

Signs to Watch for in a Normal Developing Colony

Remember, your goal is a strong colony. Any abnormality could keep your colony from reaching that goal. If ever in doubt, as a new beekeeper, do not hesitate to call on a more experienced beekeeper or your bee inspector for advice. They are friendly people!

1. Recently laid single eggs in cells somewhere in the brood chamber at all times during the laying session (February-December).	This signifies that you have a normal laying queen present in the hive. Happy beekeeping. No eggs mean no queen, or she has not started laying. Check back.
2. Larvae in the coiled stages should be ivory white and shiny.	This indicates that you have healthy larvae.
3. Three fourths (3/4) of the brood frames should be filled with larvae and/or capped brood. Brood in all stages should not be spotty or scattered in the frames.	This indicates a good laying queen which is needed to strengthen the hive. Patchy brood indicates a poor queen. Replace queen.
4. Your brood cappings, which range from light yellow to brown, should not be sunken or perforated.	This indicates normally developing brood under the cappings. Perforated or sunken brood cappings indicates something wrong. Call an experienced beekeeper or inspector.
5. You should find only one (1) egg per cell in the frames. More than one egg per cell indicates something abnormal.	This indicates that you have a laying queen. Any abnormal condition would indicate a laying worker.
6. You should not find your frames full of drone cells which can be recognized by large rounded cappings and larger frame cells. Only a small corner of your frame should have drone cells.	Frames full of drone cells everywhere indicate infertile queen or a laying worker bee laying non-fertile eggs. Replace queen.
7. You should not find peanut size queen cells in the middle of your frames. These are called supersedure cells.	The workers are not happy with the queen and are replacing her. Let them proceed or replace her with a tested queen.
8. You should not find peanut size queen cells along the bottom of your frames. These are called swarm cells.	This indicates that bees are preparing to swarm. Get ready to catch a new colony of bees in 1-16 days. Good luck.
9. You should not find an abnormally large number of dead bees in front of your hive in any one given day.	A very large number of dead adult bees in front of the hive indicates some kind of poisoning. Call your bee inspector.