

Package Bee Varroa Mite Treatment Guidelines for Beginning Beekeepers

During our last class on April 17th, a few questions were asked regarding the proper method for treatment of a new package of bees. An action item was taken to clarify the club's advice on this subject.

First: It is paramount that you treat your new package of bees for Varroa Mites before brood is present. Even bees from the highest quality sources can arrive with a few mites so why not take advantage of this situation to really knock down those mites?

There are three methods to achieve the same goal:

1. Oxalic dribble while bees are still in the package - Simply mix up the oxalic solution as shown below, and dribble no more than 30 ml of solution on the clump of bees. Try to avoid dribbling much, if any, solution on the queen. Install the package into the hive immediately referencing "Package Bee Installation" video on the LCBA website.
2. Oxalic Dribble AFTER installing bees into the hive - Install your bees into their new hive referencing "Package Bee Installation" video on the LCBA web site. The next day (or two), open the hive, remove the caged queen, and then proceed to dribble 5 ml of oxalic solution per seam of bees. Do not exceed 50 ml of solution per deep box. Reinstall the caged queen.
3. Oxalic vaporizing package before installing bees into the hive - See "Oxalic acid Treatment of Package Bees" video on the LCBA website. After treatment, install your package of bees into the hive referencing "Package Bee Installation" video on the LCBA web site.

LCBA videos: <http://www.loraincountybeekeepers.org/beginners-beekeeping-class.html>

All three methods will achieve the same results.

Recipe for oxalic solution for Varroa Mite treatments using dribbling method:

1. A quart Mason jar is about the right size to make this solution.
2. Mix 1.5 cups warm water with 2.5 tablespoons of oxalic acid crystal. Mix very thoroughly
3. Add 2 cups sugar to this solution and mix well.
4. Treats about 10 deeps.
5. May be refrigerated for a couple of months. Shake well before reusing. When in doubt, make new since it's inexpensive.

Additional note for Oxalic dribbling for Varroa Mites:

Published studies have shown that repeated dribbling of oxalic solution on bees can cause damage to their antennae, so it is recommended that dribbling be performed no more than once per the life of the bee. Since bees only live about 6 weeks (except for winter bees which live up to 6 months), this means that it is safe to dribble OA solution every 6 weeks. Naturally, the queen lives longer than 6 weeks, so it is prudent, if possible without too much difficulty, to avoid repeated dribbling of OA solution on the queen.



Your Friendly Neighborhood Lorain County Beekeepers Association.
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