

CHAFF HIVES—Their Suitability.

I heartily indorse all you say in your reply to Mr. H. Michener, when you state your preference for a single walled hive with winter shell of 3 inch lumber, instead of the Root chaff hive. A good many down this way use the Root chaff hive, with lumber enough in them to make a chicken coop. I do considerable driving through the country and whenever I see a nice yard of bees, the temptation is usually too great to pass by without having a chat with the proprietor. Who ever heard of a bee-keeper with pride enough to keep his apiary looking nice that wasn't ready to talk bees? I have yet to find a progressive bee-keeper who was not free to admit, that a chaff hive having the lower story only double and admitting of the tiering up principle, had many advantage over the Root chaff hive. If you will look at the photo of my apiary I sent you some years ago, you will notice that nearly all of the hives were double wail (lower story double only). But I have a lot of single walls now and I very much prefer them for wintering when provided with an outside shell of 3 inch lumber without top or bottom and admitting of 3 inches packing on four sides, none on bottom and about seven or eight inches on top. A chaff hive has but one advantage that I know of over such an arrangement, and that is less trouble in preparing for winter. But when a single walled hive is covered with a winter shell and properly packed, it is in very much better shape than the most of the chaff hives are and who minds the extra time spent, when one knows his bees are better prepared to withstand the winter. A single walled hive with a packing case costs considerable less than any chaff hive I have yet seen, and after using both in the same yard for about 8 years, I am free to say that I would pay more for the single walled hive with shell, than the double walled ready for winter. My packing cases (I prefer and use an individual case for each hive) are without top or bottom, but at the bottom board a strip as wide as the space between hive and case stops the chaff from going to the ground. I prefer three inches of packing between hive and case. I have always used clover chaff for packing. Oat chaff may be better. If so will some one kindly say so, as I have used

but little of it and cannot speak from experience. I have had good success with clover. A great deal of alsike clover seed is raised near my apiary, the chaff is handy. I expect I shall need about 100 new packing cases this fall and have made one and am wintering a colony in it to test it. To corner posts 14x2 inches and 2 feet long I nailed lath the proper length to give 3 inches packing between hive and shell, leaving a few lath off the front where the bridge 3 inch high makes an entrance to the outside of case. Each one of the four sections of the case are made separate so that they can be laid flat and stored when not in use. When placed around the hive they are fastened together with hooks, or perhaps a Vandusen clamp would be better. The ends of the posts are placed on the ground and loose straw is placed on the ground as far as the stand (about five inches) or until the bottom board of the hive is reached, I then poured the chaff in and on top. I have a roof about six inches wide mitred together at the corners in such a way that it gives a slant outwards to the 6 inch roof. This roof extends one inch over the outside of the case and leaves a hole in the top, the same size as the inside of the hive. I use the ordinary hive cover on this roof and it makes a very good arrangement for a roof at little expense. The laths are placed in a horizontal position and no attempt was made to make a close fit, the rough edges coming flat together same as they came from the saw. I was afraid that rain would beat in and wet the packing, but on the night of March 21st we had a heavy rain-storm and the next day in the afternoon I drove down to the apiary four miles out of town, took the roof off the shell, ran my hand down between the hive and the lath and there was scarcely any damp feeling to the chaff. There may have been a slight dampness, but I was not satisfied that there was any, even on the side the storm came from. If there had been any it must have dried out very quickly. The bees seem to be wintering perfectly in this hive. If this case is a good one and it seems to be, there will be no excuse for anyone wintering bees without protection (as many do in this part of Canada) as a 15c. bunch of laths makes two cases and the cost of the rest of the lumber is trifling. If any of the readers of the C. B. J. has tried cases made in the manner I have described, I should be glad if they would give their experience in the C. B. J.

J. F. DUNN.

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