

From the Bee Hive.

### SPRING MANAGEMENT.

**PRESUME** that your offer of two queens for an article on "Hints for Beginners," would mean beginners that had never kept bees and wish to start an apiary now. My advice to such would be to get a practical bee-book and study it; for whoever wishes to start an apiary in this age of the world must give some time to the subject. Get your supplies ready; make your hives, and have them all of one size—the L. frame I think is nearest the standard. I like a large two-story hive best, such as I have illustrated in a back number of the *Bee Hive*.

Make two division-boards to each hive, so you can pack and keep the brood warm in spring and your bees that are wintered outdoors, for it does not pay to winter a few colonies indoors as the cost would be too much for a beginner to undertake. When it gets warm enough to buy a few colonies of bees in your vicinity, in old box hives if you can buy them cheap, then transfer them, for this will give you a little experience in manipulating bees. You will have a little trouble in this transferring business that you don't read about, and one trouble will be in making your comb stay inside the frames. If you use sticks or tins they will drop out or be in the way, and if you use strings they will cut into the comb or the bees will pick them in two.

But I have in mind a way that I think would hold the comb in, even if it was all in small pieces, better than anything I have used. You want first to get frames that have no wire in them, then buy a little poultry netting and cut it in pieces that will just go around the frame and fasten, but not getting it so wide that it will reach by the ends of the frame. When you are ready to transfer get a wide board, and after you have tacked one side of this poultry netting to the upper side of the top-bar of your frame, lay it down flat on this board (or some other level surface) with the netting underneath; then after you have filled the frame full of comb bring the netting over and tack to the other side of top-bar. When you have it all finished it will have the appearance of pieces of comb caged up in the frame.

I will further add that if you have not comb enough to fill a frame and you can not get the under part of your comb so you can spring a stick underneath the comb, from end-bar to end-bar, so as to hold it up against the top-bar, you want to take a few strips of tin, having them long enough so you can fasten one end onto the wire netting above the underside of the comb on one side, and then poke the tin around under

the comb, and bend the other end over the wire in the same way, above the other side of your wire netting. You want to use strips about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch wide, so as not to cut into the comb. Wide strips of cloth would do if you have no tin.

After the bees have well fastened the comb you can take your netting and tin off. If there is not much honey coming in you had better feed. Feeding will not hurt bees in spring. But if you want the full benefit of the feeding you must know when the honey harvest is coming, and feed your bees six weeks previous to this time; say about the first of April for fruit bloom; first of May for clover and so on. Feeding is not the only way of increasing bees, for if the brood-nest is not kept sufficiently warm the bees will dwindle away in spite of you. You will often see larvæ being dragged out of the hive on this account; there being too much room in the hive for the bees to keep up the desired heat.

In this case you must make the brood-nest smaller, to correspond with your bees, by taking out a few frames and moving your division-board up to the bees. Your bees should cover every frame, and when you see brood all capped over in the middle frame, place one of your outside frames next to it, and when all of the frames are filled with brood and well covered with bees, put a frame filled with comb or foundation in the center, spreading the brood-nest for this purpose. Work in this way slowly and carefully, keeping the brood-nest always warm with your winter packing till warm weather sets in, and you will soon have a fine colony of bees that will do to divide if you do not wish them to swarm naturally.

Swarming is the better way for a beginner, for if he divides he is apt to divide too much. When hiving a swarm never carry the hive to it, but take the swarm in a box or something to the hive (after you have placed the hive where you wish it to stand); shake them onto a sheet placed before the hive and they will go in if it is carefully done by dropping a few bees first, and when these start in shake the rest down on the sheet. If you want surplus honey in sections you must also keep that department of your hive warm so the bees can work the wax easily; but don't let the sun shine on that part of the hive where the sections are as to make it so hot that the bees will be forced out. There is a good deal more to be said but it will not do to make this article too long, besides if you get a good book, like A. I. Root's A B C book, you will find in that all you can remember and practice the first year; but I want to add one more item, that is always keep your face covered with a veil