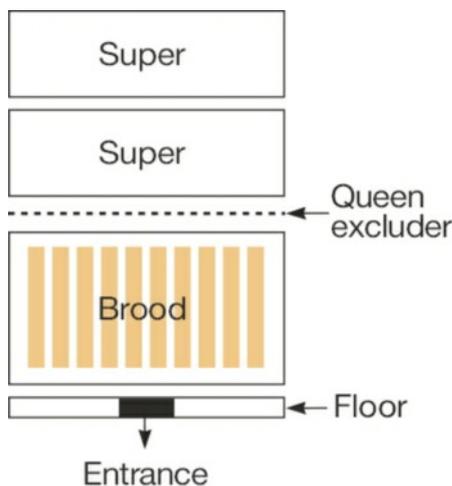


**This method does not create an 'artificial swarm' situation, but can be used when you do not have spare equipment to create an additional full hive.**

A swarm (natural or artificial) has a queen and a lot of bees, and is put on foundation and fed syrup and has to go where the flying bees can find it to be reinforced. Whereas, a nucleus is a small balanced colony (queen, eggs, young brood, old brood and food) and has to go away from the old site or it will lose bees to the parent.

There is absolutely no point in attempting to control swarming without the knowledge of what the bees are trying to do. All methods of swarm control attempt to disrupt the swarming process in some way.

**The following description of the method appears in the [BKKA publication L003 'Swarm Control for Beginners'](#).**

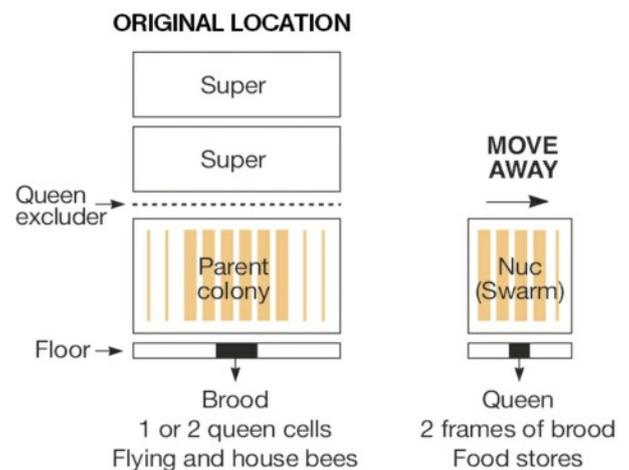


**Diagram 1** - Hive in original location.

**Complete the following steps**

1. Find the queen.
2. Take the comb she is on, another comb of largely sealed brood and two combs of food (preferably pollen and honey), together with bees to make a 4 frame nucleus, and place it in another box. This can be a brood box or a nucleus hive.

3. Shake bees from other brood combs into the box. The aim is to add enough young bees to the nucleus to cover the brood and keep it warm after some have flown home.
4. Push the frames against one side of the box. Fill the vacant gap with drawn comb if you have it, if not then foundation or use a dummy board.
5. Give the nucleus a small entrance so that the bees can easily defend it, and move it at least two metres away. Face the entrance close to a hedge bottom or other barrier to confuse robber bees.



**Diagram 2** - Create a Nucleus

6. In the parent colony fill up the brood box with drawn comb or foundation. It is important to fill the gap with frames or wild comb will be built, especially in a honey flow.
7. Leave the nucleus for three days to get established.
8. As the nucleus develops, add empty combs to expand the brood nest and keep an eye on the food situation.

**To choose a queen cell** – (in the original brood box).

9. Eight days later (seven if this is the convenient time), examine all brood combs carefully for queen cells. As the queen was taken away and some queen cells may have been removed the colony may have built emergency cells.

10. Select a queen cell which is a good size and has dimples on the surface. Mark the position of the cell by placing a drawing pin in the top bar, vertically above the cell.

11. Carefully smoke the bees to move them and destroy all other queen cells on the frame. Treat this frame gently.

Do not jar or shake it or you may damage your chosen future queen.

12. Shake the bees off all the other brood combs into the brood box and break down all the queen cells. It is important only one queen cell is left otherwise the colony is likely to swarm with the first queen to emerge.

13. Re-assemble the hive.

### **Be Patient**

Do not open up the original colony that is raising a new queen for at least 14 days. If the young queen is on her mating flight, she may be confused when she returns to find the hive

open and may fly into an adjacent colony or get lost.

Vital inspections that cannot be avoided should take place after 5 pm when the young queen is likely to be inside the hive.

When you do inspect to check if your new queen is laying, try to do so quickly. Look for a patch of eggs or very young larvae, failing this check for an area of cells that have been highly polished by the workers ready for the queen to lay in. Close up the hive, be patient, and check again in a few days.

A young queen will generally start laying 10–14 days after she emerges, longer in poor weather or in a larger colony. If your new queen has not started laying after three weeks, seek advice from an experienced beekeeper, as she may have been lost or failed to mate.

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## **Uniting the Colonies**

A nucleus is always a useful item in even the smallest apiary. It can be used for many things including increasing your number of colonies or providing a queen in case one needs to be replaced.

This method of making one is good, but if you don't want to increase your total number of colonies, the nucleus with the old queen can be united back to the original colony with the new queen. It is best to do this in the evening, when flying is reduced.

1. Move one or both of the colonies together 1 metre a day.
2. Remove the roof etc. from the original colony with the new queen.
3. Place one large sheet of newspaper to completely cover the frames and cover it with an excluder to stop the paper blowing away!

4. Place an empty brood box on top.
5. Find the old queen in the nucleus hive and kill her.
6. Transfer the combs from the nucleus, with their adhering bees, into the top brood box in the same relative positions to each other.
7. Replace the inner cover and roof on top.
8. As the bees chew through the newspaper their scents will mix and they will unite without fighting.
9. After 7 days, check whether any queen cells have been started in the top box and break them down.
10. All the combs with brood on can be put down into the bottom box, if there is room.
11. Surplus combs that are free of brood can be shaken clear of bees and taken away. If there are too many combs of brood for one box, surplus ones can be given to other colonies.