

BEE WORK IN MAY.

How to Get Your Bees Ready for the Honey Flow.

—By N. D. WEST.

May is here. Our bees are again well wintered, and the apiarist is made happy by the joyful hum of his own co-laborer, the honey bee. And as he goes out on a peasant day, takes a walk through his bee yard and see his bees all active and busy carrying in great loads of pollen and some honey, he is inspired to say "Oh how beautiful! how I do enjoy this. But business is business and it is time for me to work, and like the great shepherd take care of my flock."

The apiarist, in walking through his bee yard should carefully watch the flying of his bees at each and every hive. In this way the observing bee master can in a very short time tell nearly the condition of his bees. He can tell by their flying the strength of the colony, the health and energy of the bees, and whether they are gathering honey or pollen in peace and harmony, or if war is raging and some of the poor swarms are being robbed, either in his own yard or some other yard. Bees in war are desperate fighters, and it is sometimes quite hard to compromise with them.

Now as the apiarist has been walking through his bee yard perhaps he has noticed by the flying of the bees that some of his swarms were not in good condition. Such should be marked when noticed, by laying a stone on their hives, or some kind of a mark made to call attention to the fact. They should be looked to the first cool morning. Do whatever should be done, contract the brood nest or give honey if needed, &c., &c.

From the time bees are carried from the cellar to their summer stands they want watching. See that they fly well and know that they have honey enough. Keep the tops of the hives well covered to keep the bees warm and dry. It is not necessary to open the hive of a number one swarm of bees until fruit trees are in blossom. Bees, from the time they are set out should be encouraged to breeding by feeding them unbolted rye flour. Put it in a large shallow box, set the box in one corner of the yard out of the wind. This should be done on all pleasant days until natural pollen comes. A load of green sawdust spread

around the box or near the yard is a great help. The bees love to work on the dust, it stimulates them to breeding and keeps the bees working near home, and they will not die off as fast as they would to fly farther from home in search of something.

But May 15th has come and fruit trees are all in bloom and it means business. But we will get there just the same.

Our hives and boxes are all made and we are ready to work with our bees by the wholesale.

I will now be a little personal and talk about myself and boys, as we are about to go to work. My son's name is David and my hired man's name is Amos; I'll be boss and tell them what I want to be done. Hurrah boys! To-day we will clip our queens and scrape our hives neat and clean, so there will be no wax or burr combs in the hives, or on the brood frames to bother us in moving the frames. This also tends to prevent the frames from being waxed fast again, which bothers us through the swarming season. We must also equalize our swarms and get them in shape so they will be ready for the sections, and we must get the bees to work in the supers before swarming begins.

David, you put a good hard wood fire in three of the Bingham smokers, and then get my tool box and carry them in the bee yard. See that the things are in the box such as, bee veils, screw driver, hive scraper, hammer and a few nails, chalk and pencil and bee memorandum book, and get a lot of those section pieces that we use on our hives for tags. On these tags I write the age and strain and quality of the queen in the hive, as

Q 1895 - I strain.
Q XXX clipt, etc

I place this tag under a wire spring, on the back end of my hive. That wire spring can be turned around like the hands on the face of a clock, and it will hold the tag in any position I want it, and the position of the tag on the hive indicates the condition of the swarm. The most of the tags are up to the hive rim, and show that the swarm is O. K. But when the tag hangs away down, then there is no queen. When they have a queen call the tag is moved again, and so on, until the queen is laid and clipt. Amos I think now you understand how to place the tags.

Amos, David has the tools, and the smokers lighted, and he is in the bee yard with them, ready for business. He has six clean empty hives there also. Amos you take this comb box on the wheelbarrow and wheel it from the honey house to the end of the first row of bees. This box