

Helpful Hints in Extensive Bee-keeping

(By E. D. Townsend.)

Last spring our bees here at Remus were wintered in clamps (buried) and were taken out of their winter quarters the last week of March. We begin digging them out as soon as the frost is out of the ground. We have left them in their winter quarters as late as April 15th, but have had rather better results when they were taken out as soon as the frost is out of the ground. The pits have no ventilation, and when the bees are removed, the hives and boxes are quite damp and mouldy. As the pits have no roof over them the driving rains seem to make matters worse. Then, we think the bees need to be taken out of April and May to breed up, and get into condition for the early June flow.

How to Remove Bees From a Clamp With no Annoyance from Flying Bees.

As soon as the time arrives to set them on their stands, and we get such a spell of weather that we think the day will be suitable for the bees, we go to a yard with shovels and forks, and throw the dirt off from the pits in this yard, except an inch or enough so that the bees can get out and fly from the pit. Wait just at night, when it is so late the bees can't fly, then go and carefully remove the balance of the sand and straw. Leave the bees alone until morning, when they will be all nice and clustered in their hives, and can be taken to their summer stands without a single bee flying. Before

adopting this plan we used to dig them out, and then set them directly upon their stands. This is the first time the bees have seen daylight, or had a whiff of fresh air, in months, and by the time we could get them set down on their permanent stands they would be ready to fly; and the only time we ever had any mixing up, or drifting from one side of the yard, uniting with those on the other side, leaving the colonies on one side of the yard almost depleted of bees, was when they were handled this last mentioned way.

What to do If the Bees Mix Up.

If one should get into a mix-up like this, the only alternative is to do a little hustling in changing places with the colonies that are getting the most bees, and those that are getting the least. In this way something may be done to even up the flying force of the yard. When you get through, you will probably conclude that you have done a pretty poor job; and, when night comes, and you have a breathing spell, you will form a resolution, to never get caught in such a mess again if it is possible to avoid it.

If the entrance is contracted, so that only a few bees can fly at a time, it helps to keep them flying at a more moderate rate. We sometimes throw a shovel full of sand into the entrance, then, with a small stick, make an opening at one corner, so that only a few bees can fly at a time. This certainly helps to keep them from mixing. I am sure the whole secret lies in so managing that only a few bees fly at a