

NORTH LONDON BEEKEEPERS

<http://www.beekeeping.org.uk/>

Information Sheet No.7

Open Mesh Floors

(This is an appendix to Information sheet No.6 on Integrated Varroa Management.)

Open Mesh Floors

These were originally developed to provide good ventilation throughout the year and were found to suit the UK honey bees, based on the fact that damp air is heavy and therefore drops down through the mesh.

It has also been established that it is one of the effective varroa control methods. Mites often lose their grip on the bees or comb and drop down to the floor. On a traditional solid floor, they are able to crawl back up. However, with an open mesh floor they fall through to the ground beneath and cannot find their way back.

20% of the mites can be lost in this way. As a safeguard, make sure your hive is on stands & at least 8" (20cm) above the ground and do not have the tray inserted, unless you are checking for mite drop (2 weeks maximum at any one time).

Cost

Current cost (2006) of an open mesh floor for a National hive is £25.50 each, which includes a tray. Mesh can be purchased separately if you want to make your own floors. Mesh comes in galvanised or epoxy coated steel. Care must be exercised when sterilizing with a blow lamp as the heat can damage the finish on the steel. Also acetic acid will corrode the galvanised steel. A good scrub with hot water and washing soda will usually be adequate.

Benefits

Open mesh floors remove some live varroa.
No debris on the floor to encourage wax moths.
Improves ventilation.
Can use collection tray to monitor mite drop when required.

Not sufficient if used alone for varroa control.

Consider reducing or blocking the mesh during very cold winter weather.

Reference:-

“Managing Varroa” by DEFRA (June 2005) - Integrated Pest Management in detail.
www.beekeeping.org.uk – information sheets on other IPM controls