gently check to make sure the queen was released – if you see eggs and larvae, you have a queen! At this point you can remove the queen cage and scrape away any burr comb the bees may have built surrounding the cage.

We recommend installing your package the same day you pick them up. If bad weather or other scheduling conflicts require you to install them the next day, be aware that there may be some dead bees in the package, and the bees must be sprayed with sugar water to keep them hydrated and energized.

It is highly unlikely, but if your queen is dead inside the queen cage, contact Camille at Shonnard's , 541-929-3524

Some Quick Notes and Resources for More Information

A colony of bees is a living organism. As beekeepers we do our best to manage them in a way that encourages them to stay in the hive we provide for them. It is highly unlikely for a first year package colony to swarm, but there is no guarantee. Swarming and absconding are natural phenomena.

Varroa mites are present in almost every bee colony, package, and nuc. It is a good idea to test your colony for mites after they are established to determine if treatment is warranted. There are many methods for doing this ([see *https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/resources/varroa-management/*](https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/resources/varroa-management/) to use their excellent "Varroa Management Decision Tool" which outlines ways in which to best manage mites).

Unlike nucs, package bees contain a caged queen that must be released slowly to increase her chances of acceptance by the colony (a process which can take up to 10 days). Use our instructions above as a guide for releasing your queen. Overly disturbing the colony (other than to refill feeders) makes queen rejection more likely.

Package bees are essentially artificial swarms that must re-establish themselves in the hive you are providing. If you are starting them on new foundation instead of drawn comb, they have a lot of work ahead of them as they have no reserves of nectar and pollen. We recommend feeding them sugar syrup and supplementing with protein patties every week for at least the first month to give them a good start. This is especially true if they are installed before a stretch of rainy weather.

A great resource for beginning and experienced beekeepers alike is **Randy Oliver's website 'Scientific Beekeeping'** (www.scientificbeekeeping.com). Search for the article "First Year Beekeeping" for an excellent overview of topics you will encounter as a beginner. The website is full of informative articles written from the perspective of a biologist-turned-commercial beekeeper.

Attending a meeting of your local beekeepers association is a great way to learn and meet other beekeepers in your locale. In the Corvallis area we have the **Linn-Benton Beekeepers Association** (www.lbba.us). Check the Oregon State Beekeepers Association website (www.orsba.org) for information about other associations near you.

The **Oregon Master Beekeeper Program** is another great way to further your education about bees while networking with local enthusiasts. See <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/mb/> for more information.

WE CARE ABOUT YOUR SUCCESS!

For questions about the general care of your nuc, management techniques, and general beekeeping advice, contact Camille at (541) 929-3524 or bees@shonnards.com