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OUR OWN APIARY.

IN spite of the backwardness of the season, the white clover is beginning to bloom, and bees are commencing to work on it quite lively, in a few days we expect to be able to taste white clover honey of this year's production and from the appearance of the bloom at the present time and if the weather continues at all favorable, the crop will likely be very large from that source. We are now preparing some of our colonies for queen-rearing, although we usually have it done a month before this time. The preparations we make may be interesting to some, as from past experience we believe there is no way of making the bees produce better queens. We think this is a subject that has not been given as much consideration as it deserves, because a poor queen means a poor colony, and a good queen a good colony. How is it that some of our colonies gather more honey than others? and yet there is apparently no difference between Spring and Fall. Some gather more than double those of others. If these extra fine colonies are selected for queen-rearing, how much better must be the results if the practice in this direction is continued right along. We are selecting such colonies from which to breed all our queens, and in order to make them very strong we add either young bees or hatching brood. This brings on swarming sooner than by leaving them to their own resources. We can prepare a colony and give them the swarming fever, in less than a week, and large numbers of queen cells will be constructed. If unsealed brood is given, there is no danger of queens being started from larvæ; when hatching brood or sealed brood cannot be found, we give young bees instead, rather than unsealed larvæ. As soon as the queen cells are finished and capped, or perhaps one day before they are capped over, we remove the queen, thus preventing them from swarming, but should they steal a march on us and swarm, we put the swarm back keeping the queen and introducing her to another colony, or making a nucleus for her, close by the parent stock. There is a wonderful difference between queens raised in a very strong colony, (one containing bees enough for three or four swarms), and an ordinary colony; the queens will be ready to fly as soon as they hatch out. We have frequently seen them crawl right out of the cell and fly; they will also mate much sooner than those raised in weak colonies, or nuclei, and as a consequence commence laying sooner. Their movements are more quiet on the combs, are less liable to be balled, and are more easily introduced to another colony on account of their less excitable disposition. These queens may be put in the queen nursery and kept until they are old enough to mate. They may be caged on combs, two or three in each hive, and as fast as one mates she may be caged or taken out, and another one liberated, continuing in this way until all become fertile. We have had fertile and unproducing queens both caged, in one hive, while another unproducing one was liberated to mate from the same hive.

By this process fewer nuclei need be used, and more work accomplished. Queens can be kept constantly on hand to supply queenless colonies, or to ship to customers, as the case may be, after the proper season for queen rearing has once commenced.