

Keeping Bees in Mediums

Your Back *and* Your Bees Will
Thank You!

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Why Keep Your Bees in Medium Supers?

- First, the obvious:
 - A medium super of honey weighs about 60 pounds.
 - A deep super of honey weighs close to 90 pounds.
 - Beekeepers may live longer than any other occupational group, but an awful lot of them have bad backs!
 - And things get really tricky when trying to remove honey supers above your head....



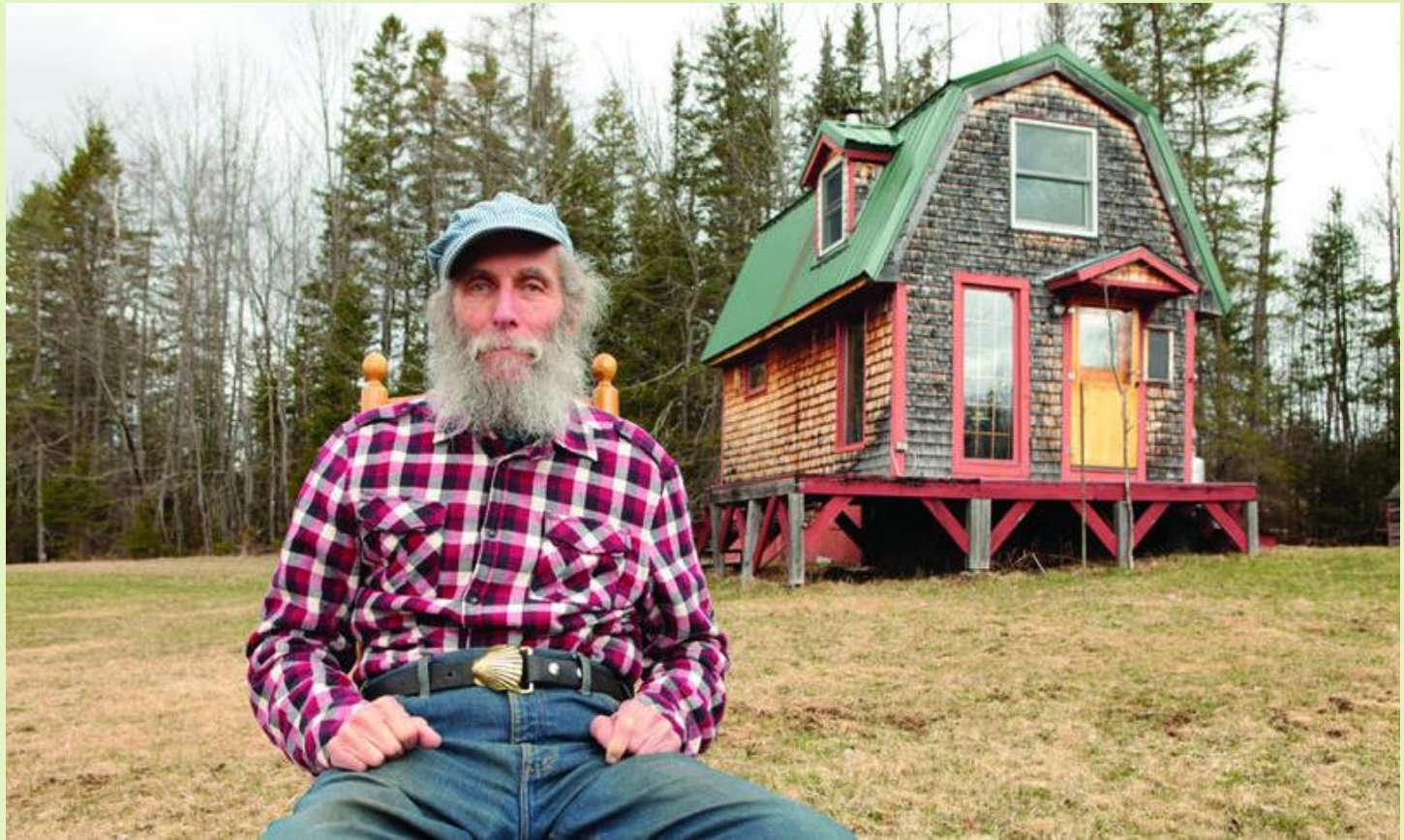
We start out young, strong,
and tall....



