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## HOW TO REQUEEN

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A good beekeeper is always ready to replace unsatisfactory queens, His success in introducing new ones is a sign of skill. We may be confronted with one of several reasons for replacing the old queen with a new one.

If any of our bees tend to sting readily, we have one of the best reasons for introducing new blood. Nobody should tolerate a strain of bees so mean as to be a nuisance. The second main reason for installing a new queen is to replace an old or failing queen, or one whose offspring are not producing as much honey as they should. We may even wish to introduce a queen of a new strain that we would like to try out.

### We Get Our Queens From a Good Source

Whether we raise our own queens or buy them from a commercial queen breeder, we should get the best we can. Almost everything our colony does can be credited to or blamed on the queen; so it doesn't pay to scrimp. If we raise our own, we should pick our breeding colonies with the utmost care. Gentleness, good production, winter hardiness, disease resistance, low propolizing tendency, uniform color, and little inclination to swarm are a few of the things to consider in choosing the colonies from which to rear queens and drones. Unless we have good isolation from drones from other colonies, we will still be gambling on the outcome of our breeding. In many respects it's cheaper in the long run to buy mated queens from a reputable breeder and let him worry about all these things. We may try several breeders, until we find one that produces the kind of stock we desire.

### Introducing the New Queen

Assuming that we just received a new queen through the mail, a safe way to get her established is for us to set up a new, small, three or four-frame hive, or nucleus, made up of a couple of frames of emerging brood with enough bees to cover them and include a frame or two of honey and pollen. The older bees on these combs will return to their original hive, leaving mostly young bees. We should remove the pasteboard or metal guard covering the hole in the queen mailing cage which is filled with candy. Next we place the queen cage between two frames of brood with the candy-plugged hole toward the top, or lay the cage, screen side down, between the tops of two frames. We then close the nucleus and wait a week. During this time the bees in the hive will eat the candy separating them from the queen and thus release her. When this has been accomplished, they will be accustomed to her and should accept her willingly. One week after we put her in, she should be laying well and young brood should be present. Now is the time to introduce this queen into the colony we want to requeen.

First we remove the old queen. Then remove enough frames at one side of the hive to make room for the three or four frames of the nucleus hive which has the new queen and her brood. We place these frames in the space just made for them and close the hive. We should check the colony a week later to make sure all is well. Just to be on the safe side, we might save the old queen just removed by placing her, with several frames of brood and bees in the nucleus hive from which you removed the new queen. As soon as the new queen is safely accepted, the old queen can be killed.

If we have any reason to believe that the bees might not accept the new queen even under this almost foolproof system, a further precaution would be to unite the nucleus and the colony by the newspaper method. We place a single thickness of newspaper over the colony to be requeened (after the old queen has been removed). Then place the nucleus in a hive body on top of the newspaper. Poke a couple of holes in the newspaper with a pencil or stick and close up the hive. This results in practically 100 percent acceptance.

If the colony needing the new queen has already lost its queen, and we don't want to wait to establish the new queen in a nucleus, we must examine the colony and make sure there are no queen cells. No colony with queen cells will accept a new queen. Then place the queen cage in the hive as described above. If the colony is a two-story one, we put it on the top of the lower hive body. If we think we can do it successfully, it will help to remove the worker attendants from the queen cage before introducing the new queen. Persons inexperienced enough to be doubtful should leave them in and don't take the chance of losing or injuring the queen. In any case, wait a week before examining the hive for the presence of eggs and young brood, which are the best indications of successful introduction.

The best time to requeen is, in general, when there is some honey coming in. At other times, it is a good idea to feed a little thin sugar syrup to the colony during the operation.

There are many other ways of installing new queens described in books and bee magazines. The methods here described are two of the most common and successful.

