

**WELCOME
TO
HIVE MANAGEMENT 101**

OR

“OMG, NOW WHAT DO I DO???”

By Deirdre Perot Lightsey

What we're going to cover...

- Establishing objectives
- Record Keeping
- When & how often do I visit my bees
- What (and what not) to wear
- Opening the hive
- Basic Inspection techniques
- What the heck am I looking for?
- Signs of a healthy hive

Bee Keeper or Bee 'Have' er?

(It depends....)

- Honey producing
- Crop pollinating
- 'peripheral' production
(wax/propolis/pollen, etc)
- Hobby beekeeper (a little of all above?)

*Those who forget
history are bound to
repeat it*

Winston Churchill

KEEP GOOD
RECORDS!!

Record Keeping

- Loose leaf paper / spiral bound notebook
- Digital camera
- Excel spreadsheet or Access database
- Purchased hive management software

What to record

- When was this hive established?
- By what method? (split, package, etc)
- When was the queen put in? Is she marked?
- When did you put super on?
- How much honey did this hive make?
- Breed?
- General attitude of the hive?

WHEN & HOW OFTEN DO I
VISIT MY BEES??

AGAIN WITH THE “DEPENDS”??

A GREAT DAY TO VISIT THE BEES!



Visit hive

- What am I trying to accomplish?
- Between 70-90 degrees
- Not when temp is below 55 degrees
- Sunny dry weather, not windy
- Don't disturb during honey flow
- Between 11 am & 3pm
- 6-8 visits minimum per year

Seasonal visits

- Two in spring, to check on buildup
- One before honey flow, make sure they've got room & check for mites/treat
- One to pull off supers
- One to check for pests, after pulling supers
- One in fall, to check fall brood
- One to check for winter stores (heft hive from outside)

Reasons for visit

- Check brood pattern
- Check stores (pollen/honey)
- Check for pests (hive beetles/wax moths)
- Check general “attitude” of hive (are they “happy” bees?)
- Get to know them. (going into the brood box puts them back 1-2 days).
- Check for queen cells (supercedure/swarm)

Suiting up...

- Light natural cloth
- Elastic sleeves & legs
- Always wear your veil
- Try to wear gloves only when hives are 'hot'
- Pockets for hive tool, magnifying glass, etc

Opening the hive

(Cover me, George, I'm going in!)

Wherever you are, BEE there!!!

(Zen & the Art of Hive Maintenance)

Breathe!

- Approach hive from side or back to avoid flight pattern of bees
- Have smoker & hive tool in hand
- Observe coming & goings in hive, are they carrying pollen? Does it look like there's a war going on (robbing)?

Slow steady movements

- Try not to squish any bees! (remember the scent will be released)
- No swatting!
- Relax, enjoy, observe...
- BEE there!

Basic Inspection Technique

- Smoke opening, then under cover
- Remove outer cover
- Remove top feeder & cover with towel or inner cover
- Remove 'wall' frame, examine, set on ground on its side or on hanger
- Remove 2nd frame, examine, put back into space from 1st frame
- Work through frames, when finished, slide 2-9 back at same time, then replace 1st frame.

