

Preparing for Winter



The bees will need your help to get through the winter months and you need to start helping early!

What you need to do in September:

Size: Check that your colony is big enough to survive the winter. If small, unite with another colony.

Queen right : check that your colony has a laying queen.

Varroa: Check that your colonies do not have large numbers of varroa mites.

Disease : check that your colonies are healthy (brood and adult bees).

Stores: Each colony needs to have around 20 kg of stores to last the

Feeding: You should feed a strong sugar syrup now (2 kgs WHITE sugar to 660 ml hot water). Top up the feeders regularly, until the bees stop taking it down.

And in October:

Fresh Air: If your hive has an Open Mesh Floor, you may want to leave out the insert for better circulation during the winter. However, it is a good idea to replace it for REALLY cold weather.

Mice: When the first frost is forecast, it's time to fit mouse guards. You can also cover your hives with chicken wire if there are woodpeckers nearby.

Apiary Tidy Up: It's time to cut back overgrown branches and weeds around your hives. This means the air can circulate freely around the hives and rain does not drip on them.

Rain: Damp is a very real danger to your bees. If you have a flat roof on the hive, use a thin piece of wood under the hive to lift the back of the hive a little. This lets rainwater run off.

Wind: Don't forget to put a large brick or stone on top of your hive to stop the roof blowing off. or you can strap up your hives so that they do not separate if they do fall over.

And throughout the winter: (check your hives once a week)

Hefting: You can keep an eye on the stores by gently lifting one side of the hive at the start of Autumn. If the hive feels a lot lighter through the winter, FEED your bees with a block of fondant.

Snow: No problem if the snow is soft and quickly melts but clear away any that is frozen hard.



Dead Bees: remove the mouse guard occasionally and use a thin stick to clear away dead bees from the entrance. Remember to put it back though!

The hive: check for animal or vandal damage.

Keep us Alive !



Heft the HIVE !

**DO NOT OPEN THE HIVE IN
WINTER!!**

(This could chill your bees!)