But then Time goes by....



Consider using equipment that will still work for you when you are 80 years old.



Next, the not-so-obvious

- Management is much easier with one size equipment.
- It can be deeps, mediums, or shallows, but if all your frames are the same size, you will harvest more honey, and find you have more options available in your management.
- Mediums are probably the most practical choice.

Disadvantages: More equipment to Build

3 Boxes and 30 Frames



2 Boxes and 20 Frames



\$132.75 VS. \$102.90

Disadvantages

- Most of the literature centers around a double deep brood nest. You must “translate” this to a triple medium brood nest, which can be difficult until you get some experience.
- Nucs generally come in deep equipment.

Advantages

- **EVERYTHING** is interchangeable.
 - If you need a frame of honey for a nuc or swarm, it can come from ANYWHERE in the hive, not just from the brood nest.
 - If your queen lays in the honey supers, just switch the frame of brood “upstairs” for an outer frame of honey taken from “downstairs.”
 - If a colony has started building queen cells, you want to add drawn comb in the brood nest and you have no drawn brood comb to give them, you can give them an empty honey super.
 - If you run out of honey supers, in a pinch you can use a brood super.
 - Etc., etc., etc.

More Advantages

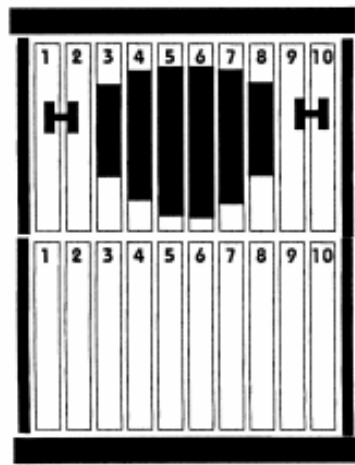
- You really don't need to cross-wire frames if you use wax foundation.
- If you ever use the Demaree technique for swarm control, it is much easier with all mediums.
- You will harvest more honey because you can throw away your queen excluders.
- You will have less swarming because you can throw away your queen excluders.

Honey Frames vs. Brood Frames

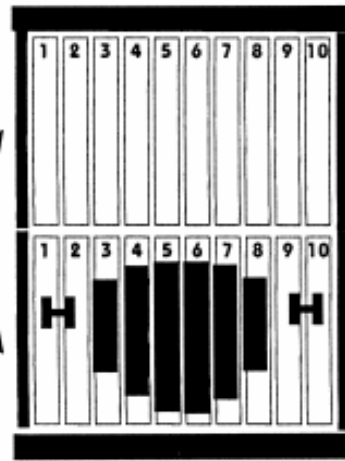
- At the end of the season, we go through stacked equipment and separate honey and brood frames.
- Of about 150 honey supers extracted, perhaps a dozen contain some brood frames.



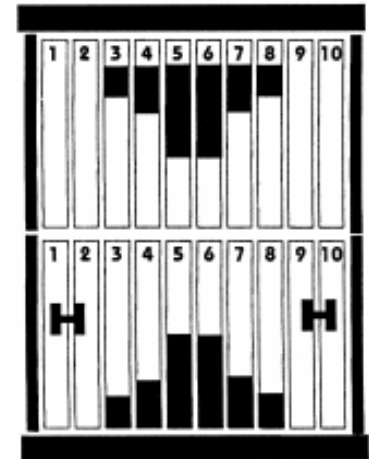
Expanding the Brood Nest By Reversing Supers (2 Deeps)



