

Bee Newsletter

1 April 2025

Alert: The Honey Bee Package delivery date is 6 April!

MEETING AT SR. CENTER PICNIC PAVILION

I think we are locked in on the delivery date after 2 changes.

Always the bad news first. The packages will be hard pressed to grow into robust colonies before the spring nectar flow starts. That means all the nectar collected will go to raising new bees versus storing honey for us to rob later.

The good news. Maybe you can force the package enough through expert management techniques so the populations are large enough by sourwood season you can rob some sourwood honey.

Expert management techniques translate into tricking the bees. Or better said, helping the colony by reducing the work load.

I will explain the optimal actions and anything less will result in less honey stored in the hive. We are not concerning ourselves with pollen as the foragers will take care of that in relation to the number of eggs being laid by the queen.

Give the package queen at least 3 frames of drawn comb when the package is installed in the hive box. This will allow the queen to start laying eggs immediately. Feed the new package colony sugar syrup starting on day one. It does not matter if it is 1:1 or 2:1. 1:1 is supposed to stimulate honey storage and 2:1 is supposed to stimulate wax building. So, anything helps!

Let the queen out of her shipping cage on day 3. She was laying eggs when they captured her and she wants to get back into that activity as soon as possible. This will increase the amount of brood with an early start versus leaving the worker bees to let the queen out on day 5.

If you have dead out colonies, hopefully you took action to preserve the comb to use with the new package. If not, you can order artificial drawn comb from the

bee supply companies. It is a little bit expensive but well worth the investment to help the package get started.

Add more frames, up to a total of 5 in the first week. Hopefully all drawn comb but 2 foundations are okay.

Keep feeding the colony until the wax builder bees are working frame one and five with the queen laying eggs on frame 2&3.

If you have a winter over colony, steal some frames of honey from the well-established colony and place them in the package colony. Replace these frames with foundation frames and feed the over wintered robust colony 2:1 syrup to expedite their wax building and honey storage in the brood area. Place the foundation just outside the working brood area. The in-hive bees will work hard thinking they need to catch up so the queen can lay eggs in the newly drawn comb.

In week three, if you have a wintered over colony, switch its location with the growing package colony. Do this on a bright sunny day when the foragers are out working. The returning foragers will enter the hive sitting where they left from. A bee bearing gifts is accepted into any colony. This will result in more foragers being added to your weaker package colony speeding your nectar collection. The strong loosing colony will show no ill affects as new bees are emerging and new foragers developing every day.

If you have old honey you can spare, feed it back to the bees. Mix it about 50/50 with water. I like in hive feeders to keep wasps and ants out of my syrup.

The very bottom line is feed your colonies now and after packages are installed to reduce the amount of work the foragers have to do. Keep adding frames to your current colonies so you will have more to barrow after the packages get here. You can go to 3 double deeps on a good robust overwintered colony.

See the “want add” page attached to the newsletter. There are available components you can get cheap or free.

We are already looking at setting up an informational booth at the August Mountain Fair in Hiawassee. Ideas welcome!

Look at the Georgia Beekeepers Association (gabeekeeping.com) site for their April gathering. Great information sharing.

See you all at the Picnic Pavilion on Tuesday the 1st. The college is on Spring Break

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