

Taking a Sample of Bees for the Purpose of Disease Detection

It is important to remember that a sample of bees with suspected adult bee diseases needs to be taken, so it is more likely older bees, rather than young ones, will be infected.

How do you take a sample of older bees?

Young bees are not keen on the light and will gather towards the centre of the brood nest. Older bees occupy the outer frames, along with the returning foragers; therefore the first frames from the outer walls will be the best place to take a sample.

1. Use a matchbox.
2. Open the matchbox and hold it against the frame.
3. Gently run it across the frame and close it before removing the matchbox.
4. Place the matchbox in a freezer to kill off the bees. Do not leave them in there too long, dissecting squashy bees is difficult and not much fun.
5. A matchbox will hold about 30 bees, which can then be used to diagnose Acarine and/or Nosema.

Beware – do not do this anywhere near the queen, in case of mistakes!