



"THE GREATEST POSSIBLE GOOD TO THE GREATEST POSSIBLE NUMBER."

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How much Honey should Bees have to Winter on?

THIS is a question which interests a good many just now, and when all go about the yard weighing or examining their colonies, the question naturally arises: How much should this colony have, and how much should that one have to make it safe to be left until next spring? Now, friends, this entirely depends on where they are wintered. If wintered outdoors, a large colony should have 30 lbs.—35 lbs. would not be amiss—a medium one 25, and a small one 20 lbs. Now, if they are packed securely, perhaps 5 lbs. less in each instance would do, although it is better to have a few pounds extra, and you can easily manipulate your colonies to have them consume it in spring for brood rearing before the honey harvest arrives. In winter quarters the quantity of food consumed varies in proportion to the perfect condition in which the bees are kept, and also varies in proportion to the quality of the food. Now, supposing that we took 25 lbs. of capped stores in two different hives, the one hive is liable to have the stores capped thin and watery, while the other hive may have them thoroughly ripened, thick, rich and fine. This simply means that 25 lbs of thick,

well ripened honey will go further to winter a colony of bees than 25 lbs. of thin, watery honey. The difficulty seems to be that the bees become agitated, eat more, their bodies become distended, and there is a large quantity of stores consumed in order to manufacture an extra quantity of heat to evaporate the surplus moisture; and if this 25 lbs. of thin honey were evaporated down to say 20, the result would be far different, as one of the secrets of wintering consists in having well evaporated stores for the bees to feed on. It takes a pound of wood to reduce a pound of water to steam, is it not reasonable to suppose that it would take a pound of honey to produce the extra heat necessary to evaporate the pound of water. In this way it will readily be seen that five pounds of stores would be required to evaporate the five pounds of water, and the reader will understand that in that case he will only have fifteen pounds of stores left for actual feeding of the colony, whereas the hive originally weighed 25 lbs.; and now the fact is we have had five pounds of water in our stores, which has taken five pounds of honey to evaporate, leaving us 15 lbs. of poor stores instead of good. If the bees are in very poor condition, from the fact that they have been agitated more or less, which naturally shortens their life in spring, and one of the principal causes of spring dwindling is this same difficulty of feeding too thin stores, which injures the vitality of the bee, and we all know that