

How to catch and install a swarm

In apiculture, colonizing a hive is one of the vital things to do and one of the sources of bees is through catching a swarm.

Before undertaking the task of catching a swarm, ensure that you have all the essential equipments needed which include a catch box/ card board box, light coloured bed sheet, bee brush, pruning shears, lemon grass oil, protective gear and a ladder or stool. When the swarm is near the the ground, you can easily catch it but if its higher above the ground, you need to use a stool or ladder to reach the swarm.

Swarm catching

To catch the swarm, lay your sheet on the ground under the swarm and place the catch box on top of the sheet. Move as much of the swarm into the box as you can and incase the queen bee did not make it into the box, you will know in minutes because the workers are attracted to the queen.

If the Queen did not make it into the box, wait until most of the bees cluster again and try again. If the cluster of the bees is on a branch, shake the branch to have the bees fall into the box and if hanging on a small branch or vegetation, use pruning shears to cut the branch into the box but you need to remove the vegetation when placing the bees in the main hive.

If the cluster is on a fence/ wall, you might need to mist the bees with water to prevent them from flying and if its on the ground, smear lemon grass oil in the box and turn the box such that the bees can easily move into the box.

Installing the swarm

After catching most of the bees, close the box but leave a small opening for the returning scout bees to enter. After night fall, close up the box and secure it with sealing tape and transport the swarm as gently as possible.

To install the swarm in the main hive, pour the swarm into the main hive and put the top bars then cover.

Bee keepers can use lemon oil to attract swarms but the trap catch box should ideally be 6 feet from the ground.