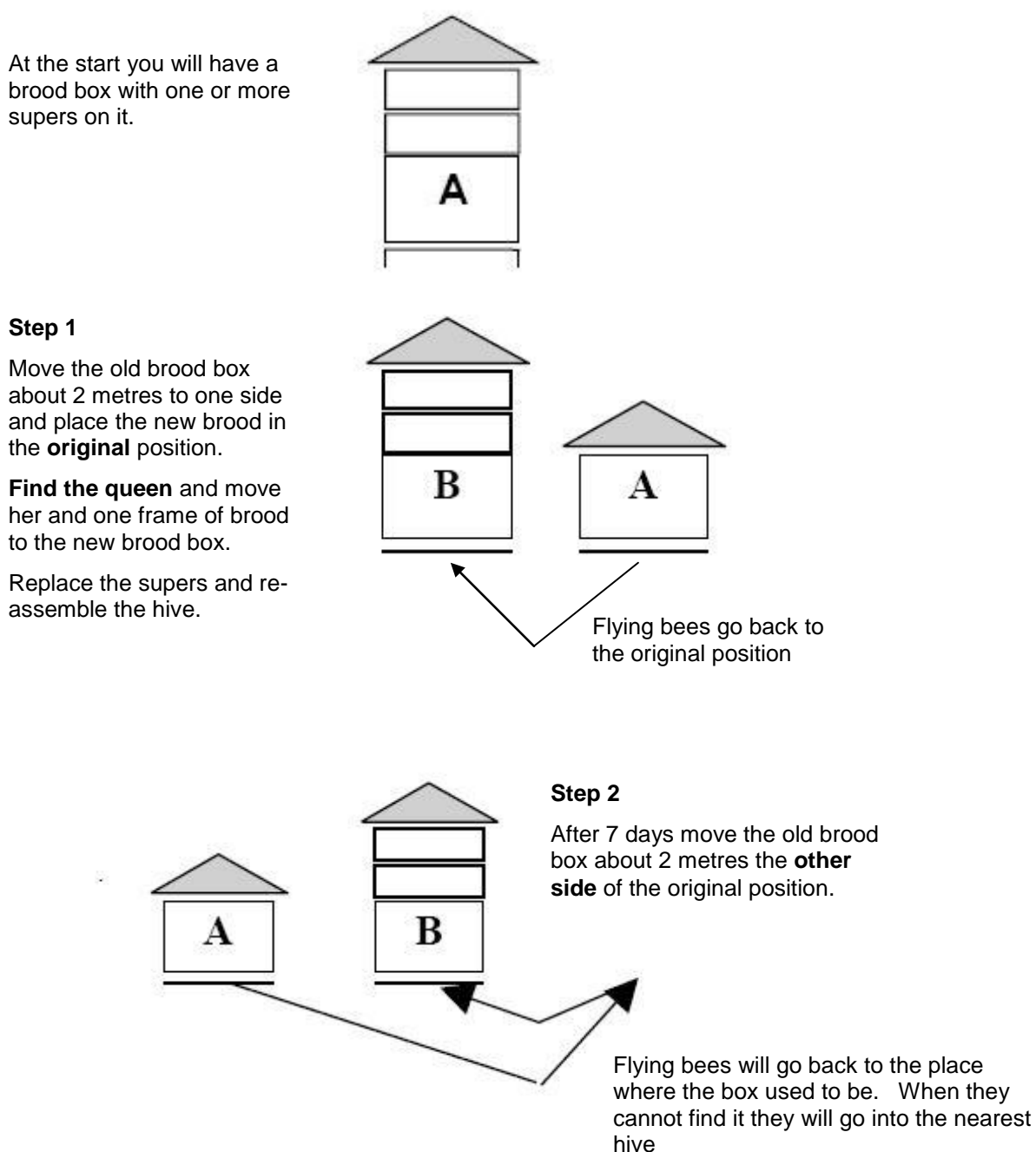


The Artificial swarm

If you find **unsealed** queen cells in the hive during a routine inspection but **no sealed queen cells** it is a sign they are preparing to swarm. The best way to deal with this is to do an **artificial swarm**. This splits the colony into two and persuades the bees that they have already swarmed but you do not lose any bees in the process.

You will need a second brood box, another roof, floor and hive stand. It is a good idea to have these ready at the beginning of May because the artificial swarm should be carried out on the same day that you find the queen cells – the following day may be too late.

Fill the new brood box with a complete set of frames with new foundation. The steps to carry out are shown in the following illustration.



Important notes:

1. The artificial swarm can only be done if the bees have not already swarmed. You must do it before the queen cells are sealed.
2. After you have moved the old brood box to one side (step 1) you should go through it and remove most of the queen cells. Only one or two cells should be left and these should be selected as the ones that are unsealed and contain the fattest, healthiest looking larvae.
3. The new queen(s) will emerge 16 days after the eggs were laid. It normally takes about 2 weeks for the new queen to mate and start laying but it can take a bit longer. Eggs and young larvae should be present no later than four weeks after the queen has emerged.
4. When the new queen has started laying, the two colonies can be united if you do not want to increase the number of colonies you maintain. Remove the old queen from colony **B** so that your combined colony has the youngest queen.