

DIY – Wasp Guards

By Steve Davies

If 2022 turns out to be a wasp year there are various methods we can use to help our bees defend themselves and I hope that one of these will benefit your own colonies.

1) The Basic

- Using corrugated pvc sheeting, cut out one ridge 200mm long.
- From the centre of the ridge, drill a series of 2.5mm holes for approximately 50mm. Three parallel lines is recommended.



To use, simply pin the top edge to the hive covering the entrance then block one end completely.



Next, reduce the other opening to one bees width. I have used pieces of foam entrance block but any suitable material will do.



Tape and pin around the edges and that's it! Of all the examples, this is the only one I have used and can confirm it works, even if it doesn't look pretty. It works better without the landing board and wasps tend to be drawn to the centre holes where the scent is. If they continue to be a problem, consider covering it all in black tape (apart from the scent holes) to make it darker; alternatively, you could make a longer version.

Thanks goes to the unknown author who sent this design to BeeCraft several years ago.

2) Still basic but more challenging – both for the beekeeper and for the wasps!

For this you will need some Correx sheeting (or similar).

- Cut out a piece 250 mm x 140 mm.
- 60 mm down from the long edge, make a fold across the complete length.
- Repeat this twice more with 15 mm between each fold.
- Mark another fold 150mm down but fold it in the opposite direction.
- To assemble, fold each section at right angles to form a 'tube'.



- Unfold, then at the bottom of the 140mm section, and in the middle, cut out an opening 180 mm wide and 15 mm high. This will be the hive entrance.
- Two folds below that entrance, drill a series of holes using a 2.5 mm drill bit. This will allow the hive scent to drift out.



- Once complete, fold over once more and tape the sides together.



With the hive entrance block left in situ (smallest opening), tape the wasp guard in place making sure the openings align. Note – you will also need to pin the tape down to prevent the rain and Correx pulling it away.



The bees are able to exit left and right but if the wasp problem is severe, block one exit completely leaving just one for them to defend. If you use landing boards, consider taking them off to make it harder for the wasps to gain entry.

The measurements given are the minimum required; it can be made to any size you like, even to the full width of the hive.

Any Correx left over can become a porch roof. Cut a piece 100 mm deep and the width of the brood box. Then pin in place as shown below:



Not as elegant as a WBC but it does the job, especially in prolonged heavy rain (thanks to Peter Cammack).

3) The Advanced

This is my version of the Wasp Out sold by EH Thorne (£6.99). One reason I like this is the ease with which it can be fitted. Simply remove the existing entrance block and replace with the Wasp Out.

Materials:

First, you will need either an existing entrance block or make one yourself using 22 mm x 22 mm stripwood. I prefer the latter as I can make the hive entrance as small as I need.

You will also need some electrical mini trunking 25 mm x 16 mm. A two metre length costs £1.85 (Screwfix) and this will give you eight pieces. Finally, you will need four 10 mm screws.

Construction:

- Either make your own entrance block or square off the edges of a bought one (make sure you use the smallest entrance).
- Cut a 250mm length of trunking. (see image next page)



- Separate the two parts of the trunking. Starting from the middle, drill three rows of holes in the lid using a 2.5mm drill bit. They should be approximately 5mm apart and extend for 50mm (25mm either side of centre).
- On the remaining section of trunking, and directly opposite the holes, cut out the entrance. This can be either at the bottom edge or in the middle; the full length of the entrance block opening or made smaller. The exact size will depend on your preferences. I have made mine with a bottom cut mainly because I use landing boards.



To assemble, drill four screw holes in the trunking entrance block approximately 20mm from either end and 20mm from the edges of the entrance.



Next, align the bottom of the trunking with the bottom of the entrance block (making sure both entrances align). Then drill and screw the units together making sure the screw heads are not proud of the trunking. Clip the lid in place and it's ready to go; simply remove the entrance block and replace with this.



Again, if the wasp situation is really bad, one exit can be blocked off.

If you intend to keep this on for a prolonged length of time (over winter) you may need to consider adapting it to fit a mouseguard. The genuine Wasp Out uses doweling which prevents mice from entering but still allows free passage of the bees. Simply remove the two outer screws, re-drill the holes and fit an appropriate sized dowel. Refit the lid and you're done.

Although all of these help deter wasps, some still manage to get in. They do seem reluctant to enter and frequently reappear within a short time with a guard bee close behind 😊🐝

A word of warning - if this is to be left in place for a prolonged time, it needs to be checked regularly as it can become blocked by dead bees. Slide the cover to one side and clean out the debris without causing too much disturbance to the bees.