

Below is my #3 hive this morning Nov. 18 at 8:30AM in central MD. It is 50 degrees. The red arrow points to a grapefruit size ball of bees hanging from the landing board.

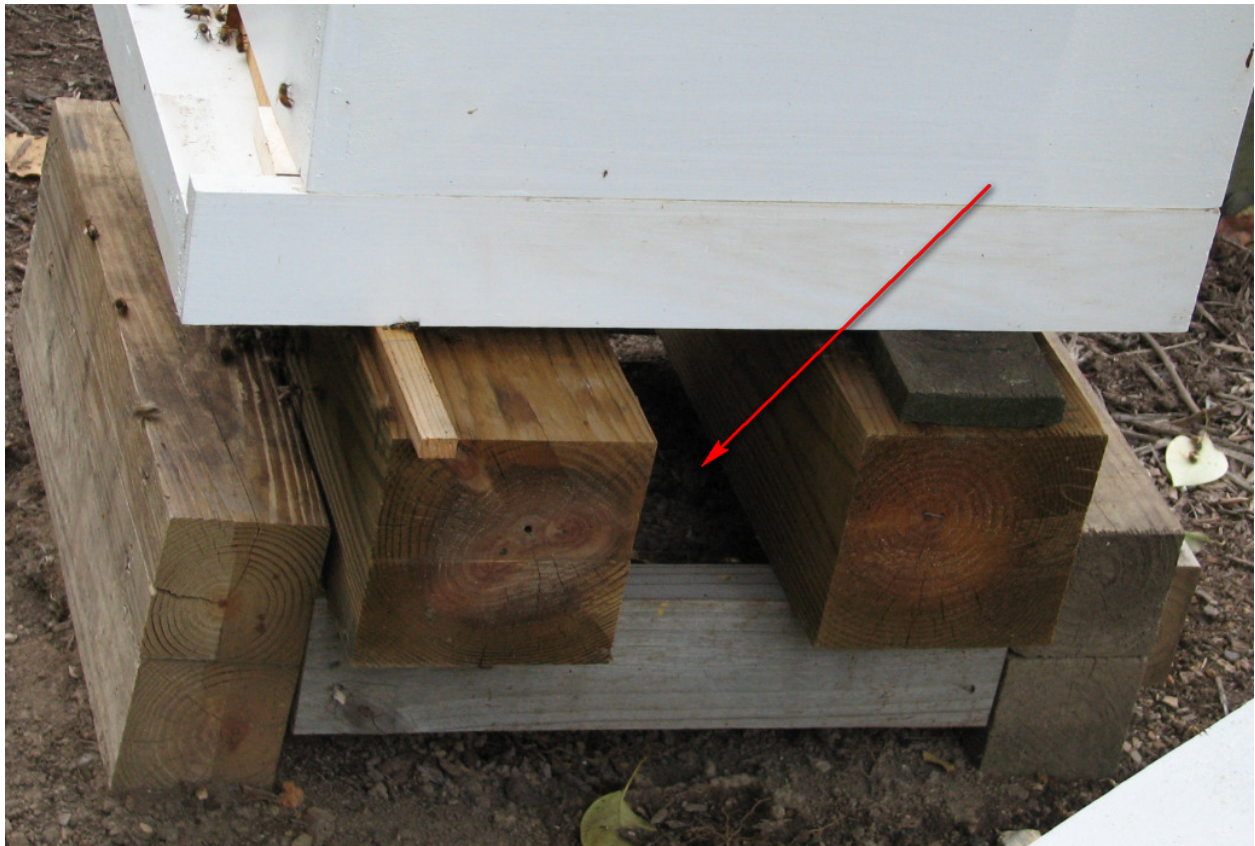


Here is a closeup:



This issue started last evening. I disassembled the hive in order to swap out the bottom board. The old bottom board needed some work, so I replaced it.

