

Step-by-step instructions on making a Preemptive Split - Double Screen Board Method

1. Open hive and remove supers.
2. Find the queen, and set her, on her frame, aside in secure place (a nuc box is a good choice.)
3. Move all the boxes off the base.
4. Set an empty box on the base and fill it with drawn, empty comb. Some foundation is OK. A frame with some stores (nectar, honey, and pollen) is a useful insurance policy against a period of bad foraging weather.
5. Add a frame of brood in the center.
6. Add the frame with the queen. (Check to make sure she's still on it!)
7. Install a queen excluder if you use it.
8. Add a generous amount of super capacity, with mostly drawn comb.
9. Place the double screen board on top. Put the end of the board without any doors towards the front of the hive.
10. Open one of the upper doors on the double screen board, on the side of the hive.
11. Place a box with all the remaining brood - at least five frames - on top of the double screen board. Make sure there are eggs, or very young larvae on at least one frame.
12. Add at least 2-3 frames with stores (nectar, honey and pollen). The upper section will be short of foragers for a while and needs to be self-sufficient.
13. Close the hive up in the usual way. And then double check to make sure you have one upper door open, along one side of the hive.
14. On the 4th or 5th day after the split, check to make sure the bees in the upper section are making queen cells. Also, close the door that leads in to upper section and open the one immediately below it. Then open the upper door on the opposite side of the hive.
15. On the 8th or 9th day after the split, you can do another door change, opening the upper door at the back of the hive, and closing the one on the side, while opening the one underneath it. If the bee population in the upper box looks too lean, you can skip this step.
16. After the 10th day from the split, make no more door changes.
17. About four weeks after the split, you can inspect the upper section for signs of a newly mated, laying queen. Once you've confirmed that, simply move the upper section to its own base.

Meanwhile in the lower section, the colony will have settled down to rebuild. The one or two infusions of flying bees resulting from the door changes will have provided a steady boost of younger bees to keep the field force strong and collecting nectar. If the flow turns out to be stronger than expected, you can always add more supers, but it's better to be over-generous at the time of the split in order to avoid disturbing the re-queening process in the upper section.