



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





The End

Enjoy your Free Bees

