

## 2026 Bee Blog 2

Hello,

Isn't it nice to see spring again. Everything coming back to life, longer warmer days. I regularly drive the same 200 miles and at this time of year it's amazing to see how fast the scenery changes. I think watching the changing view out of the car window is better than a lot of the stuff on TV. I find it good to take the time to notice the little changes in nature.

In my last Blog I ended up waiting for the weather to get warm enough to move our bees into a wooden hive again. They had overwintered in a poly nuc box. When I started keeping bees I had decided to standardise all my equipment and I have only bought National style equipment. So the frames will swap from the nuc to the wooden hive without a problem. I was concerned about the lack of space and the weather had not been warm enough to move the bees to my wooden hive, so I added a second brood box in the nuc box with 6 new frames to give them more space to move up without having to disturb the hive too much. This winter is the first time I have used a poly box. The one I have is from Abelo. I found it very good and the extra insulation is good over winter in my exposed location.



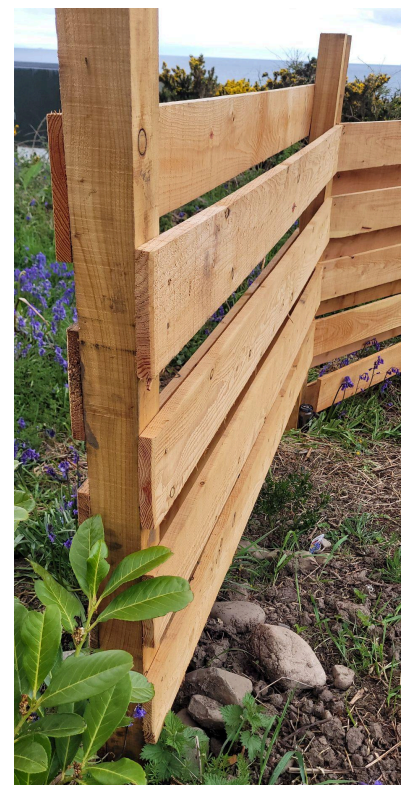
The drawbacks I can see are it is harder to clean without damaging the box and the boxes fit together with a relatively wide stepped mating face. This means it is not possible to land a box at a slight angle and slide it closed as I do with the wooden box. The result in the wider jointing faces coming together in line is that more bees end up in the gap and squashed. Only having one hive, and the time to work slowly, I try to have the minimum casualties. I am sure if I had many hives to look after I would be less concerned.

As the weather improved I swapped the frames into my wooden hive. This gave me the first good look through the hive. It looks like it is progressing well so far. We have space, food, brood, grubs, eggs and the queen was seen.

As I have said before we have a very exposed site. There is some protection from some bushes to one side and a hill to the North, however to the South East the site is quite open. I decided to build a fence to give some protection in this direction. I have read that for wind protection it is better to make the fence with gaps between the rails then add more rails on the other side of the post to coincide with the gaps. The theory is, if you have a solid fence the wind hits it, goes up and over then down again. Whereas with the air gaps through the fence the wind is slowed down as it goes through the gaps and creates a bigger "still" area behind the fence.

I designed the height of the fence to still allow the morning sun to warm the hive but hopefully be high enough to protect the hive from the worst of the wind and horizontal rain.

As we were building it there was a cool fresh breeze coming from the SSW. It was nice to feel the difference in the chill factor behind the



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fence once it was finished. We were working only about 4 feet in front of the hive. I originally thought we would need to wear our bee suits, however we found the bees seemed happy to carry on with their work and not be aggressive towards us. I enjoy being able to spend time watching them coming and going without feeling we are upsetting them.

Thinking forward, the next most likely potential issue is swarming. We are aiming for frequent inspections, weather permitting. I have the poly nuc available if we feel the need to do a split, although the colony is still relatively small so I would prefer not to split unless I have to. Thinking of other local bees swarming we have a bait hive set up with a frame of wax and a few frames with starter strips of wax hanging from the top of the frame. It is important to have sufficient free space in the bait hive so the scout bees can fly around inside and measure it. Last year we had the bees we have now arrive in the bait hive. The free form comb they produced from the starter strip was beautiful.



I hope the weather continues to get warmer and maybe some overnight rain so the plants keep producing pollen and nectar for a bumper honey crop later in the year.