

Warré hive instructions

Thank you for purchasing one of our Warré hives. Below you will find assembly instructions and a little history to help you get the most out of your hive.

Short history of the Warré hive

After many years and many trials with different styles of hive, the French monk Abbe Émile Warré designed the Warré hive, or the 'Ruche Populaire'. He wanted to create a hive that was simple to use and natural in style, required less economic input than other hives and caused minimal disturbance to the bees. He found that bees thrived better when they were managed box by box and so the idea of small boxes with just top bars was created. The tall narrow structure of the hive mimics a tree trunk, again in keeping with the simple, natural style of beekeeping he wanted to achieve.

Each hive comes with:

- A floor with splayed legs and integral varroa screen and drawer or solid floor
- Four brood bodies (some may be observation panels), each with eight plain top bars
- A plain canvas quilt
- A deep quilt with hessian cover and wood shaving insulation
- A ventilated roof

The hive parts come securely nailed and glued.



How to assemble your Warré hive

1. Find a flat, sheltered space for your hive to be situated, preferably protected from the wind as the Warré can get quite tall and narrow.
2. Set down the floor, facing the way you want your bees to fly out. You may want to place the floor on a concrete slab or blocks for extra stability.
3. Place one brood body on top of the floor, spacing the top bars out with 12mm in between each bar, or 36mm between top bar centres. We do stock an eight frame spacer tool that can help you to accurately space your frames.
4. If introducing a package of bees, place the queen in her queen cage on top of the top bars with the seal broken and candy exposed. If introducing a swarm, you won't be able to do this, unless you find her and place her in a cage.
5. Place a second brood body on top, this time leaving the top bars out.

6. Gently tip your bees into the top box. If there are any stragglers left in the box you are tipping them out from, simply place it in front of the entrance to the hive and they should find their own way in once they can smell the queen inside.
7. Once the bees have filtered their way down into the boxes a little, replace the top bars in the top box, spacing them as with the bottom box.
8. Place your plain canvas quilt on the top box, then the deep quilt with wood shavings on top of that and finally the roof on the very top (see *Notes and tips* section below for feeding at this point).
9. Leave the bees to settle in and draw some comb. Once they look like they have drawn a few combs in the bottom box, you can add another box underneath.

Notes and tips

- Feeding bees when moving them into a hive with no comb or stores is recommended. With a Warré you may need to modify the quilt by cutting a circle or flap out the middle of the canvas quilt and sticking a fine gauze over the top. Contact feeders can then be used to feed syrup. Alternatively, you can make a hole in the quilt and simply place a round rapid feeder over the hole. This should fit inside the quilt box nicely.
- If you have the time and/or patience, you can add a thin, straight wax strip to the underside of the top bars to help encourage the bees to draw their comb from there.
- Bees tend to build comb in the upper boxes and then move down into the lower boxes. It is best to add new boxes to the bottom in the spring so that the bees continue to draw their comb downwards but store their honey in the boxes above. These upper boxes can then be taken off, if wanted, for honey in the autumn.
- Generally, bees in Warré hives are overwintered on two boxes with no less than 12kg of stores.
- Boxes can become heavy, so when adding new boxes underneath, you may find you need a second person to help lift.
- Due to the tall, narrow nature of these hives, it is advisable to attach eyelets to the roof and peg the hive down, particularly during adverse weather.