

End Of Season Use For Your Mininuc Bees and Frames

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2019 was my first serious queen rearing season, having played around for the last ten years or so making all the mistakes known to beekeepers, and perhaps making a few new ones.

2017 saw me attending a weekend down in East Devon with Dan and Ken Basterfield on one of their excellent NDB courses — Queen Rearing. This course for me pulled all the various bits and pieces of my knowledge into one understandable useable lump.

Following this weekend a small group of us on the Isle of Wight formed a Queen Rearing group 'Wight Bee Improvement Group' with backing from BIBBA.

July/August 2019 saw the end of quite a successful queen rearing season, but posed the question of what to do with fourteen mininucs (Apidea in our case) full of queenless bees. One of our WBIG members found an interesting youtube link produced by "irishbeekeeping4you.info", which is the basis for this article.



- 4 A National broodbox or super needs to be altered to accept the small Apidea frames, in my case three National frames each holding 12 Apidea frames: 36 frames in total. (I personally use BS

Four additional pieces of equipment need to be fabricated for this nuc-combining technique:

- 1 Large sheet of plywood.
- 2 A small square of ply 6inch x 6inch.
- 3 Three legged tripod.



National 14x12; other sizes/types of brood/super frames are possible.)

This is where the magic took place: on the small square of old plywood attached by string to the tripod, we attached to its underside an old sock plus a caged mated queen; this was hung over the sheet of plywood prior to releasing all the queenless mininucs, ensuring that the bottom of





the sock brushed the large plywood sheet. The tripod was a simply-made job: three battens tied at the top.

All the mininucs were opened and placed on end. At this stage we removed each frame and stood them on end at the centre of the ply sheet; as there are so many different small colonies being combined no fighting takes place.

We next took each frame and shook/brushed all the bees off to under the hanging sock/caged queen — these empty frames were then placed in our altered national super.



This was followed by shaking all the remaining bees in the Apidea under the sock/caged queen.

At this stage, after shaking all the workers off the frames and Apidea bodies into one neat pile, we left them for approximately five minutes; the bees were seen to be walking up the sock and forming a very neat cluster around our caged queen.



We left them to slowly form a cluster; this took about 30 minutes to have formed a nice tight cluster around their caged mated queen.

These were then shaken into a six frame polynuc, the caged queen placed onto the frames and fed.

The final manipulation was to add our altered National super holding 36 Apidea frames onto a small queenright colony. This we left for four weeks to ensure all the brood that was still good could hatch and add numbers to its new colony.



The final result one month later from 14 queenless Apideas and one caged queen:

A queenright six-frame nuc ready to expand into a full BS National 14 x 12;

Plus a weak queenright colony has been strengthened and is now ready to face the full force of an IOW winter

Our sincere thanks to Ian for producing a great piece.

Another method for manipulating and strengthening our colonies is always welcome.

Remember!

When joining colonies or apidea remnants, ensure you are joining three or more colonies.

Two colonies will fight, three or more tend to have a little party together and simply get along.

We could learn so much from honey bees eh!

Tom