



## Betterbee Smokers - Tricks and Tips

### Lighting and using smoker - Here are a few suggestions:

Start by putting in a piece of newspaper and light it with a long lighter. After it's flaming (be careful!) add wood pellets/shavings/pine pet bedding a little at a time. Keep puffing strongly for 20-30 seconds and adding more wood chips until smoker is  $\frac{2}{3}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  full. The shavings should be somewhat densely packed in, and the smoker will give out billows of light gray smoke. Now shut smoker tightly and use light puffs to "herd" your bees off areas you need to work, such as off of frame edges, or box edges. Bees retreat from smoke. Smoke a bit and watch them move deeper in.

**Another method** is to light 2-3 pieces of our Betterbee Smoker Fuel (it won't flame up, but will smolder). Then add more smoker fuel, wood stove pellets, or wood chips/shavings/pine pet bedding until smoker is  $\frac{2}{3}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$  full, puffing strongly until billows of gray smoke come out. Shut the lid tightly. When working bees, don't use strong puffs, but light puffs.

**Another good fuel** is pine straw or pine needles. These will light nicely with no paper or cloth as a base. Be sure to pack them down or they will burn away quickly.

**When finished with your bee work**, either empty your smoker fuel into a puddle or onto gravel, and douse it. Another option is to stuff a thick wad of green grass in the cone's tip. This smothers the smoker, and leftover fuel is kept inside for next time. **HOWEVER, keep smoker in a safe place such as in a metal can or outdoors, since it may begin smoldering again. Do not put a lit smoker indoors, inside a vehicle, or in the bed of a truck.** Once the smoker is cold and not smoldering, store indoors to protect the leather and wood bellows from the elements.

### Troubleshooting:

Problem: "My smoker smokes well until I shut the lid. Then it goes out!"

Solution: Check the cone. It is blocked up with something, like creosote or fuel. Clean it.

Problem: "My smoker has a hard time getting going even when I puff the bellows hard."

Solution: There may be a blockage in the lower air tube, under the tray. If you can remove the tray, do so and dump out any ashes or material present down there. Replace tray and repack smoker. If tray won't come out, tilt and tap smoker to get material to fall out of the lower air tube.

**SPECIAL NOTE FOR The Betterbee Premium Smoker (SMOKEBB)** : The Betterbee Premium Smoker includes a perforated stainless steel "outlet grate" which is not installed by default. This optional accessory for your smoker's outlet cone keeps fuel, especially wood pellets, from falling out when tilting smoker toward your bees. Unless using wood pellets, we recommend not using the grate due to the buildup of creosote on it. If disc becomes clogged with creosote, scrape with a hive tool or clean with a wire brush -- as you would normally periodically clean inside your smoker.

To install the grate, insert into the outlet cone of the smoker, and then install retainer spring (circular wire) behind it to hold the grate in place.