Bringing Your Hives Out of Winter
– February 2018 –

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Overview

• Spring Food Stores

• Hive Frame/Box Management

• Weak Hives

• Swarm Indicators
Spring Critical For Nutrition

Brood Stimulation
- Sun Location
- Longer days
- Trees budding

FIGURE 2: BROOD REARING & FOOD STORES

Critical Time
Spring Flow
Extract Honey
Fall Flow

Jerry Freeman photo
Early Spring Colony Growth

Other factors influencing:

- Overwintered Adult Population
  - “Frames of Bees”
  - 1 Frame = Both Sides
  - Good Way To Track Strength

- Remaining Honey Stores
  - “Tilt” Test
  - Aggression -- Can be Sign of Starvation
  - Larvae Condition – Dry cells?
    - May Indicate Need For Pollen Supplement

- Weather conditions

- Nectar and Pollen availability
Food Supplement

• Carbohydrates
  - Honey, Nectar, Sugar Syrup, Sugar Candy, etc.
  - Back to “1 to 1” Sugar Syrup
    – Remember – One to One By Weight, Not Volume
      — One Cup Nearly Boiling Water Weighs ~ 8 ounces (1/2 a pound)
      — One Pound of Sugar For Every Two Cups of Water
  - Consider Supplements Like Pro Health or Honey B Healthy

• Protein
  - Pollen Stores, Pollen Flow, Pollen Substitute
    – Ultra Bee
    – MegaBee
  - Patties – Only Enough For A Few Days At A Time (Hive Beetle Magnets)
Hive Frame/Box Management

• Reverse Brood Boxes
  - When temperatures drop (~ 55 F and lower) Bees Cluster
  - While In Cluster, They Maintain Close Contact To Food Stores
  - As Food Is Consumed, The Cluster Slowly Moves Up The Hive
  - Results In Mostly Empty Frames In Lower – Brood in Upper

• Move Empty Frames Inward
  - Consumed Honey Frames (Empty) Can Be Moved Inward To Increase New Brood Laying Areas
Hive Frame/Box Management

• Add Second Brood Box
  - If Bees Are Filling Over 70% Box, Good Time To Add A Second

• Use A Process Often Referred To As “Pyramiding”
Weak Hives
- Consider Combining -

• Weak Hive? Judge By Frames of Bees
  - Table of “Strong” Hives
  - Half or Less of This - Consider Combining

• “Newspaper” Method
  - In the “Weaker”
    – Consolidate Into One Box With 10 Best Frames
  - In the “Stronger”
    – Remove the outer and inner covers
    – Single Sheet of Newspaper On Top Bars.
      – Small Slit Or A Few Holes Helps Hive Odors Pass Back & Forth
  - Place “Weaker” On Top Of “Stronger”
  - Feed Sugar Syrup
  - Check In A Week
    – Newspaper Chewed Away – Colonies Combined
    – Weaker Queen is ‘History’
  - Consolidate Three Deeps To Two (20 Best Frames)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>5 +</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>8 +</td>
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<tr>
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<td>14 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>12 +</td>
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Swarm Indicators

• Sound
  - Kind Of A Warble To The Hum Instead Of A Steady Hum

• Highly populated
  - Cover Filled With Bees
  - No Empty Frames - Congestion

• “Back Filling”
  - Filling Empty Brood Cells With Nectar
  - Most Useful Indicator – Early Enough To Do Something!

• Swarm Cells
  - Possibly Too Late – But Take Action
Summary

• Spring Begins Primary “Decision” Season For Beekeepers

• Judge Each Of Your Hives
  - Food Stores
    – Feed Sugar Syrup (1 to 1)
    – Feed Pollen Supplement
  - Strength
    – Strong – Does It Need Frame Or Box Manipulation
    – Weak – Should It Be Combined

• Begin Watching For Swarm Indicators
  - More On Swarming Next Month