

The Month's Work

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The work for the month of May is, enlarging the entrances to the hives, expanding the hives from time to time according as the growing strength of the different colonies require, and removing the winter packing.

Ever since the bees had their first flight in March the entrances of their hives have been set at about $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch. With the opening of the willows or first bloom about the first of this month the bees will begin to work fairly fast, and it will be found, that the $\frac{3}{8}$ inch entrance to their hives is too small. It should now be enlarged sufficiently, but no more, so as to allow them free access in and out of their hives while working. Usually one inch is abundance, if not too much, for even the strongest colonies, but whenever this is found to interfere with their free ingress or egress it should be enlarged.

Removing the winter packing too soon and while the colonies are weak so as to chill the brood or even check the brooding, or leaving it on too long so as to cause overcrowding and swarming, are equally bad mistakes. If possible it should be left on until the last of May or first of June, but never at the expense of causing the bees to swarm.

As soon as the bees begin to crowd their winter quarters, and their combs are becoming filled with brood and honey, which with good colonies is usually sometime during apple-bloom and with weaker ones later on, their hives should be expanded, that is, those colonies which have been wintered on less than a full set of

brood combs, should have the dummies or fillers in their hives removed, and frames of empty comb or foundation placed in the brood chamber in their stead beside (not between) the combs already there; but when any of the colonies which have been wintered on a full set of brood combs, or those having been expanded to this during the spring become crowded, they should be given an extracting surplus case of empty comb, and for this purpose a half story extracting case is much better than a full story one. Whenever the bees have this case about two thirds or more filled with honey, they should be given a second, and this continued for as many more as are required. It is seldom however, that more than one such case is required even by the strongest colonies during May, and there are more colonies as a rule, which do not require even this one than what do. The point to be observed in all this is to give each colony extra frames of empty comb or foundation or extracting cases just as fast as they can occupy them, but no faster, and if their hives are so constructed, that they can be thus expanded and still retain their winter packing, it should not be removed before the last of May, but if this cannot be done, it will have to be removed when the hive is first expanded. Occasionally colonies become so strong and crowded before the end of May, that unless their winter packing be removed, and they are ventilated and shaded the same as in summer, (see next "Month's work") they will swarm. Whenever this is the case there should be no hesitancy about removing it. The object sought to be accomplished in our work during this month, and thus far outlined, is through natural means to encourage our colonies to their utmost capacity in brooding and while doing this to