

Honey Bee Candy Board Recipe

Put 16 ounces of water (2 cups) into a large pot (preferably stainless steel) and place over medium to medium high heat. Add 5 pounds of sugar (you will need to mix it in with a spoon). It will be very thick and quite cloudy until it comes to boil and as it approaches the proper temperature (248 degrees), you will notice it changes from cloudy/opaque to clear.

You need to continue to stir the mixture as it heats and comes to the proper temperature (candy makers call it the “soft ball” stage just before it hits the “hard ball” stage at 250 degrees). Do not be concerned or panic if the temperature hits 250 degrees, the candy board will still turn out fine.

Once the mixture is at 248 to 250 degrees, then remove pan from heat and let it cool for a minute or so.

As the mixture cools it will change from clear to cloudy. You can continue to stir it for a bit so you can get an idea of how quick it is thickening (hardening up). Do not let it get too hard or it will not pour out and run evenly across the surface of the candy board (it still has to be liquid enough to still level out on the board). Let the candy board thoroughly cool and harden before you place it on a hive.

Note:

I put ½ of a pollen patty on the board before I pour the candy mixture. I remove the wax paper from both sides of the pollen patty for two reasons.

First the bottom side of the patty will stick to the board better and secondly, the bees have enough on their hands trying to stay alive without having to tug/pull and shred the wax paper off the patty before they can get to it. The pollen patty is not required, but many beekeepers who make their own candy boards put anywhere from a 3rd to ½ of a pollen patty on the board. It may give the colony an edge on the resumption of brood production in the late stages of winter.

The above recipe is for re-using existing candy boards. If you do not have one, you will need to make one first. It is essentially a piece of 3/8th inch plywood cut to the same dimension of a hive body with 1 inch by 2 inch boards cut to length and affixed (I use screws) to create “sides” to contain the candy mixture once it is poured on the board.

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The below are two pictures (one of each side) of a previously used candy board.

Bottom side of a candy board



If you zoom in on this side you will see some popsicle sticks glued to one end of the board. This is to provide some venting of the hot moist air from the colony.

Top side of a candy board



Be sure to use a short screw or nail which will secure the 1 by 2 to the plywood, but not go all the way through to the other side. 5/8ths inch screws have worked fine for me. Also, you only need enough screws to make sure pieces of the 1 by 2 boards are firmly affixed. I noticed a little overkill on the candy board depicted in the above picture. It must have been one of the first I made or the lumber was really warped. Normally you do not need 4 screws for each long side of the board.

One last note: The candy board REPLACES your inner cover. So when you put on the candy board, remove and leave off the inner cover and just put your outer cover over the candy board.