



CANTERBURY
BEEKEEPERS



FOLKESTONE
HONEY GARDEN

OK - SO, THEY SWARMED ...

Dougal Hendry

... now, what are you going to do about it?

The two flights of every swarm

- When the bees leave the hive, their first task is to join the Queen who left with them
- She pauses **a few yards** (usually less than 25, not more than 100) from the hive to collect her bees, which cluster around her and 'reset' as a new unit
 - Beekeeper can "easily" take them at that point
- **Any bees that can't find the Queen go home**
- 'Scout' bees leave the cluster and go 'house hunting'
- Once the new home has been selected*, they go off as a group and move in (Q then reluctant to leave it)
- To minimise competition with the parent colony, they set up home a significant distance away - likely going more than **half a mile**

Beekeeper can "easily" take them ...

- Get the situation under control ASAP
 - no messing about, bees into a hive without delay
 - they could leave at any moment!
 - seconds CAN matter ...
- All MY methods follow the same fundamental ideas
 - **Get Q in and the rest will join her**
 - **Get most of them in, and you probably have Q**
 - **Once Q is in, don't let her out**
 - put a **QX** over the entrance (workers can pass)
 - really easy using a Poly Nuc
 - not possible with skep, etc

Beekeeper can "easily" take them ...

- General scheme of things
 - get access to the bees
 - damp them down (spray mister) if appropriate
 - discourages departure, tightens cluster
 - get most of them (somehow) into the Poly Nuc
 - check for Q captured **Check? How? Nasonov!**
 - repeat until achieved! (note net inward traffic)
 - check QX is *pinned* in place
 - deodorise cluster spot (room freshener spray)
 - leave until sundown (or it starts raining)
 - so that scouts and foragers return and are also taken
 - close and pin Nuc entrance, strap and remove
 - unless bees from known source, ideally to 'isolation'

But HOW do I get them in the Nuc?

- I suggest 5 basic methods
 - Drop the cluster straight into a nuc
 - Brush, or drop them into a flexy cardboard box, then shake/pour them from the box into the nuc
 - Cut off their branch and shake them into the nuc
 - Use smoke if need be, to drive them UP into the dark of a box placed above them. Then to nuc.
 - Find Q and put her in your nuc
 - (Drawstring sack on a pole?) Then to nuc.
- **Recognise and adapt as appropriate**
 - every situation is different!

Notes for Swarm Collectors

- Obtain access permission
- Be sure you understand your insurance position
 - 'amateur' no fee!
- Obtain permission for any action
 - like cutting a branch off a tree
- Keep the public away
- Leave the nuc in place to collect all the scouts
 - until rain or sundown & all scouts returned
- Don't mess around or 'show off'
 - includes "hiving" by "running in"
- Just get the situation under control ASAP
 - minutes may matter!
 - prevent bees becoming a nuisance elsewhere ...