AGRICULTURAL
GUIDE
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Seasonal apiary management for Missouri

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Winter

December and January

1. Repair, paint and clean equipment.
2. Remove and render any foundation in poor condition.
3. Inspect apiary for animal or weather damage.
4. Feed bees sugar water and pollen substitute if necessary. Colonies that have less than 15 pounds of capped honey (six frames in shallow super or three deep super frames) need supplements.

February

1. Open colonies on a warm day. Check for diseases, and see if the queen is actively laying eggs.
2. Feed bees if necessary (see December and January). You may wish to feed sugar water to stimulate an increase in the bee population. Feed preventative antibiotics.
3. Unite weak colonies. Select the best queen of two colonies. Kill the less desirable queen and lay one sheet of newspaper over the desirable brood nest. Slit the paper in several places. Set the queenless brood nest on the top of the desired brood nest. The two colonies will merge. One strong colony is more productive than two weak ones (see Figure 1).

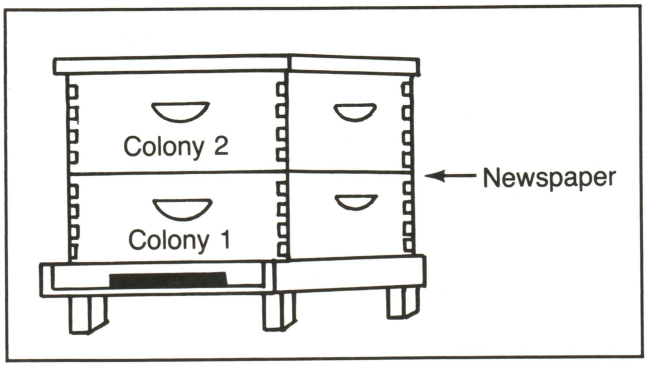
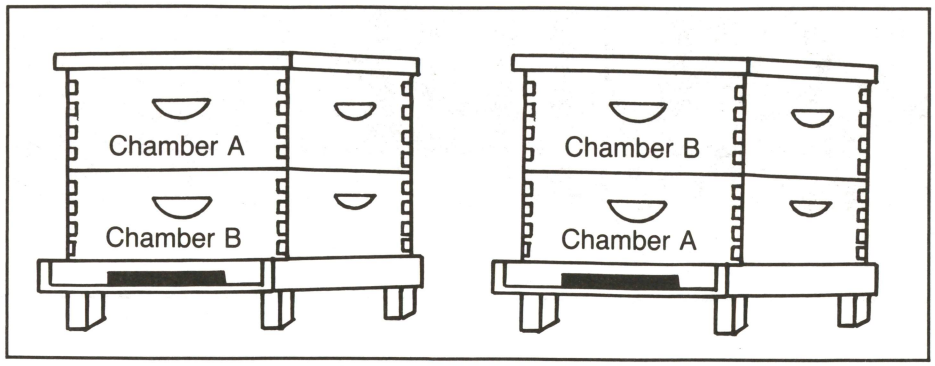


Figure 1. Unite weak colonies.

Figure 2. Reverse brood chambers.



Spring

March

1. Reverse the brood chambers if most of the brood is in the upper chamber (see Figure 2).
2. In about two weeks, when the upper chamber is filled with brood, reverse the chambers again. Reversing the chambers every two weeks during the season helps prevent swarming.
3. Replace queens at least every other year during March or April in Missouri. Before placing a new queen in the colony, remove the old queen and all swarm cells. Place the new queen over two frames of brood. Recheck the colony in two weeks to see if eggs are present and if the new queen has been accepted. When you order queens, make sure they're clipped and marked so you can locate and identify them easily. Clipping can also aid in preventing swarms.
4. Destroy any swarm cells in the hive. Swarm cells are queen cells and must be destroyed every week to prevent swarms.
5. Inspect for diseases, and feed preventative antibiotics. Terramycin powder mixed with powdered sugar and fed once a week for three weeks will prevent foul brood. Fumadil "B" fed three times (once a week) with sugar water prevents nosema disease.
6. Feed colonies as necessary.
7. Prepare shallow supers for use during the honey flow. Replace damaged foundations and clean the frames. Keep shallow supers fumigated with paradichlorobenzene crystals until 24 hours before they are placed on the colony.

