

BAIT HIVES

Seasoned club swarm collector Karl regularly uses bait hives and he has written the following piece explaining how he sets them up and uses them....

"Seeing we are mostly all confined to home and looking for something to do may I suggest making up your swarm catching bait hives. Payne's Poly Nucleus hives with the feeder cut out making an Eight frame nucleus make good bait hives

Ideally you can use any empty spare hive that has had bees in residence or a new one if that's all you have, old comb or frames work well but you can use new frames and comb if you have nothing old.

Make up a hive with the frames but the main thing you must do is CLOSE UP THE OPEN MESH FLOOR.

I've experimented over the years and never caught a swarm in a hive with an OMF.



Siting the bait hive is not crucial but, on a post, hedge, garage roof is recommended but tries not to site it in the full midday sun as it can get quite warm and this sometimes puts them off. You need to access it easily so not too high either, 6ft or less is ideal.

I use pure natural lemongrass oil NOT synthetic on a cotton bud just popped inside the entrance and a little wiped onto a frame but use it very sparingly as too much will put them off. (DO NOT

USE HONEY)

Mid- April is a good time to put them in situ and they will attract scouts quite quickly, but a swarm may take 6 weeks or more to arrive, if at all. A top up of the lemongrass will be needed every week or so.

Once a swarm has arrived encourage all the bees to go into the hive with a fine water spray then close it up after dark. You must also remove the cover from the OMF once a swarm has arrived as it will get to hot inside for them. Remove the bait hive that evening to its new site and after a short while opens the entrance so they can fly the following morning.

