

Apiary.

Italian Bees.

Now that it has been some time since the Italian bees have been introduced into Canada, we are better prepared to speak of their merits as compared with our native bee.

That they are deserving of all that has been claimed for them we do not believe; but that they are superior to the common bee, and make with them an excellent cross, there can be no doubt. It has been claimed for the Italians that they gather freely from red clover; such, however, is not the rule. There are circumstances under which they will work quite freely upon the second crop of red clover, and possibly upon the first crop, if it be somewhat dwarfed in its growth; but such instances will be found to be rare, and they never work as freely upon red clover even when it is most favourable for them to do so, as they do upon either white or Alsike clover.

It is certain, however, that they gather more honey, owing no doubt to the great prolificness of their queens causing hives to become more numerous populated, and to their greater activity. That the pure Italians are more peaceable, when not provoked, there is no doubt; they will, however, defend their stores from robber bees with far greater vigour, and if irritated by rough handling until their vindictiveness is fully aroused, they are more difficult to subdue or control. It is true, however, that with proper care they are more easily managed. They are hardy, and will endure more cold than the common bee, hence will be found working more freely in cool weather.

All that can be said of the pure Italians is equally true of the cross between them and our common bee, except that the hybrid are more wicked than even our native bees; but as regards the prolificacy of their queens and their disposition to labour, they have no superiors. For this reason alone the introduction of pure Italians is desirable, in order that the stock may be improved.

J. H. THOMAS.

Brooklin, Ont.

Pea Meal for Pollen.

To the Editor.

SIR.—Your bee-loving friends will, I am sure, feel grateful for a little bit of information concerning a discovery I made last spring. I had seen a statement in various agricultural papers and bee journals that rye-meal was a very good and acceptable article of food for bees in the early spring, before nature had opened her stores and spread her bounteous table for their daily repast, and had accordingly been at some trouble to hunt up some rye-meal for the benefit and

delectation of my wintered stock. Whether it was because this newspaper paragraph had its origin in a mere theoretical notion of some editor, with a bee in his bonnet, or whether it was because the bees needed to be trained, like young calves, to their new diet, I do not know; but this I do know. I could not tempt my bees to touch it. With all my coaxing it was no use. They slighted my kind endeavours, and, metaphorically speaking, turned up their noses at the meal of my providing. However, *ex nihilo nihil fit* did not prove true this time. Having tried Graham flour with no better success, I, as a last chance of getting a meal that would suit their fanciful taste, put some pea-meal before them. This they at once attacked most heartily, and they continued to work in it, whenever the weather was warm enough, until there was a plentiful supply of pollen. My bees did much better last year than ever before, and much better, I believe, than any of my neighbours' bees did last year. Whether, however, my success was due to the pea-meal or not, I leave every one who may care to try it to judge for himself after trial.

Whitby.

W. O. E.

Bee Queries.

To the Editor.

SIR.—The patent or double hive is now quite common with farmers through this section of the country, but in general they are not thoroughly posted in the management of bees. The hive referred to is constructed with sliding frames, for the purpose of taking out the cards of comb, and avoiding the destruction of the old swarms of bees. Answers to the following queries would be acceptable to others besides myself:—

1. What season of the year is the proper time to take out the cards of comb, and not interfere with the egg or new comb that is coming forth that season?

2. What is the most convenient mode of taking out the comb, so as to avoid injury from the bees during the operation?

M. SPOOR.

Wolfe Island, April, 1869.

REPLY.—Frame hives, properly constructed, allow the frames to be taken out of the top of the hive. Sliding frame hives are now considered objectionable, as they cannot be operated without more or less injury to the bees.

Combs may be removed from a hive at any time of the year, whenever it is desirable to do so. In the spring it may be done for the purpose of cleaning the hives and ascertaining if the stock has a queen, and plenty of honey. In the swarming season, for the purpose of making artificial swarms, taking honey, looking for moths or miller-grubs, finding queens, &c., &c. In the fall, for the purpose of exchanging cards or combs of weak stocks for those of strong stocks, and preparing the hives for winter quarters. It

matters not when the combs are removed from the hive, the eggs or swarm will not be affected the combs are placed back again.

If Mr. Spoor wishes to know when the combs may be removed for the purpose of taking honey, we answer, during the honey harvest, as soon as the outside cards are filled and capped over. It would be of little use to remove any combs for honey except the outside ones, as all others are more or less filled with eggs and young brood, which would, of course, be destroyed by removing them from the hive and not returning them again. In hives of medium size the outside cards contain but little or no brood, and when filled with honey may be removed, and empty frames put in their places.

The proper manner of operating with frame hives is, first, to remove them from their stands a few yards, then blow a little smoke into the hive, tapping lightly at the same time. In ten or fifteen minutes, often much less, the bees will fill themselves with honey, when they may be operated with safety and without difficulty.

We would refer Mr. Spoor to a small work on bees called the "Canadian Bee Keeper's Guide," which may be had for 28c., post-paid, either in the city of Toronto, or of the publisher, Brooklin, Ont. It gives full directions for the management of bees in frame hives.

J. H. THOMAS.

Bee Manuals—Italians.

Dr King, of St. Catharines, makes the following inquiries:—"I shall feel much obliged if you will kindly inform me, in the next number of the CANADA FARMER, the best work published on the culture and rearing of Bees; also, if you would recommend the Italian in preference to the common bee."

Ans.—It would be difficult to say which is the best work on bee culture, as there are several good works published. "Bee Keeping" by Quinby, or "Langstroth on the Honey Bee," are both excellent works. "Bee Keeping," by Quinby, is the more practical. Both of the works can be had in this city (Toronto). As a hand book the "Canadian Bee Keeper's Guide" is all that can be desired. No bee-keeper should be without it. It can be got in this city, or of the author, J. H. Thomas, Brooklin, Ont., price 28c. post-paid.

We would recommend the Italian Bee as being more productive and better workers.

FIRE IN BEE-HIVE FACTORY.—A steam mill used partly as a bee-hive factory, owned by Mr. Nelson Thomas of Brooklin, was destroyed by fire on the morning of April 10th. The loss of property was estimated at \$3,500, and the amount of insurance was only \$1000. There were in the building, manufactured and under way, nearly 2000 bee-hives, all of which were burned. In an adjoining building were stored some 200 hives, which were saved. Mr. Nelson Thomas manufactured for his uncle, Mr. J. H. Thomas. We understand that, notwithstanding this heavy loss, it is expected that the demand for hives during the ensuing season will be promptly supplied as heretofore, as arrangements have been made for resuming the manufacture immediately.