

APICULTURE

Preparing for 1918

WHILE a maximum production of honey is of pressing importance in the war-food year, yet increasing the bees for next season must not be neglected.

Roughly speaking, the bees that are in the hives at the commencement of the honey-flow gather the crop, while the brood builds up the colony for the next year, unless there is to be another important honey-flow. This brood is very valuable for forming nuclei, because these, started early with a laying queen, or ripe queen-cell, will build up into strong colonies before winter. Increasing in this way with brood from strong colonies during the honey flow is the basic principle upon which an apiary can be quickly built up while at the same time an almost full honey-crop is secured.

In newly-formed nuclei containing brood in all stages there is always more or less desertion of bees and consequent death of the young brood and sometimes stinging and death of the older brood, even when the nuclei are skillfully made by an experienced apiarist. Further, queens may not be immediately obtainable, or they may be lost in introduction. Robbing of the newly-formed nuclei has also to be guarded against, but during the height of the honey-flow only careless bees will cause this; towards its end, however, the danger of robbing grows so great that it is difficult to maintain newly-formed nuclei even when strong. Desertion may be checked by stopping the entrance with grass; the bees will make their way out when the grass dries and shrinks in about two days, but care must be taken to avoid overcrowding the confined bees, which would lead to stinging, especially in hot weather. A good way to overcome the loss of young brood is to place the brood over a queen excluder a week before its removal from the parent hive. This may be done in the ordinary course of relieving congestion in the brood chamber as a means to discourage swarming, a frame or two of empty comb or of foundation being placed in the brood chamber when the brood is raised.

To Minimize Risk.

All of these risks may be greatly minimized as follows: Have all the queens' wings clipped (this is not essential), and when a colony of a strain that it is desired to propagate swarms, move the parent hive to a new stand, and place the swarm in an empty hive on the old stand, the queen having been picked off the ground and placed in the empty hive. The swarm will return to the new hive at the old stand. The field bees will now join the swarm, and the super should be transferred from the parent hive to the swarm which will produce the crop of honey. The colony, now depleted of bees, but rich in brood, is divided a week later into three to six nuclei, each nucleus consisting of two or three frames containing brood and honey carrying two or three queen-cells containing queens soon to emerge with the adhering bees.

The beginner should be warned not to divide the parent colony into too many weak nuclei, but this fault may be rectified in the autumn by uniting. The ideal conditions for building up nuclei are a slow honey-flow throughout, or August and early September. Fortunately these are supplied in most Canadian localities by goldenrods, asters and buckwheat.

Mistimed queens should be replaced any time up to the first or second week in October, preferably not during the robbing season.

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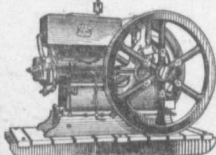
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