

Outdoor vs. Cellar Wintering

Given at Perth Bee-keepers' Convention
By D. Chalmers.

Mr. President and fellow Bee-keepers.—If my memory serves me right, the above subject was allotted me at our last meeting as an appropriate paper to present at this our spring gathering.

But before entering upon it I would like to draw your attention to the term "out door," or "outside wintering." Does it not seem to you in using such a phrase, that the bees are outside simply in their hives as those in cellar would be; I will leave it with you to discuss as to how "Winter Packing vs. Cellar Wintering," would pass as a proper term to use to distinguish between those wintered in cellar and those wintered in summer stands protected.

My experience with the system of winter packing I practice now, dates from the year 1882, but for 13 years before that I cannot well explain how my bees were prepared to stand the winter blasts. Several winters between 1882 and now I have tried cellar wintering, and also a room prepared on the D. A. Jones principle, well protected, supplied with sub-earth ventilation, etc., etc., but for the last three or four years I have wintered almost exclusively on the winter packed system. Had these lines been penned in the latter part of March or early in April, grave doubts would have pervaded me as to how the bees would fare, after the warmth in the earlier part of the former month, which no doubt induced them to brood freely. This warm spell was followed by about three weeks of cold weather endangering chilling of the brood, but the cold seemed so steady that few bees ventured out and therefore spring dwindling did not reduce the bees as it often does, and to-day I am better pleased than ever with wintering bees protected in summer stands. It has an advantage which cellar wintering cannot claim, it saves the heavy carrying to and from the cellar, it saves all anxiety as to when bees should be set out. In early spring some mornings are bright and warm, but ere the day advances very far it becomes chilly, and should bees be set out from the cellar on such a morning they would be lost by thousands, for they will come out whether fit or not, when newly placed in open air, but on the contrary, when winter-packed, they are their own judges of the weather and are very instinctive as to when it is wisest to stay home." In Germany

I think it is, the people look to the bees as weather indicators, and in fact my observations are that on a rain threatening day if the bees do not seem to leave their hive to go gleaning, their owner had better not go far from home either.

My mode of winter packing is to make a rough box with bottom within the sides, so that the rain will not lodge so readily. The top of it should be sloped to suit a shanty roof. It requires two strips about three or four inches wide nailed edgewise on the bottom of the box to set the hive on, said strips to run from the front to within four inches of the rear. The box also requires a hole to be cut in front about four inches square, the bottom of which should just be level with the top of bottom board of the hive. It should be large enough to allow at least four inches of packing all around.

When the time comes for packing for winter, the rough box is to be filled to the top of the strips on the bottom herein above described. Set the colony in place, bridge the entrance, pack all around and over the top of the hive, and the chances are that another summer's sun will shine on a live colony of bees. A very essential point, of course, is to see in early fall that they are supplied with sufficient sealed honey to carry them to next season's apple bloom. As to the time of packing, if your rough boxes are water tight, pack in September or October. But if they leak, better leave off packing till after the fall rains are over. The hive entrance may be kept about three inches wide during winter but when spring comes contract to about one-half inch and gradually open as the days become warmer.

Trusting these ideas may meet your approval, and wishing you all a prosperous season.

D. CHALMERS.

Poole May 10th, 1894.

A man went into a drug-store and asked for something to cure a headache. The druggist held a bottle of hartshorn to his nose, and he was nearly overpowered by its pungency. As soon as he recovered, he began to rail at the druggist. "But didn't it help your headache?" asked the apothecary.

"Help my headache!" gasped the man. "I haven't any headache. It's my wife that has the headache."—Selected.

All things fulfil their purpose, low or high;
There is no failure; death can never mar
The least or greatest of the things that are;
Until our work is done, we cannot die.

—Chamber's Journal.