**Before
reversing**



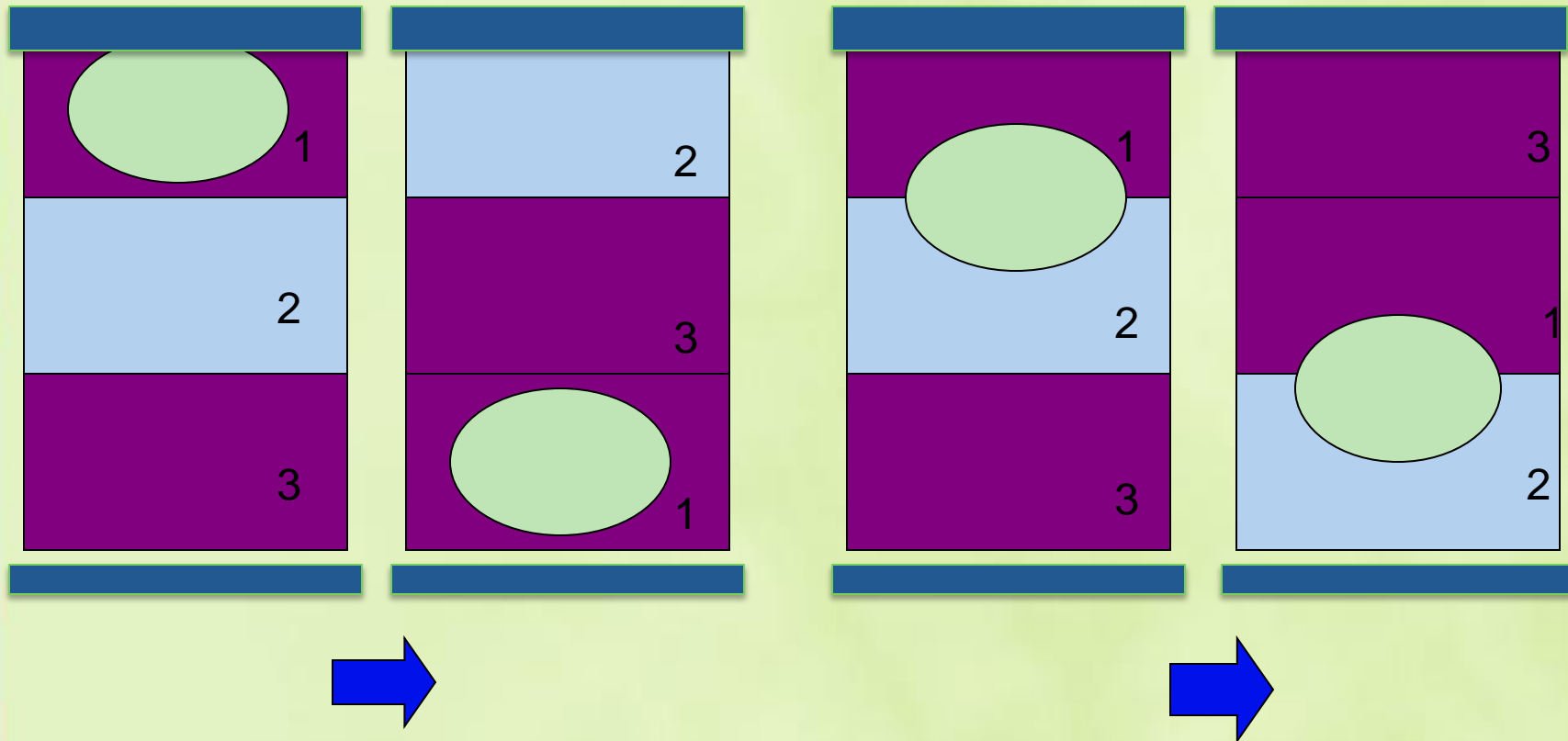
**Correct
reversing**



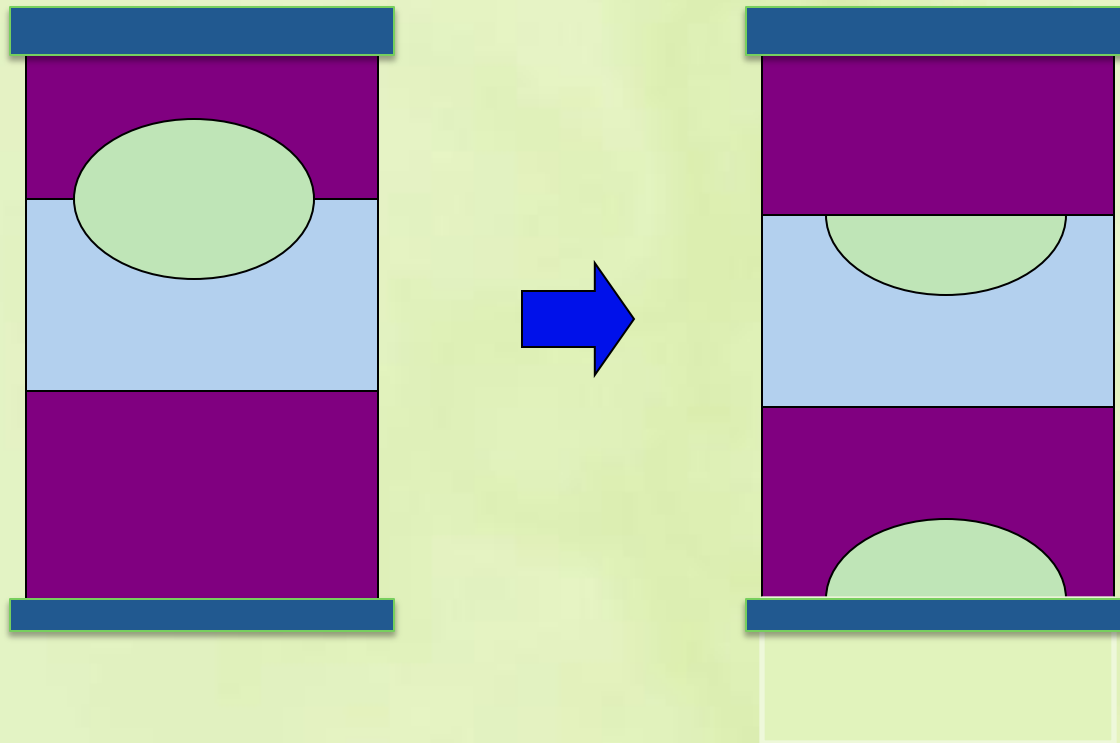
**Incorrect
reversing**

- Bees always work UP
