

Making a Snelgrove Board

Making a Snelgrove board is very easy. You will need four 25mm woodscrews some wood strips 20mm wide by 10mm thick, a saw, a stapler and staples or 25mm panel pins and hammer, also some glue and a pencil. A screwdriver, and a 2mm drill

Start by marking out the plywood to the size required for your hive I am using a clearer board to mark round in this picture



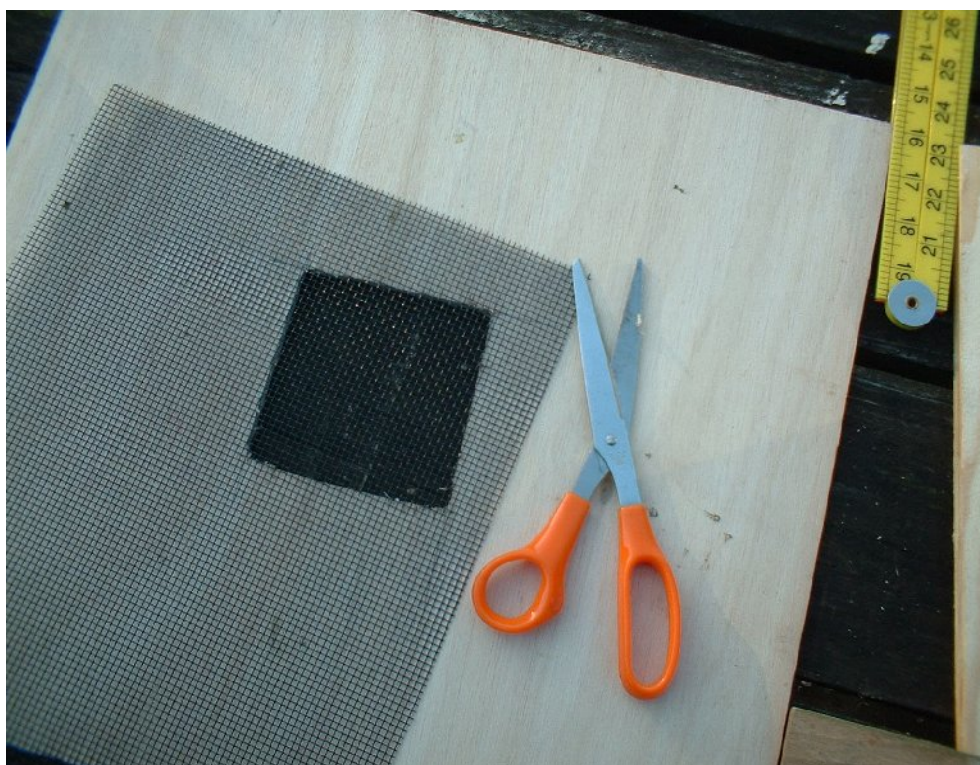
Now cut out the plywood to size



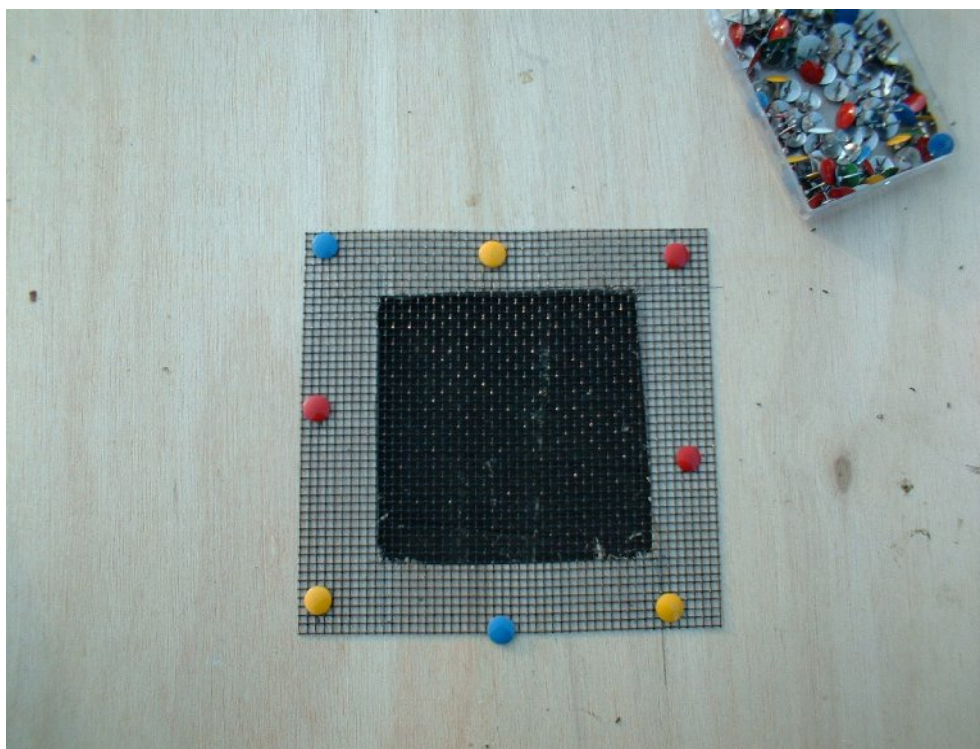
Cut all your ply first for as many boards as you need

Next mark a square around 100mm x 100mm which will be cut out

Cut out the square and prepare to cover it with mesh



Now pin the mesh to the board using drawing pins so it can be removed when combining bees later in the season.



