

10 Frame Vs 8 Frame

By Michael Bush

Lighter boxes.

"Friends don't let friends lift deeps" Jim Fischer of Fischer's BeeQuick

The hardest thing for me about beekeeping is lifting. Boxes full of honey are heavy. Deep boxes full of honey are VERY heavy. There may be some disagreement as to the exact weights of a full box of honey, and there are other factors involved but in my experience this is a pretty good synopsis of sizes of boxes and typical uses for them:

Standard 10 Frame boxes

Name(s) Depth Weight full of honey Uses

- Jumbo, Dadant Deep: 11 5/8" 90 pounds Brood
- Deep, Langstroth Deep: 9 5/8" 72 pounds Brood & Ext
- Western Bee Supply: 7 5/8" 63 pounds Brood & Ext
- Medium, Illinois, 3/4: 6 5/8" 55 pounds Brood & Ext & Cmb
- Shallow: 5 3/4" or 5 11/16" 45 pounds Cmb
- Extra Shallow, 1/2: 4 3/4" or 4 11/16" 36 pounds Cmb

8 frame boxes:

- Jumbo, Dadant Deep: 11 5/8" 72 lbs
- Deep: 9 5/8" 58 lbs
- Western Bee Supply: 7 5/8" 50 lbs
- Medium, Illinois: 6 5/8" 43 lbs
- Shallow: 5 3/4" or 5 11/16" 36 lbs
- Extra Shallow: 4 3/4" or 4 11/16" 29 lbs

All of these weights get exaggerated because the box, even though you have broken it loose is still somewhat glued to the box below so you are often lifting two boxes until the bottom one lets go.

If you want a grasp of these and don't have a hive yet, go to the hardware store and pick up a fifty pound boxes of nails or, at the feed store, two fifty pound bags of feed. A ten frame deep will weigh half again this much. An eight frame medium will weigh less than this much.

I find I can lift about fifty pounds pretty well, but more is usually a strain that leaves me hurting the next few days. The most versatile size frame is a medium and a box of them that weighs about 50 pounds is an eight frame.

So, first I converted all my deeps into mediums. It was a huge improvement over the occasional deep full of honey I had to lift. I still got tired of lifting 60 pound boxes, so I cut the ten frame mediums down to eight frame mediums. I'm really liking them. They are a comfortable weight to lift all day long and not be in pain for the next week. Any lighter and I might be tempted to try to lift two. Any heavier and I'm wishing it was a shade lighter.

I'm wondering how many aging beekeepers have been forced to give up bees because they hurt themselves lifting deeps and it hasn't occurred to them there are other choices?

Richard Taylor in *The Joys of Beekeeping* says: "...no man's back is unbreakable and even beekeepers grow older. When full, a mere shallow super is heavy, weighing forty pounds or more. Deep supers, when filled, are ponderous beyond practical limit."

Typically I hear the question, "do they winter as well?" and I say they winter better in my experience as the cluster fits the box better and they don't leave behind frames of honey on the outside as much as they do in the ten frame hives.