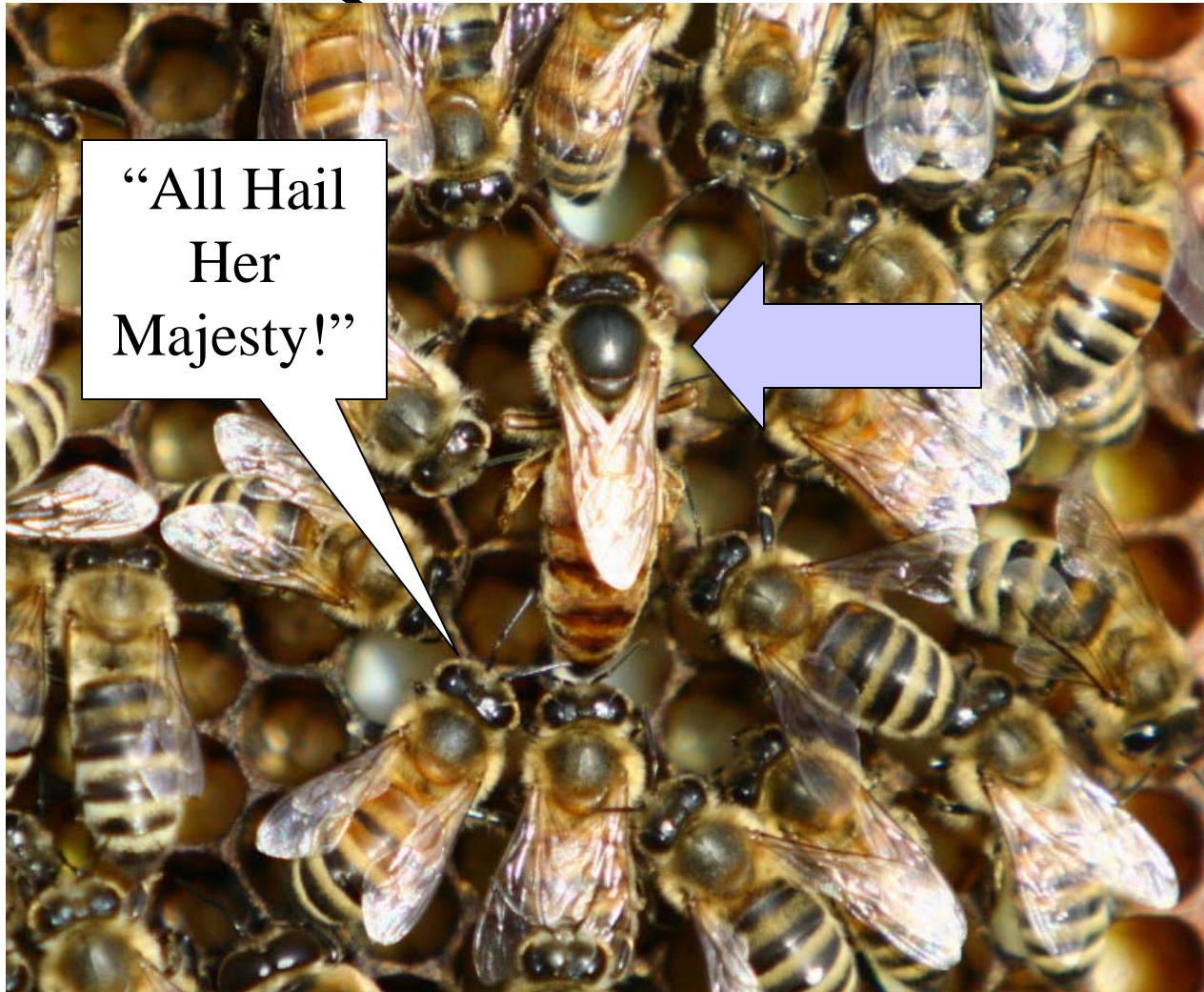
What the heck am I looking for?

Cherchez la Femme

(find the Queen)

