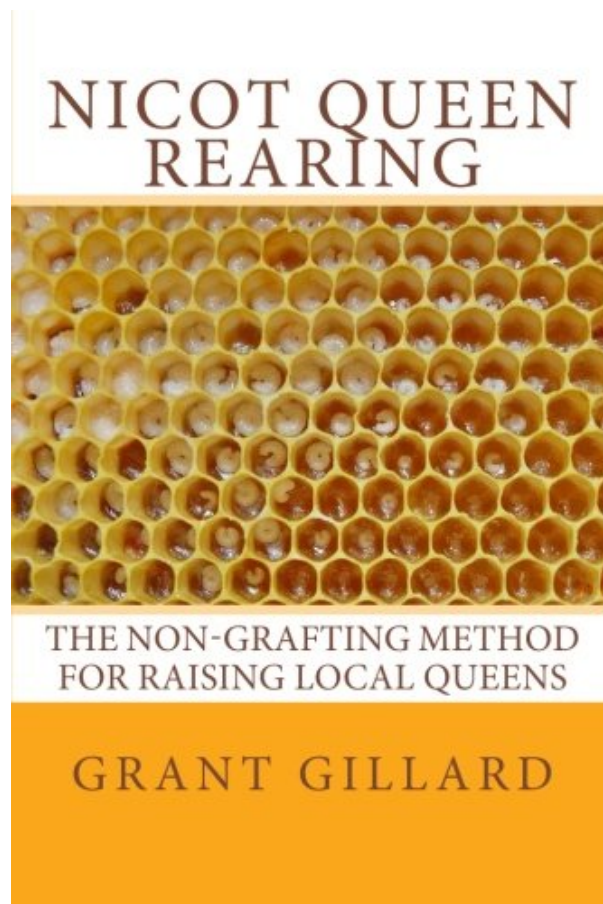


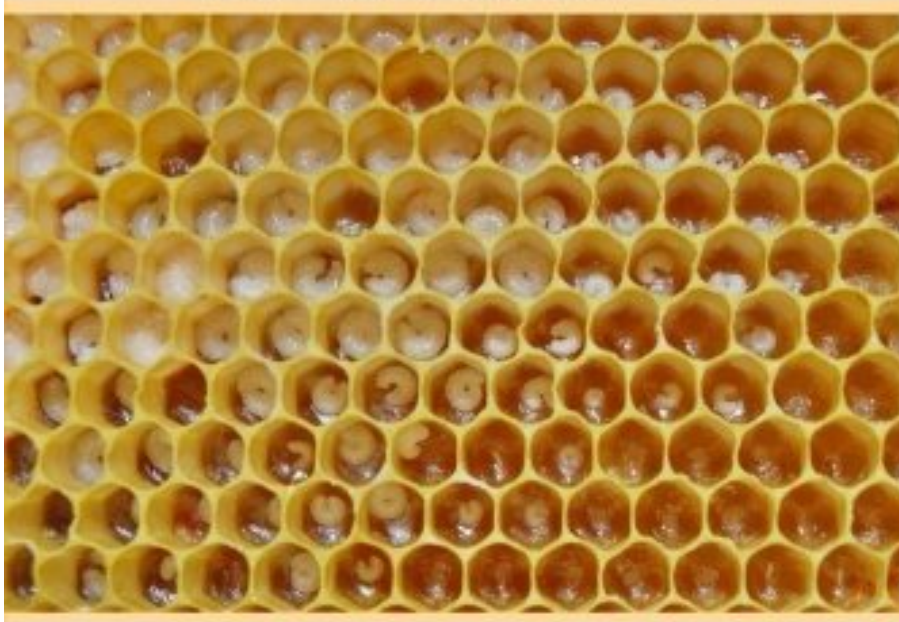
# **NICOT QUEEN REARING: THE NON-GRAFTING METHOD FOR RAISING LOCAL QUEENS BY GRANT F. C. GILLARD**