Now we need to make the doors or wedges as Snelgrove calls them. So place the strip wood along the edge of the board and mark and cut it to size. Butt joints are fine for this. A Smith hive needs 8 pieces all sixteen and three eights inches. Depending on your hive yours will be different.



Now we need to glue and staple or pin the edges on to both sides of the board. It's very important that we don't glue or pin the middle 150mm of each edge because we want a pivoting door here.



Now mark the centre of each edge and make a template for your doors from a scrap of strip wood. The template needs to be around 100mm long with a sloping cut front and rear edge approx 45° . Mark the centre of the template as shown.

Pop the template on the edge strip and mark off the doors position Note its important to think about this so the door will open outward when the assembly is complete Check the picture. The pivot point for this door would have to be on the left



Work round the board marking your other doors Then turn over the board and the template and mark off the other side.

Ok now somewhat counter intuitively this is the time to drill a pilot hole for your pivot screw. Use a drill to suit the gauge of screw I am using a N°6 woodscrew 25mm long and a 2mm drill.



Drill all four holes before doing anything else

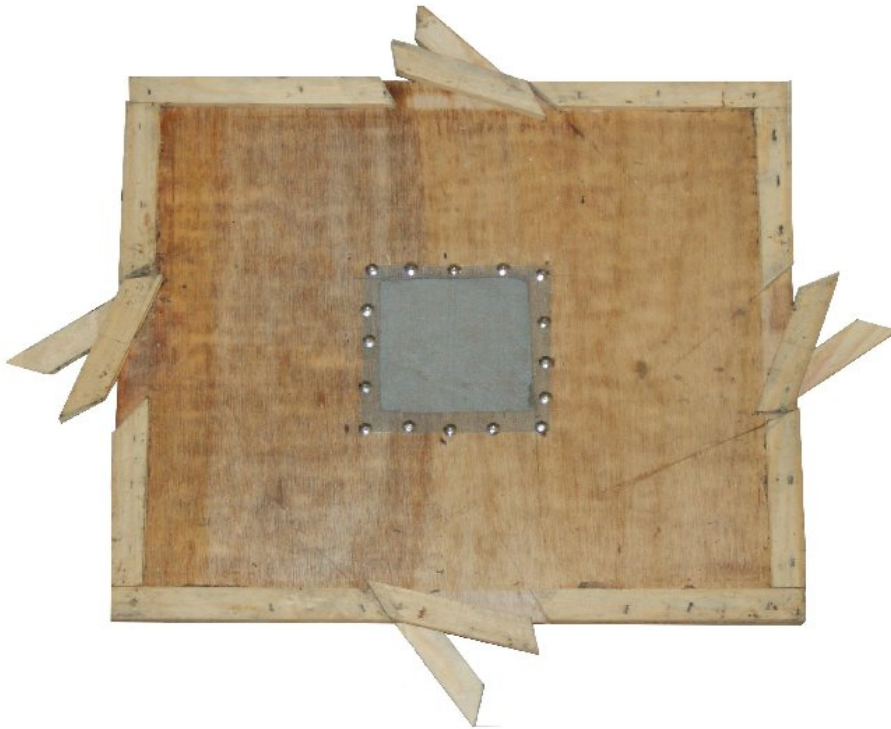


Now insert the woodscrews after countersinking the hole with the screwdriver bit to make sure the head sits flush.

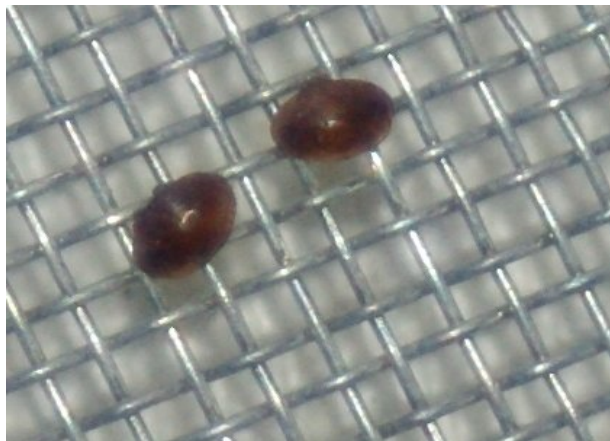
The pivot is in place so now we can cut along the marks to allow the doors to be formed .
Keep the saw upright the saw cut is the clearance needed to open the door



Here is the finished article this time made using 30mesh which is much finer than the standard mesh and can be bought online from jtwirecloth.com for about 25p each.



The finer mesh helps prevent varroa moving from the upper and lower brood boxes The board will work just as well with this size mesh



Snelgrove wrote his book long before varroa had been heard of and he didn't have Oil Seed Rape to deal with either, so his timings for splitting the colony might need to be adjusted for your area.

To get any help with varroa control from a Snelgrove board its important to get the board in place before any queen cells have been started.

Also when the queen is moved to the bottom box she is accompanied by some unsealed brood try to make sure this patch of brood is small, and importantly under 5 days old ,or you will be transferring varroa with the brood.

I hope you will give Snelgrove's methods a try his book "Swarming Its Control and Prevention" is still probably the best book on the subject for the amateur beekeeper.

John Tait