

Questions

What is meant by "balling a queen?" What may be the cause?

The only time I have ever seen queens balled, was when introducing. After having her caged for a day or two, I have liberated them and the bees would act very friendly towards her, but upon examination an hour or two after I would find her in a ball of bees, generally about the size of a shelled walnut, every one doing his best to kill her. The only cause I know of, is, that she has not yet the same odor as the bees and she is treated as an enemy.

WILL ELLIS.

The bees form a ball around the queen, they appear to be angry and try to sting her. In fact they will sting the queen to death, if allowed to do so. It may be caused by handling the combs too often during the absence of a honey flow, or very early spring, or when introducing a strange queen, if liberated to soon.

WARRINGTON SCOTT.

In balling a queen the bees form themselves around her in a ball sometimes as large as an apple, and hold her thus till she dies. Of course, this does not always kill her, but generally does I believe.

The balling of a queen, shows that the bees are dissatisfied with her and are anxious to have another.

GEO. B. McCULLOCH,
Harwood.

The bees cluster around the Queen and form a ball. Caused by strange bees

JOHN PIRIE,
Drumquin, Ont.

(a) Making her a prisoner. Enough bees will gather around her in a compact cluster to form a ball—sometimes as large as an apple. They do not sting her as a rule, but prevent her freedom.

(b) It is usually a strange queen which they ball, or one they think is a stranger. I once removed an old queen from a colony and on attempting to return her on hour later they would not accept her, but "balled" her.

I think much depends on the queen's

actions. If she moves about without fear I think she will usually be allowed the freedom of any hive.

EUGENE SECOR.

The queen being enclosed and held tightly in a ball of bees, about the size of an English walnut.

Fear, anger, jealousy or discontentment.

R. A. MORRISON,
Inverary, Ont.

When bees ball their Queen they cluster round her in the form of a ball, thus hindering her movements, if continued long she will be injured, probably killed

It may arise from various causes, such as, hastily opening a hive on a cool day.

The queen becoming infertile and useless, or her entering a strange hive in the swarming season.

R. H. SMITH.

If I should, when opening a hive for any purpose, discover a "ball" of bees the size of a hen's egg (more or less) on the bottom board of the hive, or between the frames, struggling like an old time free fight, I would know that the queen was being "balled." The cause is hostility to the queen, but what causes the hostility is not always apparent to the closest observer.

Some prominent apiarists have contended that queens are often, or at least sometimes balled by her own bees to protect her from robber bees, etc. But such is not my experience or belief. I have smoked the balling bees off of a large number of queens, often the queen being the mother of the "ball" of bees and I know they mean murder, and do often sting to death each other in the scramble.

The remedy is to smoke the ball of bees and rescue the queen and cage her for 24 hours before releasing her.

G. W. DEMARGE,
Christianburg, Ky., U. S.

(a) The gathering of more or less in a compact ball around a queen; usually done for the purpose of squeezing her life out.

(b) There are several causes. The queen may be a stranger, and instead of stinging