

# Varroa Mite Detection

Checking the Varroa Mite infestation is necessary to monitoring the need, the type and the effectiveness of a treatment. There are various methods for identifying the presence of mites. The most accurate and reliable is method is the alcohol wash. It leaves little chance for a mistake. It quickly gives a percent infection rate. A count should be performed before a treatment and several weeks after to determine if the treatment was successful. Due to the lifecycle of brood and the treatment method used, true impact may not be evident until 2 or more weeks afterwards.

## Alcohol Wash Method:

1. Take a frame of open brood with bees on it from the hive. Verify the queen is not on the frame since the sampled bees will be killed.
2. Shake the bees off into a wash tub style container.
3. Tilt and shift the bees to a corner and scoop out ½ cup of bees (approx 300 bees).
4. Quickly place them into a jar and cover with a 1/8 inch mesh lid.
5. Add about a cup of alcohol (any kind will do, make sure they are covered).
6. Shake vigorously for 30 seconds.
7. Pour the alcohol through the screened lid into a clean, clear jar.
8. Count the mites in the alcohol.
9. Divide the number by 3 to get the mite count per 100 for the hive.
10. Record the count for future reference.
11. Dispose of the dead bees.
12. Rinse bee jar clean and decant the used alcohol into it leaving the mites and debris in the bottom of the alcohol jar. Cover the jar with a solid lid for the next use.
13. Properly dispose of the dirty alcohol.

Caution: alcohol is flammable use caution when handling and storing.

Note: The number of bees killed in this process is insignificant to the whole population of the hive. Use caution when selecting a frame to ensure the queen is not on it and accidentally killed in this process.



Thanks to Geff Vitale