

WINTERING OF HONEY BEES

This, our first Bulletin of the new 1974/75 season, is, primarily, intended as a guide and help for our FIELD DAY to be held on September 21st, 1974, when you will have an opportunity to ask questions and observe a practical demonstration.

In the first place, a good young queen of this year's rearing is recommended and an adequate cluster of 30/40,000 young bees, by which is meant, bees that have not participated in the honey flow. This size of cluster is recommended for brood rearing. The amount of brood that can be matured will be in direct ratio to the number of bees present to feed it and keep it warm.

Brood rearing slows down as the season closes. It has been found that Caucasian strain generally are quicker to recognize this fact than the Italian strains which often do not recognize the oncoming of winter and continue to rear brood until it is too late in provision the hive with stores until the new season begins.

Equipment is also very necessary for wintering and it has been found that ten frame equipment is much better than nine frame and that two deeps or three dadants for the brood, are the accepted equipment for wintering in our area. This statement will, no doubt, be refuted by certain beekeepers who have found the nine frame arrangement to be satisfactory and two dadants instead of three - you make your own choice.

The accepted amount of stores for wintering is 50-60 lbs of good white or nearly white honey per hive. Poor wintering will result from poor stores which would be evident in the moist and excessive amount of bee faeces, tending to develop into Nosema disease.

Ample pollen is as necessary as honey for good wintering. It takes about 500 square inches (about four frames) of pollen stored in the comb to carry a strong colony through the winter. Without it there will be a lapse in brood rearing until the new season's pollen becomes available. Bees will not cross a comb or even an expanse of sealed honey in the same comb to get pollen to feed brood so, no pollen is of any immediate value unless it is adjacent to the brood. It is therefore, vitally important that both pollen and honey be properly positioned in the hive.

With regard to positioning of hives to be wintered, the experts advise us to locate on an unobstructed south or southwest slope to get the full benefit of the low winter sun during the warmest period of the day. Avoid locating in a valley as moisture laden air settles in the lowest spots. Cold winds remove heat from hives so, unless there is a natural windbreak of trees or hedge, a slatted windbreak fence is recommended.

H.R.
12th Sep. '74