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About the Farm

Bees, and their Value to the Farm

By Allan Campbell

The busy bee that figured in the nursery rhymes of our childhood as an example of honest industry, is beginning to arouse a genuine interest among the farmers of the West. The little profit-gathering bees, once they become established on the farm, possess a strong fascination, and the novice in bee-keeping soon sees the fallacy of most of the popular prejudices levelled at the heads of these well-intentioned little toilers. Of course, like all other undertakings, it is the breaking of the ice as it were, in taking the initial steps, that must be overcome. After the first expense there will be only an occasional small outlay required now and then, and of course, as one has to buy more equipment through increases in the apiary, the stock on hand will be far greater in value to compensate.

In addition to the marketable products of the apiary, viz., honey, extra swarms and wax, the bees render valuable service in pollenizing various plants on the farm, and such service is essential for the best success in raising garden products. The hives are not unsightly objects, and the little golden-colored occupants of the hives are far from being so; in fact, an apiary gives to the farm an air of thrift and up-to-date progressiveness.

It is not necessary for the beginner to start on a large scale. One or two colonies will be enough at the beginning, and these will soon increase to five or six in the one season.

The following is a list of articles that the beginner should have, and their approximate cost:

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 2 Hives of Bees (each)..... | \$10.00 |
| 1 Smoker..... | 1.50 |
| 2 Extracting Supers..... | 1.25 |
| 1 Bee Veil..... | .40 |
| 1 Honey Extractor..... | 9.00 |
| 1 Pound Brood Foundation... .. | .60 |
| 1 Excluder in each hive to prevent the Queen from raising brood in the Honey Super (each)..... | .30 |

In regard to location, a northerly slope is desirable, with enough trees to shade the hives from the more intense rays of the sun. The hives should also be protected on the most windy side, though this is not absolutely imperative. The bees will travel a mile or two if necessary for the gathering of stores.

When the beginner has obtained his colonies he should set them out on the location which has been chosen. Of course, the spring is the best time to start in bee-keeping, but there is no great objection to making a start later in the season, for in the latter case the beginner will have a good chance to become acquainted with the work, and then make a start in the spring on more expert lines.

Italian bees are recommended as one of the most docile to handle, and will prove satisfactory all round. They are distinguished by golden bands on their bodies. The hives should be inspected every week, and the method of doing this is to approach from behind so as not to interfere with the bees coming to and going from the entrances, then, having put on veil and gloves, gently raise the back of the lid and give two or three puffs of smoke from the smoker so that the bees will leave the tops of the frames and go down between them. This treatment will have a quietening effect on the bees. After this the lid should be lifted off and gently leaned against the side of the hive. It is important to avoid all rough jars and jolts when working around a hive, and then the bees will take but little notice of the fact that they are being temporarily disturbed. A tin box should be kept close and handy to put the combs full of honey in as they are found. On finding a full comb of honey, the bees should be gently brushed off it with a small wisp and allowed to fall back into the hive, the comb put into the honey box and a new foundation frame put into the hive in place of the comb of honey. In removing the frames from the hives, it is necessary to employ the use of a screw driver or a similar tool to loosen each end of the frames before lifting them out. The hive being examined, the lid may then be replaced and the honey taken away to be extracted. Up to the first part of August the bees are likely to swarm, or later, "warming" is caused by the

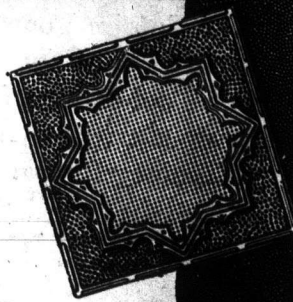
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