# **Capturing Swarms**

### Free Bees are the best Bees

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I started beekeeping about 2014 which started with a removal and I did everything wrong.

- I did removals and picked up swarms for a few years
- I wanted a better/faster way to increase my hive numbers so I started researching catching swarms.
- A 10 frame deep box appears to be about the perfect size but Swarms seem to prefer the vertical orientation better.
- A size of about 40 liters is ideal, 1 liter = 1.06 quarts.



When do you start putting the Honey Bee Haven out?

- I start hanging swarm boxes in late February or early March.
- I would rather have it up early than late.
- I usually have a swarm in the box within a week.

# Where is the best place to hang the Honey Bee Haven?

- The west side of a field or tree line gets morning sun and evening shade.
- This really helps during the summer if it gets really hot.
- Bees sometimes left when it was too hot.
- I drill several small holes near the top.
- I also add another entrance on the back top of the Honey Bee Haven.

# Do you bait the Honey Bee Haven?

- Yes, one frame of drawn out comb, a zip lock bag and a paper towel with several drops of lemongrass oil.
- Zip the bag until it's almost closed then put a stick in the opening to keep the bag from closing.
- I use foundationless frames.



- Bees prefer to build their own comb and will avoid foundation until it's the only thing left.
- I experimented with one frame of comb, 1 frame with foundation and 4 foundationless frames in each position.
- Bees avoid foundation every time.



## How high do you hang the Honey Bee Haven?



- It doesn't really matter.
- I stopped going too high for safety reasons while trying to remove a heavy box.
- The heaviest box I removed was 57 lbs and that was difficult.

This last season as I was preparing to put up all my swarm boxes and while inserting frames I discovered a swarm had moved into a box sitting on the ground under the car port.



### How long do I leave the Honey Bee Haven hanging after a swarm moves in?

- I check the box every week or so for eggs just to make sure the queen is laying.
- I remove the box once they have about 4 frames of drawn out comb.
- If you wait too long bees draw out comb on the bottom of the frames. If so, I remove the comb and place inside another frame.
- I have never lost a swarm by doing it this way.

### **Building on Bottom of Frame**







#### How do you remove the Honey Bee Haven?

- I use 2 ratcheting straps and a single handle from a ski rope.
- Put the 2 straps around the box and hook them to the handle.
- Place the ladder above the swarm box and strap the ladder to the tree.
- Make sure the two cleats are not stuck together.
- Hold onto the ladder with one hand and lift the box off the hanger with the other, being very careful descending the ladder.





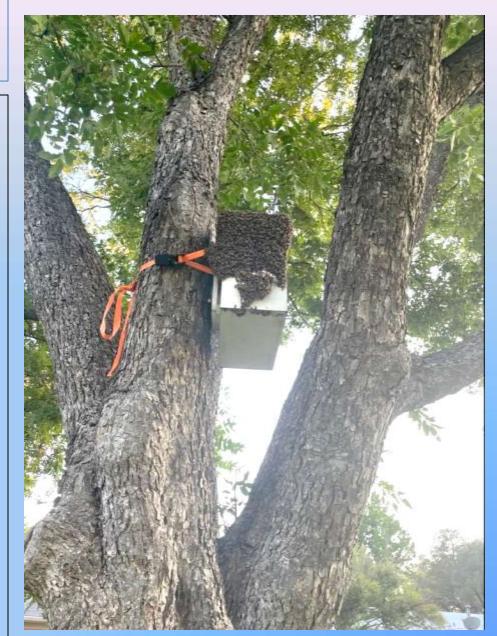
#### When do you move the frames from the Honey Bee Haven to a deep hive box?



- Before first light, I staple a wire over the entrance.
- I wait until light and remove the Honey Bee Haven from the tree and take it to its new location.
- I place the box next to the deep hive box that I intend to move the bees into.
- I release the bees but leave them in the Honey Bee Haven for a day or so; this reduces the stress on the bees.
- Next remove the frames from the Honey Bee Haven and place them into the new hive in the same order in the center of the hive body.

#### When do you take the Honey Bee Haven down?

- I have left mine up as late as October or November depending on the weather.
- I never want a late season swarm because they require lots of attention but without the box if a hive does swarm, they would probable die on their own.



### **Other precautions.**

If the hanger cleat and the cleat on the box are painted use a piece of wax paper to keep the two pieces from sticking together. Another option would be to stain the cleats rather than painting them.





#### I use the Honey Bee Haven for Trapouts