- Space below them is useless; the beekeeper must provide space above the bees.

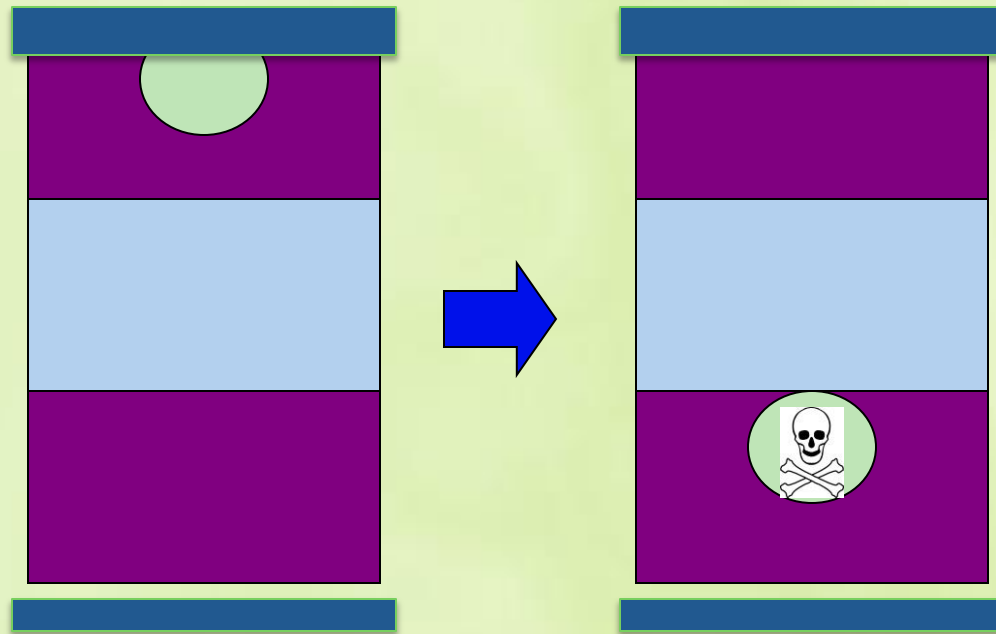
Correct Reversing of Supers in a 3-Medium System



