

Quick Guide by Andy O'Connell (Steamship Bee Company, LLC) When do you need a queen?

## Queenright vs. Queenless

Queenright is a mated queen.

Queenless means there is no mated queen.

They are not the same; you may have a virgin in a "queenless" hive.

Caution: introducing a queen in a cage into a "queenless" colony the virgin will kill your mated queen.

### Evaluating for Queenlessness

#### Eggs and Brood?

- Yes-> you probably have a queen but just can't find her. When you do find your queen, I find it helpful to mark her to make it easier in the future. All my queens are marked/clipped when found for future discovery(paint or disc).
- No-> you may still have a virgin. You can try and look, but she may be out mating. Drop a frame of fresh brood from another hive into the colony and wait to see if they will draw down queen cells.

#### If the colony does not draw down any queen cells

• the colony is queenright with a mated queen - perhaps not yet laying or laying you just can't find the eggs.

#### If the colony draws down Queen cells,

• the colony could still have a virgin but you know you do not have a mated or laying queen.

## Queenright or Queenless – What to do

#### Insert a frame of graft-able larva.

You will watch cells being drawn down. During this time everything will be fine.

Soon after capping and generally by day 8 (sometimes longer) the Cell will be torn down; there is a virgin or freshly mated queen in the colony.

Generally, if the Cell hasn't been killed after 3 days (day 8), you can remove all cells on your frame & safely introduce mated queen.



Other times when a new queen may be advisable. *Advanced Beekeeping!* 

These are some other common reasons why you would re-queen a hive. This is more advanced beekeeping than we are trying to cover here.

- Swarm Management
- Poorly laying failing queen
- Aggressive colony/temperament
- Splits/Expansion

# Introducing a new queen

- There are several methods for introducing a new queen. One common approach is to let the bees gradually release her from the roller cage, allowing them to acclimate. You can watch the bees groom the new queen, which indicates acceptance, unlike when they ball up around her, leading to her death.
- Introducing A Mated Queen To A Hive \$ [ Step-by-Step Guide for Beekeepers by Black Mountain Honey

Want to learn more? Here's some resources that I feel good recommending

- <u>Queen Bees and How to Live With</u> <u>Them</u> – Dr. Connor Lecture Series
- Honey Bee Biology and Beekeeping (Caron and Connor)
- <u>The Beekeeper's Handbook</u> by <u>Diana Sammataro</u>