

Prevention of Swarming and Increase.

Since different bee-keepers are running out apiaries, the question arises how to manage them during swarming time. If we let the bees swarm and hire a boy for watching and catching the swarms, we have considerable expense and can be sure that this boy will sleep somewhere in the shade just when a swarm is coming out and going off.

Since I have kept bees, now for about 40 years, I have tried to avoid this watching for swarms by making them artificially, just a little earlier than the colonies would swarm naturally. Of all the different ways to make artificial swarms, I found that brushed swarms on the old or on new stand are the best, because they are quite similar to natural swarms; in some respects even better. In this way I managed an out-apiary from 1882 to 1893 for comb and extracted honey, and lost very few swarms. At that time I increased the number of my colonies; when I did not want more colonies I united two of the weaker colonies after the honey-flow or in the fall. In some localities and some years I still think that it is the best plan and right here I want to say that a great deal depends upon the locality and other circumstances as to which management is the best.

In my locality, for instance, the bees commence to breed early; at the end of March some of the colonies in 8 or 10 frame hives are swarming already, but the main honey-flow from horsemint commences generally at the end of May. During this flow we expect no swarms at all. In other localities the swarming time commences just before the honey-flow and continues all through it. This makes a big difference in the management to prevent swarming. Now, I will tell how I do it. I use very large

hives in the spring, and they prevent swarming to a great extent. When you have used them five or six years you will find out that your bees will be less inclined to swarm. In some years, very favorable for brood-rearing in the spring, a large number of the colonies would nevertheless swarm, but they will swarm at least a month later than those in small hives. Once in awhile I go over my colonies and if I find one very strong I remove the shallow stories to see whether the colony has comparatively much brood. If I find brood that would fill more than two stories (an equivalent to about 10 Langstroth frames,) this colony is swarmed or divided artificially.

Now, you will say, We want you to speak of a plan, or some plans, to prevent swarming and increase. Well it is this way: The plan consists of two parts. At first a brushed swarm is made and then the second part of the manipulation, all the bees which will afterwards hatch from the brood are given back to this swarm at the proper time; and this can be done in different ways. If we produce extracted or bulk comb honey the plan is more simple and I will explain it first.

One thing I have to mention. If a brushed swarm is made or a natural swarm is used just at the beginning of the main honey-flow for producing comb honey in sections, I always give starters only in the brood-frames and full sheets of foundation in the sections. For extracted honey I prefer empty combs or full sheets of foundation in the brood-chamber. I think you know the reason of this. Now, as to our management.

FIRST PLAN.—If a colony is ready to swarm and the honey-flow commences in about two or three weeks and extracted honey is to be produced, I set a new brood-chamber