

Beekeeping Tips for March

1. If you have ordered package bees or are planning splits, have your equipment built, painted and ready to go.
2. Bees should be quite active. They should be bringing in pollen and searching for nectar on warm days. However, since the honey flow hasn't started, bees need to be fed. Bees can die of starvation in March!
3. On a calm and mild day (55 F or above), thoroughly inspect and clean your hives:
 - a. Check food stores.
 - b. Look for brood and a good brood pattern, which indicates the presence of and the quality of the queen.
 - c. Look for disease and parasites
 - d. If needed, scrape and clean the bottom board
 - e. Remove burr comb and excess propolis on frames and boxes
 - f. Add new frames to replace old or damaged ones.
 - g. Clean up any dead colonies.
 - h. Burn comb, tops, deeps, and bottom boards from any colony that died due to American foulbrood. Other woodenware may be reused if boiled in lye water or scorched with a propane torch. In bad cases, BURN ALL!
 - i. If you have two deep brood boxes and the queen is in the top box, reverse the boxes.
 - j. Remove swarm cells.
 - k. If the brood nest is congested, prevent swarming by providing plenty of room. Add a super, but be sure to remove medication before doing so.
 - l. If you used extender patties, they may be left on the hive.
4. Start making splits using the new queens that you ordered last autumn.
5. Merge weak hives.
6. March is the time that you want the most brood being developed. Eggs laid in March produce the bees that bring in nectar next month when the honey flow starts.
7. Remove entrance reducers near the end of the month. Do this sooner if the weather warms and bee activity indicates congestion at the hive entrance.
8. Dust with Tylosin as a preventive treatment for foul brood. Follow package instructions. CAUTION: As this mixture will kill open brood, only sprinkle on top of bars of outside brood box frames. Open brood is usually in the center frames of the brood box.
9. Carefully check stored supers for wax moths. Keep moth crystals in stored supers.
10. Plan to have supers on by early April. Supers that have been stored with moth crystals should be aired for three days to one week before installing to eliminate the paradichlorobenzene odor.

