

How to collect a sample for Nosema testing – This is not easy!

The ideal bees to collect are older flying bees, this is because they are the ones most likely to be infected and collecting them around the middle of the day is the time that infected bees are most likely to be flying.

1. Block off the entrance with something and wait a few minutes for the returning bees to start gathering. In the one I used here as an example the hive was quite weak so there weren't many bees to collect.



2. Scoop about 30 bees into a suitable container (matchbox, honey jar anything that won't squash the bees) This is the difficult bit but just get as many as you can into the container.
3. Label the container so that you will know which hive it came from and then freeze it to kill the bees. If you are collecting the sample more than a day before it will be tested then leave it frozen until the testing day.

If you struggle to collect bees in this way then try holding a honey jar over the entrance gap and tapping the side of the hive. This will collect bees but they will be less likely to allow detection of a light infection. As you can see below, I ended up with a variable number of bees in each box but they were all flying bees and there is more than 20 in each so that should be okay and was the best I could manage with the weak hives. Strong colonies are easier to do.

