

TIPS FOR FEBRUARY

1. As your hive begins to grow, their need for food will grow as well. It takes up to 2 frames of honey to raise 1 frame of brood. Be sure to check your hive at least every other week to ensure they have enough food stores to grow properly. Even if flowers are blooming, that does not mean those flowers are producing enough nectar to sustain your hive. A 20 lb. surplus of stored honey or syrup is recommended in your hive during February.

Feed a 2:1 (2 parts sugar to 1 part water) syrup if your hive has less than a 20 lb. surplus.

2. With an increasing number of flowers beginning to bloom, feeding a pollen substitute is not as critical. However, during the months of February and March we can have serious cold snaps. During these times, bees are unable to forage.

If the weather is 50-55 degrees or below, bees typically forage very little. If there are more than 2-3 consecutive days below these temperatures, a strong growing hive can run out of stored pollen. If a hive runs out of pollen, they will begin cannibalizing brood, which can cause your hive to lose strength quickly. To prevent this, give each hive a pollen patty if these conditions occur.

3. Consider reversing boxes. If your hive has overwintered in 2 boxes, you will often find a majority of your bees are now in the top box as they have migrated upward over the winter, consuming honey. If this has happened to your hive, consider placing the box full of bees on the bottom, and the empty box on the top.

4. If your hive has all the boxes currently 75% or more full of bees, considering adding an additional box. Very strong hives can swarm in late February or early March. Help prevent possible swarming by adding an additional box and planning to make a spilt later in the spring.

5. Consider treating for mites. As a general rule, test for mites before treating. Every hive has mites, but not all hives have high enough levels to necessitate treating. There are a variety of tests, including the sugar roll, ether roll, and sticky board test. If your hive has more than 2 mites per 100 bees, treat.

A visual inspection is not a reliable method to determine mite levels. In general, if you can visually see mites, the infestation is already at lethal levels for your hive.