How and why to test for mites in your beehive

The varroa mite is dangerous in beekeeping because it can spread a number of viruses which viruses end up causing the bee colony to collapse. It is important to control the mites before their populations surge to prevent the build-up of viruses in the bee colony. In controlling the varroa mite, use chemicals only when you must to prevent the mites from gaining resistance to the chemicals.

Reasons for testing

Testing and tracking the varroa mite pest levels is important for you to ascertain when to apply the control measures.
Testing for varroa mites is key in an integrated pest management system.
Testing for mites helps in preventing the overuse of chemicals and the other importance is to ascertain if your treatment is effective i.e. when you apply a mite-controlling means, you can know how successful you are and change the tactic if it’s not working.

Testing for mites

You can test for the mites using a varroa mite testing container. To do this, first, remove the queen to ensure that the queen isn’t among the bees that you take for sampling since the alcohol wash being used to test for mites leads to the death of the bees used in the testing.
To test for mites, start by preparing a container, take a frame on which the queen is not, and shake the bees into the container.
Cover the container with a towel to calm down the bees and then now collect a sample.
Put the sample in the testing kit and cover it.
Put the remaining bees back into the hive and reassemble the hive.
Add alcohol to the testing kit, swirl and shake the mixture,

and after, lift out the container containing the bees, and if any mite was present then it would be seen in the alcohol in the remaining container.