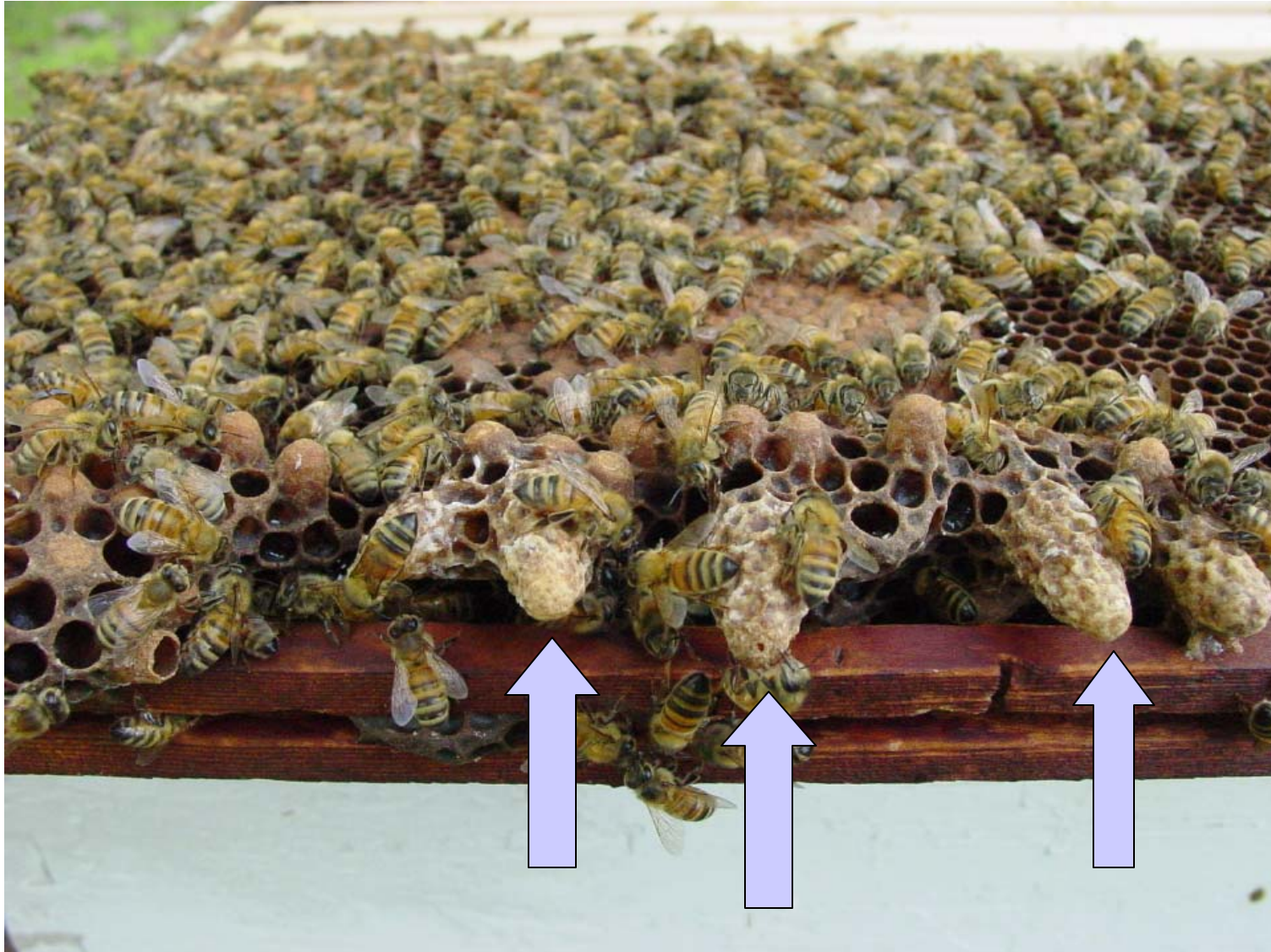


