ROSE
One-Size-Box Hives

(patents pending)

Tim Rowe
Ballylickey,
Bantry,
Co.Cork
Ireland
tim@rosebeehives.com
At first glance these hives don’t seem very different from ordinary hives – they’re just a small development in the long history of hive-design.

But in fact, this small development is a significant one, and I find that these hives really work for me and my bees.
... I hope they will help more people keep bees successfully – something we and the rest of the natural world needs urgently..
In a Rose O.S.B. hive there are no dedicated brood-boxes or supers – each box can be either, as needed.

Every box is identical and measures 460mm x 460mm (the same as a National and a Commercial) but only 190mm* deep.

*18\(\frac{1}{8}\) x 18\(\frac{1}{8}\) x 7\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches
each contains 12 frames..
The most obvious and immediate advantages, and the reasons I first developed this hive, are:

1. All the hive components – boxes, frames and foundation – are identical.
2. Every frame is fully interchangeable throughout the whole hive.
This would be enough on its own, but I soon found that with this hive all the usual beekeeping jobs are made significantly easier too.

My entire hive-management has altered, making my beekeeping cheaper, easier, healthier and more productive – *simply because every frame in every box is fully interchangeable.*
I run 100 hives in small apiaries in West Cork..
I used to struggle along with Nationals and Commercials, usually on a brood-and-a-half system, because, like all the other standard hives, their brood-boxes are too small..
- National
- Commercial
- Smith
- WBC
- Langstroth
- Etc., etc..
This meant two different sizes of frames within a brood chamber – very frustrating!
So three years ago I started replacing the brood-and-a-half with two equal-sized boxes.
.. this meant the same number of frames but they were now all the same size...
.. and carried on up, using them as honey supers...
(They are heavier than standard supers when full of honey (approx 10% more than a Commercial super), and for some this could be a disadvantage.

For me the overall gains easily out-weigh this.)
Suddenly lots of beekeeping jobs became significantly easier.

Here are some examples of management techniques that are made simple with this hive:
1. SPRING BUILD-UP
Having over-wintered in two boxes the brood soon expands..
BROOD
.. but instead of putting a super on top, I put an O.S.B. in the second position..
.. thereby spreading the brood vertically..
.. expanded brood nest
I repeat this as necessary until the first week in June.
.. This encourages good big colonies which is what I need for blackberry and clover in July..
2. REPLACING OLD BROOD COMB
Old brood-comb should be replaced every two or three years to keep hives and colonies healthy.
Early on in the year I simply swap round the bottom two boxes of the hive..
OLD BROOD
COMB
OLD BROOD COMB
... and my normal expansion technique sees that box working it’s way to the top of the hive where all the brood hatches and is replaced by honey..
OLD BROOD
COMB
OLD BROOD COMB
OLD BROOD COMB
OLD BROOD COMB
OLD BROOD
COMB
OLD BROOD
COMB
OLD BROOD COMB
OLD BROOD
COMB
OLD BROOD
COMB
At the end of the season that box is removed for extraction and the old comb is melted down – *with no waste at all*..
OLD BROOD COMB
OLD BROOD COMB
3. INCREASING STOCKS
This couldn’t be simpler – because the boxes are all identical, just divide the hive up, add a crown-board, floor and roof. A week later replace queen-cells with a queen in the queen-less half.. and you’ve doubled your stocks..
new boxes
Making up lots of nucs from a big colony is easy too, because you can take brood and honey frames from anywhere in the hive.
4. COLLECTING HONEY
I have almost stopped using excluders since I changed hives.

Excluders obviously can be useful, but they are the most unnatural thing in a hive. They force the workers to squeeze through sharp little holes and they tend to restrict the queen – and that’s the last thing I want to do.

With all the frames identical, it doesn’t matter where the queen lays. When I’m collecting honey frames I just fill a box from wherever they are in the hive (usually at the top, of course), and leave behind any with brood in them.

Overall, my hives are more productive, despite two miserable summers.
This delicate, fragrant honey comes from West-Cork’s wild summer flowers. Gathered whilst the bees perform their vital pollination work, this, surely, is one of Nature’s greatest gifts – glorious and life-enhancing.

Our bees have never been fed sugar.
5. SWARM CONTROL
With this hive, one of the primary causes of swarming – restricted laying space - can be avoided because you don’t need to use an excluder..

But colonies swarm for other reasons too, and the ‘artificial swarm’ method of swarm-control is particularly suited to this hive. - The queen is restricted to an empty box at the bottom of the hive and the brood is moved to the top where a new queen is raised. All much easier when the frames are identical..
5. MATING QUEENS
Because Rose boxes contain 12 frames comfortably, it’s easy to make queen-mating hives with them – either dividing them into 4 (with 3 frames each) or 3 (with 4 frames each).

At the end of the season I take the dividers out and put a new Rose box on the top.

(I raise all the queens I need every year.)
Other points worth noting:

- Because these hives are the same size in 2 dimensions as Nationals and Commercials, floors, crown-boards, excluders and roofs are all interchangeable.

- This also means that it is possible to gradually replace older hives with the Rose, over a couple of years, without waste or disruption. Just add Rose boxes as the older boxes wear out and eventually the hive becomes a Rose O.S.B. hive.

- The only difference in the Rose frame from a National frame is the length of the side-bars – I just cut down deep side-bars.
• I am a commercial beekeeper (albeit a small one) – and I make and use these hives because they work and make economic sense. I could not afford to do so otherwise. They suit me and my bees very well and I would never revert to standard Two-Size-Box hives.
• I teach beekeeping, I write and give talks on bees and biodiversity, and constantly encourage beekeeping. I never feed my bees sugar, the only chemical I use is Oxalic Acid. I stand over this design and the management techniques.

But they might not suit everyone! Let me know how you get on?

tim@rosebeehives.com
ROSE O.S.B. HIVE

• SIMPLER
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• SIMPLER
• CHEAPER
ROSE O.S.B. HIVE

• SIMPLER
• CHEAPER
• HEALTHIER
ROSE O.S.B. HIVE

• SIMPLER
• CHEAPER
• HEALTHIER
• EASIER
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Thanks for watching
and good beekeeping!

Tim Rowe
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