

A bee year calendar:

Winter (Oct., Nov., Dec., Jan., Feb., Mar.) Spring: (Mar., April, May), Summer (May, Jun, Jul, Aug), Fall (Sep)

Jan:

- Check the overwintering hives, shovel snow away from entrances. Make sure wind breaks and ventilation is adequate.
- Check and repair stored hives.
- Keep an eye on food stores.
- Order queens & packages of bees.
- Plan new pollinator habitat.

Feb:

- Check the overwintering hives, shovel snow away from entrances. Make sure wind breaks and ventilation is adequate.
- Order new equipment or supplies from catalogs.
- Order flower seed for more nectar and pollen sources
- Consider a supplemental feeding strategy.

March: (when does nectar begin to flow?)

- Check the overwintering hives, shovel snow away from entrances. Make sure wind breaks and ventilation is adequate
- Consider a supplemental feeding strategy.
- Pick a warm day. Inspect colonies. Clean house. If any colonies have died, remove the bees, bury them and their combs. Clean and disinfect the hive boxes and frames.
- Consider frost seeding clovers.

SPRING

April: The time frames given here are greatly weather dependent. Observe the weather. You should have an indication at this time weather spring (and nectar flow) will on time – typically April 30th. Will spring be early as it was in 2012 when spring came two weeks early. Or will spring be late as it was in 2013 when rainy, cold weather set things back by two weeks.

Inspect every 10 days to two weeks. Have an agenda to know why you are inspecting.

Your objective is to maximize colony size in time for major nectar flows.

For existing colonies:

- Consider adding sugar water and pollen patties as a supplemental feeding strategy if nectar is not flowing.
- Inspect for vigorous queen. Re-queen if necessary. (leave queen-less for 2-3 days so workers accept a new queen)
- Inspect for colony health. Check/treat for varroa mites.
- Inspect to see if there are 3-6 frames of brood. If yes, consider a partial reversal of the upper brood box to the lower position.
- Clean bottom boards.

For beginning new colonies:

- Now is the time to “hive a package”
- Or to add a nucleus colony.

Till or work up ground and plant flower seed.

May: Check, add supers?

Prevent swarms, divide colonies.

SUMMER

June: Check, add supers?

Consider splitting hives to prevent swarming. Move any newly split hive at least 2 miles away from the parent hive to discourage bees from returning to the main hive.

July and August:

Check for a vigorous queen and plenty of brood.

- Remove honey supers. Harvest honey.
- If Honey comes off in early August then do varroa mite check & treat afterwards

September:

- Check and treat varroa mites if the honey supers are off for the year.
- Add an entrance reducer to prevent robbing and keep mice out.
- At 64 degrees bees cluster in a ball and take turns heating the hive by rotating stations inside, (warm) and outside (cold) on the cluster. The heat generated by them moving their wings is enough to keep them warm.
- Make sure there is still a vigorous queen.
- There is very little brood produced at this time.
- Consider adding sugar water to hives as food sources decline.
- Consider feeding medicated syrup to treat for Nosema.

October:

- Think about insulation for the winter.
- A 2 box hive body should have 85-100 pounds of honey over it in this climate. A frame of honey weighs 5 pounds so this means about 17-20 full frames of honey should be left for the bees. This is 2 supers of honey.
- 3-5 Pollen frame
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- Consider adding sugar water to hives as food sources decline.
- Consider feeding medicated syrup to treat for Nosema.
- There should be about 3-5 frames of pollen or bee bread available.
- Make sure winter ventilation to remove moisture from the hive is adequate. Add a moisture board.

November:

- Should you relocate hives for the winter to a more protected spot?
- Clean frames & empty supers. Store properly (avoid moths).

December:

- Enjoy the honey. Make holiday gifts of bee products.
- Check the overwintering hives, shovel snow away from entrances. Make sure wind breaks and ventilation is adequate.
- You may check honey supplies. Try to work only on warm-ish days.

- If you see bees clustered under the top cover it means.....?



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