Colony inspection

In apiculture colony inspection helps the farmer ascertain the status quo of the hive.

To do a colony inspection, smoke the hive and disassemble it. During inspection, we look out for all the signs and conditions that a normal hive should have and we at the same time look out for the signs of diseases.

How to inspect

Cut and slowly remove the first frame up the box. In this frame you are meant to see stored honey, fresh nectar in the shinny cells, some pollen and a number of drones ie this frame basically contains food reserves.

Lean this frame on the corner of the hive and remove the next to inspect. This could contain drone pupa and the eggs but to see the eggs, lay your hand on the frame to clear off the bees and hold the frame such that the sunshine is shining directly into the bottom of the frame.

During inspection, note that worker pupa have flat cupped cells while drone pupa have round cupped cells. When the weather is warm, the propolis becomes soft and the frames are easy to remove.

The queen will most likely be found where there are a lot of open cells where she could be laying eggs within the brood area. The outside frame in the brood is usually honey and always put the frames back in place after inspection.