

A Beekeeper's Year

The Prairie Edition

While dates of phenological events may vary according to your bee yard's geographical location and microclimate, the order of events will be the same.

Chores



Phenological Events To Look For

MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JAN-FEBRUARY
Inspect and check food stores as weather allows May reverse overwintered brood boxes when grass turns green and air > 60°F	Install package bees Evaluate and equalize overwintered hives Possibly treat for mites Prepare for brooding up, splits, queen rearing Set swarm traps	Swarm season Make splits, queen grafts Inspect every 7 - 10 days Super up as needed	Inspect every 7 - 10 days Check for mites Super up as needed	Inspect every 7 - 10 days Check for mites Secure mite treatment if threshold is met Super up Add ventilation as needed Late requeening & splitting	Inspect every 7 - 10 days Check for mites Harvest	Inspect every 7 - 10 days Check effectiveness of mite treatment Treat a second time if needed Combine as needed	Inspect every 14 days as egg laying slows Check effectiveness of mite treatment Install mouse guards Feed 2:1 syrup if hives are underweight	Inspect every 14 days Winterize as desired	Inspect and winterize as desired Clear snow from entrances	Check emergency food stores as weather allows Clear snow from entrances Possible oxalic acid treatment Planning period: organize, order, and assemble to support new season's goals
MAPLE, WILLOW, ELM										
	HAZELNUT, CEDAR, POPLAR									
	CHORUS FROGS & SPRING PEEPERS									
	EPHEMERALS & GARDEN BULBS									
	MUSTARDS & DANDELIONS									
	LAMIUMS									
		REDBUD								
		COTTONWOOD & FRUIT TREES								
		WHITE DUTCH & ALSIKE CLOVERS								
		BIRDSFOOT TREFOIL								
		YELLOW SWEET CLOVER								
		BLACK LOCUST & KENTUCKY COFFEE								
		CATALPA								
		ELDERBERRY & ALFALFA								
		LINDEN & BASSWOOD								
		SOYBEANS								
		BUTTERFLY MILKWEED								
		CONEFLOWER								
		WHITE SWEETCLOVER								
		MOUNTAIN MINT								
		SILIPHUMS								
		WHITE AND PURPLE PRARIE CLOVER								
		BUTTONBUSH & RATTLESNAKE MASTER								
		PARTRIDGE PEA								
			SUMAC							
			EVENING PRIMROSE							
			WINGSTEM							
			IRONWEED							
			SUNFLOWER, SNEEZEWEED, GOLDENROD							
			SMARTWEED							
			GIANT RAGWEED							
			WHITE SNAKEROOT							
			ASTER							

OTHER CHORES

- Maintaining records/inspection logs
- Ordering new equipment, packages, and nucs
- Planning for continuing education e.g. magazine subscriptions, book lists, classes, and events
- Tracking hyperlocal pollen and nectar flows with a phenology planner and responsively managing

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Phenological Events To Look For

It is recommended to verify all species with a reliable field guide (digital or paper)

JANUARY & FEBRUARY	No phenological events
MARCH	Maple, Willow, Elm, Hazelnut, Cedar, Poplar, Chorus Frogs And Spring Peepers, Ephemerals And Garden Bulbs
APRIL	Maple, Willow, Elm, Hazelnuts, Cedar, Poplar, Chorus Frogs And Spring Peepers, Ephemerals And Garden Bulbs, Mustards & Dandelions, Lamiums, Redbud, Cottonwood & Fruit Trees
MAY	Maple, Willow, Elm, Ephemerals, Garden Bulbs, Mustards & Dandelions, Lamiums, Cottonwood & Fruit Trees, Birdsfoot Trefoil, White Dutch And Alsike Clover, Black Locust, Kentucky Coffee Trees, Yellow Sweetclover, Catalpa
JUNE	Mustards & Dandelions, Birdsfoot Trefoil, White Dutch And Alsike Clover, Black Locusts, Kentucky Coffee Trees, Yellow Sweetclover, Catalpa, Linden & Basswood, Soybeans, Elderberry & Alfalfa, Butterfly Milkweed, White Sweetclover, Coneflower, Mountain Mint, Silphiums, White And Purple Prairie Clover, Buttonbush, Rattlesnake Master, Partridge Pea
JULY	Birdsfoot Trefoil, White Dutch And Alsike Clovers, Butterfly Milkweed, White Sweetclover, Coneflower, Mountain Mint, Silphiums, White And Purple Prairie Clover, Buttonbush, Rattlesnake Master, Partridge Pea, Sumac, Evening Primrose, Ironweed, Wingstem
AUGUST	Birdsfoot Trefoil, Butterfly Milkweed, White Sweetclover, Mountain Mint, Silphiums, White And Purple Prairie Clover, Buttonbush, Rattlesnake Master, Partridge Pea, Evening Primrose, Ironweed, Wingstem, Sunflower, Sneezeweed, Goldenrod, Smartweed, Giant Ragweed, White Snakeroot, Aster
SEPTEMBER	Birdsfoot Trefoil, Butterfly Milkweed, Silphiums, Partridge Pea, Ironweed, Wingstem, Sunflower, Sneezeweed, Goldenrod, Smartweed, Giant Ragweed, White Snakeroot, Aster
OCTOBER	Aster
NOVEMBER & DECEMBER	No phenological events

Beekeeping Chores

JANUARY & FEBRUARY	Check emergency food stores as weather allows Clear snow from entrances Possible oxalic acid treatment Planning period: organize, order, and assemble to support new season's goals
MARCH	Inspect and check food stores as weather allows May reverse overwintered brood boxes when grass turns green and air temperature over 60°F
APRIL	Install package bees Evaluate and equalize overwintered hives Possibly treat for mites. Prepare for brooding up, splits, queen rearing Set swarm traps
MAY	Swarm season Make splits Queen grafts Inspect every 7 - 10 days Super up as needed
JUNE	Inspect every 7 - 10 days Check for mites Super up as needed
JULY	Inspect every 7 - 10 days Check for mites - secure mite treatment if threshold is met Super up, add ventilation as needed Late requeening and splitting
AUGUST	Inspect every 7 - 10 days Check for mites Harvest
SEPTEMBER	Inspect every 7 - 10 days Check effectiveness of mite treatment Treat a second time if needed Evaluate hives; combine as needed
OCTOBER	Inspect every 14 days as egg laying slows Check effectiveness of mite treatment Install mouseguards Feed 2:1 syrup if hives are underweight
NOVEMBER	Inspect every 14 days Winterize as desired
DECEMBER	Inspect and winterize as desired Clear snow from entrances