

FAQ about Buying, Pickup and, Installing Package Bees

Buying package bees:

You will only be able to see or purchase bee packages if you have paid 2022 dues and you are [logged into your Guild store account](#). If you're unsure whether you've paid dues, log into your account and check the orders you've placed. IMPORTANT: Due to a communication glitch between Paypal and the Guild store, all of your orders will be marked 'processing' – this is normal and doesn't mean the orders were not completed.

The last day to purchase packages is March 25.

Picking up your bees:

When is bee delivery day?

Bee package delivery is scheduled for Saturday, April 2 11 am – 4 pm. Do not arrive early.

Where do I pick up my bees?

Peninsula Feed Store
346 El Camino Real
Redwood City

Is there any chance the date might change?

In past years, we've occasionally had to delay delivery because of really cold and crappy late Winter/early Spring weather. This year is going well and we're already seeing hive buildup, drone production and good signs of bee health. So that date looks pretty solid for now.

I'm busy that day, can you hold my bees until the next week? Can I get them the week before?

We don't have facilities to hold bees. If you are unable to make the package pickup, you need to make arrangements with another beekeeper to pick them up. We make only one run per year to pick up bees.

So, what happens on bee delivery day?

Bee pickup is in the parking lot of the Peninsula Feed store. You will have received an order confirmation when you purchased your bees. Please print the confirmation and bring it with you to the pickup.

What time was again?

Plan on being there during the 11-4 window. And PLEASE don't arrive before 11 am. We pick up the bees early that day and build in time for traffic, but it's not perfect. We're hoping to be done by 4pm.

And now, about the bees themselves:

Where do the bees come from?

We buy our bees from a high-quality Northern California breeder who, for a number of reasons, prefer to remain anonymous. The breeder has a special place in his/her heart for bee clubs and so gives us a special price for great bees.

Stuff that's important:

When should the bees go into my hive box?

We *strongly* suggest that you install into your hives the same day to minimize any harm to the bees. Most experienced beekeepers install them later in the afternoon so foragers don't go too far and get lost finding their way back.

HERE'S A REALLY BIG, IMPORTANT THING. Seriously!

Check the queen before installing – if she is dead in the queen cage, do not install your package. Take a video of the dead queen in her

unopened cage and call Bob S. at 650-255-1026. The Guild will provide a replacement queen for you with further instructions. However, the ONLY circumstance in which you will be given a replacement queen is if she is dead in the queen cage BEFORE you install.

More IMPORTANT stuff:

- Do not transport bees home in a plastic garbage bag or airtight container – they breathe, too.
- You are responsible for learning how to install a package BEFORE the day you receive the bees.
- The guild will provide candy to plug the opening in the queen cage.

And yet even more IMPORTANT stuff:

When installing, remember to keep your queen safely caged for a few days when first putting her into the hive. The queens in the packages are raised regionally and the bees with her are from other sources, they are not *that* queen's bees. As a result, she needs time to imprint them with her pheromones so they will love their new step-mom.

It's highly advised that you leave the queen in the queen cage for at least two days. Plugging the hole in the queen cage with the candy will provide that delay, it takes time for the worker bees to chew it away. In past years some beekeepers released the queens directly into the hive with sad results. Voids the warranty and costs you another \$35 for another queen.

For people who ordered 2+ bee packages. If your hives will be sited next to one another, orient the openings at different directions if possible, or keep the entrances closed for a day or so. As noted, the

package workers are not daughters of the package queen or oriented to your hive's location. Significant drift to one hive may deplete the population of a nearby hive.

WOW, that's a lot!

I've provided a lot of information but it's really not rocket science. All will be well.

Oh, I almost forgot. I have created a list of Youtube videos showing how people **install packages** ([click here to download list](#)). I like the first video from Beekind. The segment on how to remove the cork from the end of the California mini cage is very informative.

Thanks to the SF Beekeepers' Association web folks for help with this content.