

20 SUGGESTIONS FOR NATURAL BEEKEEPING

Compiled by Paul Sheppard, adapted by NCBA

- 1. Do not treat Honeybees with chemical or organic pest control substances.**
- 2. Re-queen weak and non resistant colonies with survivor or resistant queens.**
- 3. Start new hives with bees and queens from your area. Do not use imported queens or genetics.**
- 4. Use only feral or survivor stock for apiary increase.**
- 5. Allow for propolis build up. Propolis has health benefits for bees.**
- 6. Do not remove pollen. It is the protein food of the brood.**
- 7. Do not use queen excluders for honey separation from the brood. There will be more than sufficient honey for use on the outer extremes of your hives.**
- 8. Use foundationless frames or top bars. A 3 to 4 inch wax or wooden strip on the underside of the bar will help guide the bees and reduce cross-combing.**
- 9. Allow for drone build up. Reducing or destroying drone comb reduces the ability of the bees to build resilience.**
- 10. Allow swarming to take place or use timed splits (pre-swarm) for apiary increase. Natural selection is the key to survivability.**
- 11. Leave honey for the bees in dearth periods (winter/rainy season).**
- 12. Only feed sugar when strongly needed, and especially do not feed sugar as a substitute for honey after extracting all the honey stores.**
- 13. Use single stands and widely spaced hives in your apiary; 5 to 10 meters apart is the minimum.**
- 14. Limit inspections into the brood chamber. Entrance activity can tell you a lot about the health of your bees.**
- 15. Consider using thick walled structures to help the bees manage internal temperatures and climate (2 to 3 inches in the tropics and 3 to 4 in countries with winter). Try to mimic natural tree hive conditions.**
- 16. Allow the interior of your hive to be rough to encourage propolis build up.**
- 17. Keep hives off the ground; 18-24 inches is good.**
- 18. Collaborate with beekeepers nearby. The possibility of permanent change is strengthened by everyone being on the same page.**
- 19. Use less smoke or eliminate it completely. Smoke affects the abilities of bees to smell floral scents. Try using plain water or Sugar (syrup) Water (1:3) in a spray bottle. I strongly advise however to have a smoker lit and handy with aggressive colonies such as AHBs.**
- 20. Ensure water and forage is available year-round. Forage is tricky, but aim for blooming plants for as many months as possible, including late summer/autumn.**