

The Bees Are IN!

Contributed by Gordon Cunningham
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The honey bees are in! We went down to Bowdoinham this morning and picked up a 3 lb package, and the suppliers also had many hives set up to have their bee school pupils put a package into a hive. We watched them put a package in and then we came home. It's a cool day, about 45 degrees up here, and the bees were pretty subdued. The sun was out down south (overcast here), and that warmed them up a bit. As the car warmed up, however, they started getting more active and you could hear the buzzing building!

I made up the sugar water necessary to feed them till the flowers open and nectar is flowing, set the hive up in the spot we chose, and got my tools and things together. The hardest part was keeping the smoker lit! I used newspaper and leaves, but I guess I need to experiment with other fuels.

Joyce set up the video camera and taped the whole thing, about 20 minutes start to end, and she also took a bunch of stills which you'll see in the gallery soon. I'll try to get her to edit up a video file to put up here, too.

The other difficult part was getting the bees to go down into the hive. The smoke is supposed to drive them down, but they didn't move very quickly. At the demo, they went down right away. Not sure why they hung out up top, but I did finally put the inner cover on gently and they moved.

So now we wait and check in a few days to see if the queen made it out of her cage ok and things are moving along in the colony setting up housekeeping in the hive. I'm sure we'll be reporting our progress and findings every couple weeks or so, so stayed tuned!

PS. Joyce says I look like a natural beekeeper in this pic.