

Managing Honey Production

Betsey Spencer

When does spring management begin?

- July and August - Making sure your bees are well fed during the dearth
- Check your mite load (treat)
- Check your queen

YOU GOT THROUGH WINTER—NOW WHAT?

January

- Check stores (feed if necessary)
- Location of brood nest (Rotate if needed)
- Queen laying?
- Foraging?
- Ready equipment

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1CCaBKVFtojLRzYwz3DXBQneol1-rq4Nb>



October through January



February 3rd

Honey and Nectar

Evaluate need to supplement and how

- Surplus Capped Honey?
- Fresh Nectar Coming In?
- Resources In Proximity to Brood nest?
- Are Bees Foraging ? What's Blooming?
- Population estimates

Evaluate Queen and Brood Nest

- Population
(The good, bad and ugly)
- Queen less? (Now what?)
- Queen not laying?
(If not consider possibilities why)

EQUIPMENT

- Be proactive in evaluating the need for additional equipment.
- Have honey supers ready
- Consider setup – mediums, shallows, queen excluders, top supers vs. bottom
- Get them on early (draw foundation)

NOW COMES THE BALANCING ACT!

February

- Kicks into high gear with red maple
- May need to rotate boxes
- May need to feed syrup
- May need to add equipment (be proactive)

DON'T LET THEM STARVE!

March

- Watch the weather
- Watch the resources
- Watch the expansion of the brood nest
- Anticipate expansion needs
- Rotate again if needed

Mites, Oh My!

March

- Begin taking mite counts
- Treat using your preferred method
- Continue the balancing act! Swarming can reduce your population by 60%.

Honey Production

- Get supers on early
- Don't feed sugar
- Don't treat for mites with chemicals
- Supering top or bottom?
- Upper entrance?

Swarm Prevention

Emergency Action

- Add equipment
- Checkerboard the frames
- Queen excluder
- Simulated swarm

De-queening

- Do a simulated swarm
 - (I do this as a matter of course)
 - Keep old one as backup
 - Raising a queen provides break
 - Doesn't hurt honey flow

WHEN Is It Safe ?

- Usually by March
- Do you see Drones (mature)
- Just before the flow

HOW?

- Transfer two to three frames into a Nuc
 - One with open brood and nurse bees
 - One with nectar and pollen
 - One with emerging brood
 - Along with queen
 - Add a frame of drawn comb
 - Options for 5th frame

PREP THE MAIN HIVE

- Tear Down Any Swarm Cells
- Make Sure There Are Eggs
- Mark The Top Of Frames With Eggs
- Make Any Adjustments Necessary To Reorganize And Consolidate
- Evaluate Your Queen

Evaluate Queen

- Laying patterns (Requeen?)
- Breeding stock
 - Gentleness
 - Overwintering
 - Mite resistance
 - Resources

When To Extract?

- After the flow

Pros-

- Fresh honey (no treatment chemicals)

Cons-

- Judging how much is too much
Dearth, Winter
- Storing empty supers

When To Extract?

- Spring- Before the flow

Pros-

- This is truly surplus honey
- Reduces the need for sugar
- Honey is better for bees than sugar
- Can put supers back on
- Earlier crop before other beekeeper

Cons-

- Chemical treatments limited (formic acid)
- Last year's honey

Remember!

- What works for others may not work for you!
- Keep your objectives in mind!

QUESTIONS ?