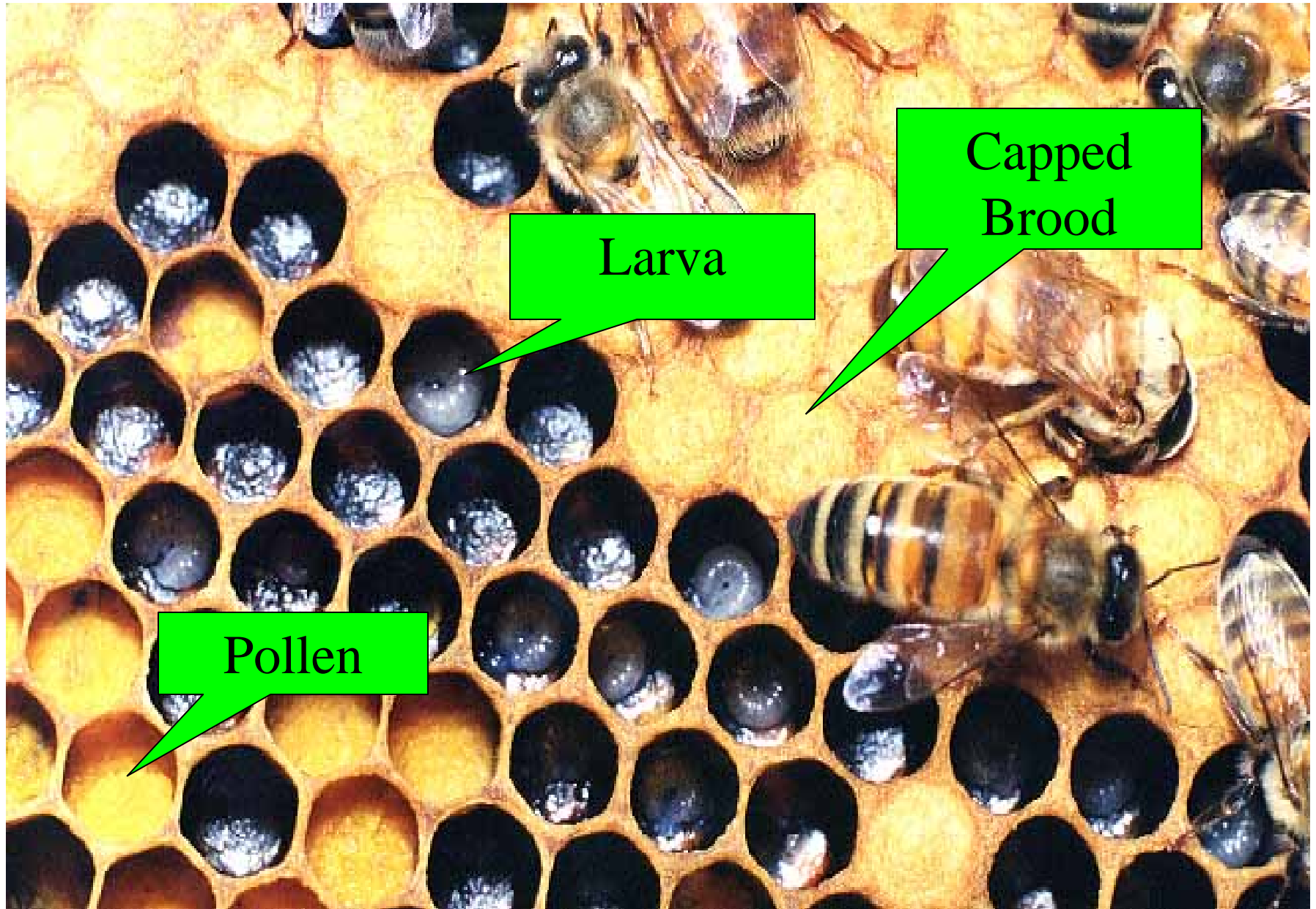
Queen's Court



"All Hail
Her
Majesty!"

