

THE ENTRANCE TO DEFEAT THE PILLAGE OF HIVES

How to resolve the problem of pillage

by Franco BLANCUZZI

During their apiarian work the bee-keepers have been often present at the pillage occurred between hives and therefore they know how this could be a frequent and damaging phenomenon.

There are many reasons why the bees of an hive pillage the stores of another hive and it can happen in different moments:

- during the work of the bee-keeper: while he's opening a beehive or during honey dripping, because of a forgotten honeycomb or a bad positioned crown board, etc.:
- because of hunger (in the periods of a lean harvest). In this case the pillage is made on weak, queenless or diseased bee-family;
- during a period of bad done nutrition.

Often the pillage is the cause of the diffusion of diseases like *America foul brood* and of viruses or parasites like *varroa destructor*.

The pillage, whether it is latent (the bees get in few at a time and constantly) or violent and massive, can concern one or more hives or even the entire apiary.

When the bee-keeper is working in the apiary, he can find different methods, more or less effectives, to stop the pillage. Otherwise he can't find a solution when he is not present.

After a few years of experimentations and observations I'm able to present a method to solve the problem of the beehive's pillage from the beginning.

It consists of a new "entrance to defeat the pillage of hives" which prevents the looter bees from going into the hive but it allows however regular activities of the bee-family.

This new entrance is adaptable to every type of hive. It can be used at the end of the season (when the beehive are cured) in place of the standard hive or during the entire apiarian year. In this last case the new entrance can be used in the 'production position' (look at the second picture in the section "How it works") which lets the bees to go into the hive in traditional way but it will be ready for the use in case of an emergency.

This entrance helps to protect the nucleus which are formed during the apiarian season. It doesn't prevent the normal activity of the bees: there is no problem for the fecundation of the queen-bee, the apiary is regularly cleaned, etc.

It also helps to protect the colony and avoids re-infestations and permits to use less chemical products to defeat *varroa* so that the beehive can maintain strong its immune defenses.

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How it works

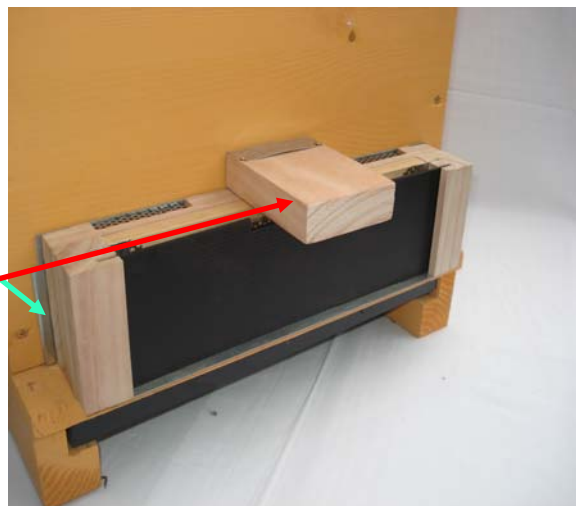
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This entrance is adaptable to many hives in commerce.

It can be fixed to the hive or inserted into the guides in place of traditional entrance.

It is composed by a particular secondary wooden entrance which is placed in the middle and which stretches out for about 5 centimeters upon the two small doors.

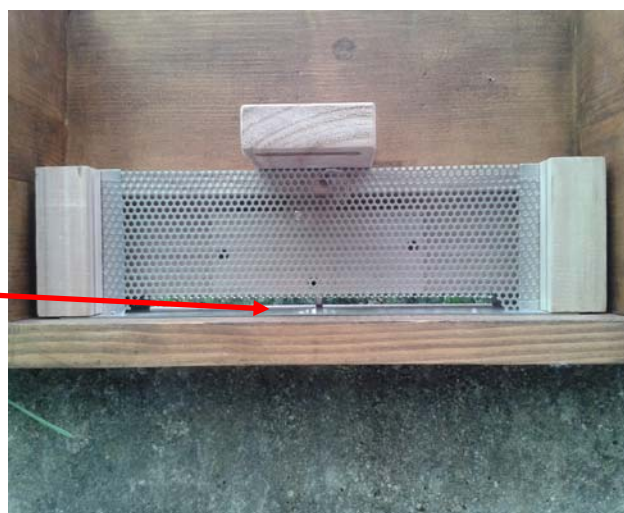
Below there is a rabbet which allows the bees to go in.



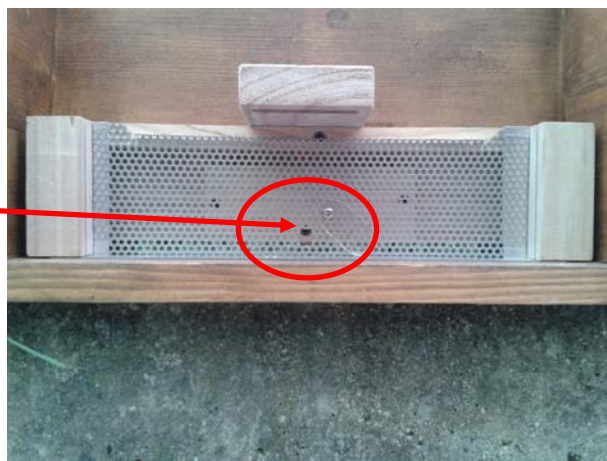
This entrance is also composed by two doors: a wire netting door and an obscuring door.

