

Queries AND Answers

Question No. 1—I lost nearly all my bees last winter and spring, and having a lot of combs that will not be needed this spring, would like to melt them down. Please tell me the best way to do, when I have no wax extractor, so that the wax will be clean and clear. Some of the combs are full of sugar syrup. How shall I get it out? Will it keep for use next fall?

Drayton, Ont.

Answer—To render wax from old combs without an extractor, I have found the following plan answer very well: Break up the combs and press them together as compactly as possible, put them into a bag made of cheese cloth, or any strong sacking; put this bag into an old wash boiler or kettle with water enough to cover it. Place strips of wood beneath the bag to prevent it sticking to the bottom. The bag should be weighted to keep it under water when boiling. The wax will rise to the surface and may be skimmed off or allowed to cool and taken off in a cake.

The combs that are full of sugar syrup I would use again, as far as possible, if the syrup has not fermented in them; or the syrup may be extracted, boiled to kill any traces of fermentation, and used for feeding this fall.

Question No. 2—How can I change my bees from old-fashioned box hives to hives with frames?

Nova Scotia.

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Answer—I would not advise a beginner to attempt to transfer bees at this season unless honey is coming in freely. The season of fruit bloom is a good time, when the combs are not so heavy with honey, bees are not so numerous and are less inclined to rob. As the directions are rather lengthy, I would refer you to any good text book on bees. A short plan I have found to work well this season is to remove the top of the box hive, or turn it upside down, and place a hive, with bottom removed, filled with frames of good worker comb, right over it, making all joints bee-tight. The bees soon work up into it. Or the old hive may be "drummed" to get them started. After the queen has commenced to lay above, place a queen excluder under it and let it stand for 21 days, or until all the brood in the old hive has hatched, when the old hive may be disposed of and the new hive set in its place.

Question No. 3—Last season a neighbor who grows buckwheat for seed complained that my bees had injured it. Would like to know from a reliable source if this could be possible.

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Prince Edward Island.

Answer—I am afraid your neighbor belongs to a class who imagine that bees injure fruit blossoms. I have never heard of bees injuring buckwheat; in fact, the opposite is the case. Growers in this district believe that bees or other insects are necessary to fertilize the blossom. Only last week a farmer who has a large acreage of buckwheat asked me to take my bees to his farm.

St. Thomas, Ont.

R.H.S.

Now is a very good time to introduce Italian queens. They are about as cheap as at any season of the year and there is very little danger of loss in introducing a new queen to a colony of bees which has just sent out a swarm.—Modern Farmer.