Swarm cells





Larva

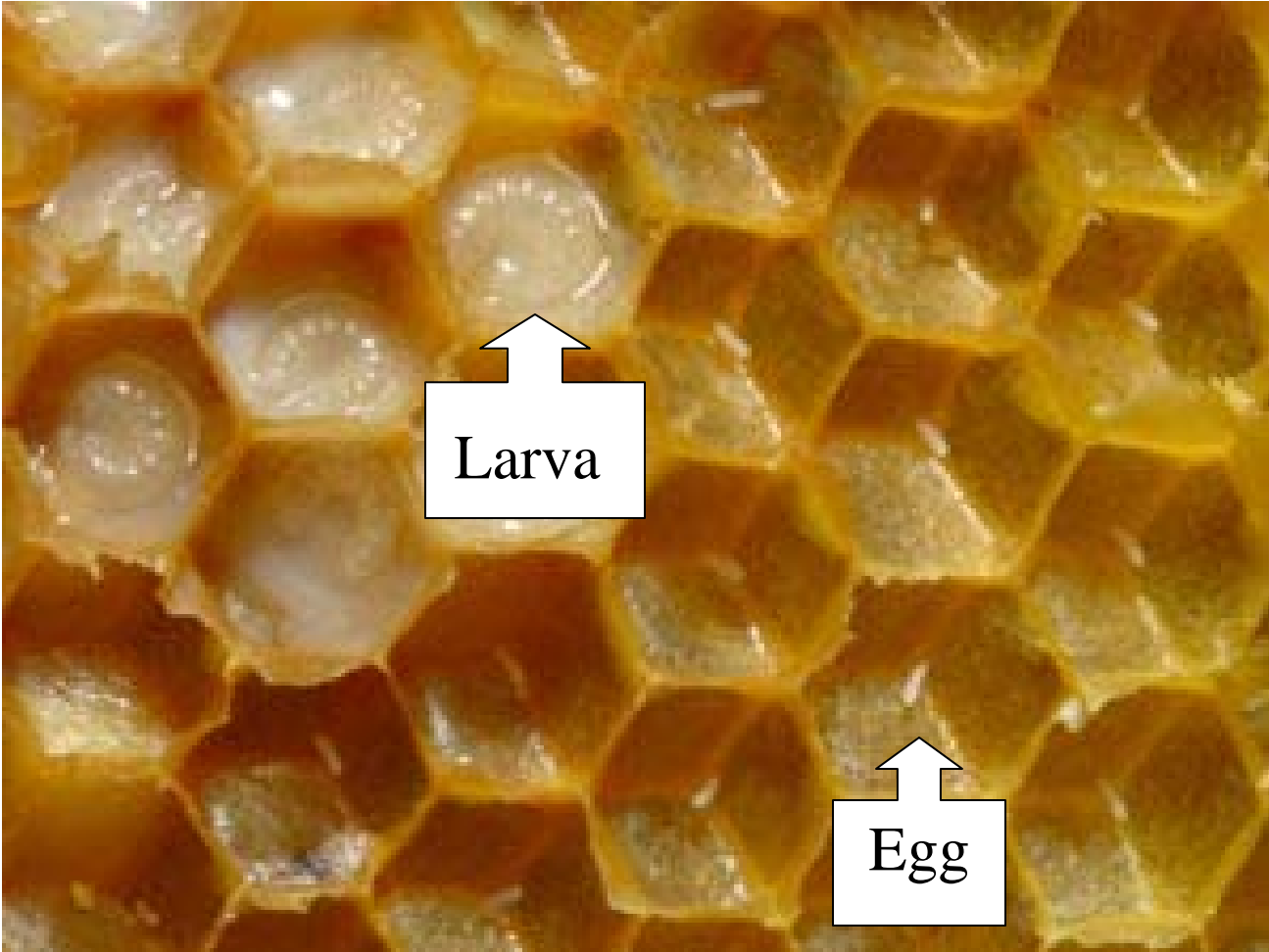
Capped
Brood

