Nucleus Method of Increase

By G. M. Doolittle

I first get out boxes of suitable sizes, according to the size of the colonies I wish to make, holding from one pound of bees up to 6 or 8, the latter being a very large swarm. For ordinary nuclei nothing is better than a 20-section shippping case nailed up, and leaving off the side strips that hold the glass. On one side of it, where the glass would go, I permanently nail on a piece of wire cloth, and for the other side nail a piece of wire-cloth the same size as the first, to four strips of suitable length, so these strips surround the wire-cloth as a slate-frame does a slate.

Now, with four small wire nails (one in the middle of each strip) I tack this wire-cloth frame to the opposite side of the box, when I have what I term a "nucleus-box," one side of which can be removed at any time with the blade of my jack-knife. I next had a tinsmith make me a very large funnel, 18 inches across the top, with the usual slope of side, coming down to a 2½-inch upright, or outlet, which was about 2½ inches long. Having the funnel made I pressed the top together from opposite directions till I had it oval at the top, about one foot wide and 22 inches long, in the diameter of the two ways across the top. It was fixed thus so as to collect in the bee better, when they were shaken from the frame, than would be done if left in the ordinary shape.

I then bored a hole in the top of the nucleus box, which would just let the small or upright end of the funnel into it ,and over this hole I fixed a slide to cover it when the bees were in and the funnel out. In one end of the box is fastened a section of honey, of those that were not quite salable, and left over from the year before, the same being held in place by a screw going through the end of the case and screwing into the section. This is for feed for the bees should they be kept in the box longer than the honey they take with them lasts, as is quite often the case. This completes the box and funnel part.

I now boomed ahead as fast as possible the colonies I wished to increase, by using any of the plans given in the books for keeping them warm, stimulating, etc., and as soon as one became strong enough I prepared it for queen-rearing, as I have given in the bee-papers and in "Scientific Queen-Rearing," continuing to rear queens from this colony as was required; for queens can be so reared and not hinder the colony from contributing its share of bees for increase as well as the others, as the queen is laying all the time in it. This gets us along much faster than where a colony is to be made queenless to provide queens, as is advised by most of the other plans of rapid increase. With this plan no colony is made queenless at all, but all queens are kept laying at their best all the time

As soon as any of the colonies are full of bees so they can spare bees from two frames, or from half a pound to a pound, and there are ripe queen-cells, take the cells out and put them in the queen-nursery to hatch. As soon as the queens are one or two days old, go to the hives which can spare bees, take from each two frames, being sure the queen is not on either of them, and shake the bees from them down through the funnel into the box,