



LANCASTER COUNTY BEEKEEPERS SOCIETY



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also

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Jim Pinkerton

Hopefully, if you have hives, you are seeing bees flying and bringing back pollen on the few warm days we have had recently. I saw at least 4 different colors on some recent days. I wish they would answer me when I ask what it is that they are collecting. It is more than just crocuses and early flowers because there was a steady flow of bees loaded with certain colors. I will include a list of flowering plants and trees in order of blooming (see page 5), just to give you an idea of what it may be that your bees are collecting.

It has been a hectic winter; with our Workshop and Banquet behind us it is time to begin building up those hives that survived the winter. We need to get their populations high enough in early spring to be able to collect a good honey crop for us in May and June.

Brooke Binder sent the article on Spring Management, beginning on page 2, from his "Florida Office"©. What I have learned about Brooke is, he is that detail oriented person that most of us wish we could be. He has a very good record with keeping bees alive through our PA winters and his procedure does not include taking them along to the sunny south! His wintering procedure is available on our web site.

Check it out early. Winter hive preparations begin in midsummer.

.....Jim

Membership in the Lancaster County Beekeepers Society is \$10.00 per family per calendar year. Dues should be sent, by April, to
Lori Stahl, Treasurer

Spring 2013

Meetings for
2013

Feb 9

Introduction to Bees and Beekeeping Workshop *A very successful day..*
Thanks to all

Feb 26

Lancaster County Honey Producer's Banquet 48 attended and enjoyed Jeremy Barnes' stories

March 19, 6:30pm

Spring Management for Honey or Increase. Winter loss evaluation.

March 28

Tri County Meeting Penn State York Campus 7:00pm

Dennis VanEnglisdorp,

internationally known bee researcher will be the speaker
North Museum, Lancaster

April 17, 6:30pm

North Museum..TBA

May 14

Open Hives at Penn State Research Farm. Club Yard Sale and Plant exchange

June 18 & July 16

Open hives at Penn State Farm
Splitting hives and setting up Nucs.
Raising your own Queens.

August ??

Beekeeper's Picnic, Peter Ebersole's home. Directions and times will be posted later

Sept 17, 6:30pm

North Museum....TBA

Oct. 15, 7:00pm

Dutch Gold Honey

CARING FOR HONEY BEES IN THE SPRING TIME

By Brooke Binder

The initial Spring hive inspection

On a day that the bees are flying and the weather is relatively warm it should be safe to remove any insulation and felt paper that is on the hive. It is also OK to remove the tray under the screened bottom board if one has been installed and also any insulation boards that you may have on top of the inner cover.

If the temperature is above 60 degrees and there is very little or no wind it should be safe to remove the top and inner covers. You will most likely find many bees at the top of the hive.

When removing frames at this time of year, care must be taken not to allow the brood to get chilled. Do not keep the frames of brood out of the hive for extended periods of time. Also take care not to hurt the queen or give her a chance to fly away.

Remove and replace enough frames in the upper super to determine the following:

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- ✓ Where in the hive is the brood nest located? If the bees are in two deep supers, the brood nest may be completely up into the top deep super by this time.
- ✓ Check the bottom super to determine if there is still brood in it. Bees start the winter in the bottom of the hive and over the course of the winter move up to the top.
- ✓ If the brood nest is completely into the top deep super it is sometimes advisable to reverse the two deeps, putting the bees back down on the bottom. It is not advisable to reverse the boxes prematurely, is there still brood in the lower deep?
- ✓ Are there eggs and larvae which will prove that the queen is alive?
- ✓ Is the brood pattern solid indication that the queen is doing a good job?
- ✓ Determine if the brood nest area is crowded.
- ✓ Is there plenty of room for the queen to lay eggs?
- ✓ Is there empty drawn comb above and around the brood nest?
- ✓ Is there adequate honey and pollen (bee bread) in the hive to sustain it?
(The hive will not raise the desired amount of brood without sufficient honey and beebread in reserve.)

Note!Reversing the top and bottom hive bodies when there is still brood in the bottom deep will split the brood nest. **This is not advisable.**

Feeding

If you have determined that there is not enough honey in the hive, considering both the top and bottom hive bodies, the hive should be fed sugar water in a 1:1 ratio by weight or volume. Cane sugar is best. Not HFCS (High-Fructose Corn Syrup).

Some beekeepers feel that it best to use some type of feeder other than a Boardman feeder at the entrance of the hive. These have been known to start robbing if there is no nectar flow in progress. Different methods of feeding are available on our web site, click on '[For our Members](#)' than '[Useful documents and Links](#)'

Considering the conditions described above, top and bottom bodies can be reversed and this will put the bees and brood nest put back down on the bottom. This is considered by some good beekeepers to be a stop-gap measure and a temporary fix until more time is available or the weather is warmer.

HIVE MANIPULATION

Two of the most common conditions that will cause a hive to swarm are:

1. Crowding of the brood nest area
2. A queen that is old or not in good condition

Both of these conditions can be determined with the initial inspection described above.

Cautions:

- Rearranging the frames in a hive is a very invasive process. This should not be done when the weather is cool or windy.
- When frames of brood are removed from the hive the bees cannot keep it warm and care must be taken to prevent it from being chilled.
- Remove a frame or two from the sides first. This would be frames 1, 2, 9 or 10. Removing a frame first that is in the brood nest increases the possibility of damaging the queen by “rolling” her as the frames are removed.
- If you find the queen on one of the frames you have removed, you may want to put that frame into a nuc box, if you have one, to protect and keep track of her until you are done moving or inspecting frames. If you place the frame back into the hive the queen will most likely move around in the hive. If you are done with the deep you are working on this will not matter.

