

Beezotted hive care

Thank you for purchasing a Beezotted hive of Australian native stingless bees. We hope that your new bee family brings you many years of pleasure.



Siting your new hive

Hives are best sited with the entrance **facing north-east** so that they catch the morning sun until around 10-11am. It is a place where you would be comfortable to park your deck chair all day, all year round. This is vital in summer as you don't want to cook the bees on those very hot days. The 5-star positions in SEQ and NSW are ones that get the shade in summer and full morning sun in winter, perhaps because they are near a deciduous tree.

In **hotter climates** (especially northern Australia) the hive should be in mottled or patchy shade from 10am. Excessive heat will kill a hive. In **cooler areas** the hives can be exposed to more sunshine till later in the day, as they won't venture out until the temperature exceeds 18°. In your garden it may work better to have a summer spot and a winter spot. (See 'Moving a hive' further on.)

Mounting your new hive

Before you mount your boxed hive, record its weight on your calendar so you can gauge that your hive is growing and healthy as the months pass. You might want to weigh it two or three times a year. (If you find your hive has lost weight contact Matthew to discuss your options.)

Beezotted boxed hives can be placed on a veranda or in the garden, on bricks or on a frame (we sell aluminium frames that can easily be placed over a star picket).

If your hive is on wood or bricks, to deter ants ensure that there is an oiled cloth barrier such as an old tea towel wrapped around a makeshift platform (e.g. cut tomatoes stakes) beneath the hive. This cloth will need oiling every few months. If the box is on a platform it also allows for airflow under the hive. If you use a star picket, grease or oil it near the ground. Ensure there is no foliage touching.

Once the hive is mounted, **remove any tape or gauze that is covering the bee entrance AND the air holes underneath**. The tape is only there to prevent the bees escaping during transit.

Leave the metal mesh in place over the entrance and air holes. The mesh keeps hive beetles out and helps protect air holes. For more information about hive beetles visit www.beezotted.com

If the temperature is over 18° you should see some bee movement. If the hive has been in transit for a few days it may take a couple of hours before the bees peek out.

Signs of a healthy hive

- Lots of activity at the entrance with bees coming and going once the day warms up.
- Depending on your area, you will see the bees returning with little side saddle bags of pollen nectar and resin.
- Every few minutes bees emerge from the hive with a little bundle of debris, which is the casing from the hatching babies that cannot be recycled.
- Good weight gain over time.

Warning signs

- Little or no bee activity on a warm day.
- Frenzied ant activity on or around the hive. If the hive's support is kept well-greased or oiled there should be zero ant activity.
- Any other predatory insects taking excessive interest in the hive.
- Hive has lost weight.
- Dripping or foul-smelling seepage. This may be a fatal sign that the hive has been invaded.

Ongoing care

- NEVER SPRAY OR DEPOSIT PESTICIDE OR HERBICIDE NEAR YOUR HIVE. Any chemical use nearby could put it at risk. However, it's okay to be near a swimming pool with chlorinated water.
- Keep hives free of cobwebs and foliage, including long grass.
- Ensure hive is not in direct line of an irrigation system.
- Keep star picket or cloth barrier oiled.
- Replace any tape that has perished (it is added protection against predators).
- There is no need to open your hive, as all Beezotted hives come with viewing windows.
- Every few years, sand and repaint or re-coat hive. This can be done at night after the bees have gone to bed and you have taped the entrance up.
- **It is normal for bees to swarm from time to time.** (See more about this on our website.)

In case of extreme weather

In a **heatwave** it's good practice to place a wet hessian bag and/or a thick foam or cardboard box to provide extra shade over the top of the hive. Protect from direct sunlight, even in the early morning. If it gets **very cold**, cover the hive with a dry hessian bag and a thick box. Some people even place hot water bottles or electric blankets on their hives when there's a cold snap! Other people tape the boxed hive up and bring it indoors at night if **extreme weather** is expected. It is safe to keep hives indoors for 2-3 days with gauze across entrance to ensure air flow and stop them escaping. **Return hive to the same position when ready.**

If there is a bushfire or flood warning, remove hives sooner rather than later.

Moving a hive

The general rule for moving a hive is **less than a metre or more than a kilometre at any one time**. Tape bees up and **move at night only**. The easiest way to move a hive across the garden (more than a metre) is to tape it up and move it after dark to a friend's house more than a kilometre away. Position the hive correctly, let the bees out, leave them there for a few weeks, then tape up again for the return journey. The bees will reset their navigation systems to the new location.

If hive is taped up for moving or renovation, ensure it is kept in a cool, shady place.

Educting a hive

After a while you may decide to duplicate your hive by educting a new box to the mother box or log. Please contact Matthew for more information.

Contact us

For any queries or concerns, call or email and we will get back to you as soon as we can.