

The Powdered Sugar Method For Varroa Mite Detection and Control

The Powdered Sugar Method uses powdered sugar as a means of Varroa mite control by taking advantage of the bees' natural grooming behavior. It is one of various tools to **manage the varroa mite population** in the hive. It is not population measuring technique. To measure the population of mites inside your hive, you would use a "natural mite drop". At this time there is no scientific data to support the efficacy of this method. Anecdotal reports show mixed results. Contact Morris Ostrofsky to learn about his success using this method.

When to use the Powdered Sugar treatment:

This treatment can be used spring, summer and fall. You want to treat during the time of day when most of the bees are in the hive; i.e. early or preferably late in the day.

When NOT to use the Powdered Sugar treatment:

Do not treat or disturb the bees during the **winter** (you do not want the bees to leave their cluster). Rule of thumb: do not treat if it is too cold for the bees to fly (less than 50 degrees F)

What you will need:

- Flour sifter.
- Bee brush
- Measuring cup
- Collection board (sticky board)
- ½ to 1 cup of powdered sugar per brood box

A screened bottom board below your hives (allows mites to fall to the ground and unable to re-enter the hive) is NECESSARY for this method to be successful.

Directions:

1. Place the collection board under the screened bottom board before you apply the powdered sugar. **Do not leave the collection board in place permanently.** Remove it once you have finished the powdered sugar treatment.
2. If the hives have two brood boxes, break the hive down to the lower box, sift ½ to 1 cup of powdered sugar over the brood frames in the lower box.
3. Brush sugar off top bars to allow the sugar to fall down to the bees.
4. Replace the top brood box and distribute ½ to 1 cup powdered sugar in the same way.
5. Wait between 15 minutes to 1 hour, remove the collection board and look for mites. **Many mites on the collection board mean a high mite level.**

6. Repeat this treatment two times per week for 4 weeks; then once per month after that until the bees are no longer flying.

For more information about this method go to

www.scientificbeekeeping.com and select "Varroa Management" from the menu on the right column. Once there, click on

[Fighting Varroa: Biotechnical Tactics II - Feedback - Updated 6/10/07](#)

Drone brood trapping and powdered sugar dusting: a biotechnical one-two punch against varroa?

QUESTIONS: Contact Morris Ostrofsky (541-685-2875 Ostrofsky@pacinfo.com) or other club members who use Powdered Sugar treatment for questions and guidance.