A Look at Fall/Winter Bee Year

BEE COLONY STEWARDSHIP

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Reduced entrances

Rain shelters

Photo: Judy Scher
Roadmap

• How did we get here?
• HAPPY NEW YEAR
• What to do NOW – AUGUST 1st
• What needs to be done Labor Day (early September)
• What needs to be done following the early fall inspection
• Do I need to FEED???
• Last minute wrapping up
Beekeeping – the real KEY!
FALL .... Insure strong, active colonies of young-aged honey bees with adequate food reserves located above the cluster

Beginning of NEW BEE YEAR

Courtesy George Hansen
Some of the challenges

- *Apis mellifera* -- Not native to US
- Some regions (Oregon) with poor fall flow
- Environment has ups and downs (Indian summer – early/late fall slow spring)
- Bee mites, Bee Mites,
  
  **BEE MITES** Mite relationship not a good one
Early Spring

Late spring

[Images of beehives in snow and in springtime]
Basic idea

Spring colony expands
gets big in synch with nectar flow

Fully expanded colony
First season success...

Start by learning

Practice..practice
2nd Season – I **will** be anticipating – not merely reacting!

Need more boxes & frames
1st & 2nd year issues....

• Defensive bees

• Lack of understanding of bee seasons – especially this ONE!

• TOO SMALL a colony

• TOO BIG a colony

• Queenlessness

• Sudden nectar halt – Or NO nectar

• Robbing
Earlier – ONLY Manage Supers

Carolyn Breece
NOW!!! ...... Prior to Fall .... or Fall = New Year Aug 1st

- Finish honey harvest
- Complete requeening management
- Monitor for varroa mites – treat
  (decide which control choice)
- Split/bolster/equalize
- Protect brood combs from wax moth
Going Into Fall and Winter

Hive Strength

• Bees tell you Fall is here when they start kicking out drones.

• Combine Weak Hives
  ✓ After medication is off, check for presence of queen and hive strength.
  ✓ Don’t combine weak with strong IF weak hive is diseased nor 2 weak together
  ✓ Combine using newspaper method.

• Requeen if necessary
  It’s necessary to have a good laying queen through winter.
  ✓ Requeen if hive is queenless!!
  ✓ Requeen if brood pattern is spotty.
  ✓ Requeen if queen is old.
What do successful Fall (and overwintered) colonies look like?

• Strong populous colonies (BUT can they be too weak or too strong?)

• Young, vigorous queens (why survivor or selected hygienic stock?)

• Healthy brood (lack PMS) and virus-free adults

• Enough honey & bee bread stores (how much is needed?)

What do successful Fall (and overwintered) colonies look like?
1st Fall Inspection August – September

- amount & position of food reserves
- queenright
- extent and pattern of brood
- Adequate adult population
- healthy brood and adult bees
- condition of bee hive equipment & good frames in boxes to overwinter

Randy Oliver
Fall Inspection

Colony needs attention

Starting to look good

Readin’ the frame – key stewardship skill to develop
Fall = “FAT” Bees

• “Fat” bees

• “Fat” colonies

Courtesy Dennis Andersen
2nd Fall Inspection

Follow up inspection [October]
Fall

OPTIMUM COLONY CONFIGURATION

Brood position early Fall

We Learn to read stories about patterns
Fall

FEED HEAVY SYRUP OR HONEY

- Feeding to insure adequate food reserves or move queen/colony cluster position downward

Note: One of many ways to feed sugar syrup
Moisture Control and Ventilation

NOTE: moisture will kill bees...NOT cold!
Locate hive out of the wind.
Use screened bottom boards.

Use screen tops with moisture collector.
  Burlap
  Straw
  Old Towels
  Etc.
Yellow Jackets and Robber bees

- Reduce entrance so guard bees have more chance to ward off yellow jackets and robber bees from other hives. You should have screened bottom boards so even though the entrance is reduced, the bees have adequate ventilation.

- Put Yellow Jacket traps nearby. Good idea to include carbohydrate like apple juice in YJ traps. Also cat food.
Late fall

FEED ONLY DRY SUGAR or FONDANT CANDY

Need wind break?

Need moisture venting?

Colonies leaning forward

Need rocks on top?
Some winters are tough....

Courtesy Ann Harman
Why colonies die overwinter!

- Run out of food reserves – starve
- Too few bees to provide protection – freeze
- Lack of ability to void wastes
- Bee PMS or cumulative effects of mites and/or diseases
- Sometimes they just die!

Or
Just disappear!
Spring ... will they survive?