

A SIMPLE METHOD OF QUEEN REARING

By Leon C. Wheeler

I hesitate somewhat to give my method of rearing queens, as it is not one method, but many methods, which I vary as circumstances seem to warrant. Also my methods are most of them rather crude, as I don't make any specialty of that branch of the business, but simply try to raise what queens I want for my own use. However, as this article is designed for that class of bee-keepers who are producing queens only for their own use it will probably serve the purpose.

The methods as used by men who make a specialty of the rearing of queens seem to me to require a specialist to use them. At least I have usually made a botch of them when I have tried them, and I believe the average bee-keeper will, unless he puts in more time than he can afford in learning to do it. I find, for instance, that grafting larvae from one cell to another requires more skill than I could acquire without considerable practice to keep from killing them in the operation. One can raise a lot of queens in the course of the season from a choice breeder by using the following method.

When she has her hive well filled with brood, hunt out the queen and cage her. Shake the bees all off the brood which was in the hive, and take this brood to the stand occupied by some colony whose queen you do not wish to keep. Set this hive, bees and all, to one side, and put the beeless brood in its place. Then hunt out your undesirable queen and cage or destroy her, shaking the bees at the entrance of their old stand. They will of course at once occupy the hive with the brood from your choice queen, and as they have no queen of their own now, they will soon begin operations to raise one. Ever prodigal in all their

work, they do not stop at one or two cells, but when you examine them a few days later, nearly every frame will be found to contain from one to six or eight cells. As soon as these cells are capped over, or in about ten days, they are ready for use, or to be distributed as nuclei if you are not ready to use them yet.

But to go back to the stand occupied by the breeding queen, where we left the queen caged and without brood. We have shaken all the bees from the brood of the undesirable queen and now we carry this brood back to the hive where our choice queen is and turn her and the bees loose on it. We will call this hive No. 1 and the other No. 2. By the time the cells are capped over and ready to distribute in hive No. 2, all young larvae in hive No. 1 are from our choice queen and we can take this brood all away again and put it in the place of the brood frames containing cells that have been removed from hive No. 2. Cell-building again goes on apace. There will be plenty of colonies in the yard by this time which can spare one or two frames of brood apiece to replace that taken from hive No. 1, and so the rounds can be repeated as often as desired to secure what queens you want. You can save every good cell if you so desire as you take them from hive 2, by cutting out all but one cell and fitting them into other frames and giving them wherever needed. All these operations should be done in the heat of the day as the young larvae are very easily chilled and that would render all your work useless.

I make my increase in much the same way, except that I set aside about five hives for that purpose alone, and use the extra colonies to draw brood from. When running for increase in this way, I see to it that each nucleus as it is built from hive 2 has at least three frames of brood, either dividing the brood from that hive into about three divisions, or

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