



*Serving beekeepers in the greater
Madison area*

608-444-1493

www.capitalbeesupply.com

Lighting Your Smoker

Lighting a smoker is similar to starting a fire in a fireplace or lighting a campfire. You start with rapid burning, easily combustible material, such as newspaper. Once it is burning you add in a less combustible material, such as pine needles or cedar bedding chips and ignite that material. Lastly, if you are going to be in your apiary for a long time you can add in a longer-burning, more durable fuel, such as punk wood or dry wood chunks that will sustain the fire for as long as needed.

1. Gather your tools: paper, pine needles, punk wood, matches and smoker.



2. Crumple the newspaper into a loose ball a little larger than the smoker and light the bottom of the paper.



3. Let the paper catch fire and the flame begin to move up. Before the fire reaches your hand push the paper into the bottom of the smoker using your hive tool and puff the bellows gently a few times to keep fresh air moving past the paper. Flames will come up over the top of the chamber and engulf the paper.



4. Puff two or three more times until most of the paper is burning, but not yet consumed. Add a small handful of pine needles, cedar chips or other less combustible fuel to the chamber.





*Serving beekeepers in the greater
Madison area*

608-444-1493

www.capitalbeesupply.com

5. Puff a couple more times until the flames from the paper catch the pine needles, or chips afire. Once they are burning well push them down into the chamber with your hive tool, puffing slowly so air flows through the chamber.



6. When the first small batch of needles, or chips, begins to flame up, add more of that material loosely. Puff several times so you don't smother the fire. Keep air moving through the system



7. When the second, or third, batch of needles or chips begins to smolder you can add the more durable fuel if needed. Puff the bellows slowly to keep air in the system.

If you are only going to be in your apiary a short time you might skip the durable fuel. Some beekeepers add a small amount of green grass clippings on top of the needles or chips which will generate a lot of smoke for a short period of time.



8. When a lot of smoke rises when you puff close the smoker, still puffing occasionally.



9. When lit, the smoker should smolder unattended for many minutes. If it sits idle for a while without use, puff rapidly a couple of times so the smoldering coals flare up.