As I took the hive apart last night, I noticed hundreds upon hundreds of bees ON THE GROUND beneath the hive which is raised on a frame of 6"x6" timbers. This design results in the below open cavity below the hive and it was LOADED with bees:



I thought nothing of the several hundred bees down inside there. This is the hive that was being heavily robbed last week. While being robbed, I noticed hundreds and hundreds of bees all over the bottom front timbers but I did not specifically look inside the cavity.

Last night I just smoked those that were in the cavity and continued with my work. When done, I leaned the old bottom board against the hive (it had several dozen bees on the TOP of the screen which I would expect since I had just removed a deep from it):

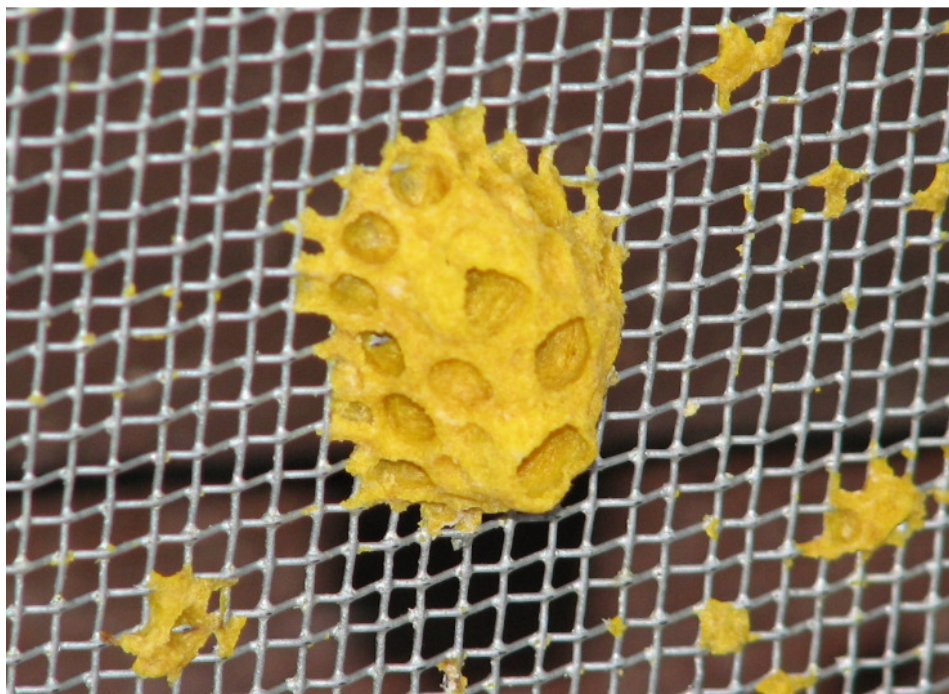


But when I returned an hour later, I noticed the **BOTTOM** of the old bottom board screen was loaded with bees (right arrow in the below):



What I **DID NOT** notice last evening but which shows in the above photo taken last night was the grapefruit size ball of bees hanging from the landing board (left arrow in the above).

So last night I dumped all bees that had clustered on either side of the old bottom board screen back into the top of the hive. Upon inspecting the BOTTOM of the old screened bottom board I noticed a golf-ball size burr comb (dry and empty cells) which had earlier been directly over that large number of bees that had congregated on the ground in the cavity beneath the hive:



I am not sure if this means anything. Just an interesting observation. Why would a group of bees live on the ground beneath the hive and build some comb on the bottom of the SBB? Why not live inside the hive instead of being “homeless”.

So, this morning, there are no bees on the ground, but there is that grapefruit size ball of bees hanging from the landing board! Remember, it was there last night, but I did not notice it then.

Can anyone tell me what is going on with that ball of bees? Is the hive too full? Are they visitors from another hive? Why not go inside where it is warmer? What should I do with them? Leave them alone, suppose.

And why did I have a huge number of bees living on the ground beneath the hive?

Ideas??

