

1. When you pick up your package, put it on back seat of car, not in trunk nor in the open cargo area of your pickup. You want a cool sheltered area with no draft. When you get home, spray them lightly with room temperature water or even with some sugar syrup you will feed them that day. Upon reaching home, put them in sheltered shady place. Your garage or basement?
2. If possible hive them in late afternoon. 4:00 pm? If you intend to use an in frame feeder, fill it and place in the hive ahead of the bees.
3. You need dexterity. Gloves are a problem during hiving. The bees will be very docile while "swarming." People are rarely stung during hiving.
4. Your package will probably come with a thin plywood sheet covering the syrup can and the queen cage. Pry that off with your hive tool and remove the queen cage. Replace the plywood cover to prevent bees from exiting where the queen cage was. Don't worry if some bees get out.
5. Don't remove cork or candy plug in queen cage yet. Reach in and remove a frame or two so you can reach in and place the cage on the bottom board screen up. After putting queen in hive, replace frames, close it up and let her scent or pheromone permeate the frames for 15 minutes before adding the bees. The bees in the package will now sense the lack of a queen.
6. Take the package in both hands and strike it not hard, but firmly on the ground. The clustered bees will drop to the bottom of the cage. Then still holding the package, raise it suddenly upward, so the syrup can lifts up high enough to grasp with your fingertips. Pull it all the way out and toss it behind you so it is well out of the way.
7. You now have a wide opening in the top of your package. Pour the bees over the frames, shaking the package gently to dislodge them. They will pile up a little and then, as they smell the wax and the queen, they will begin to descend into the hive. You may have some stragglers in the package. Place the now nearly empty package on a tilt with the open hole as close to the hive entrance as possible. The stragglers will find their way into the hive. There may be a lot of flying bees for a few minutes. Put the inner cover on and for ten minutes or so leave it open two inches for them to find their way in. It's a good time for observation. You will observe bees inside fanning their wings outward to send the pheromones out to the flying bees. They are communicating, "We are here!"
8. You can add your feeder now. If you had an in-frame feeder, it will already be in place.
9. You now have a hive of 12,000 bees with a queen inside, but still caged. Leave your hive alone for two days. The bees will feed her through the screen.

10. After two days remove two frames and bring out the queen cage. Remove the cork or tape that covered the candy plug. With a small thin nail poke the plug to see if it is hard. Most often it is soft like a marshmallow, so you take no further action. Put the queen cage back inside where it was. If it is hard, poke the nail through the plug so you can see the tip enter the queen cage. Do this very gently so as not to injure the queen. The bees will eat at the plug from both ends to free the queen.
11. Return after three days to check the queen cage. It should be empty. Remove it. On rare occasions, the plug was so hardened that the bees couldn't eat through it. With the nail you may gently remove the plug entirely, so the queen is free. You can put the cage on the top bars and she will come out along with her nurse bees. Remove the cage and close up the hive. Leave it for a week.
12. It's hard to wait while all this is happening, but the bees and the queen came from different hives and do not know each other. If she is freed before they are accustomed to her pheromones, the bees will kill her. We want to intervene as little as possible in this introductory period. After she is freed, checking hive once per week is fine. More than that disturbs the bees and only should be done to accomplish something important that cannot wait. Refilling the feeder will not disturb them.

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.