The bottom deep

Ideally the brood nest will be in the center of the bottom deep surrounded on each side by frames of drawn comb, bee bread and honey. If the brood nest is large enough, some beekeepers will insert a frame of drawn comb between each frame of brood but not more than one frame placed between each frame of brood. This will help to prevent crowding of the brood nest which is a major cause of swarming. It is ok to use frames of foundation for this if there is a honey flow in progress or if you do not any frames of drawn comb. Put the drawn comb closest to the brood nest.

The top deep

The upper hive body should have frames of drawn comb placed right above the brood nest on the bottom. On each side of the frames of drawn comb should be placed any available frames of beebread and honey. If no drawn comb is available use foundation.

After placing most of the frames of brood in the bottom deep super, if there are any frames of brood remaining, they can be placed in the upper super right above the brood that was placed in the lower super. When a large amount of brood is available some beekeepers will put a frame of brood above each frame of drawn comb or foundation that was placed in the bottom and a frame of drawn comb or foundation above each frame of brood. In this way the frames of brood and drawn comb are staggered. A process of this type is sometimes referred to as checker boarding.

Care should be taken to not break up the brood nest by more than a single frame of drawn comb between each frame of brood, because it will make it difficult for the bees to keep the brood warm. Many beekeepers have determined that the bees will only draw out foundation when there is nectar being brought into the hive.

Procedure tips

- ❖ **If using all mediums** the same procedures will apply. You will just be dividing your frames between 2 or 3 medium supers instead of 2 deep supers.
- ❖ Important temperature considerations...40 degrees you can open top and take a peek... 50 degrees you can remove a frame or two for a very short period... 60 degrees you can do a complete hive inspection....All considering it is not windy!
- ❖ Before beginning the manipulations it is a good idea to set the supers aside, preferably on an inverted top cover and clean the bottom board.
- ❖ Many beekeepers will have an additional empty deep super that they will place on the cleaned bottom board and they will place the frames into it as described above.
- ❖ Likewise an additional hive body can be used to place the remaining frames and it will become the top deep.
- ❖ Perform the procedures as efficiently and quickly as possible so that the brood is not cooled down.
- ❖ Many beekeepers will locate the queen and put her and the frame she is on in a safe place where she will not be harmed or fly away.

If only it was this easy to get that spring hive maintenance done!



Bee Wiser....The following list was compiled by Jerry Stormer from Punxsutawney. Not sure how I got it but hope he doesn't mind me passing it along here. It gives you a very good idea of the plants that are sources of nectar and pollen for our bees through the season.

Greetings! Another interesting "bee summer" has passed and, because of its importance, I will try to summarize for you the honey plant blooming sequence for this year. For the sake of you new members/beekeepers, this list applies to the area where my bee yards are, at 1600-1800+ ft. elevation, near 1-80. Most of you will have the same bloom sequence, but probably a week or so earlier than here. By familiarizing yourself with a bloom chart, you can super ahead of these flows, and will greatly reduce forced swarming and vastly increase your honey crop.

Mar 22 -- Water haulers active, which indicates they're raising a lot of brood

April 5 -- Red maple blooming; hard maple is last (maple bloom covers most of the month of April-great for buildup)

April 28 --Oriental plums, apricots, peaches

May 6 -- Earliest apples, with dandelions in full bloom; wild strawberries starting. Dandelions are my "Q" for making splits over double screens and setting out bait hives

May 10 -- Wild fire cherry and tame sour cherry; tame strawberries.

May 12 -- Chokecherry, blueberries and yellow rocket (mustard) starting.

May 15 -- Sassafras starting (bees not working it this year); 80% of apple bloom finished.

May 20 -- Honeysuckle and autumn olive starting.

May 25 -- End of late apple variety blossoms; wild black cherry starting; mustard in full bloom

May 29 -- Silver hawthorn (mostly pollen)

May 31 -- *Raspberries and *blackberries starting

June 3 -- *Tulip poplar in full bloom and *black locust trees starting; mustard nearly ended; white Dutch and alsike clover starting White Dutch/alsike flow is my "Q" for making splits into 5-frame nuc boxes

June 13 -- *White Dutch, *alsike, red and yellow sweet clovers in full bloom; birds foot trefoil

June 19 -- Grape vines, catalpa trees starting

June 22 -- Purple flowering raspberry

June 26 -- *'Oriental" chestnuts

June 28 -- *Stag horn sumac starting

July 1 -- * White sweet clover,*milkweed and *basswood trees

July 8 -- *Basswood in full bloom (only 2 weeks)

August 11 -- *Jewelweed' starting (almost stopped immediately due to dry weather)

August 14 -- *Knapweed, farm crop *soybeans (bees not interested this year), scattered clovers, alfalfa, *Purple loosestrife

September 1-- Early goldenrod varieties... no honeybee interest as normal for these plants

September 7 -- *Late goldenrod starting; the first wet nectar found in colonies for almost 6 weeks

September 15 -- Fall asters are blooming until heavy killing frosts

* Indicates heavy honey producers if you have good bee population, weather conditions and empty supers available for nectar storage.

Almost everyone lives in an excellent location for at least 2 or 3 of these plants. Only you will be able to determine the surplus nectar flows for your apiary location.