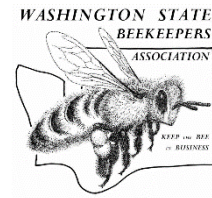




Master Beekeeping Program

Lesson 7 – Fall Management



Fall management

Fall is the start of the beekeeping year. Healthy overwintered bees give you a head start over packages and nucs available in April and May. Good fall management is the first step towards getting a good honey crop the following year.

Remove excess boxes and partially filled honey supers.

- Harvest full honey supers but you must leave at least 60 lbs. of honey in your hive for the bees to eat over the winter.
- 60 lbs = 10 deep frames or 15 western combs full of honey
- After extracting your honey supers should be stored in a cool dry place
- Keep combs stacked tightly and covered to exclude mice and wax moths
- Fumigate stored combs with **Paradichlorobenzene** crystals NOT moth balls (naphthalene)

Remove queen excluders

Unite weak colonies in the late summer or early fall

- Never unite a diseased colony with a healthy colony

Re-queen old or weak queens, fall is good time to do this if you can order queens

Do not try to overwinter weak or diseased colonies

Provide each colony with adequate food for the winter

- Good sealed honey in frames is best.
- Uncapped nectar or watery honey may cause dysentery
- If you need to feed use
 - 2 parts sugar to 1 part water syrup
- Bees cannot evaporate water from syrup in cooler temps
- Bees need capped honey or very thick syrup

Provide each colony with a top and bottom entrance

- Provides additional ventilation
- Check bottom entrance periodically to make sure its not blocked with dead bees or debris

Raise back of hive about 1 inch

- Allows rain or excess moisture to run out of hive instead of collecting in the back of hive

Make sure hives are protected from direct winds

- Hives can be wrapped in tar paper but make sure top and bottom entrances are open.
- Dark colored hives absorb more heat than lighter colored hives
- It is not necessary to wrap hives in western Washington

Protect you hives against mice

- Install mouse guards/ entrance reducers to prevent mice from taking up residence
- If you have mouse infestation in hives use protection and dust masks when cleaning

Winter management

If you properly care for your hives in the fall little winter management is needed.

- Check entrances to make sure they are not blocked.
- Monitor food reserves and feed dry sugar if hives feel light.
- A lot of hive die in Jan – March due to running out of food or cluster cannot reach food still in hive.

Notes:

Resources Online:

- PSBA website: www.pugetsoundbees.org Honey Bee Suite - Rusty Burlew: <http://www.honeybeesuite.com/>
WSBA website: www.wasba.org The Practical Beekeeper-Michael Bush: <http://www.bushfarms.com/bees.htm>
National Honey Board: www.nhb.org Scientific Beekeeping - Randy Oliver: <http://scientificbeekeeping.com/>
Bee Informed: <http://beeinformed.org/> WSU Diagnostics lab: <http://entomology.wsu.edu/apis/diagnostic-lab/>
Apiary Registration form: <http://agr.wa.gov/PlantsInsects/Apiary/>