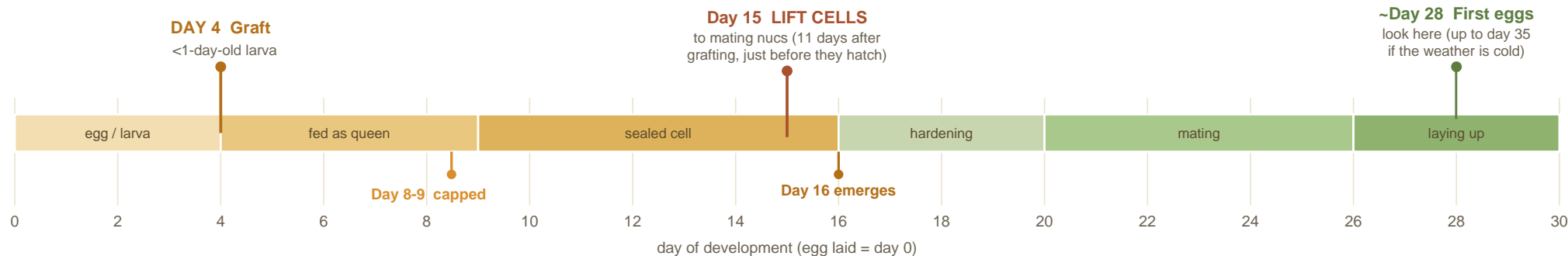


Queen Rearing Timing Chart

From graft to laying queen, and the three things that decide it in northern England

THE TIMELINE

(days from the egg being laid; graft a 1-day-old larva on day 4)



THE THREE THINGS THAT DECIDE IT UP HERE

1. The mating window

A virgin who cannot get out to mate has a hard ceiling. Grounded by weather for about three weeks* and she can no longer mate, becoming a drone-layer. Cold, wet, windy springs are what cost you queens.

* sometimes 4 weeks, but quality may suffer

2. Drones must be ready first

No mature drones, no mating. A drone needs roughly five weeks from egg to mating-fit. They must already be flying in the colony on the day you graft, so the drone brood has to be well under way before you start.

3. Mating weather, later up here

Queens fly to mate on warm (about 18-20C+), calm, dry afternoons*. Those afternoons are scarcer and arrive later in Cheshire than in the south, especially Southern Europe.

* In some areas, they seem to manage mating in less salubrious conditions

WHEN TO TRY, NORTHERN ENGLAND

practitioner judgement, tune to your own apiary



Apr - early May: drones possibly scarce and immature, mating weather unreliable. Early grafts often fail (hence buying in early queens from warmer climates).

Mid-May - July: drones mature and plentiful, best run of mating weather. The dependable window for home-reared queens.

August reset: shake out failures, re-make from production bees and summer queens. Late nucs need heavy feeding but overwinter strongly and sell well in spring.

Count back: for a laying queen by a chosen date, graft roughly 3 to 4 weeks earlier (longer in poor weather) - and have drone brood laid 5 to 6 weeks before you graft.

Egg to emergence is 16 days: graft at day 4, capped day 8-9, cells lifted day 15 (11 days after grafting, a day before emergence), mating ~days 20-26, first eggs ~day 28. These are well established (NBU/BeeBase, MAAREC). Seasonal windows for northern England are practitioner judgement, adjust to your own records.

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