



## Second Hand Equipment.

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**Most beekeepers buy second-hand equipment at some point. Although this is a great way to make savings, care should be taken to ensure that they do not harbour unseen diseases that will later infect your colony. Below are a few measures that can help reduce the risk of such events happening.**

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### **What should I check?**

Before buying any equipment, make sure that hive parts are the correct size. The dimensions can be obtained from hive plans or some bee-keeping textbooks. Most brood and super boxes are made with a bottom bee space; therefore don't be caught out with equipment that has top bee spaces, unless this is what you want. If you place a super with a bottom bee space with a brood box with a top bee space, the clearance will be too great and brace comb will be a problem. With equipment where parts are too small then parts will be propolised, i.e. gummed up. Similarly, it is worth checking the size or fit of anything else you are considering. Make sure that it is what you want!

### **Should I buy comb?**

Second hand comb should never be used because it may harbour disease that cannot be seen. If you acquire any then do not use it; either burn it, render it down for exchange at a local bee supplier or make candles or other products.

**Foundation that is professionally manufactured presents no risk to the spread of disease.**

### **What do I check when buying live bees?**

If buying bees make sure that they are healthy. If you are not sure about the signs of disease get someone who is competent to look at them with you. Often at 'Bee Fairs' or 'bee auctions' an authorised Bee Inspector will have checked the bees beforehand. The auctioneer will usually say that this has happened. This check only means that there are no visible signs of foulbrood disease at the time of examination.

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It is done to safeguard against the spread of disease. However, don't forget to check the hive or box that the bees are in when considering a fair value. Look at how many frames the brood cover, not just the amount of bees that are inside the box. Often, bees sold in hives represent better value than buying hive boxes alone.

### **What should I do having acquired second-hand hives?**

When you have obtained any second hand equipment, disinfect them before use. Please see our Hive Cleaning and sterilisation leaflet for more information on how to clean hive equipment, smokers and other beekeeping equipment.

### **What should I do when buying second hand Beekeeping overalls?**

These should be washed in the normal way. A small quantity of washing soda crystals mixed with the detergent helps to remove propolis. Beware when washing veils. It is best to wash them by hand. Putting them in a washing machine may cause damage.

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