

Thymol Treatment Recipe.

Ingredients (sufficient for about 12 colonies)

- 100 grams Thymol crystals (handle with care - avoid skin contact)
- 200 grams Cookeen or other pure vegetable fat (no additives, preservatives or emulsifiers)
- 700 grams Castor Sugar

Instructions

- Melt the Cookeen in a saucepan but do not over heat.
- Allow it to cool until warm to the touch.
- Put the castor sugar into a disposable plastic container and thoroughly mix in the Thymol crystals until all lumps are broken down.
- Add the melted Cookeen to the sugar/Thymol mixture and mix thoroughly until the mixture is the consistency of a paste.
- Well sealed, the mixture may be stored in a refrigerator for up to 12 months.

Usage

- On a piece of kitchen roll spread the mixture so that it is about 5mm thick and fold to about 10cm square and place on top of the brood frames.
- The Crown board should allow a bee space above the paste.
- All ventilation should be closed except a 10cm wide entrance.
- Refresh the mixture every two weeks until the drop falls below 2-3 mites per week.
- The ambient temperature needs to be above about 15°C unless the hive is insulated.
- Expanded polystyrene works well (about 25mm thick) and can be left on all winter.
- Treatments should be carried out twice a year in the spring and autumn, when there are no supers installed, to prevent tainting the honey. It is also advisable to remove excess winter stores in the spring before the bees transfer them into the supers.

Cost Comparisons for: [10 colonies]

[60colonies]

Apiguard	2 Boxes	£27.00	12 boxes	£162.00
Thymol Crystals	100 g [12 colonies]	£10.00	500g [60 colonies]	£25.00
Castor Sugar	700g	£ 0.75	3,500g	£ 3.75
Vegetable Fat	200g	<u>£ 0.75</u>	1,000g	£ 3.75
Total		<u>£11.50</u>		<u>£32.50</u>

Obviously treatment for 60 colonies is far more than most of us require, but by splitting it with friends, the price advantage makes it well worthwhile.

Thymol crystals have three benefits:

- It upsets its reproductive system of the varroa mite, but does not directly kill it. The female cannot mate within the cell of the bee and once it emerges with the young bee, it falls from the comb and dies and cannot, therefore infest another cell.
- It is also an anti-fungicide, which is particularly useful in controlling chalk brood.
- A few crystals can be added to sugar solutions to prevent mould and fermentation.

John Farrow 2014