

How Stuff REALLY Works # 27

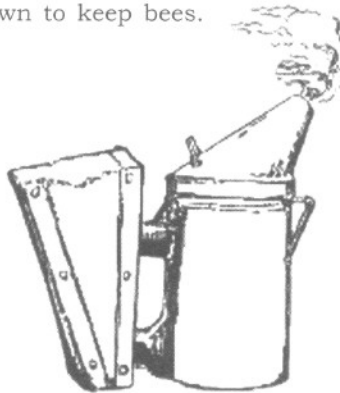
The Bee Smoker

Top pull-ring is small, but perfectly sized for the fingers (and noses) of the Zambian Pygmies who make them. Sadly, pygmies are not known to keep bees.

Bee smokers are required by federal law to use bellows, preserving jobs for the AFL-CIO buggy whip, bellows, & sandal makers local #273.

100% virgin Naugahyde bellows are a constant aggravation to the "Save The Nauga" foundation, who often picket beekeeper meetings.

Sizes of smokers range from seven inches to 12 inches. As this is a family publication, we cannot comment further.



Bottom of smoker gets hot enough to ignite dry grass and leaves. Beekeepers often work in dry grass and leaves.

While tin smoker body expands when hot, Niconel "memory metal" top shrinks when heated to make opening and re-fueling nearly impossible.

1/4 Witworth hinge-pin acquired from Latvian Navy World War I surplus stocks. No equivalent replacement parts available anywhere.

Joint between top and body of smoker leaks smoke when even a single pine needle is caught in between.

Operation is simple - load fuel chamber with combustible material (pine needles, burlap, cotton waste, cat hair) and light with a match or lighter.

Once the fire is going well, close the top, which cuts off air to the fire. For a brief period (one to two minutes) the fire will smolder, and smoke will issue forth.

Operating bellows forces air into the bottom of the fuel chamber at high velocity, blowing out any flame or glowing embers remaining.

Lack of plug or cap for spout forces beekeepers to collect wine bottle corks. Most other features of smoker drive beekeepers to drink, anyway.