

Questions and Answers

[Questions to be answered in these columns should be sent to us not later than the 15th of each month in order to insure their answer appearing in the following issue. We wish to make this department as useful to our readers as possible and a reliable source of information. For the present at least, the replies will be procured from various sources.]

QUESTION.—On handling over my comb honey this fall I found moths in some of it. How can I prevent this and when does the moth lay her eggs? I also found a little white worm about a quarter of an inch long and almost as thick as a pin, these seem to work in the cappings but make no web; they resemble the wax worm but they are very small

Frontenac.

NOVICE.

ANSWER.—Professor Fletcher of the Division of Entomology and Botany, Ottawa, very kindly replies to us in reference to the above which we submitted to him:—

"It is difficult to reply to such a question as this without seeing the specimens. There are two insects which might be the one your correspondent is complaining of, either the young caterpillar of the ordinary Wax Moth (*Galleria mellonella*), or the caterpillar of the Meal Moth (*Plodia interpunctella*) which occasionally does injury to wax, among many other kinds of substances which this almost omnivorous insect attacks. The suggestion you have made of fumigating the surplus combs with sulphide of carbon is an excellent one, and perhaps the easiest method which can be adopted. It must be remembered that this is an extremely

inflammable material, and great care must be taken that no light is brought near the box in which the fumigating is taking place. A few ounces in an open dish placed with the combs in a tightly closed receptacle will soon volatilize, and the combs should be subjected to the vapour for at least 48 hours. This should be done in a shed or some other place out of doors when the weather is not too cold. It is also a good plan to leave combs in which there is any idea that "wax worms" are at work, in an out building, so that they may be exposed to freezing weather during the winter.

I do not understand how the moths can get into your correspondent's honey, that is if he really means moths and not their caterpillars. The true Wax Moth (*G. mellonella*) lays its eggs during the warmer months of summer, but the Meal Moth, being more of a granary insect, emerges over a longer period and may lay her eggs indoors at any time from early spring to late autumn."

We presume that our quierist refers to the caterpillars of the Wax Moth and not to the insect itself and that the little worms he speaks of are the caterpillars of the Meal Moth described by Dr. Fletcher. Weak colonies, black bees and poorly constructed hives are usually accountable for the condition. We however would be much inclined to think that in this case the eggs of both these insects were deposited in the combs sometime during the interval that our correspondent kept the honey in his store room prior to grading and packing.—Ed.