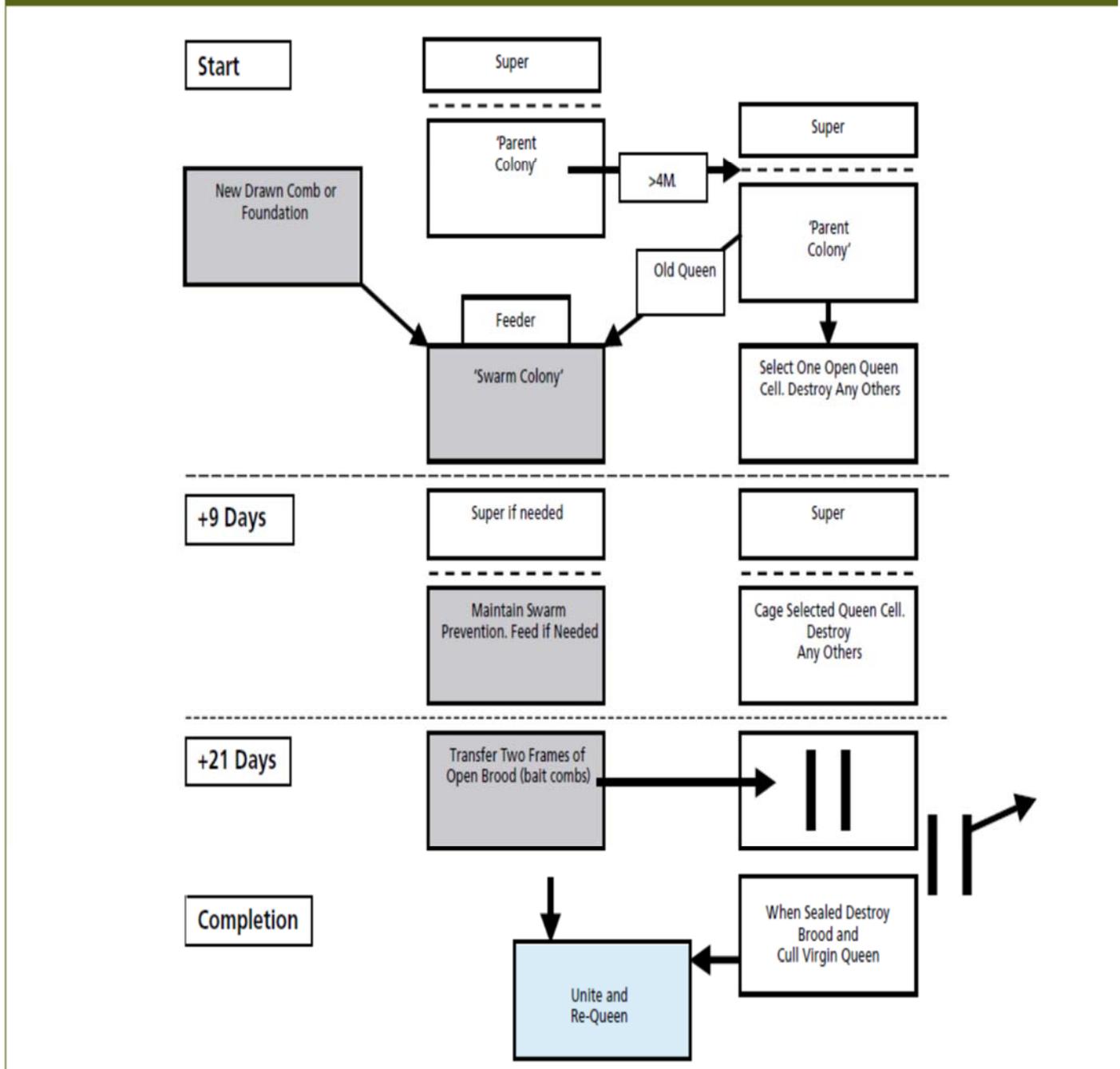


Figure 31: Diagram illustrating the control of *Varroa* using an 'Artificial Swarm'



**Artificial Swarm for Varroa control**

This is a method you can use if you do not want to use any treatments. It is only suitable to use this during the swarming season.

When you find your colony is preparing to swarm and is producing queen cells, move the brood box away from the original stand at least four metres away. Place a clean replacement brood box on the old stand containing clean new drawn comb. At this stage it is best to place a queen excluder under this brood box to prevent the swarm from absconding. Find the queen in the original box and place her on a comb in the new box on the old site. All the flying bees will return to this site to join her. Place a feeder on top and ensure you keep it topped up until the colony becomes established. Once the queen is laying well the queen excluder can be removed.

The original brood box on the new site now needs to be checked. Remove most of the queen cells but leave at least one for the bees to care for. This should be an open cell with a nice grub in it and should be in a suitable position for you to put a cage over later. Seven to nine days later, before any queen cells have hatched, go through this colony again and thoroughly check for queen cells. Destroy all these except the one you chose. Place a queen cell nursery cage over this cell and close up. This cage will allow the virgin to hatch and the bees can care for her but she cannot get out to mate. The bees will happily accept they have a queen and will not start to produce laying workers.

Twenty four days after you first split the colony, all the brood in the virgin queen colony will have hatched and the varroa mites will be desperate to find cells to go into to breed. Go to the original colony which is queen right and remove two frames of Unsealed Brood and place these in the brood less colony. The mites in here will enter these cells and when both frames are capped they can be removed and destroyed. The virgin queen should now be removed from this hive and a new queen introduced. If you do not have a new queen, the colony can be re-united with the original stock.