

Bee Gym: Chemical Free Varroa Grooming Aid



The Bee Gym, a chemical free varroa grooming aid

The Bee Gym is a patented device to assist and improve grooming behaviour in honeybees to help them to control varroa mite populations.

The Bee Gym was developed on the principal that with a simple device, bees can be encouraged to groom themselves more effectively to remove varroa mites. With its unique combination of specifically designed grooming aids, the Bee Gym encourages and enhances the natural grooming behaviour of honeybees, assisting in the removal of varroa mites from the colony. The Bee Gym should be used as part of an Integrated Pest Management approach to varroa control.

Key Facts

- Bee Gym is a device bees use to dislodge or injure varroa mites and other parasites
- Bee Gym is chemical free and works throughout the year
- Bee Gym is easy to install and can be used in any modern hive type with an open mesh floor
- Bee Gym should be used within an **Integrated Pest Management Strategy**

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What is a Bee Gym

The Bee Gym is the world's first grooming assistance device to help bees rid themselves of varroa.

The Bee Gym is a framework of wires which enable bees to scrape varroa mites off their backs, together with flippers and scrapers that help the bees to remove mites from their abdomen. Dislodged

and damaged mites will fall to the bottom of the hive, so an open mesh floor should be used and emptied regularly. Bees voluntarily use the Bee Gym throughout the year, including during a honey flow, and even form a winter cluster around it to enable improved grooming during cold periods.

How to use the Bee Gym to assist Varroa Grooming

The Bee Gym is extremely easy to deploy, simply place it on an open mesh hive floor during a routine inspection. The Bee Gym can then be left in place all year, save for an annual clean.

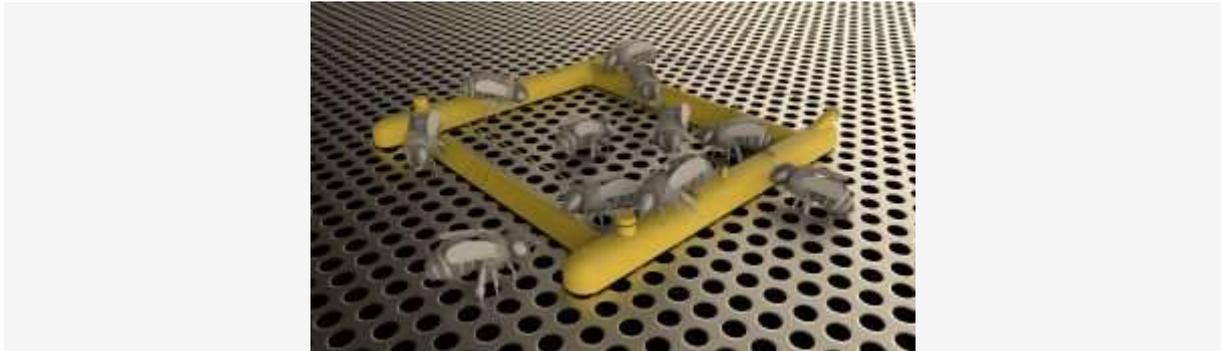


Diagram showing how bees use the Bee Gym as a varroa grooming aid

The Bee Gym should be positioned in a busy part of the colony, either on the mesh floor about 2 cms back from the hive entrance or on top of the brood frames in a shallow 'eke' or spacer.

Orientate the device so that the Bee Gym name is uppermost and faces the opening in the hive entrance block.

Check that the wire loops are tight and that the flippers are located in their sockets. The wires and small plastic flippers point upwards.

To maintain the Bee Gym, soak it in a bucket of soda solution, then replace within the hive. The Bee Gym can stay in the hive all year round.

The Advantages of Bee Gym

- **Chemical Free:** Bee Gym is a physical grooming aid for bees.
- **Economical:** Bee Gym has high durability and no on-going costs, making it a highly economical investment.
- **No extra apiary visits:** Bee Gym can be left in the hive all through the year.
- **Specific:** foragers returning with full pollen baskets choose to avoid the Bee Gym, so there is no risk of pollen being lost.
- **Sustainable:** Bee Gym encourages the natural grooming behaviour of honeybees, resulting in more hygienic colonies, better able to manage varroa infestations.

- **Integrated:** Bee Gym is an ideal component in an Integrated Pest Management approach to varroa control.

Tips for Use

- Position the Bee Gym in a busy part of the colony, about 2 cms back from the hive entrance or on top of the brood frames in a shallow 'eke' or spacer.
- Use a sticky floor (coat a white piece of paper or cardboard with vaseline) to observe mite drop. These should be refreshed regularly.
 - OR Use the Bee Gym with an open mesh floor so that the varroa mites drop out of jumping reach of the hive.
- Leave a space between the hive entrance and the Bee Gym so that pollen-laden foragers are able to avoid the framework.
- Move the Bee Gym around the hive when convenient so that it stimulates more interest from the bees.
- Leave the Bee Gym in place throughout the year as it improves grooming behaviour, helping bees to rid themselves of varroa mites.
- Ensure there is sufficient gap (at least 15 mm) for bees to move around the Bee Gym to fully utilise it.
- Clean the Bee Gym with washing soda periodically to remove excess propolis. Don't worry if the bees propolise the frame a little – the grooming flippers and scrapers will not be affected.