

FIRST STEPS IN BEE-KEEPING.

KEEPING EVERLASTINGLY AT IT
BRINGS SUCCESS.

QUESTIONS SENT IN BEARING UPON FIRST STEPS
IN BEE-KEEPING WILL BE ANSWERED IN THIS
DEPARTMENT BY THE EDITOR.

During this month, if it has not already been done, examine every colony and satisfy yourself that it has a laying queen. If it has not and fertile workers have not developed or the colony has dwindled very much the bees being all old, get a queen. So far as we know all our advertisers are reliable men. If the colony is in a bad condition we would advise destroying it.

Toward the latter part of this month or when the brood is pretty well hatched from the combs, see that your colony has at least twenty-five pounds of honey for stores. An eight frame Langstroth hive with combs and bees, lid removed, should weigh from 55 to 65 pounds.

If they do not weigh 50 lbs put in combs of honey from upper stories. If you have not such you must feed. There are numerous feeders. I know of nothing better than the Miller feeder; there may be better. You must get a feeder which can be used at least inconvenience and out of which the bees take the feed rapidly. The more quickly you feed the least waste and the better. Then leave your bees alone until time to pack for winter.

QUESTIONS.

Is it right to take honey from the hive before the frames are all full and capped? My bees are the old black kind. I should like to get an Italian queen, but don't know how to put her in the hive and I should like to get comb foundation if I thought I could put it in, and it would suit for any hive. My husband made the hives. I should like to know much to succeed with my bees. Will you kindly advise me, and oblige

Mrs. J. C., Sowerby, Algoma.

ANSWER.

Honey should be taken when ripe. It is safe to say that honey may be ripe and yet not capped, and therefore it may be right to remove the honey before the frames are full and capped. When honey is coming in freely and the hive fills up we take the fact that the combs are about sealed as an evidence that it is ripe. When the honey

flow ceases, however, before the combs are full, the bees do not continue to cap, neither can they fill the combs; under such conditions you can rest assured that the honey the bees themselves gathered will be ripened as much as it ever will be within a few days of the time the honey flow ceases. Of course when changing from dark to light honey, or from light to dark, it may become desirable to extract honey not ripe and prevent it mixing with an inferior grade, but avoid extracting unripe honey. It may be ripened artificially afterwards by placing in a hot place, but the plan is not good, better have the honey a little dark and thick and ripe than light colored and unripe.

About changing queens. As you are a beginner, unless you have a fall flow do not attempt to change the queen this season, it is too late. If other bees are in your vicinity they are liable to rob your hive during the long operation of finding the queen. Then if the queen should be lost in introduction it may get pretty late in the season and you may have difficulties. But next season when honey comes in by all means do away with your black bees. If you cannot find your queen in any other way put a queen trap or bee guard at the entrance. Shake all the bees out of the hive, adjust your trap or guard at the entrance; shake the bees from the combs at the entrance and put them in the hive. Put quilt and lid in place, then with smoker gently drive the bees into the hive. To prevent the queen getting under the hive I like, before the operation begins, to place the hive flat on the ground. In this way the queen should be singled out as the bees pass through the metal.

As to foundation, it can be put in by means of melted wax or nailed in by means of a strip of wood. You can get any size of foundation you desire from dealers, but do not make the mistake so many do—forget to give the size, or even forget to order the kind you want, brood or section foundation. But you have only a few hives, now why not get a Langstroth frame or hive and make it that size to begin with, it will save you much annoyance in the future, and you can get goods to fit that hive from any supply dealer. There is no patent on the hive.

R. F. HOLTERMANN.

Frogmore, July 23, 1894.

Bees did poorly the forepart of the season. I only had eight swarms from twenty-six, spring count. I lost none during winter. I have 300 pounds of basswood comb honey and no clover.