

5. Choice of exterior coating or finish

Water-based Acrylic paints and stains can be used. They have good weather resistance but are soft and prone to physical damage. Water-based shed and fence treatments should not be used on smooth timber normally used for the construction of hives.

Microporous finishes work well on hives. These treatments allow water vapour to escape from the wood without peeling or blistering the finish. They are also highly water repellent and flexible. The use of paints based on these principles gives an excellent and durable finish.

Woodstains may contain fungicides but no insecticides are used and these products can be used safely on beehives.

Woodstains and microporous finishes have a distinct maintenance advantage over conventional paints. After 3 to 4 years it is only necessary to clean down and recoat. Woodstains are classified as low or medium build according to their resin content. Low build finishes are preferable for migratory beekeeping.

Varnishes are unsuitable for use on hive parts. Under prolonged exposure to sunlight the finish breaks down and restoration is difficult.

Note: hive parts that have been treated should be dry and free from odour before the bees are housed in the hive.

Hive Roofs

Galvanised metal is the most suitable material for use in covering hive roofs. It does not need much maintenance. When the galvanised metal starts to fail a metal primer followed by a metal paint can be applied. If heat reflection is wanted then an aluminium or heat reflective paint can be used. Thin aluminium sheeting is a good alternative to galvanised material as it is corrosion resistant and needs no maintenance. Consider using silicone mastic to fix metal sheeting to the underlying structure, then you don't have to make holes in it for nails.

Roofing felt can be used to cover roofs, but it is not very durable and the wood underneath can rot before it is obvious that the felt is damaged. When roofing felt has been used, the felt can be painted with a heat reflective paint recommended by the felt manufacturer. Any holes or small tears can be repaired using a suitable mastic sealant. It is best to remove the whole covering if any part of the roof needs to be re-felted.

*This leaflet is provided for general interest and information only.
No liability is accepted for any injury or loss arising out of the contents of this leaflet.*

1. Choice of Timber

Western Red Cedar is usually the preferred material for the construction of beehives but is expensive. It is stable out of doors, it is light in weight and has some natural resistance to decay and insect attack. Hives can be constructed from softwood, preferably redwood (Scots pine). Whitewood (a knotting compound if a paint finish is to be used.

Water-resistant, exterior grade plywood can be used, but take care when cutting it to avoid splintered edges. Hives made from plywood will be heavier than Red Cedar. Plywood has little absorbency for preservative treatments. Do not use blockboard or MDF since these materials lack exterior durability. Spruce and larch are best avoided, as they are less durable and not as receptive to preservative treatment. Hardwoods such as oak are rarely used. They are more difficult to work, usually heavier, and are expensive.

Whichever kind of timber is selected it should be straight grained and knot free as far as possible. If it contains sapwood it will require protection to prevent decay. Knots should be sealed with

aint

Pressure treated timber can be bought from timber merchants or DIY centres: but check the treatment chemicals used are not harmful to beecy f40 @ T d r