

1. Many different designs can work well in different circumstances.
2. Feeding syrup made from regular store granulated white sugar is fine (but it must be cane sugar). If you are using a lot of sugar it can be purchased less expensively at a restaurant supply store like Ace Endico in 25 or 50 lb. bags.
3. In spring feed one part sugar to one part water by weight i.e., 5lbs. sugar mixed in 5 lbs. water. Bring water to boil on stove. Take off heat so temp dips below 212 degrees. Stir in sugar slowly until it completely dissolves. If water is still at boiling and any of the sugar caramelizes, it can make the bees sick. In summer or fall feed two parts sugar to one part water by weight i.e., a much heavier mix.
4. Entrance feeders are best in early spring. In summer and fall they encourage robbing. Don't use. An inverted gallon jar with perforated lid and enclosed in an empty deep super is effective.
5. Top hive feeders are effective and hold more syrup. Make them bee tight. If it doesn't fit tightly on your upper deep super, duct tape it. You probably won't use your inner cover, so remove it and place three or four full sheets of newspaper right on the feeder and then put down your outer cover. The bees won't be able to get in there to rob or drown. Guard against drowning with floats, screens, pine needles or wood chips. Bees will safely climb on the pine needles, feed and go back to comb.
6. In frame feeders are good in any weather and work great with nucs or full size hive. Make sure you have a float to prevent drowning.

7. Don't rejoice yet if you see the bees flying in early spring. Many hives die in March because their stores are depleted. They should go into winter with 8-10 deep frames packed with honey or up to 70 lbs. Likely there will be some left over in the Spring. If they are light, however, in early October, feed them until they won't take anymore. Check upper deep by lifting its edge during February thaw, when it's close to 50 degrees or at first opportunity. Good idea to sprinkle granulated sugar on top of the frames or feed them a fondant patty right on top of the cluster.
  
8. If they are not taking the syrup, they have found something better or are full up. If in early spring wait a bit, before removing. The bees may be foraging on early maples. But the next day might be too blustery to get out and they'll take down the syrup from inside. If it looks mildewy, get rid of it. Don't dispose of the unused syrup within 100' of hive. Pour into a depression or hole and then cover with leaves. Leaving sugar water, a broken comb with honey, or even a candy wrapper can possibly drive the bees into a robbing frenzy, especially in summer or fall. If that happens, close down the entrance to one bee width and wait it out.
  
9. You might check your hive in June and find it full of honey. But during a late July inspection it looks almost empty of honey. A heat wave or drought may have caused a nectar dearth and they had to use their stores to feed the young brood. Feed them 2:1 and monitor. Careful about robbing! This is the worst time for it.

**Hudson Valley Natural Beekeepers note:**

*Each beekeeper has his or her set of techniques and best practices and still tries new ones from time to time. Please consider this as you implement this or anyone's methods in your apiary.*