

Notes for Beginners.

R. F. HOLTERMANN.

It would, perhaps, be a difficult matter to find a season more confusing to a beginner in bee-keeping. Bees have acted contrary to all the well known and commonly laid down principles. To begin with the swarming season. A pretty safe rule has been to instruct the beginner to give super room as soon as the bees were sufficiently crowded to build fresh comb along the top bar of the hive. This year the bees swarmed when they had plenty of room for storing honey in the brood chamber, the outer combs on the sides next to the hive wall having little if anything in them. Swarming has been excessive, and at this date of writing, if thistle and basswood yields well, the bees in our apiaries will very likely swarm again. The clover flow has lasted long and continued almost until basswood opens. Owing to the intensely hot weather it has been a difficult matter to keep swarms in after hiving them, and shade, ventilation, room and every conceivable method to make them comfortable had to be resorted to.

We have been using very extensively the wedges designed by Mr. S. Pettit. They are placed between the bottom board and side of the hive and have undoubtedly been of great advantage.

We have a splendid lot of comb honey, and the extracted is of the very best quality. We shall to-morrow (July 16th) remove some fifty cases of finished comb honey, and then refill these with empty sections. If they are not filled with thistle and basswood honey we shall have them filled with buckwheat. If plenty of buckwheat were not within easy distance we would not put on any more comb honey supers, but double up the remaining supers now on and put upon the balance extracting supers.

The beginner should not allow well filled sections to remain on the hive, and as soon as there is no more prospect of honey, remove even the unfinished sections. To leave them on longer would result in travel stained and soiled sections. These never sell as well as that of good appearance. See that every colony has a laying queen. This is particularly necessary after a season of excessive swarming.

If colonies are weak and no prospect for even a moderate honey flow to keep up breeding, double up the weak colonies, or

if you are particularly anxious for increase, stimulate the weak colony to breeding by feeding sugar syrup. If the latter is resorted to feed late in the evening so that the colony will have stored the syrup and assumed its natural condition before morning when it is liable to attack from robbers. Allow no honey or combs containing honey to be exposed. If you have to examine colonies get through your work as quickly as possible and do that work as late in the day as you can, the bees have but little time to get started before dark, and unless they have made considerable headway they will not continue the attack next morning. Brantford, Ont., July 14th, 1897.

Preparing for, and Wintering.

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During the honey flow is the time to begin. If there is an old queen, she should be superseded. A queen may pass the season and seem all right, yet there is no disputing the fact that young queens will pass the winter and spring with less loss than the old ones.

I have had a chance to make comparisons, several times. I practice the unqueening method of controlling swarms. I also clip my queens. As my honey flow comes in June and July, no fall flow, the unqueening and requeening is done in early summer. If I unqueen in June, the young queens will get to laying in July. I pay no further attention to young queens than to know that they mate and get to laying, until spring. While looking one in the spring I clip all not already clipped. A record is kept like this. Upon finding the queen, if she is clipped I know that she is more than one year old, so I record 5, 3, O. Q. (May 3rd old queen). If the queen is not clipped I clip her and record 5, 3, c'p'd. This may be done in April or May. When I unqueen in June I save the recently clipped queens, which are of course not quite one year old, as many of them I may want to preserve, though if some of these are not good I save of the most vigorous of the two year ones as many more I may need. This is an easy way to keep track of them, and have only young queens.

I have wintered bees so handled, and those allowed to swarm and do their own superseding, side by side, and I find