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THE HANDLING OF BEES

Practical Hints About Bees and Honey Making.

Preparations for Wintering Over—
Spring Examination Important—
June Is Swarming Month—How
to Avoid Too Early Extracting.

(Contributed by Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto.)

THE beekeeper's year may be said to begin in September at the close of the honey season. Supers are then removed and colonies are examined for queen condition. Queenless colonies should be united with those which have queens, particularly with weak colonies such as light swarms which may have young queens. At present prices of honey and sugar it does not pay to attempt to winter any but the best colonies as swarms of bees can be purchased from the Southern States to arrive in May and give as good a crop of honey as an average colony wintered over.

After supers have been removed in September each colony should be fed a sufficient amount of syrup made of two parts granulated sugar to one of water to bring its supply of feed up to 35 or 40 pounds. This feeding may be done about the first of October.

Hives may be placed in boxes for outdoor wintering before or after feeding at the convenience of the beekeeper, but winter packing should be applied before settled cold weather. For cellar wintering, hives should be placed in the cellar at freezing up time in November, selecting for the wintering a cold day immediately following a spell of warm weather. When properly prepared according to some method similar to those described in Bulletin 256 on "The Wintering of Bees in Ontario," outdoor wintered bees require no attention from the time the feeding and packing is completed until the following April. The bee-cellar should be watched for the regulation of temperature and ventilation when changes of weather occur.

The successful wintering of bees depends on having good colonies of young bees, young queens, plenty of good stores, hives warmly packed and ample protection from cold winds.

On the first warm days of April colonies should be removed from cellars and all should be examined to detect queenless ones or those short of stores. The former should be united with those having queens and the latter given extra feed. It would not be wise to make a thorough exam-

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Attention for disease when the weather is warmer than it usually is in April. Early in May when favorable weather arrives queens should be clipped and the matter of stores given attention. At queen-clipping time the brood should be inspected carefully for infectious diseases as described in Bulletin 213, "Bee Diseases in Ontario."

The supering of strong colonies will begin during fruit bloom and outdoor wintered bees may be unpacked soon after. In a backward spring the unpacking may be left until early in June. The beekeeper's main duty in May is to get queens clipped as stated and see that each colony develops properly or is given room to check swarming impulse as the case may be.

June is the swarming month and time of supering for the main honey flow which begins between the 10th and 20th of the month, depending on the season and the latitude. Be sure to give supers enough to avoid any crowding, which may cause the bees to become discouraged, quit work and swarm excessively. It should be the beekeeper's aim to prevent swarming as much as possible. This is done by keeping young queens, giving plenty of room and a systematic examination of brood-chambers to detect colonies which are preparing to swarm. When queen cells are found far advanced they should all be destroyed and the queen herself removed. After the colony has been queenless one week the combs should again be examined and all cells except one removed. This one will provide them with a queen and if only one is left they will not swarm again. Where an improvement of stock is desired the new queen may be given instead of leaving one queen cell.

Natural swarms should be hived on the old stand after removing the parent colony to one side. The swarms should be given the supers from the old colony. New swarms work with great vigor because they

have no brood to care for during the first week. Colonies held together without swarming gather more honey than those which swarm. They also cause the beekeeper less trouble at unexpected times. It is the beekeepers' patriotic duty to reduce the cost of honey production and thus increase the quantity he is called to produce as greatly as possible. This may be done more by swarm prevention than in any other way. Bulletin 233 takes this matter up thoroughly and should be carefully studied by all beekeepers.

Most of our best honey is gathered during late June and early July. None of this should be extracted until near the end of July when the bees are nearly through gathering light honey. It might be necessary to give each colony from two to four extracting supers to avoid early extracting. By doing this we get a much better ripened honey which commands a better price and maintains much greater public confidence in honey as a staple food.

Colonies which have not been requeened by natural swarming or by swarm control methods in June or July should be attended to in August as best results are usually obtained from queens not more than one year old.—Provincial Apiarist, O. A. Colledge, Guelph.

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South Emskillen, Oil Springs	" 27
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