

Sugar brick recipe

Makes 6 one-pound bricks, in two quarter-sheet (9" x 13") jelly roll pans.

Ingredients:

- 14 cups (6.25 pounds) of **granulated sugar**
- 1 cup of **apple cider vinegar***
- 1 ½ teaspoons **citric acid powder USP**

(Get real apple cider vinegar, not artificially flavored and colored "cider vinegar." A good brand is Braggs.)*

Alternatives to jelly roll pans: Your bees won't care what shape the sugar bricks come in, as long as you make sure the finished brick is no thicker than about one inch — this helps the blocks dry easily and fit within the space on top of the hive. You can use shallow, disposable, foil pans from the grocery store, re-purpose shallow plastic trays from frozen dinners, or — if your dehydrator has circular layers — use any kind of shallow container that fits on the trays. If you have a top bar hive, you can create a brick form that matches the shape of your combs, then attach the dried brick to an empty bar within a wire cage, next to the bees.

Instructions:

1. Place the sugar in a large bowl.
2. Combine the vinegar and citric acid together, then pour half of the vinegar mixture over the sugar. Stir.
3. Add the rest of the vinegar mixture, then stir until fully combined — the sugar mix will feel like barely-damp sand. *You may find using your hands works best, but you can also mix in a stand mixer, or in a bucket using a drill with a paint-stirrer attachment.*
4. Divide the mixture between two shallow jelly roll baking pans — no taller than about 1 inch deep — over-filling the pans slightly above the rims. Then use a rolling pin to smooth and compress the sugar into the pan until it is firm and level with the pan rim. Press down firmly to make sure there are no voids.
5. Use a knife to cut lines completely down through the sugar mixture to separate the bricks. This helps ensure you get a clean break after they are fully dried.
6. Place pans in the dehydrator or a convection oven set for 140 degrees F until the sugar is very hard, which can take 8 to 36 hours. You can pause the drying process if you need to use the appliance for cooking, or don't want to run it while you are asleep or at work. If air-drying, the process can take 24 to 48 hours at a constant, cool temperature.
7. Once the bricks are hard, remove them from the oven and let them cool. Store in air-tight containers, until needed.

The oven-drying process will give off a distinctly vinegary smell at first — but the smell doesn't linger and will actually remove other odors from your house.