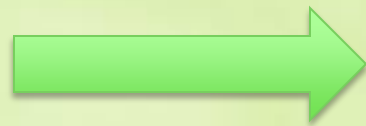
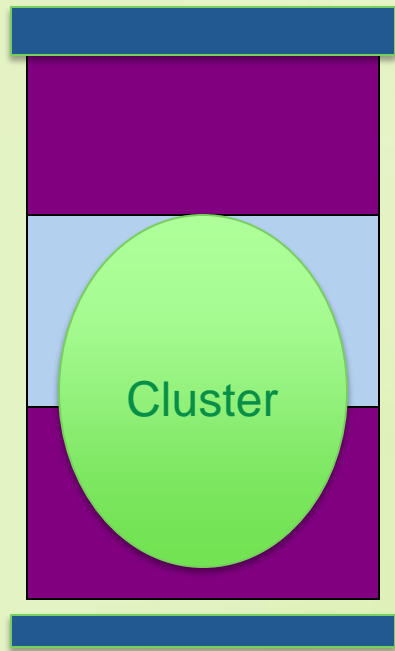
Incorrect Reversing: Splitting the Brood Nest



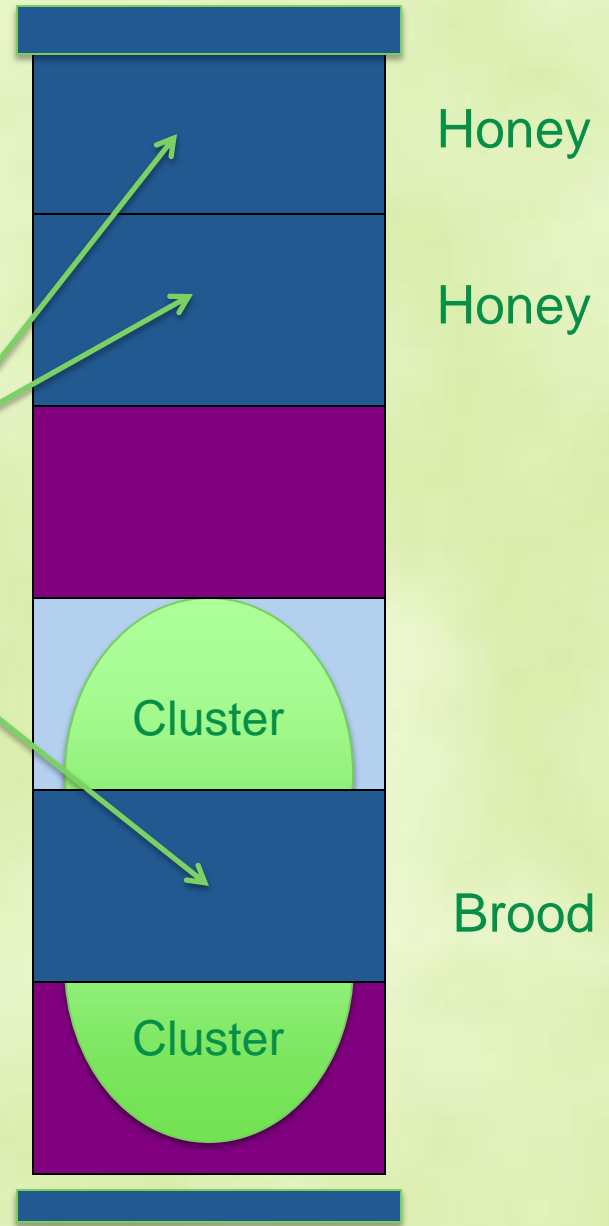
Reversing too Early: Small Cluster or Cold Snap (Why Do Queens Sometimes Chimney in their Laying?)



