

Preparing for your package bees

All equipment should be assembled, painted (recommended but not necessary) and set in place at your bee yard location before your bees are scheduled to arrive.

Caring for your package until time of installation

1. Keep packages in a dark, quiet place, preferably 50°F-70°F **taking care not to chill or overheat them.**
2. Feed generously by spraying or brushing 1:1 water/sugar syrup, 1:1 water/high fructose corn syrup mix or Pro-Sweet on the screen sides 3-4 times per day.
3. Install as soon as possible.

Package Installation

1. Install the package in the evening or early morning when the weather is cool (40°F-50°F). **Do not use smoke when installing packages.**
2. Remove four frames in the center of the hive body.
3. Spray the package liberally with Pro Sweet, 1:1 water/sugar syrup, or 1:1 water/thin high fructose corn syrup. **Be careful not to chill the bees. Make sure any sugar or syrup used is room temperature (70°F).**
4. Tap the package sharply on a hard surface to knock the bees to the bottom of the cage.
5. Remove the feeder can and queen cage from the package and set aside. **We recommend putting the queen cage in your pocket to protect the queen and avoid misplacing her.**
6. Shake bees into the hive and spread them out on the bottom board.
7. Check to see if the queen is alive. Lightly spray her cage with sugar syrup, thin high fructose corn syrup, or Pro Sweet. **Be careful not to chill with cold syrup. Make sure syrup use is room temperature (70°F).** Install in the hive using one of the methods on the next page.



A hive ready to receive package bees.



Bees ready for their new homes.



Package bees being installed.

a. Direct Release Method – Lower the queen cage to the bottom of one exposed frame, keeping the cork facing down into the hive and gently open the cage. Observe the queen to ensure that she exits the cage (ideally onto the foundation of a frame) and doesn't fly away. Carefully replace the frames by adding them closest to the queen first and moving outward.

b. Delayed release (3-4 hours)

Supplies needed: Mini Marshmallow, Hive Tool

First, remove the cork from the cage using your fingers and hive tool if needed. **Make sure the queen is moving away from the cork when attempting to remove to prevent harming the queen.** Once the cork is removed, replace with the mini marshmallow. Replace the frames and wedge the queen cage inbetween two frames (along the top bar in the front or back of the hive) with the screen out toward the center of the hive. **Do not place in the center if pail feeding with syrup.**

8. Place a pollen patty (Ultra Bee or Bee Pro) on the top bars, not directly under the hole in the inner cover.

9. Place the inner and telescoping covers on top of the hive. Ensure that the entrance reducer is in place utilizing the smallest opening.

10. Inspect the colony 4-7 days after installation for queen acceptance by the hive.

Caring for your newly installed package

1. Provide the colony with 1:1 sugar syrup, high fructose corn syrup mix or Pro Sweet to encourage the bees to build wax comb.

2. Feed pollen substituting patties (Ultra Bee or Bee Pro) and syrup until they no longer consume it.

3. Increase the size of the entrance reducer when congestion occurs. Remove the entrance reducer when larger opening appears congested.



A pollen patty placed on the top bars of of a hive.



Bees enjoying syrup out of a Pro Feeder.

**TIPS FOR TRANSPORT AND
INSTALLATION OF PACKAGE BEES**

- Do not wrap packages in cloth or winter wrap. Package will overheat.
- Strap hive into seat securely.
- Don't worry about getting every single bee from the package into the hive. Place the open package near the front of the hive to encourage any remaining bees to enter the hive.
- To keep syrup warm during installation, either keep in a warm location until ready to use or place jug inside pail of luke warm water to prevent chilling bees with cool or cold syrup.
- Watch bee package installations in-person or online prior to installing. Examples of videos to watch are provided by [The University of Minnesota Bee Lab](#) and [Jim Kloek of Nature's Nectar](#).

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