Pollen



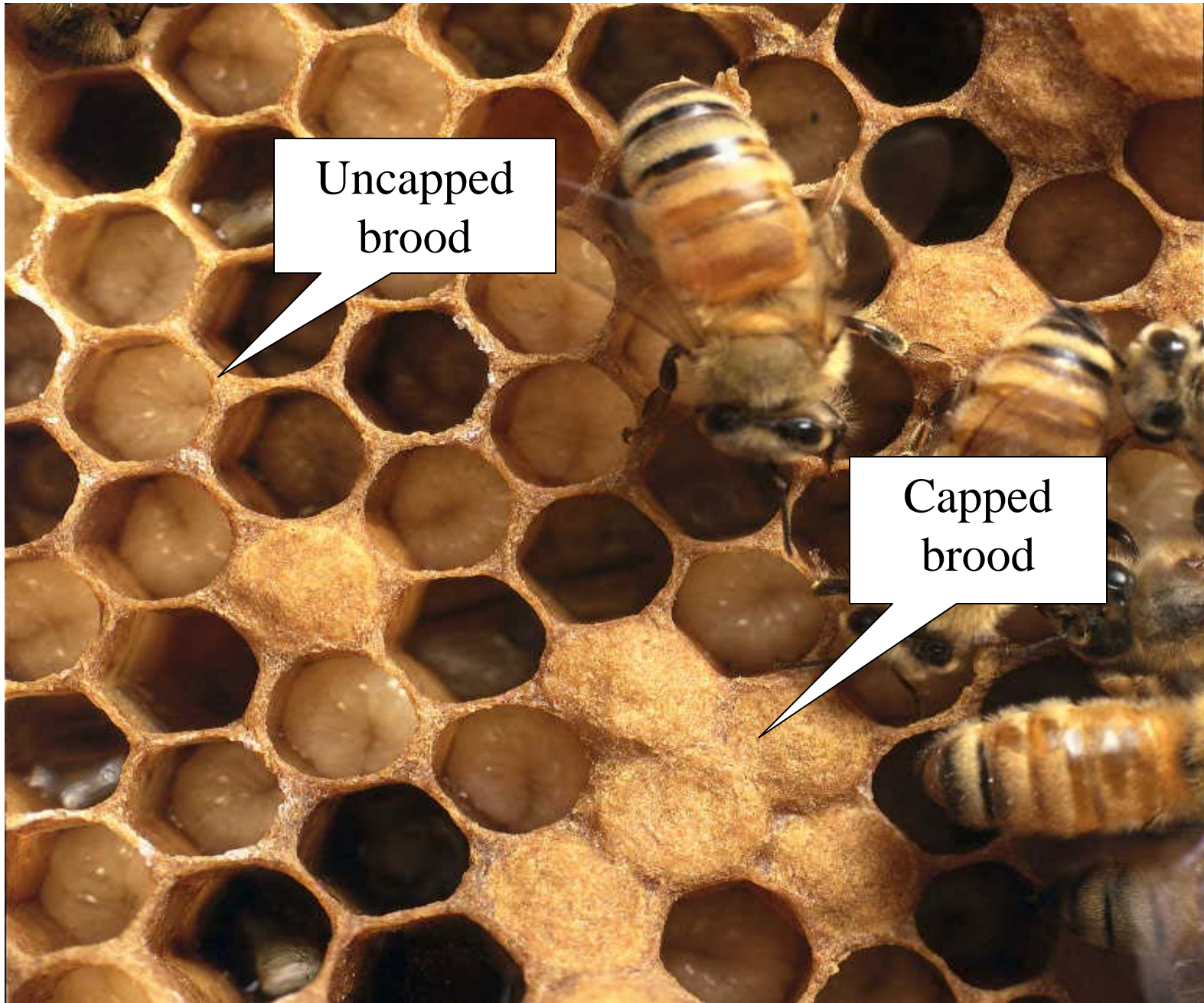
Awesome sight, new baby emerges!





