

## TRAPPING

The objective of trapping is to perform the non-destructive relocation of a colony. This is best suited to situations where opening up the location would cause damage that cannot be easily repaired, or any damage at all is unacceptable.

When the flight path to an entrance conflicts with where people walk or play, the likelihood of unfortunate events is high. This can happen when bees are living in a cavity in the trunk or at the base of a tree.

Cutting open the trunk to remove bees is neither practical nor realistic, it would cause too much damage to the tree.

The purpose of trapping is relocation, so all but one access point is sealed and a one-way exit is installed at the remaining entrance. A functioning hive is installed nearby. Foragers which leave through the exit cannot re-enter upon their return. Frustrated by being unable to access the nest, they enter the nearby hive. Guard bees normally discourage the entry of bees from another hive, but bees laden with pollen or nectar are welcomed.

Managing a trap is labor intensive for the removalist:

- The one-way exit(s) requires regular attention to make sure that drones (which are larger than worker bees) do not block them.
- The nest must be inspected to ensure that the colony has not discovered alternatives to come and go other than the one-way exits.
- The hive must be checked to ensure it does not become overcrowded with the overflow population from the nest.

The queen in the nest will gradually slow her egg laying, and the colony will recognize the desperate straits in which it has found itself. At some point, rather than dwindle away, the colony will abscond (aka a desperation swarm) to establish a nest somewhere else.

After nest activity (6-8 weeks) ceases, the nest entrance is reopened.

If the trapping is done in fall, an unprotected nest will be robbed of honey by other bees and predators like yellow jackets. The bait colony will help rob the nest of honey, leaving behind nothing but pollen and dry wax. Wax does not generate any damage risk, so the opening can be blocked.

At other times of the year an empty nest full of honey may be ignored because bees would rather gather nectar during a flow than rob honey.

Trapping should be scheduled to end at a time of year when there is a dearth of nectar.