

Why Rear Queens?

There are a variety of great reasons to raise your own honeybee queens:

- Good queens are hard to find. By rearing your own queens, you can ensure that they are of high quality.
- Raising queens is a great way to save money, since purchased queens are not cheap and there are usually shipping costs.
- It is sometimes necessary to re-queen in emergency situations and it often takes several days to make arrangements to get a new queen. If you already have one in a mating nuc, this will not be a problem.
- Queens raised in your beeyard are acclimatized to local weather conditions and have a better chance of overwintering.
- Beekeepers can raise their own queens which are more resistant to American foulbrood (AFB), varroa mites, or other honeybee ailments.



Photo by Jerry Shue

References:

"Best Management Practices for Producing Honey Bee Queens in Florida." Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry. Undated.

Ratnieks, F.L.W. and Nowogrodzki, R. "Small Scale Queen Rearing by Beekeepers in the Northeast." (1988) Cornell Cooperative Extension Publication.

Zawislak, J. and Burns D. "Raising Quality Queen Bees." University of Arkansas. Undated.



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Rearing Queens

Best
Management
Practices
& the Law



Photo by Scott Bauer USDA/ARS

RAISING QUEEN BEES

What Makes a Good Queen?

- The queen should be reared from a healthy, strong, disease-resistant colony.
- Make sure the queen is raised from an egg/larva that is well fed.
- The queen mates with multiple, genetically diverse drones that are also from healthy colonies.
- Both colonies have behavioral or biological attributes that the beekeeper wants to propagate.
- The queen receives plenty of food as a larvae.



Photo by Scott Bauer USDA/ARS

Once you have raised a queen, monitor her egg-laying ability to assess whether she is prolific.

Rearing Queens for Sale

Raising queens is also a great way to make money! Please note however, that if you plan on selling your queens, there are additional rules you must follow under the Utah Bee Inspection Act.

Per UAC Title 4, Chapter 11, Section 9:



- 1.) Apiaries where queen bees are raised for sale may be subject to additional inspections by the County Bee Inspector.
- 2.) If the apiary where the queen bees are raised has been found to be infected with disease, the beekeeper must get permission from the County Bee Inspector or the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food to transport the queens.
- 3.) A person rearing queens for sale must follow methods which minimize or eliminate unmanageably aggressive stock.



Photo by Katie Lee University of Minnesota

Grafting is the most common method of queen rearing. Yet there are alternative systems such as Miller, Hopkins, Nicot, etc.

Preventing the Spread of the Africanized Honeybee

There are several southern Utah counties where Africanized Honeybees (AHB) have been found. When raising queens in these counties please take precautions so that feral AHB populations do not become established in the state's gentle managed colonies. Here are a few tips:

- Breeder queens and drone source colonies must be headed by European honeybee (EHB) queens.
- Maintain all EHB in a strong, healthy, populous condition to discourage usurpation (takeover) swarms by AHB.
- Do not select eggs from unmanageably aggressive stock.
- Marking European queens is especially important in areas where AHB are established.