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MAKING CONCRETE BLOCKS FOR BEE HIVE STANDS

By G. A. Deadman.

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In making concrete blocks for hive stands, I decided to have my hives arranged in pairs. Allowing eight inches between the two hives, it was necessary to make the blocks 38 inches long. As I was replacing with wire a board fence which had done duty for over twenty years, I took some of the six-inch boards and cut them this length. Two of these were nailed together trough style, or at right angles. For a "board" on which to mix or make the concrete, as many boards of the length I happened to have were taken as would, when placed side by side, be about four feet wide, and under these I placed four cross pieces. On each side of this was nailed a board six inches wide—although less would have done as well. These boards at the side not only make a better "mixing board," but they also form one end for each mold, as a row of these are placed on each side. As the molds are placed the narrow part down, there has to be some way of keeping them the right way up. There is nothing better for this than a little sand, near each end, on each side. When making the molds of one-width lumber, one side will be wider than the other. There is an advantage in this, for when placing the molds I was careful always to keep the narrow side nearest me, having the wide side rest upon the narrow side of the one preceding it. In

this way we not only have a support on one side for each, but the sides now become of equal width. A board was then placed along the outside of each row to form the other ends. These are kept in place by stakes driven into the ground. By having your sand heap narrow, it is an easy matter to extend these molds along each side, and the sand will keep a board forming the inside end of the molds in place.

Having obtained the necessary sand and Canada cement, we are ready to begin. The sand was from the lake shore—the coarse kind. There was very little in it larger than marbles, anything larger than hen's eggs being raked out. For a job of this kind I prefer it finer. Nothing larger than peas may possibly be better. The proportions used were one of Canada cement to full three of sand. These were put in a heap and turned three or four times before adding the water. This cannot be done too thoroughly. We never mixed more than half a bag of cement at one time, which was sufficient for five blocks. As the top of the blocks comes next to the ground when placed under the hives, we need not be very particular about their appearance, being more concerned in having the molds clean, so that the narrow part at the bottom, upon which the hives are placed, will be smooth and level. The molds were sprinkled with water before filling. We used plenty of water, sufficient so the mixture would not require pounding, but not enough to leak away. Before it hardened, in usually about fifteen minutes or less, I took a plasterer's trowel