

Hints For Beginners

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A question often asked is how to increase the number of colonies in an apiary at the least expense. This is a question somewhat difficult to answer. Where the person is a good judge of a colony of bees and the price no greater than that at which some colonies are offered for sale every year in some portions of Ontario, I should say the cheapest way of increasing under the above conditions would be to buy the bees. Buy good colonies and ignore inferior at half the price. In passing let me mention how universal the impression is that hives weighing the heaviest are the best colonies. Quite recently I was moving an apiary of 100 colonies, the men who were hauling them noticed quite a difference in the weight and remarked that some of them (referring to the light hives) were very weak and would not amount to much. Bees, brood and good combs are of greater importance than weight, these cannot readily be obtained when absent, the feeding if needed can easily be done. We will, however, consider that a bee-keeper wants to increase his bees and would like to know how to go about it. He should have plenty of hives, drawn comb is very desirable and a great help. If they are old comb they should be dry, free from unwholesome odors although when increasing artificially this is not of as great importance as where swarms are cast upon the unclean combs. Leave your bees alone until they fill the brood chamber of the hive: if honey is not coming in, at the close of the day uncap a little honey in the

hive, if the stores are scant feed the bees by well known methods but do not feed honey, feed granulated sugar syrup. When the stock is strong and honey coming in divide, having previously ordered and on hand as many young queens as you intend making nuclei. An eight frame Langstroth hive well filled with bees can be divided into three smaller hives. Give three combs of hatching brood with adhering bees to one hive, placing it upon a new stand, and give it a new and strange queen. In another put all but one comb of the remaining brood and adhering bees, there should not be less than two combs of brood.

Shake the bees from an additional comb taking one with the largest number of young bees, they can be distinguished by their smaller and more downy appearance, with this nucleus or young colony put the old queen. Close up with a tuft of grass the two hives newly organized and allow third hive to remain on the old stand with the remaining combs and bees, giving the stock a young queen.

The first made hive with the hatching brood will as the grass dries, lose many old bees by their returning to the hive on the old stand especially as it has not the old queen to attract them. The hive with the old queen on the new stand will have some but less of the old bees return to the old stand. The bees leaving the two hives mentioned will return to swell the numbers in the old hive. A beginner nearly always makes the mistake of putting an insufficient number of bees in the young hives made. In a few days see that the queens have been safely introduced and then feed the bees whenever they are not gathering naturally to stimulate brood rearing and give them room whenever required. If drawn combs cannot be given them