

Colorado Bee Vac

ASSEMBLY IS EASY:

Just insert the tube into the end of the hose and tighten the hose clamp. Connect the hose by sliding it onto the blast gate and slide the blast gate door all the way open. Make sure the bottom slide is all the way in and locked into position. Set the vacuum top on the catch box so that it is sitting flat and resting on the black foam pad. Plug it in and you are ready to go.

OPERATION:

Make sure that the black plastic blast gate door is all the way open. To start turn the valve a quarter turn or so that the valve is half open. You can adjust vacuum pressure by closing the valve to increase the vacuum suction. Open the valve to decrease vacuum suction. If you don't have vacuum suction after turning the vacuum on either the vacuum top is not sitting flat on the catch box, the valve is completely open, or you have forgotten to open the blast gate door.

It is a good practice to locate/set the vacuum and catch box in the shade. By having the catch box out of the direct sunlight you reduce the chance of the bees overheating and dying. If you are concerned about the temperature being too warm it is a good idea to leave the vacuum on so that it will continue circulating air through the catch box.

If you take a break and turn the vacuum off be sure to remove the vacuum top from the catch box and set it to the side so that air can circulate through the screened top. If it is a hot day I will even give the bees a few squirts of water from a spray bottle thru the screen to give them a drink and help keep them cool.

*Be aware that if you do remove the vacuum from the catch box during a break you could have a considerable number of bees on top of the screen when you want to start up again, especially if you have vacuumed up the queen and she's in the catch box. The bees will have to be swept off the screen before you can replace the vacuum top. DO NOT simply set the vacuum on top of the catch box with the bees still on the screen and turn the vacuum on. You will suck up bees into the peg board and possibly into the vacuum motor, destroying the vacuum motor. Definitely not covered by warranty.

Remember to close the blast gate door before turning the vacuum motor off. If you forget, the bees will immediately begin going back out the blast gate door and into the hose. You can even remove the hose while the vacuum is on and typically the bees will not be able to escape because of the vacuum suction into the catch box. Clean hose of bees with max vacuum suction at the end.

***Don't leave your catch box in the sun or in a hot vehicle or you will cook your bees.

Remember to keep them in the shade and you can give them a few squirts of water spray. If they are going to be in box for a while I have even given them a few squirts of sugar water to calm them down and keep them fed for a while.

Emptying THE CATCH BOX

For either method you should make sure the hive box receiving the bees has been set up for their arrival. Either with waxed frames for the swarm or frames filled with brood and comb for the hive removed from a structure. A full frame feeder helps encourage the bees to stay.

Quick empty method: Is to slap the catch box on your hive body one side at a time. You can check out the demonstration on YouTube video under the heading "Bee Vacuum." You will upset the bees and make them mad so make sure you are suited up.

Gentle/Overnight method:

- 1) Set the catch box on top of your prepared hive body.
- 2) Pull the tray out and set on top to make it dark. You can also set your hive top cover on the catch box to make it dark. The bees will not move down if it is not dark.
- 3) I usually do this in the evening and come back in the morning and remove the catch box early in the morning before the bees become active. I have about a 90% success rate with the bees moving down from the catch box as long as the hive body has been prepared for them to move in.
- 4) Typically it's the swarms that don't move down, the removals move back into their comb filled frames pretty fast.
- 5) I will let the bees go a day or two, three days max, before I will knock them down. I have forgotten to remove the catch box only to come back the next week and found a honeycomb being constructed in the catch box, even with a prepared hive body below.

Swarms—I set the hive box up with waxed frames, frame feeder, and even frames from other hives so that the swarm has something to get started with and will hopefully stay put. Some people even use a queen screen under the hive body box to prevent the queen from leaving. Nothing is more frustrating than to watch the swarm you just went to the effort to catch and put in the hive box take off and fly away. I use a reducer at the front door with the smallest opening to limit the entry of other bees while the swarm is getting established.

Removals—Same process but I have set up the hive body with brood and honey comb basically in the same order and orientation as I found it in the hive that I removed. If the hive is large enough I will set up two deeps with brood and comb. I have found the larger hives will repair damage to the comb faster and begin filling a medium with honey. (I leave my bees with two deeps over the winter and have reduced the starvation factor and had better luck with winter survival rates at 6200' elevation) Reduce the entry opening for a couple of weeks while they get established. It is especially important with removals because there is going to be honey dripping from the frames that you have installed in the hive box. Frame feeder helps them recover faster.

Bee aware even with the "gentle" method of setting the box on top of the hive body I have had bees race down through two hive bodies of full frames out the reduced entry and nail me. I figure the bees have been watching me through the screen the whole time just waiting for the opportunity to zap me. If I want to linger and watch I have a jacket/vail on. Otherwise I pull the bottom, set it on top, and quickly put some distance between the hive and me. I will typically remove the catch box the following morning, early when it is still cool, before the bees are active.

CARE OF THE VACUUM AND CATCH BOX:

- 1) **KEEP IT OUT OF THE RAIN.** The vacuum is not waterproof or water resistant. Do not expose to rain, sprinklers, or try to hose it off. Water will destroy the vacuum. You can clean honey off the vacuum top off with a damp warm dishrag.
- 2) **Hose:** I run water through the vacuum hose with a garden hose with a pressure nozzle on the end. After rinsing clean I hang the hose up to dry or blow it dry with a leaf blower.
- 3) **Blast Gate:** (Black plastic sliding door) If it becomes stuck/sticky with honey/bees remove the four screws and pull the blast gate out. Rinse clean in warm/hot water (Not boiling). Reinstall using the four screws. I have gone the entire season without having to clean the blast gate. The important thing to remember is to close the gate before turning the vacuum off.
- 4) **Catch Box:** I have not cleaned the catch boxes I use. The accumulated residue of the bees that I catch gives the future bees I catch something to chew on while they wait to be released. You may have a different opinion and want to wipe the catch box clean before using it again. I have been warned about using any strong detergents, soaps, or disinfectants to clean with because it may be harmful to the bees. So I pass along that same warning to you.

Any questions, please contact us via our website at ColoradoBeeRescue.com