Swarm Control Later in the Season

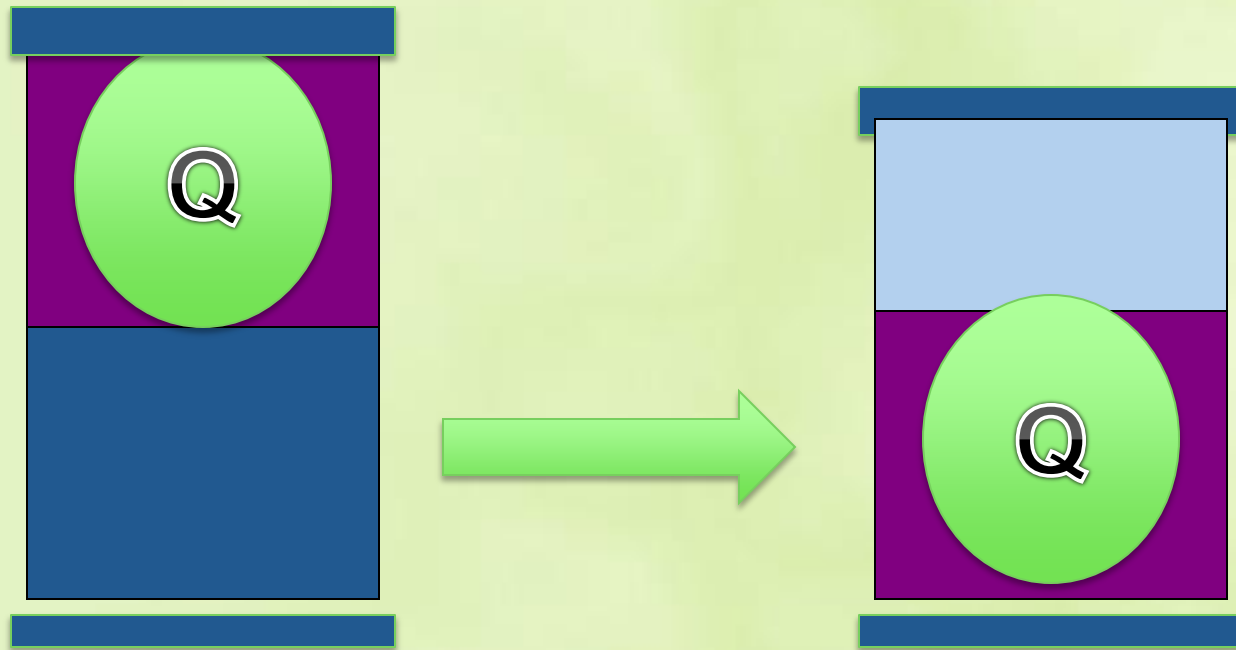


New Supers

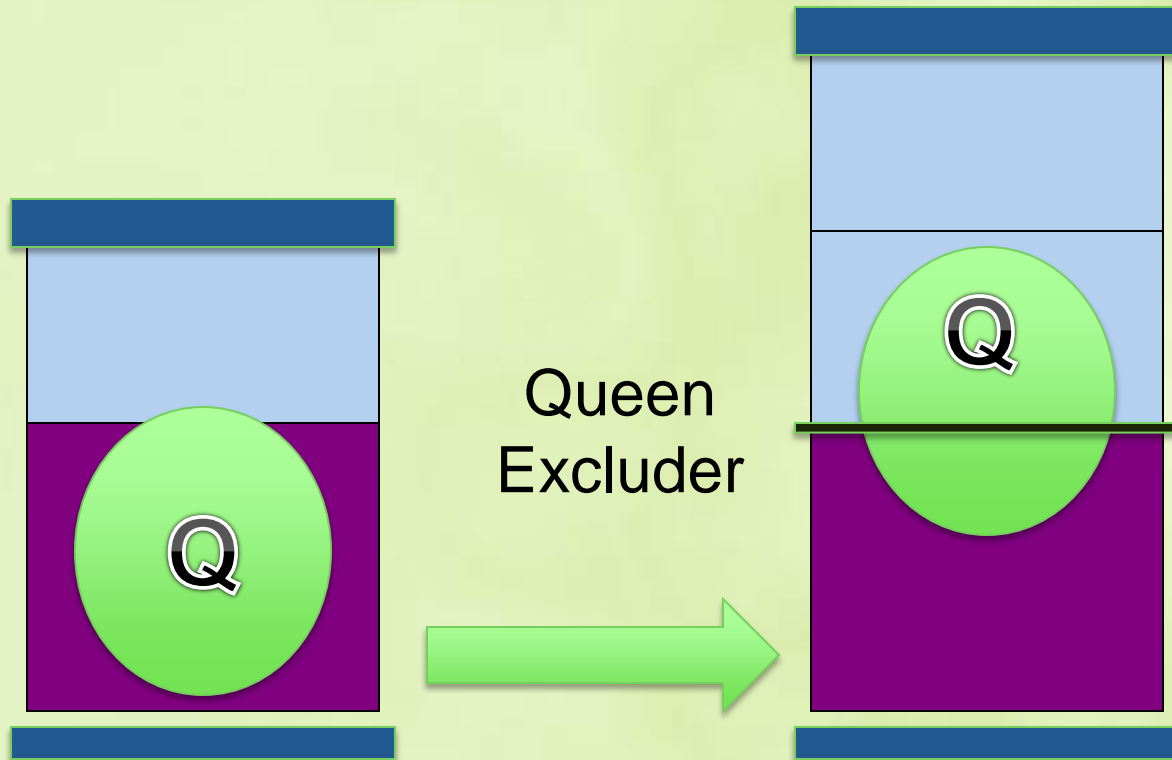


Converting from Deeps to Mediums: Step 1

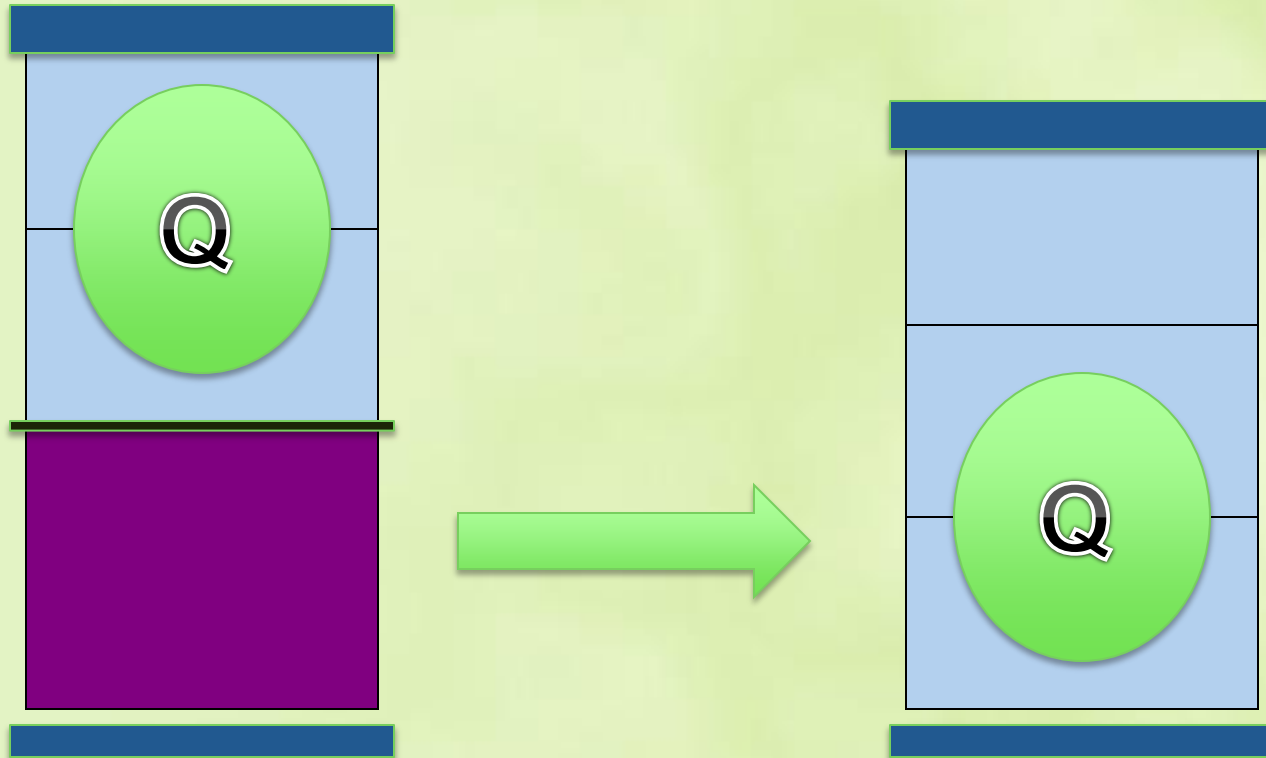
Bees at end of winter



Converting from Deeps to Mediums: Step 2



Converting from Deeps to Mediums: Step 3



What to do with the Deep Boxes and Frames?

- Use deeps to cover feeders
- Or cut your deep to medium size
- Frames can be cut down to medium size using a jigsaw.
- Remove the bottom bar and staple or nail it back after cutting.



Thank you!