The **WIRE DOOR** can be positioned in three ways:

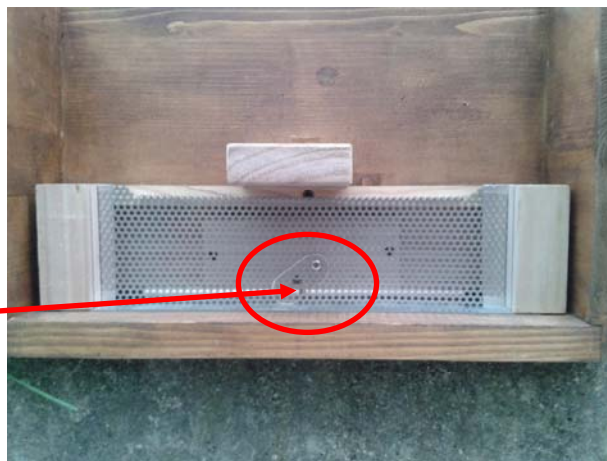
1. **OPEN**: the entrance for the bees is similar to the standard doors and it can be used in this position during the production period.



2. **PARTIALLY OPEN:** the door is overturned in the closed position but it is opened a special hole which begins to accustom the bees to go into the hive through the secondary door.



3. **CLOSED** (3 or 4 days later): the door is in the same overturned position but the hole is completely closed. This means that the bees go inside using only the secondary entrance. This position prevents the pillage.



The **OBSCURING DOOR**

It helps the bees to come out through the secondary entrance. It is recommend removing this door during the summer because of the warm and it is preferable to maintain it during cold periods.



THE ENTRANCE TO DEFEAT THE PILLAGE OF HIVES WITH TRAPS TO CAPTURE *AETHINA TUMIDA*

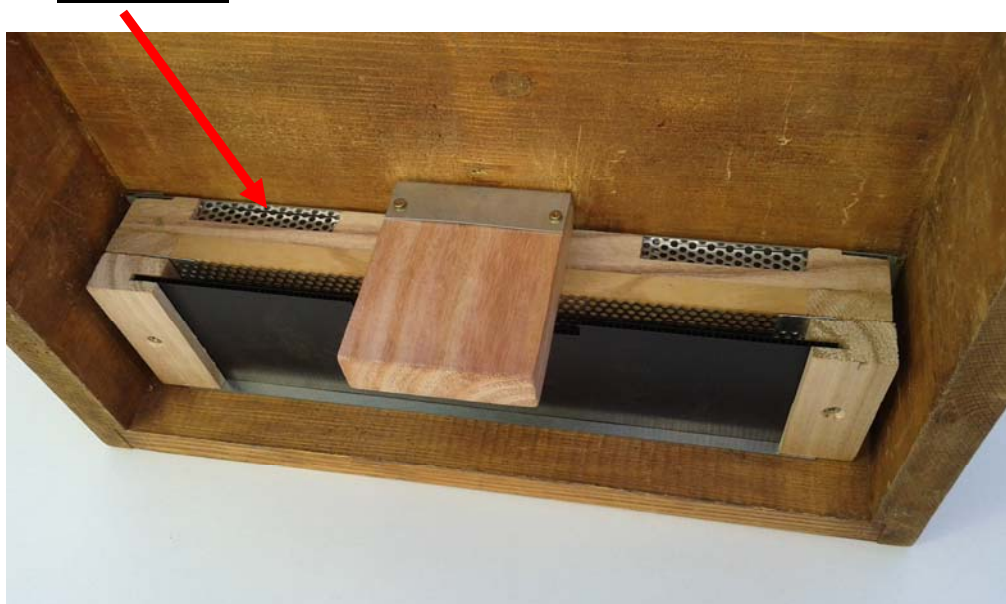
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The new entrance is very important to prevent *varroa* re-infestation.

It could have also a leading role in presence of the *Aethina Tumida*. This entrance is already predisposed to insert special external traps to capture the chafer before going inside the hive.

Like the looter bees, the chafer is attracted by the smell of the hive and, on the ground of this consideration, I disposed two type of trap for his capture. They are traps which have to be insert into the special spaces placed on the up side of the new entrance, after having removed the wire netting.



WIRE TRAP

it consists of a wire container through that get out the smells of the hive.



PLASTIC TRAP

it consists of a plastic container that can be filled up with apple-vinegar or with other substances that can attract the chafer.



These traps have to be tested in presence of the *Aethina Tumida* but up to now it has been not possible.

Against the pillage of hives instead I'm testing this new entrance with success for over two years.