



CBKA Newsletter

March 2012

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In the Apiary

As I write this we've had several days of non-stop sunshine and warm weather and I hope you have managed to check your colonies. I went along with another beekeeper to inspect his four hives and we were pleased to see that they had not only survived but had brought in a lot of honey which they had stored in the brood box. They will need queen excluders and supers adding right now, and the brood frames full of honey need the capping carefully scraping off to encourage the bees to move the honey out of the brood box and into the new supers, otherwise the queen will run out of laying space - and that will lead to early swarming. Progress of the colonies is rapid now, make sure you have enough supers with frames and foundation ready for use. Who will have the first couple of jars of honey extracted this spring?

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Bee sting relief

If you're a beekeeper I can guarantee that sometime in the next few months you will be stung by a bee. For some people it barely registers, for others it can lead to a few hours of mild discomfort and then there are those that will have swelling and itching for a few days. There are any number of suggested remedies, some having success with hydrocortisone creams and others use ice, vinegar and baking soda and so on. Now I hear that toothpaste has been tried and in the case of the article that I read it proved to be the best of half a dozen different remedies. It wasn't anything special, just ordinary toothpaste. A small amount was spread around the sting area and left on for 15 minutes, the calming effect lasting for 5 hours. As a low cost experiment it must be worth trying, so have a small tube in your toolbox and give it a try next time you're stung. Perhaps you can let us know if it works for you.

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National, Smiths, Commercial or Langstroths?

It's strange that there's so much choice of hive types in this country. I'm talking about what I would call mainstream hives such as National, Smiths,

Commercial, Langstroth, WBC etc, acknowledging that there are plenty of interesting alternative designs such as top bar hives and Warre hives available both here and abroad. Is it the same sort of thinking that has had us living with a mix of Imperial and metric units for such a long time? In most countries there's one type in general use and that's it, and worldwide it is usually a Langstroth. Perhaps we need to standardise on one type of hive too and it might lead to economy in manufacturing - certainly the prices of hives are usually much lower abroad, even taking into account that cedar is the preferred wood of choice here and cheaper softwood is normal elsewhere. I know the National is still the most popular here, but it isn't universally used because a lot of beekeepers feel that it is too small for modern bee strains. A hive with a larger brood chamber will have more bees and make more honey in similar circumstances to a standard National, and as the queen has more room to lay then swarming will be less likely.

* A National hive has approximately 50,000 cells in the brood chamber.

* A Langstroth hive has about 61,400 cells in the brood chamber.

* Commercial beekeepers often use Commercial hives (that was obvious) which have about 70,500 cells in the brood chamber.

* A deep version of the National with a 14x12 brood box has a 72,000 cell brood chamber.

* Some people go on to use twin brood boxes. A twin brood box National hive will have 100,000 cells in the enormous brood chamber, and it is held that inspecting a twin box brood chamber isn't very hard and in fact is easier in some cases.

My choice is to use 14x12 Nationals which means there's complete compatibility with a standard National hive apart from from the brood box, so floors, queen excluders, supers, roofs etc remain the same. I wanted a larger brood chamber without what I think is the extra effort of inspecting two brood boxes. Larger brood box frames are required of course, going from the standard 14x8.5 inches to, yes you've guessed it, 14x12 inches. You can buy a new 14x12 brood box in either flat pack or ready assembled, but if you already have a

standard National brood box and are reasonably handy you can make a converter.

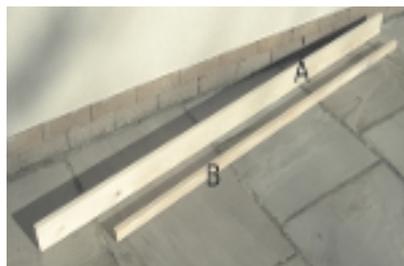
You need two pieces of wood, one 1.8m x 25mm x 38mm and a piece 2.4m x 20mm x 90mm. These are standard sizes which can be bought at your local timber merchant. They need to be cut to form a box very much like a shallow super. If placed under a National brood box the extra 90mm (yes, mixing Imperial with Metric units!) creates a 12 inch deep brood box. Note the rebates in two of the sides in the second photo to give strength to the converter.



Standard National brood box on a converter with a National frame and a 14x12 frame for comparison

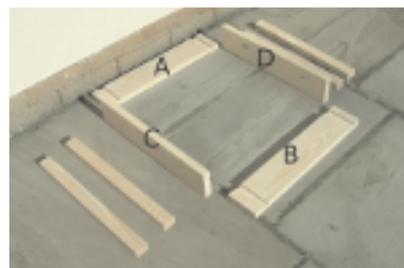
By Sal Mancina

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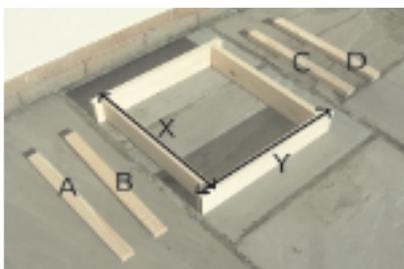


Piece A = 2.4m x 20mm x 90mm

Piece B = 1.8m x 25mm x 38mm



A=B = 460mm long
C=D = Size so that the assembled box is 460mm square as below, taking into account depth of rebates in A and B



Glue and nail the four sides together to give a 460mm square box (X,Y). Cut A,B,C,D to fit in the recesses. Glue, then nail from the inside.



Two finished converters.

Beekeeping Museum, Colmenar Near Malaga

If you are thinking of visiting sunny Spain and the Costa del Sol on holiday this year why not have a break from the beach and visit the Museo del Miel, (Honey Museum) at Colmenar?

Colmenar is about 30km to the north east of Malaga. The Museum gives lots of information on beekeeping and the staff are very helpful to visitors, especially fellow beekeepers.

By Rob Andrews



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Happy Beekeeping

Secretary: Derek Herring, 8 Wardale Avenue, Acklam, Middlesbrough. Tel 01642 282030

Winter meetings (September to April) are held on the 3rd Monday of the month at 7:15pm in the:

Southlands Leisure Centre, Ormesby Road, Middlesbrough, TS3 0HG. Visitors and new members welcome.

BEEKEEPING SUPPLIES

Allan, Tony & Richard Jefferson

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