

Beginner's Page

ABOUT WINTERING

The question as to whether it is better for the beginner to winter his bees on their summer stands or in the cellar, is one that cannot very well be answered in a general way, for what was best for one might not be so for another. A great deal depends on what part of the country the apiary may be in, on the location in which it is situated, and on the cellar in which it is proposed to place the bees. A pretty safe rule for the business is to study the wintering methods of some successful bee-keepers in his own neighborhood, and adopt their system until he is old enough to find a better way for himself—and it will be long before he is old enough to find a better way other than by the slow and steady method of careful experimenting on a small scale; for the beginner, or even the erstwhile beginner, who undertakes to play with the wintering problem on a large scale will almost surely wake up some fine spring morning "stung."

As a general thing, cellar wintering is the most satisfactory method in most parts of the country where there is comparatively steady cold weather for four months or more. In the most southerly parts of Ontario and other such climates where there is a certain amount of weather in which the bees can fly sprinkled through the winter months, outdoor wintering is more generally satisfactory, but it is worthy of note that nearly all the specialists and other extensive and successful apiarists in the northern States and Canada, who wintered outside ten

or fifteen years ago, are now becoming more and more in favor of cellar wintering as more generally successful and economical than the outdoor method.

A dry, dark, quiet cellar, where the temperature stands at about forty-five degrees, with as little variation as possible, will winter a good healthy colony with plenty of good honey practically every time. Such a colony can generally be wintered nearly as well on its summer stand in a double-walled packed hive, and where a reasonably good cellar is not to be had, outside wintering can be made very successful, but the work of preparation is more, and more honey is necessary to keep the bees in health and warmth. To a person with only a few hives, the extra work would not be a drawback, but where many are to be wintered it amounts to quite an item.

Colonies to be wintered outside should be located in a spot sheltered as much as possible from the prevailing winds, and yet not placed so that the March sun will strike them too strongly and entice the bees out when the air is too cold. A good tight outer case, allowing four inches for packing on each side and end of the hive and about a foot on top, is necessary. The wooden cover of the hive is removed before placing on the top packing, the packing going directly on the cloth over the frames, or being enclosed in a cushion for more convenience in removing for inspection in spring. A "bridge" must also be placed between the hive and case, over the entrance, to prevent the packing from blocking the entrance of the hive, which must be open to the outside at all times to

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