

## Making A Candy Board

By Steve Tipton

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Sometimes we goof when it comes to estimating how much food our bees will need overwinter, and either we don't feed, or we don't feed enough. Careful beekeepers in the colder parts of the country will be periodically checking their bees on warm-enough days to make sure they are doing OK and if they find that this is the case ... the bees have eaten their way all the way to the top of the hive and the cupboard is bare ... what can they do?

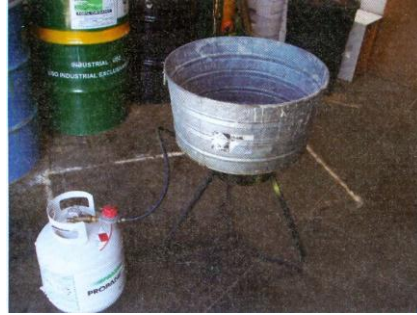
Usually feeding honey frames is recommended, but replacing frames in frigid weather can be hazardous to the health of the bees. And if it gets in the wrong place may divide the cluster.

A better choice is putting food directly above the bees where everybody can get at it. Bottles or cans of syrup probably won't work because of the temperature of the syrup when it gets cold again. Even if the syrup doesn't freeze it will be so cold the bees won't be able to eat it.

Slabs of commercial fondant work well, laid right over the cluster. Heat from the cluster rises and partially dissolves the sugars so the bees can eat it without moving. It works really well, but it's expensive. But so do candy boards. These use just sugar, not sugar and HFCS mixed like commercial fondant.

Last Summer I visited with Steve and Becky Tipton during their big Fun Day, and for a wintering demonstration Steve made a candy board. Here's how he did it. (see next page)

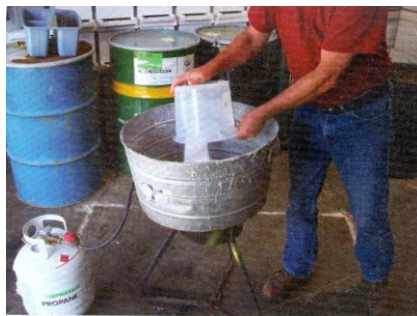
**WARNING: You are boiling sugar! It is very hot, 240F and has a tendency to adhere to you skin. Please be careful if you make up sugar boards.**



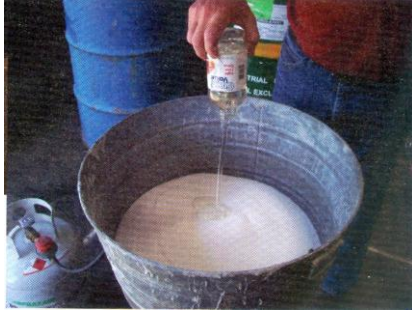
For a few boards you can use the set up shown here. A propane burner and a galvanized washtub. He'd used the burner the night before to heat oil for deep-fried fish.



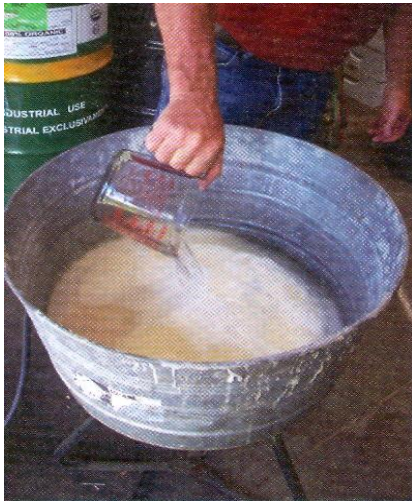
Prepare the board. Make a shim about two inches deep with the same inside dimensions as hive boxes. Plywood works for material. Steve shot some staples through the sides to support the sugar once it hardens. A good idea. Be careful when cleaning. And be aware of an upper entrance if you remove the inner cover with that notch.



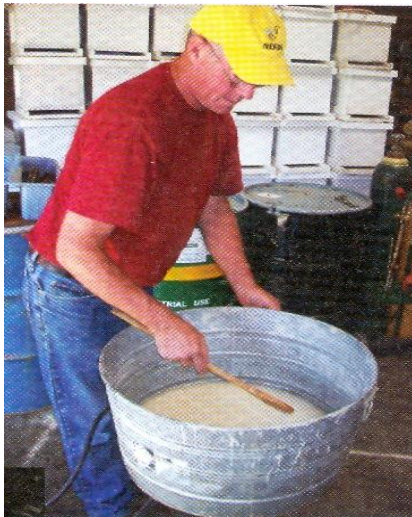
Pour in 15 pounds of sugar.



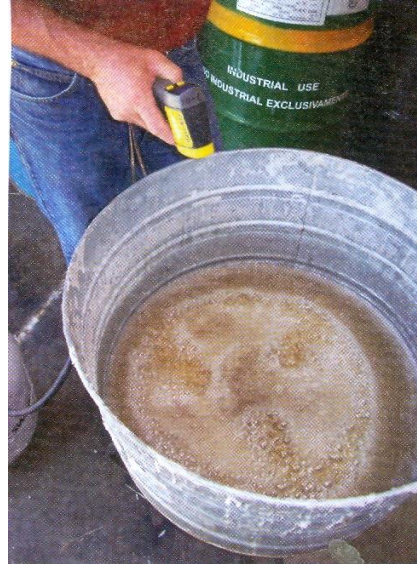
Add three one pound jars of Karo type corn syrup.



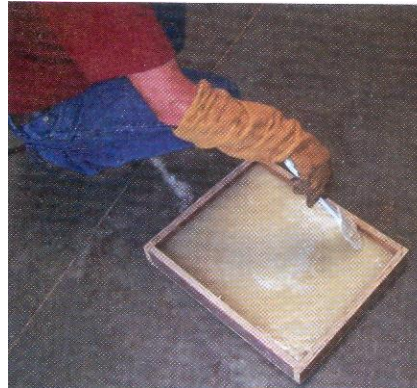
Add four cups of water.



Turn on the heat and begin to mix. Do not stop mixing. Do not let the mixture burn. Stir, stir, stir. Bring to a rolling boil.



Using a candy thermometer or handheld infrared thermometer, bring the mix to 240 degrees, turn off the heat. Let cool to about 180 degrees.



Pour to fill the board about three quarters full. Let harden. It's ready for emergency feeding. Make them now for emergencies later this Winter.