

PRESIDENT'S CORNER...



WITH MARK BEOUGHER

Good morning, GGLBA!

I had the great pleasure of spending the entire day yesterday in the bee yard. I came away with a few observations that I wanted to share with all of you. Since we can't have our regular meetings or meetup in the beeyard, we'll take advantage of our Facebook page and website to share these things with you.

The direction our club is going with training and education is absolutely working! I have not had a single dead-out over winter and I'm talking approximately 150 hives overwintered. I am not mentioning this to boast in any way other than to boast on the club and the management practices the club is teaching if applied correctly work incredibly well. A lot of management, genetics, nutrition, integrated pest management, weather and the blessings of God and this bee thing is very sustainable.

Listed below are some of my observations and things you should now be doing:

1. Unwrap your hives. The weather is stable enough now and the populations are expanding that it is now safe to do this.
2. Remove your spacers. If you put a spacer or shim on your hive to allow for fondant or sugar bricks get them off ASAP. If your hives were wrapped and your colonies are strong, they are absolutely drawing comb in this space and laying eggs and making a mess. I brought home yesterday 2 five-gallon buckets full of drawn comb most filled with eggs and larva from the spacer area (what a waste).
3. I would recommend if you had insulation above your bees to leave this on for about 2 more weeks.
4. Leave your mouse guards on until the end of April or early May but remove any dead bees from the bottom board by scraping them out from the entrance as best you can.
5. I saw pollen of 4 different colors coming in yesterday. Dull white, red, dull yellow & bright yellow
6. Surprisingly I did see a little bit of nectar in some hives coming in.
7. It is still too early to reverse boxes in my opinion. I would wait a couple more weeks for this.
8. Since it is too early to reverse your boxes if your hive is full and crowded you could add an additional box to the top to give them some more space. Drawn comb would be best but foundation although a little early could be used if that's all you have. If using

foundation for this do not use a queen excluder. We are still having very cool nights, so we don't want to give them a bunch of open space to try to keep warm if it isn't warranted. My hives are booming so I will be adding 1 additional box per hive this week where needed. My plan will be to place a queen excluder on and add a medium box of drawn comb on top to give them additional space. This will allow them to spread out, move some honey up from the brood nest area to make room for the queen to lay and a place to put incoming nectar without plugging up the brood nest. I personally don't like my queens laying in my honey supers. Once a queen lays in your honey supers the risk of wax moths destroying your supers increase tremendously since wax moths feed on the lining left behind in the combs from brood. This additional space will also help suppress their urge somewhat to swarm, but this is not an absolute fix.

9. Speaking of swarming I will be placing my swarm traps out over the next 10 days. Make sure to include in your trap at least one frame of old dark brood comb and a few drops of lemon grass oil inside the box.
10. If you have a varroa mite problem, you could use Apivar strips but if you do no honey supers can be put on for 8 weeks (6 weeks of treatment plus 2 weeks to cool off). Oxalic acid vapor could also be used on a warm day but also no honey supers on for human consumption if you are using this treatment.
11. I saw purple eyed drones and drone brood but, in my opinion, it is still too early to think about splitting any hives unless you have a mated queen to install. Walk away splits, OTS or notch method, grafting or 48-hour queen cells is still too early to be trying any of these. There is no hurry so I would wait 3 weeks or so before attempting any of these things.
12. 1 to 1 sugar water can now start to be used if needed but I would definitely keep insulation on top of the hives to help maintain temperature in the hives. Bees won't take sugar water when it's too cold. If you add pollen patties only put in a small piece at a time since real pollen is now starting to come in and the bees prefer the real pollen over the patties so no need to waste the patties. Besides too much pollen patties in a hive will attract hive beetles.

Even though we can't visit each other, we can still visit our beeyards as the 2020 beekeeping season is underway.

Hopefully this information can be a help to our members on what they should be doing now in their hives. Doug & Allen I would appreciate if you could get this information in some form on our website and Facebook page.

Thanks,

Mark