

TIPS FOR JANUARY

1. In most years, most beekeepers in Texas will begin noticing bees bringing in small amounts of pollen on warm days at the very end of January.
2. Queens will also begin laying in most areas in mid to late January. As the population begins to grow, the need for food grows as well.
3. Continue feeding pollen substitute, either in patty form or open dry feeding. This will ensure that your hive has sufficient food available to continue rearing brood, regardless of the constantly changing weather this time of year.
4. If your hive has less than 30 lbs. of excess honey stored, begin feeding small amounts (1 pint per hive, per week) of syrup to ensure the bees have the food necessary to rear brood.
5. It is perfectly normal this time of year to notice a few dozen dead bees in front of your hive. This is considered normal as winter bees begin to die off and are replaced by the next generation.
6. If your hive has 3 frames of bees or less, join them with another hive using the newspaper method. Kill the queen in the weak hive. Remove the lid of the hive you are going to join the weaker hive with. Place a sheet of newspaper over the stronger hive, and place the box containing the weaker hive directly on top of the newspaper. Over a period of days, the bees will chew through the newspaper and merge into one hive. This slow method of joining hives helps prevent fighting between the two boxes.
7. If you have more than 2 mites per 100 bees, treat for varroa mites. Most treatments are effective this time of year as there is little to no brood.
8. Order bees and queens if you have not already done so.
9. Limit quick (30 second) looks into hives in cold weather. Longer, several minute inspections should be reserved for days above 55 degrees.