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# NICOT QUEEN REARING



THE NON-GRAFTING METHOD  
FOR RAISING LOCAL QUEENS

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### About the Author

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Beekeeping is a journey of many roads. This is a manuscript for beekeepers wishing to learn how to raise their own, local queens...but just cannot bring themselves to figure out how to graft. The NICOT queen rearing system explains how the average beekeeper implements its unique design and overcomes the distinctive hurdles to raising local queens without grafting. The Nicot system is not the only non-grafting approach, but it works. This manuscript shares the journey of one beekeeper who taught himself how to raise his own queen honey bees. Grant F. C. Gillard, a small-scale commercial beekeeper since 1981, shares his insights and philosophies, his field-tested ideas and sustainable methods on how to hang tough, to persevere in the face of adversity, to run and not grow weary, to walk and not faint. Grant often tells people, “The Nicot kit is not the perfect method to raise queens; but neither is it the only way. It is what it is, but it becomes what we make it. It holds tremendous potential for the average beekeeper to take control of their genetics and shape, even reshape the destiny of their apiaries.” In essence, that is Grant’s purpose for raising his own queens, particularly in an era of “natural” beekeeping, managing our colonies with reduced and minimalistic treatments, and breeding our own locally-adapted queens from survivor stock. Grant wanted better queens than he was buying from the large, commercial queen producers in the south. He felt the Nicot system created the best opportunities, and lowered the bar for those beekeepers who didn’t know how to graft. Grant adds, “My journey raising my own queens covers a number of seasons, more than I can count at this point. I readily admit I’m not the sharpest crayon in the box but I’ve learned to keep on coloring, even if most of my work can’t stay within the lines.” There’s an old bit of advice that suggests real education is learning from our mistakes. Yet the best, most efficient education learns from the mistakes of others, and more so, it doesn’t take near as long and it’s generally not quite as expensive. Grant readily admits he’s made many mistakes, especially in queen rearing. Grant hopes to accelerate your success so you don’t have to make the same mistakes he made and stumble over the same obstacles he incurred. Again, Grant adds, “I unswervingly believe the queen to be the heart and soul of the colony, and without a young, productive queen, everything, including a colony’s health and future, is at stake, as I mentioned in the preface.” When a honey bee colony struggles and wallows in malaise, for any reason, not just a poor queen, it is not uncommon to find beekeepers also experiencing frustration and losing heart. When beekeepers throw in the towel, especially on a larger scale, there is more at risk than the honey we enjoy in our green tea or the simmering anger of our spouse wondering why we entered such a challenging hobby at such a challenging juncture in time (translation: how come you haven’t harvested any honey in three years and why are we buying new bees to replace those old that died this past winter?) The absence of adequate pollinators affects everyone who irresponsibly grumbles with their mouths additionally one-third full of food humbly provided for them, courtesy of the tireless, under-appreciated honey bee. The benchmark of queen rearing is grafting, the mandatory technique that winnows out the potentials from the professionals. I won’t argue against grafting even though I don’t practice this method, but I firmly believe alternative queen rearing methods offer equally satisfactory options with similarly acceptable results. With the Nicot system, anyone can raise their own queens and not worry about grafting, or even losing any sleep over wondering how they could possibly even learn how to graft.

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- 318 pages

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2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Terrible writer. Boring text. Read something else.

By fourdegreesc

Ugh. One of the worst written books I've ever come across. The book does not focus on the Nicot system, but is rather a rambling manifesto of one guy's opinions on queen rearing in general. Not interesting. There is also a fair amount of self-promotion of the writer's other publications. Nevertheless, I read the thing cover to cover and was able to glean two tips for using the box. I provide them here so you don't have to pay for this crap-book and then sit through the whole opinion piece on queens. If you know nothing about raising queens, read another book. If you know but want to try the Nicot box, read these two tips. Good luck out there!

1. Don't transplant eggs, which is well known in the queen rearing world, but in this system I could see someone rushing them into the cell-builder early.
2. Put the box in the hive and let the bees "polish" the cups for a couple of days. I'm not sure if this is good advice, but it is one of the only things in the book directly related to the Nicot box.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Like all of his books I have read

By Neil Tonkin

Like all of his books I have read, Gillard repeats himself and parts of it needs some editing BUT after wading through about one third it becomes clear why he repeats himself. It sears itself into your memory. It's also increasingly interesting and informative the further you get in. The tricks and tips provided from his experience of failure were incredibly valuable to me. Only missed 5 stars by a fraction.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Great content - poor format.

By B Miller

This book is an interesting read and contains some excellent nuggets of information. Unfortunately, the book uses a very large font (28 point?) that is very difficult for my young eyes to read. I can only read a few pages in a sitting before my eyes begin to complain.

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