

We had about one week of fine weather beginning April 19th, on which day I commenced setting my bees out of the cellar, and carried the last out May 13th. I never before had bees in their winter quarters as late as the first of May. Last spring I had finished setting out one day earlier than I commenced this year. The bees set out a few days ago (13th) were in just as good condition, if not better, than those set out nearly a month earlier. My notion about setting out bees in the spring is this, and it is being strengthened from year to year. If they are quiet in their quarters I do not meddle with them until the time of natural pollen. When the pollen appears, if the weather is suitable, I begin setting out—first those showing uneasiness and those having least pollen in their stores, a fact which I note in preparing for winter. I do not set them out any faster than I can clean them out and fix them up the following day after they are put out. And here we come to "swarming out"—its causes and remedies. I never lost but one colony from this cause. When a colony of bees will leave its home in early spring when there is no forage—leave the brood in all stages—there must be good and sufficient reasons for their so doing. The principal cause I believe to be an unclean house and unpalatable "grub." With sour honey, mouldy combs, and a mass of dead and decomposing bees in the bottom of the hive, giving out offensive odors, is it any wonder that the tasty and tidy little occupants should desert their polluted domicile and even their young? This is the reason why this house-cleaning should be gone through the very next day after the colony is set out. If it is not done there is danger of "swarming out." True, when there are not many dead bees to remove, and the combs and stores not much contaminated, the colony will set vigorously to work to clean house and purify itself; but the bees, with all their industry, are apparently unable to muster courage enough to attack an Augean stable such as some hives really are in the spring after bad wintering conditions. The one colony that I lost by this "swarming out" happened to have a great many dead bees on the bottom boards though the combs and stores were not in bad condition. As the weather was too cold the next day after setting them out to open and clean out the hive, and remained so for several days, they left their home-brood and all, the first snatch of sunshine.

The principal cause of "swarming out," being thus apparent, the remedies are easily inferred. When you are putting your bees in cellar for winter if you use a fast-bottom hive leave the entrances wide open and occasionally through the winter hook out the dead bees from and around the entrance. In all my fast-bottom hives I have

a ventilating hole about an inch and a half in diameter through the back and about three inches from the bottom board, with wire gauze inside and a button outside. This I also leave wide open during the winter. If you use a movable bottom raise the hive up three or four inches from bottom so that there can be a free circulation of air under, even though the bottom board should contain two or three inches deep of dead bees. When this is done the accumulation of decomposing bees in the fast-bottom hive will not be nearly so offensive as with clogged entrances and no other means of ventilation. Of course, in the case of movable bottoms no bee-keeper would think of setting out the colony on its own befouled bottom board even for one hour. By having one clean bottom board to begin with, the first colony carried out can be lifted off its own stand, either in the cellar before you start or outside when you are placing it, and put upon the clean stand, and so on. Then all will be on clean stands from the first. I have found by experience that it is not generally best to clean out hives the same day they are carried out unless they are taken out early and get through with their cleansing flight before you commence. Otherwise you will be subjected to a very unpleasant bedaubing and will be covered most of the time with bees, hands, face and all, as they will persist in taking a rest on your person as well as on every mortal thing around. However, in the case of fast-bottom hives, as it is necessary to have one clean hive ahead into which to lift the frames, this can be done speedily the day of setting out and a more thorough examination and crowding up gone into later on. In this way the "swarming out" may be reduced to a minimum.

Since my last, I regret to say, still further accounts of the death of the bees in this district have reached me. The loss will, I should think, amount to from seventy-five to ninety per cent.

The clovers seem to have come through in good order and the prospects for a good crop are encouraging.

ALLEN PRINGLE.

Selby, Lennox Co., May 18th.

You are quite right, Friend P. about early setting out being no advantage. We have set out bees, weeks after the first were out and had gathered pollen, and the second lot put on their summer stands seemed to thrive and do fully as well. The weather of course has much to do with this. This year if bees had been put back in their quarters after the 25th of April and left till the 10th or 15th