A Note About Fall / Winter Bee Nutrition
– November 2017 –

Micky Cross
Co-First Vice President
Bee Nutrition

• Nutrition Comes In Two Basic Forms:

  • Carbohydrates
    - Honey
    - Nectar
    - Sugar Syrup
    - Sugar Candy
    - etc.

  • Protein
    - Pollen
    - Pollen Substitute
Nutrition Stressed In Fall / Winter
- Carbohydrates -

• Essential For Bee and Hive Survival
  - Bees Can, And Often Do, Starve Over The Winter

• Stored Honey Is Best Source -- Know Your Stores (Aka: Amount Of Honey Put Back)
  - A Fully Capped Deep Honey Frame Weighs ~ Nine Pounds
  - A Double Deep Hive Needs ~ 40 Pounds (4+ Frames) Of Stores
  - A Single Deep Hive Needs ~ 30 Pounds (3+ Frames)

• These Recommendations Assume Cold, “Inactive” Winters
  - Our Bees Will Likely Be Out Of The Hives On Many “Unproductive” Days
  - Will Likely Need To Supplement In Southeast Texas

• If You Need To Supplement
  - Remove Empty Honey Frames and Replace With Stored Honey Frames
  - Feed Sugar Syrup (Two to One) – Commonly Preferred Method In Our Area
  - Feed Sugar “Candy” – Might Aggravate Hive Beetle Problems
Making 2:1 “Heavy” Sugar Syrup

- Use White, Granulated Sugar
  - Cane Sugar Most Often Recommended

- Remember – Two to One By Weight, Not Volume
  - One Cup Nearly Boiling Water Weighs ~ 8 ounces (1/2 a pound)
  - One Pound of Sugar For Every One Cup of Water

- Water Must Be Very Near Boiling, But Best Not To Boil
  - Too Hot Can Cause Sugar To Later Crystallize
  - Will Have To Stir Often – Takes A Long Time To Saturate

Adding a Supplement Is Also Recommended
Nutrition Stressed In Fall / Winter
- Protein -

- Protein (Poll, Poll Substitute)
  - Essential For Hive Growth (i.e. New Bees)
  - New Brood Is Way Down In Winter and Bees Live Longer
  - “Fall” Bees Will Be Raising Your First Set of Spring Brood

- Need For Pollen Is Low In Winter
  - But, Can Help Ensure Strong Spring Hives By Supplementing In Fall
  - Balancing Act -- To Much Can Set Off New Brood Cycle When Not Needed

- Pollen Substitutes
  - Study By Randy Oliver
    - Ultra Bee
    - MegaBee

- How To Feed
  - Patties – Only Enough For A Few Days At A Time (Hive Beetle Magnets)
    - Extra Sugar Can Make Sure They Eat The Patties Quickly
Final Note

• Keep Your Feeding Equipment Clean!
  - Mold and Mildew Can Form Quickly In Sugar Syrup and Pollen

• “Spoiled” Food Will Weaken Bees Digestive System
  - Dysentery
  - Nosema

Like Most Things In Beekeeping, There Are Many Opinions About The If’s, Why’s, How’s and When’s of Fall / Winter Feeding.

The Key Is To Know It Is A Stressful Time and That Hives Can Starve Or Weaken.

Choose Your Preferred Method, Have A Plan, And Execute It .

(And Be Willing To Adjust If Things Change. 😊)