

Hints for Beginners

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The Hive and Its Brood Chamber.

Only those who have had long experience in writing, addressing and instructing others, can realize the necessity for careful detail in giving directions. In our haste we are inclined to over-estimate the knowledge of those we address, and to omit or overlook many minor but essential points which we wrongly suppose they are in possession of. Again, it is often quite out of question to cover a subject in a certain limited space of time, and yet touch all the details.

Giving instruction as to the weight of a hive in winter can hardly be done in a word. A colony is the better for 30 pounds of winter stores, what they do not require in winter, they will require in spring. After pointing out the difference in the weight of combs, it will readily be seen that the only way is to make ample allowance for the difference in weight. After careful weighing I find that a new Langstroth comb, wired and built on comb foundation, weighs 12 ounces. When age and use in the brood chamber has left many layers of cocoons, combs will run 24 ounces readily, and combs which have been in the brood chamber of a queenless colony, clogged more or less with pollen, will exceed two pounds. In the hive I use, 12 frame Langstroth, this can make a difference between new and old combs of nine lbs., or if pollen clogged of even 15 lbs., without there being any difference in the amount of honey in the hive. To one figuring closely this is quite

a serious item, and unless guarded against, may result in the starvation of the colony.

Again, especially when division has taken place by swarming, and colonies are very uneven in strength, one hive may be crowded with bees from side to side, and in another the bees may only cover a few combs. The weight of bees in such cases makes a difference. If in the one case there is two pounds of bees and in the other six pounds, the stronger colony, with an equal weight of hive, has four lbs. less of honey. A weaker colony will, in proportion to the number of bees, consume more stores, and instead of being discriminated against, it should have at least five lbs. more of honey. It requires more in the winter, and more in the spring. This makes a great difference; but there is another factor; if one hive has pitchy and knotty lumber, and another clear lumber in its construction, there may easily be a difference of several lbs. in the weight. I do not want these knotty and pitchy boards in my hives, but some do have them, and must make due allowance, or make all weigh more to cover the risk. After all, the only really safe way is to examine each brood chamber, and treat each stock individually, or make each stock weigh enough, to cover all the differences which may be in weight outside of the amount of honey the hive may contain.

Bee-keeping requires a certain amount of care and attention, and experience, just as any other department of the farm. The matter in hand is of very great importance, and yet is often indifferently attended to, and with correspondingly indifferent results in the winter and spring which follows.

In the work of my own apiary during the past month there has been much of it detail, first the supers and

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