THE FORAGING BEE · FIELD CARD

Queenright Checklist

Is she there, is she laying, and is the colony behaving like it knows? — LISTEN protocol, Section V

Work this card top to bottom before you conclude a colony is queenless. Most 'queenless' calls are a queen you did not find, a virgin not yet laying, or a colony broodless for a reason you can date.

1 · EVIDENCE OF A LAYING QUEEN — STRONGEST TO WEAKEST

- ☐ Eggs present: one per cell, upright or angled, centred at the cell base (laid within 3 days).
- ☐ Open larvae of graded ages, pearly white, floating in royal jelly.
- ☐ Capped worker brood, flat tan cappings, solid pattern.
- ☐ The queen herself — do not spend twenty minutes looking if eggs are present.
- ☐ Colony tone: even hum, bees working comb calmly, no roar when the lid lifts.

2 · WARNING SIGNS OF QUEENLESSNESS

- ☐ Roaring or 'wailing' note when the hive is opened; agitated bees running on the comb.
- ☐ No eggs and no open larvae anywhere, with capped brood emerging out (colony broodless 9+ days).
- ☐ Emergency queen cells on the comb face — not swarm cells along the bottom bar.
- ☐ Multiple eggs per cell, eggs on cell walls, domed drone cappings in worker cells = laying worker.
- ☐ Polished, empty cells in the centre of the nest with nowhere for a queen to lay.

3 · DATE IT BEFORE YOU FIX IT

What you see	Colony has been queenless roughly	Action
Eggs, no queen found	Not queenless — 0–3 days since she laid	Close up. Re-check in 7 days.
Open larvae only	3–8 days	Give a test frame of eggs; watch for cells.
Capped brood only	9–20 days	Requeen now, or combine.
No brood, calm, polished cells	Virgin may be present, 14–28 days	Wait 7 days before intervening.
Laying workers	21+ days	Shake out 50 m away, or combine over newspaper.

4 · THE TEST FRAME — THE ONLY RELIABLE DIAGNOSIS

Insert a frame of open brood and eggs from a healthy colony. Return in 4 days. Emergency cells drawn = the colony is queenless and knows it. No cells = a queen or a virgin is present. Repeat once before acting; a colony with a virgin will refuse to build.