

HONEY DO LIST

Monthly Beekeeping Checklist



MAY

May is the when bees are arriving, spring is springing and now the bees really go to work. It is important to give them their space when they are busy and to be sure that when doing inspections that the bees are working hard and doing what they should be doing.

If you are receiving your bees this month, it can be a very exciting time and NEWBEEES (new beekeepers) are really excited and want to check on their bees all the time... DO NOT DO IT. Let them work and then you can begin to share some time with them more after a few weeks. Check out the list and find out what to look for.

There are 2 lists, one for those who are not installing new bees and one for those installing a package or a nucleus colony.

CHECKLIST (Not installing new bees)

- If the blooms are not super abundant, keep feeding the bees with a 1:1 solution (sugar:water).
- **Observation:** During inspections be sure to locate brood comb and look for eggs. It is possible that although the colony made it through the winter, the queen may not be laying eggs. As a beekeeper, it might be time to consider re-queening the colony.
- When identifying eggs, larva and capped brood, the quantity should be enough to revive the hive from the previous year. During the middle of the summer, a colony will typically be between 40 and 60 thousand bees.
- As soon as the bees start producing fresh nectar and capping new honey, feel free to remove the overwintered honey and harvest it.
- **Observation:** The bees should be pulling in a lot of pollen. Be sure to note the color, and if possible, the source of it on the inspection form.
- Because the colony survived, it is more likely to swarm. Be sure the colony has enough room to grow (*make sure there are enough empty bars for the bees to build upon*). Early signs of swarming are as follows
 - Teacup Cells → the bees may be creating tea cup shaped cells. These will not be filled, yet, but it means they are preparing to make a new queen.
 - Drone bees being created → Look for the larger brood cells and watch if they are beginning to be filled. This means that they are getting ready to pass on genetics to other queens, as well.

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CHECKLIST (Starting with a new nucleus colony or package of bees)

- Installation season is now. If you have not already installed your bees, it will be happening soon. Be ready. Look at the previous HONEY DO LISTS™ to be ready.
- Watch the videos in the MEMEBERS AREA for instructions and to see some examples of installation for both packages and nucleus colonies.
- Observation:** When a package is installed, the queen should be released in a week. The bees should be building comb by this time. If this is not happening, call Beepods and we will help to work through it.
- As soon as comb is built, look for the queen to start laying eggs.
- Observation:** Within 2 weeks of installation, eggs and larva should be observed. If neither of these is found, it may be time to re-queen the hive.
- The hive will steadily grow until the space is full, so be sure to monitor this at least weekly for the first month and place more bars in the hive, as necessary.
- Observation:** By the end of May, full drawn out comb should be apparent and there should be brood apparent and, possibly even hatching bees.

This checklist was created for beekeepers specifically in Midwest, USA. It may need to be adjusted for other beekeepers based on weather, location and other environmental factors. This list will be updated and variations will be created over time as needed. If you would like to help with the development of these checklists, please, contact us.

Always be sure to check Beepods.com for updated lists or information in the Members Resource Area.

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