

The British black bee has already been so much crossed with the Italian bee, that there are few places where the former can be found in a perfectly pure state. Italian queens are particularly prolific from May to July, and colonies of Italian bees are more populous than blacks. Under manipulation pure Italian bees are less inclined to sting than blacks, and they remain quietly on their combs, while blacks rush about excitedly, and often take wing.

Pure Italians are easier and pleasanter to handle, and the queens are found more readily. Italians will bear division into a larger number of nuclei than blacks, and this alone makes them invaluable as a queen-rearing apiary. Blacks, however, build more numerous and larger queen cells than Italians; consequently blacks should be employed in this work. Italian queens reared by black bees are generally larger than those reared by Italians themselves. Italians work on certain flowers, notably the red clover, that are not much frequented by blacks, and the wax-moth larvae do not flourish in their combs.

Italian bees have the basal portion of the abdomen more or less of a semi-transparent orange-color, and several of the segments bear well-marked bands of short white hair. In America several good strains of Italians are reared by queen-breeders, and in most of these the queens have the abdomen more extensively colored yellow than queens imported from Italy or Switzerland, which, however, vary very much in this respect. In some American strains the whole of the queen's abdomen except the extreme tip is clear orange-yellow and the scutellum is often yellow. When these Golden Italian queens—as they are called—are fertilized by drones of equally yellow strain, very handsome workers are produced

having the basal three segments of the abdomen clear orange-yellow and the fourth and fifth segments more or less yellow.

By rearing pure Italian queens from a good imported mother, and allowing them to become fertilized with local black drones, very strong colonies of good working bees are obtained. Still better results are to be obtained by pairing queens from selected crossed colonies. In a large apiary a first-class strain can thus in time be built up, which will well repay the queen-breeder for his trouble.

In my own apiary (a very exposed one) the crossed bees have proved superior to the blacks in many ways. They have dwindled less in the spring, shown better honey-gathering results, and tested in a badly-diseased apiary in Ireland they were found to be better able to resist foul-brood. In many apiaries in America Italians only are kept and bred, and they are preferred to the crossed bees. The American Italians, however, though very brightly colored, have probably a little black blood in them, the bright color partly resulting from the breeder's constant selection of bright-colored bees. Crossed bees that are more black than Italian are sometimes found to be more inclined to sting than blacks or Italians. This is, however, a fault that can easily be bred out, as I have proved in my apiary. Crossed bees that are more Italian than black are naturally almost as good-tempered as pure Italians.

Carniolan bees, from Carniola (a small and mountainous province in Austria) have the bands of short white hair well developed like Italians, but the ground color generally entirely black. Carniolan bees are extremely good-tempered, and colonies can be examined without either smoke or veil; they are quite hardy, and good honey gatherers and the queens

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