

Glossary of beekeeping terms:

Africanized bees – so called “killer bees” – very aggressive bees with African genetics which take over normal European bee hives. They pose a serious threat to both animals and humans because they chase and sting as a whole swarm and overwhelm the victim.

Alighting board – an angled board attached to the hive stand that allows heavily burdened worker bees easier access to the hive entrance by allowing them to walk up the slope into the hive.

Apiary – the bee-yard where the beehives are located

Bee suit – a covering to protect the beekeeper from bee stings and to keep the clothing clean from honey and propolis.

Bee veil – a net covering for the face to protect from bee stings.

Bottom bar – The wooden bar at the bottom of the frame in the beehive.

Bottom board – the bottom of the hive, where the bees enter and exit the hive. It can be screened or solid, and extends out in front of the bottom hive box so the bees can enter the hive.

Brood – bee eggs, larva and developing pupae which have not emerged yet from their cells.

Brood box – the bottom hive box(es) where the bees are raised

Brood cycle – The queen bee lays an egg, which hatches into a larva. The larva grows until it is ready to pupate, at which time the worker bees cap the cell with wax and the pupa grows into a mature bee, then chews its way out of the cell and cleans up the cell it just emerged from.

Brood pattern – The way the brood cells are arranged indicates how good the queen is at efficiently laying eggs and indicates the health of the queen and the overall health of the hive.

Cappings – the wax coverings put over finished brood cells or honey cells by the bees.

Cappings scratcher – a forked tool used to scrape wax cappings off honey comb for extracting honey.

Cappings tank – Any type of container used to collect the wax cappings which are cut off the honey comb.

Cell – the individual hexagonal honeycomb where honey or pollen is stored or the queen lays eggs.

Comb honey – Honey which has been made by the bees on special thin wax foundation and is sold as is, right in the comb to the customer.

Cream honey – Very finely crystallized honey made by adding seed honey –which is already crystallized and cooling it quickly to get it to make very fine crystals.

Deep hive box – the largest wooden hive boxes usually used as brood boxes in the bottom of the hive.

Drone bees – male bees. They exist only to mate a queen. The workers kick them out and leave them to die in the winter. Drones have no stingers and die after mating. Drones are produced from unfertilized eggs.

Drone brood – raised cappings on a frame where drones are being raised.

Drone comb – larger cells made by the bees for raising drone brood.

Extraction – The method of getting liquid honey out of honey comb for bottling.

Extractor – A device used to throw honey out of uncapped honey frames by centrifugal force.

Foundation – either wax sheets or plastic sheets coated with wax placed within the frames to make a base for the bees to build their wax combs from.

Frames – wooden rectangular forms hung in the hive boxes for the bees to build wax comb on for raising brood or honey storage.

Hive box – the wooden box(es) which form the beehive

Hive stand – any type of stand that elevates the bottom board off the ground.

Hive tool – a specialized pry bar used to loosen frames and hive boxes for inspection.

Honey super – hive box(es) placed above the brood nest to collect honey.

Inner cover – a thin board usually with a hole in the center for ventilation that goes under the top cover.

Larval skins – dark cell linings left behind in brood cells after a bee emerges from the cell.

Laying worker – a worker bee who lays eggs in the absence of a queen. This produces only drone bees because the worker cannot lay fertile eggs.

Medium hive box or super – Sometimes called a “shallow” the medium depth hive box can be used for brood or for honey supers.

Nucleus or Nuc hive – Five frames of drawn comb in a box with a laying queen, workers, capped brood and some honey, used to start a new beehive.

Package bees – Two or three pounds of worker bees in a screened box with a queen bee in a cage used to start a new hive.

Propolis – a sticky substance the bees make from tree sap to glue the hive pieces together and fill holes and cracks.

Queen bee – the mother of all the bees in the hive. A hive will only have one queen at a time. She is the only fully developed female in the hive and is the only one who can lay fertilized eggs.

Queen cage – a small wooden box with three sections in which a queen bee is caged with several attendant worker bees and a candy plug for the purpose of shipping.

Queen cell – a large (one inch long) peanut shaped cell in which a queen bee is raised.

Queenless – having no queen in the hive

Queenright – having a good, healthy, laying queen in the hive.

Raw honey – honey that has not been heated any warmer than it would naturally be in the bee hive.

Rendered beeswax – beeswax that has been processed to remove all impurities, leaving only the pure beeswax.

Royal jelly – a white substance produced by the bees to feed to the larva up to three days of age and to a developing queen until the cell is capped.

Shallow hive box – or “super” - shallow boxes are the shortest depth boxes and are used as honey supers for extraction or cut comb honey.

Side bars – the wooden bars on the sides of each frame in the beehive.

Smoker – a small metal cylinder with a funnel top and a bellows attached in which the bee-keeper makes a small fire to produce smoke to puff into the hive to calm the bees when inspecting a hive.

Splitting – An artificial form of “swarming” done by the beekeeper to produce two hives out of one parent hive.

Supersedure cell – a queen cell in the middle of a frame, sometimes called an “emergency” cell. The bees do this to replace a queen if she dies or they think she is failing.

Swarm – A method of natural hive reproduction in which the old queen and up to half the bees in the hive fly out to find a new home. A new virgin queen will be left in the hive and will kill all rivals, then get mated and continue the rearing of new brood in the old hive.

Swarm cell – a queen cell on the bottom of a frame. Usually there will be a lot of these and the purpose is to produce a new queen so the old queen can leave with the swarm.

Top bar – the wooden piece on the top of the frames in the beehive.

Top cover – the uppermost cover on the bee hive, usually with a metal covering that telescopes over the top of the hive.

Uncapping – The process of taking the cappings wax off of a honey frame so the honey can be extracted.

Uncapping knife – A knife used to cut off the cappings wax.

Unfiltered honey – honey that has not been heated and forced through very fine filters. Honey that has been strained through a screen to remove wax and bee parts is considered unfiltered.

Varroa mite – parasitic mite that infests beehives, breeds in bee brood and vectors various diseases and viruses in the bee hive.

Wax moths – moths that breed in comb, especially brood comb and spin webs and cocoons and eat wax, destroying the comb.

Winter cluster – a tight ball of bees with the queen in the center that vibrates to keep warm and moves as a group through the hive as they eat the honey stores in the winter.

Worker bee – female bees who do all the work in the hive. Most of the population of the hive will be worker bees. They live about six weeks in the summer, but survive the entire winter in the winter cluster. Worker bees develop from fertile eggs.

Worker brood – flat cappings on the brood frames where worker bees are being raised.