

sideration commence with the old make-shift box hives, because you will require to control your bees, and to do this you must keep to one pattern of frame-hives, so that you can exchange combs at any time if required.

Having selected or completed your hive with its frames, the next step is to obtain some comb-foundation. This is really an artificial backbone upon which the bees will work out their cells. It costs 2s. 3d. per lb., but the novice will soon be able to reduce the cost of this materially by getting his own wax made into cell-foundation by those who have machines for the purpose. This they will do at about sixpence per pound, with say a penny extra for carriage. Having procured your foundation, proceed to cut strips three-quarters of an inch wide, and fasten them to the frames with hot beeswax. Place these prepared frames in your hives, and put in, also, a square of clean sacking just large enough to cover the frames, and prevent bees rising into the lid and making a mess, by fixing the cover tight, and you will now be ready for the swarm. Bear in mind particularly that bees love cleanliness, and cannot bear dirty smelling hives.

There are two ways of getting your swarm. The town or suburban novice may have to purchase, but in the country, especially in bush districts, you may easily find a swarm. If you purchase, do not, on any consideration, get a swarm of less than 5 lb. weight, or 8 lb. is better, and a heavier one still is preferable. An 8 lb. swarm should be obtained for 1s. per lb., a smaller one, less in proportion, and a larger one, rather more. It is easy to ascertain the weight by weighing the box first, and subtracting the weight of it from what it weighs when occupied.

It will be well here to describe the swarm-box, which is a convenience that will always be found useful. It must be large enough to hold the largest swarm you are likely to have. In fact, it is better to be too large than too small, as bees quickly respire and get overheated, dying rapidly when put in too small a box. Eighteen inches by twelve, and twelve inches deep is a good size. It

should be of light wood, without any cracks or holes, and have a sliding lid with an extra secure fastening. You can cut as many holes as you like in the lid and sides, using rather coarse perforated zinc to cover them on the inside, or tin with holes punched in it, keeping the rough side away from the bees. This will give ventilation, of which you cannot have too much.

Having secured your swarm in this box, and carried it to your hive, which is ready to receive it, your best way will be to get the queen-bee and place her in the hive; you then put the partly opened swarm-box close to the mouth of the hive, and the bees will swarm in after her. By this means the bees settle down more readily.

Another plan is to uncover the hive and remove a few frames, pushing the remainder close to the sides. All being ready, thump your swarm-box smartly on the ground, draw the lid away altogether, and then shake the bees into the open space of your hive, replacing the frames, mat, and cover. Act quickly but steadily, with no fuss. Learn to go deliberately about your work, quickly but quietly. A few puffs of smoke from your smoker will help in case the bees are inclined to be nasty. Your bees will soon settle down to work, and your hive being level, they will build their combs in the frames just where they are wanted.

The country novice, as I have said, will probably not require to purchase his swarms, especially in bush districts; he will, with a little patience and perseverance, be able to find a bush hive, and by taking it supply his own hive with occupants.

In order to find a hive in the bush you require to get your eyes into training by following bees in their flight. If they are busy on any flowers, watch them rise and follow their flight; your first lesson will then be learnt. If you find bees drinking, you may be sure their home is not far off, because, being sensible insects, they do not care to carry the comparatively large quantity of water they use any further than is necessary. This habit is sure to give their residence away to the careful observer.