

Stores for Overwintering

My last Bulletin dealt with the wintering of bees, primarily as a guide to our FALL Field Day, which proved to be very successful, and for this month I thought it appropriate to enlarge on this subject by explaining what appears to me to be most important points to be observed in dealing with stores for wintering.

Honey, as you know, is a heat producing food and as such, is consumed by bees to help maintain the desired temperature in the hive of around 90 degrees throughout the winter. The amount of comb space of honey required to produce brood is equivalent to that occupied by the brood. In other words, a comb of honey is required to produce a comb of brood. The greatest consumption of honey takes place in the Spring with the rapid increase in brood rearing, and this again is activated by the degree of supplies available. In short, few supplies, few brood. So, bear in mind that inadequate stores, a common and most costly fault in bee-keeping, lead to starving and bees ~~are~~ forced to forage ~~in forage~~ outside for food when temperatures are low and consequently are lost through chilling. With sugar at its present high price, the feeding with sugar syrup becomes costly. Do not be tempted to extract too much honey and none at all from the brood chamber, and so leave inadequate stores or you will most assuredly deplete your colonies. Sugar lacks the necessary food elements of honey and, therefore, should be avoided except in extreme cases.

Good pollen stored in the hives is very necessary for the successful wintering of bees and brood rearing, equivalent to the normal mortality rate in the hive, throughout the winter. Pollen provides the necessary protein and vitamins and nectar the carbohydrates for the emerging brood. Having pollen in the hives is of little advantage unless placed as near as possible to the centre of the cluster, for bees will not utilize scattered packets of pollen.

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that sufficient stores be available over the winter and where colonies are too weak to winter on their own, they should be united. The accepted amount of stored honey per hive for wintering a normal colony, is between 60-70 lbs.

In the coming weeks, please do not fail to administer your antibiotics, if you have not done so, unless you wish to run unnecessary risk of ~~fastering~~ FOULBROOD.

H.R.

9th October, 1974.