

Methods of marking and clipping queens

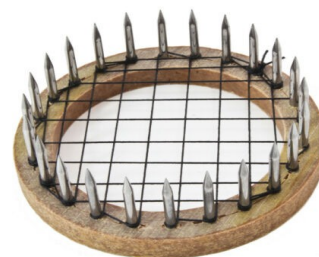
Reasons for:

- Making the queen easier to spot, this may improve your inspections in terms of speed and confidence.
- Using the colour that matches the year helps to know the age of the queen.
- Clipping reduces the chances of a successful swarm, she will leave but will be unable to fly away. This may give the bee keeper a chance of finding her and returning her to the brood box.
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Methods of marking and clipping queens

Use a queen marking cage which presses into the comb to confine the queen. Hold the cage over the queen and move her away from brood before pressing it into an area of stores or empty cells.

With your marker ready in your right hand gently press the cage down just enough to hold the queen still, mark her thorax and lift the cage off straight away. Again, practising on some drones can help you acquire the knack of holding a bee still.



Crown of thorns or a Baldock cage.

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Alternatively, you can buy tube and plunger queen marking cages where you can gently push the queen into the tube and then up against the mesh at the top where you can mark her thorax through the mesh.



There is also a bee clip

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- Pick your queen from the comb by the wings using your right hand. (You can't do this wearing gloves.)
- Transfer her to your left hand and hold her thorax between your finger and thumb. Never hold her by her abdomen.
- Mark her on the thorax and then release her back onto the comb.
- Practise on some drones to gain confidence in handling bees before attempting to mark a queen.

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• Colour	• Year
• White	• 1 and 6
• Yellow	• 2 and 7
• Red	• 3 and 8
• Green	• 4 and 9
• Blue	• 5 and 0

Will You Raise Good Bees

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Free up your right hand, by putting the frame against your body and holding it there with your left hand.



Keep your eyes fixed on her and use your index finger to guide her toward the centre of the frame and facing your left arm.

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Using the thumb and index finger of the right hand, hold her very lightly across the thorax, to the comb.



As your thumb and finger came together you will find that you are holding the wings. Gently lift her up by the wings.

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Free up your right hand, by putting the frame against your body and holding it there with your left hand.



With the left hand now free, offer the queen the tip of your left index finger, to cling onto. She will curl her body, as if she intends to sting you but don't worry, she won't.

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Use your left thumb to hold the three legs on her left side, so she is held in place. You need a minimum of two legs to avoid her doing pirouettes and being damaged.



Take the top off your marking pen and do a test dab on the back of your hand, before then marking her on the centre of her thorax

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Put the pen down and pick up your snips. Carefully snip off the end third of one of her wings, making sure she has not managed to get one of her legs in the way.



Once marked and clipped, offer her the top bars of the brood body and release her legs.