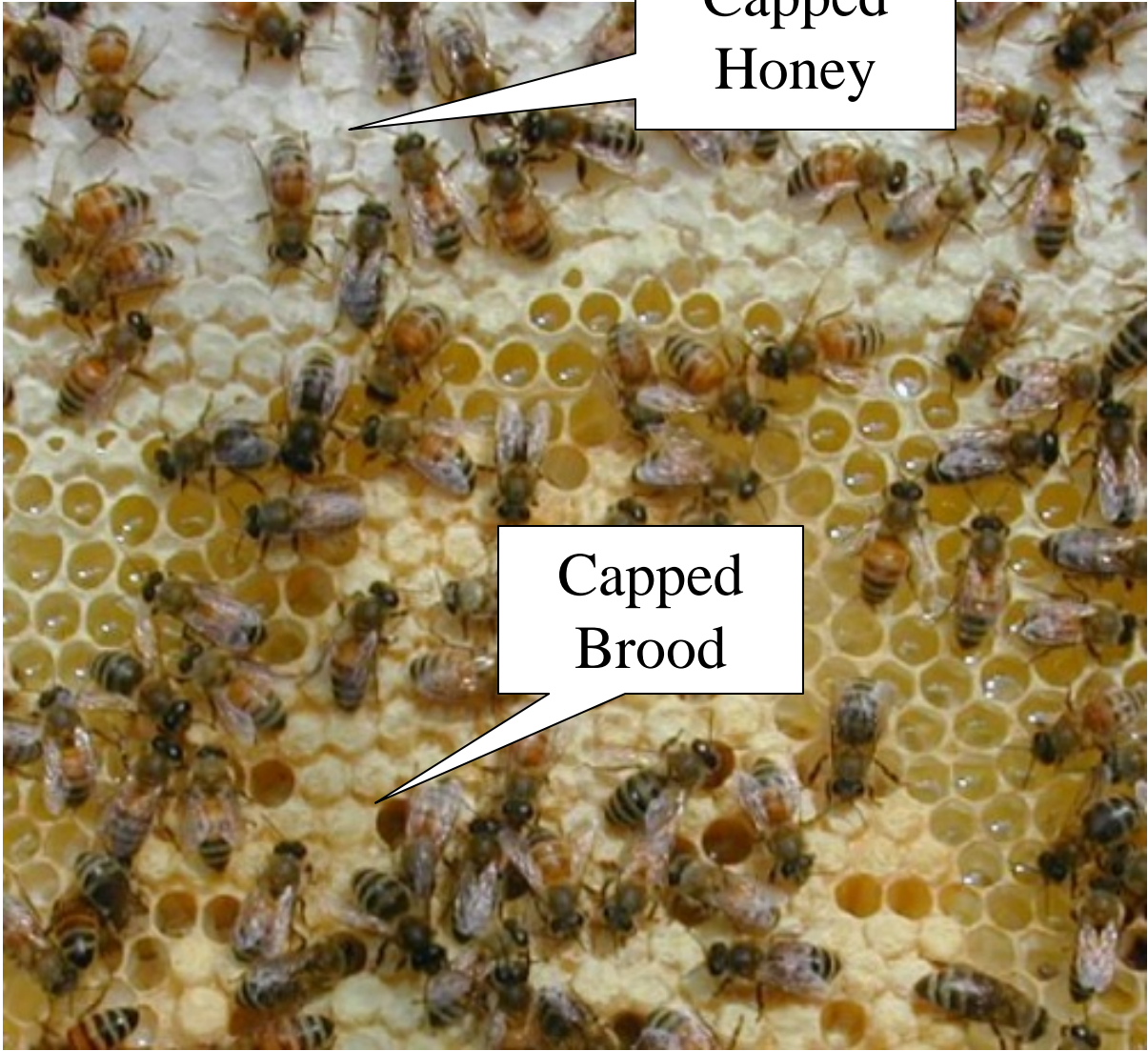
Larva

Egg



Uncapped
brood

Capped
brood



Capped
Honey

Capped
Brood

Burr comb in top feeder



Signs of a healthy hive

- Plenty of bees
- Plenty of brood
- Plenty of stores (honey/pollen)
- Listen for the happy “hum”
- Watch to see bees coming in & out

What should I expect to see, after installing package?

- 1st week – evidence of eggs
- 2nd week – evidence of larva (1-2 frames both sides $\frac{3}{4}$ filled of eggs & brood= great, 1-2 frames one side $\frac{1}{2}$ filled of eggs & brood=ok, any less= problem with queen)
- 3rd week – capped brood, check for queen cells
- 4th week – 7/10 rule, might need another super?
- 6th-8th weeks – check for swarm cells, take out entrance reducer, keep burr comb & propolis cleaned

What to do if ?

- I don't see the Queen...
- Uh, oh, a bee's in my veil
- Yikes, I got stung..
- Stuff happens, keep your cool, **BREATHE!**

Let's recap, we talked about..

- Establishing objectives
- Record keeping methods
- When & how often to visit your bees
- What to wear
- Opening the hive
- Inspection techniques
- What to look for
- Signs of a healthy hive