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Pierco Drone Comb Frame #PDFRM



Mite life cycle and why drone trapping works:

This is a good way to reduce the number of Varroa Mites during the brood rearing season, even if honey is being produced. It works because of the mite's life cycle and the preference for drone brood. The female mite enters the cell 2-3 days before it is capped. She will wait for 60 hours after the cell is capped, then begin to laying eggs at a pace of 1 per 24-30 hours. It takes approximately 7.5 days for a

female mite to fully mature and only mature female mites will emerge with the adult bees. Since drone is capped about 3 days longer than a worker bee, more mites will emerge with a drone. On average, 1.8 mature mites will emerge with a worker bee, but 2.8 will emerge with a drone. Studies have shown that by removing your drone brood, the number of mites in your hive will be greatly reduced.

How to Use the Frame

The USDA worked with Pierco to develop and build the mold for this new hard plastic, beeswax coated frame for use as an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) technique for combating the Varroa Mites. The Pierco Drone Frame is brightly colored green so it is easily identified when looking in your hive. You should place your Pierco Drone Frame near the center of the brood nest (2-4 position). By doing this, the bees will accept the frame and build beautiful comb more quickly than if it were in the first position against the wall of the hive body. Bees instinctually want to build about 10% drone comb. By using this frame, you can better control where that comb is built. This reduces their tendency of converting the smaller celled worker foundation to drone comb.

Ideally, you should have two drone combs for each hive so you can rotate these frames. For best results, be sure that a majority of the cells are capped, which takes about 2.5-3 weeks. Simply pull the drone frame with these capped cells and freeze it for 48 hours to kill the drone pupae and mites in the comb. Replace it with your second drone frame for the cycle to continue in your hive. After freezing the frame you don't have to clean it off. The honey bees will take to it and clean out the dead pupae and mites.

There are alternative methods for those with limited freezer space. The capped drone cells can simply be scraped off the frame and let the bees rebuild the comb each time. You can also blast the frame with a garden hose to uncap the cells and flush out the drone pupae and mites. The comb remains intact but the pupae and mites are washed away. The longer you flush the frame, the more mites you will rinse out. Once the frame is sufficiently flushed shake the excess water off and reinstall the frame.