

Beekeeper's Newsletter

2 September 2025

As I write this my computer connectivity is out so can't distribute the letter until after the meeting.

31 Aug: back on line

Hive beetles are becoming a point of discussion. As your neighbors' hives die the beetles migrate to new bee colonies. Someone says the hive beetle can smell honey 5 miles. That is about where you live. Placing used clothes drier sheets on the top bars will help catch the adult beetles. They have hooks on their feet that catch in the drier sheets. Remove the sheets with stuck on beetles and burn or throw them away. Don't burn them inside your bee yard and burn up your hives.

A new study and style of beekeeping is out for dissemination. What they say is count you brood and compare the ration of brood to adult bees. What this really means is a college professor has written a paper to guarantee his/her survival. "PUBLISH OR PARISH"!

What it means to us is what we all know is true. We must grow lots of healthy bees to maintain a healthy colony. That is our current Fall season objective. The more bees in the colony the more food they will store for the winter.

To reiterate: Feed syrup and pollen. The bees are not as picky as the beekeepers. I try to present my substitute feed in a form the bees are accustom to gathering. Then I want it to bee easy and not stressful work.

So, I feed powdered pollen substitute out where the bees usually gather pollen. Away from the hive like a flower patch. This keeps a bunch of foragers busy.

I feed sugar syrup in the hive for a number of reasons. One, the nectar foragers will continue to forage as long as there are flowers, probably into October. Two, it gives the "in hive honey storage bees" something to do while they wait for the foragers to return from their long travels looking for a few blooms in the late fall. Three, it lets me know how much syrup each colony is taking in without me

removing frames to see. This is the fastest way to store honey. It cuts out waiting on the forager

You want your queen to lay eggs as long as she will. This is weather and incoming food dependent. I have had small brood clusters as late as early January. The queen slowed laying based on no new food coming into the hive. There was plenty of stored food to keep the cluster alive. Then there was a 3 week cold spell when the queen quit laying eggs because the bees were clustered. Then she restarted laying 2d week of February. Queens will lay eggs all year long in Florida.

To guarantee the healthiest bees we can make: Treat for mites. Today I day DON'T FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS. Of course this can also kill your bees. YOU have to know how the treatment chemicals work and avoid the wrong ones.

Oxalic acid fumigation can be used at high or low outside ambient temperatures. It can be used as often as you like or have time to administer. It is affective for "a few minutes" until it dissipates.

Oxalic acid dribble can only be used during warm temperatures because the wet bees from the dribble can die from hypothermia.

VarroxSan is new to me but should work well with the bees walking on the strips and slowly evaporating into the hive. It can be used during honey collection. There is natural oxalic acid in honey. "They" think the mites will not develop an immunity to oxalic acid. I would use 4 strips per hive body for fast coverage (more bees contacting more strips). In a double hive body setup that would be 8 strips.

Formic acid and Thymol gels only work at temperatures between 65- & 90-degrees Fahrenheit. They must evaporate and the fumes gas the mites. So, they don't evaporate in cool fall temperatures. In Hot temperatures they evaporate too fast and gas the adult bees.

Hopguard 3 is slow and weak.

Apivar is a plastic strip impregnated with amitraz which is very affective. It can be used at any temperature because it is a contact chemical. The bees must rub on it. Put it in for 42 days, then take a break and do it again. It can be used when the

bees are in a cluster. Place the strip just inside the outer edge of the cluster on at least 2 sides, maybe 4 sides so more bees come in contact faster. Do it at Thanksgiving and mid-February. Do it in the summer when it is too hot for gels.

Treat now and again at Thanksgiving or now and VarroxSan at Thanksgiving and leave for 60 days.

By alternating what you use you will not create genetic immunity to the chemicals.

SEE CREPE MYRTLE ARTICLE

Crepe Myrtles are blooming now. This new study shows that honey bees are attacked to some specific cultivars of crepe myrtle. Plant lots of them in your yard and give a few to the neighbors on either side of you. Make sure they are the correct cultivar. It would make a great late source of volume nectar reducing your purchases of sugar for syrup. It has been long enough after sourwood that the two nectars would not get mixed up

IMPORTANT I will not be selling packages next spring. So, we all need to get together and see who bought packages where and what the opinion is on the quality of honeybees. If anyone wants to take over from me, I already have 275 packages on order for delivery next March. You can take over this order before I cancel it. As you noticed I was the least expensive seller of packages. Several beekeepers could go together on a trip and pick up their own packages. That is because I was not into it for a profit. Just to cover expenses. It is a tricky endeavor. You can purchase "cargo insurance" to cover any lost or damaged cargo. I do not know exactly which company sells it, but your friendly cargo company would know. Being a commercial endeavor, your car insurance probably would not cover it but they might know who does.

Another activity to do now is balance your populations and the stored food frames. Move frames from your strong colony to the weak colony. Move the bees with the frames. This will increase the smaller population and provide stored food in the gaining colony. There is enough time for the stronger colony to replace the losses. The larger the cluster after Thanksgiving the better chance of survival.

If you just want to move a bunch of bees, take a honey super with frames. Spray the frames with syrup. The bees will move up into the honey super on the strong hive. Spray the top bars of the weak hive with syrup. Move the whole honey super to the weak hive with the bees in it. You can use the newspaper trick between the two boxes to slow "joining up" or not. You are moving in hive worker bees who are supposed to be young and non-aggressive.

Inspect your queen for quality. Is she laying enough eggs. Is she old. Introducing a new young mated laying queen now will boost the number of young bees going into the winter. Theoretically this boosts the survival rate over winter.

Ordering a new queen next March/April is tricky because nation wide there are not enough drones to get a well mated queen. Available queens are being used up to go in packages and nucs for sale. Kona queens from Hawaii are the biggest choice.

See you at the meeting on Tuesday 2 Sept. If the College is not open, we will move to the Senior Center Picnic pavilion

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