

Hints for Beginners

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Many who have been keeping a few colonies of bees, or, rather, whose bees have been keeping themselves, when last spring opened found themselves without bees. Winter losses were heavy, and those who suffered most in this way were people who knew little or nothing about bees or their management.

There are many things which influence the wintering of bees, and perhaps the foremost in studying the question would be the bees themselves. Strong constitution, quiet disposition and such traits, whether in human beings or the lower animals, will always be less influenced by trying conditions. In the different varieties of bees we find these different characteristics more or less strongly developed, and when we have hardiness, good working qualities and gentleness combined we are sure to have a bee which is likely to remain the longest calm and quiet when confined in winter. We know that so quickly as the colony becomes excited and break cluster, so soon is the beginning of its death.

Many years' experience in handling bees has convinced me that there is a great difference in the way bees winter when wintered under the same outward conditions and upon stores gathered at the same time and from the same fields. One stock is continually restless; light entering the cellar or the least jarring disturbs them, when another standing by its side is dormant, almost motionless. The active colony, aside from its disposition, on

account of its activity, consumes more honey, therefore the intestines become clogged sooner and dysentery is more liable to set in. If these statements be true, and I believe they are, then more attention should be paid to the bees we keep, just as with cattle and other live stock on the farm. It does not pay me to keep the majority of Black or German bees when compared with the best strains of Italian or Carniolan, which today can readily be secured. The honey a colony of Italian or Carniolan bees consume is, I believe, less than the Black, and something is saved here. From other standpoints it pays to get good queens, and I would strongly recommend that those who can spare the time to introduce them get them. I have given up selling queens, and do not want to be troubled with correspondence and delays, on account of being away in out-aplaries, but I just want to impress some points of difference which have been found.

Robert West of Jamaica, W.I., writes June 28 of a certain queen: "The queen sent last year is an excellent mother. She has kept her brood nest full ever since. They are now occupying 4 chambers, 10 Langstroth frames. We gave them plenty of room, and they have come through the swarming season without showing any inclination to swarm. They are at work half an hour earlier in the morning than our Italians, and keep at it until after dark. I sometimes wonder how they see, and stand the cold so well. Some of the drones got into another hive and were caught in the drone trap. The next morning the Italians were nearly all chilled to death, while these Carniolans were alive and active."

Remember, I am not "after orders" for queens. If you want this strain, write the Editor of The Canadian Bee Journal, who will gladly furnish full