April

1. Feed colonies as needed. A strong colony consumes lots of honey and may starve before the honey flow. Feeding stimulates population growth for maximum honey production.
2. Check brood chamber for disease and swarm cells. Destroy all swarm cells and recheck for swarm cells every week. Colonies will swarm if you permit queen cells to be capped.
3. Install package bees. A package will do well on new foundation. A package will get off to a better start with drawn comb and two frames of brood.
4. Add new foundation (one or two frames) to the upper hive body in each hive. This discourages swarming.
5. Add a new queen if needed. (Some apiarists prefer to requeen in the fall.) Clip and mark all queens.
6. Add a super of drawn comb to relieve crowding. Also add honey storage supers as needed.
7. Divide colonies if you want to increase the size of your apiary. Colonies that have a strong swarm tendency are good candidates for division.
8. Remove entrance reducers from all old colonies after April 15. A new package should have the entrance reducer in place until June.
9. Remove the most undesirable comb from each brood chamber and replace with foundation.

May-June

1. Add new supers as needed. If the super atop the brood chamber is one-half full, add a new one. Place the additional super directly over the brood chamber (see Figure 3). Full supers can be stored on top of the chamber so the bees can guard them until it's time to extract the honey. Keep empty storage space on the bees from now until fall.
2. Check for swarm cells every week. Remove all swarm cells.
3. Remove capped honey supers and extract honey. Return extracted supers to the hive. This allows the bees to clean them up and use the honey left in these supers.

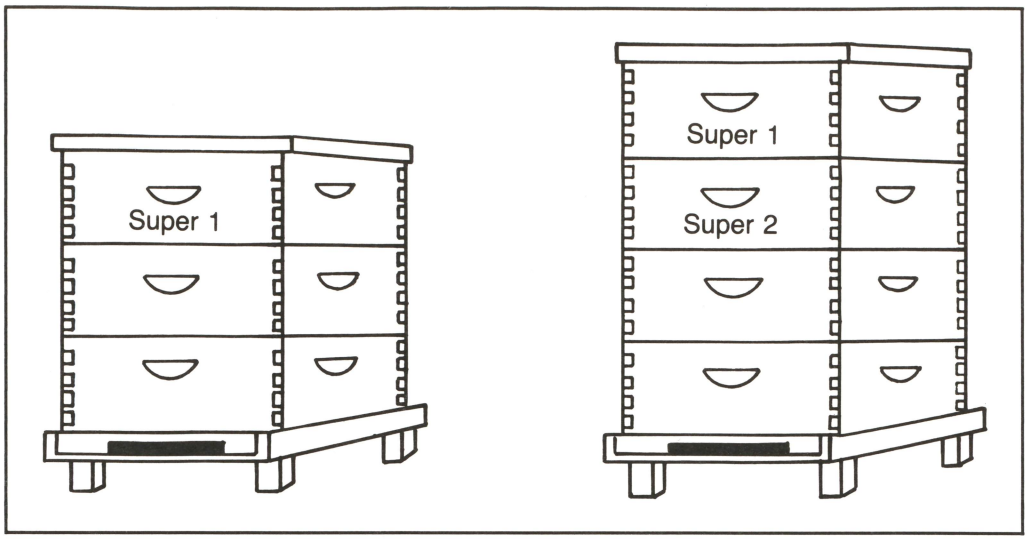


Figure 3. Add new supers as needed.

Summer

June

1. Combine swarms with weak colonies. Eliminate the queen with the swarm.
2. Check every week for swarm cells and disease.
3. Add supers as needed. Keep empty storage space on the bees throughout the month.
4. Remove and extract capped honey. Return the extracted supers to the colonies for cleaning. Supers of capped honey must be stored in a 90 degree F dust-free room. Extract as soon as possible.
5. Inspect weak colonies for wax moth infestation. If wax moths are present, dust over the frames with 1 ounce of *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Certan).
6. Prepare colonies for a move to summer pasture if necessary. Use hive staples to fasten the hive boxes together. Use four staples at each corner (two on a side) to hold hive together.

July

1. To move a colony of bees, block the entrance the night before the move and close up all holes from which bees can escape. Move the hives to a new location as early in the morning as possible. A colony should be moved at least five miles.
2. Extract honey as necessary and return extracted supers to colonies for cleaning.
3. Fumigate any supers that you leave off the colonies for a week. Use paradichlorobenzene crystals (see UMC Guide G 7600).
4. Continue to check colonies every week for swarm cells and diseases.

August

1. Continue to check every week for swarm cells and disease.
2. Remove full supers and extract honey. Return extracted supers to the colonies for cleaning.
3. Leave empty storage space on all the colonies for the fall honey flow. Colonies will need 60 pounds of honey to overwinter.
4. Store empty supers with paradichlorobenzene fumigant.
5. Do not forget to reverse hive bodies to assure adequate winter stores (60 pounds).

Fall

September

1. Check each colony for disease and swarm cells every week.
2. Requeen if necessary.
3. Consolidate frames with empty storage space. Remove frames with capped honey for extraction. Leave at least 30 pounds of honey (one super) on the bees. Do not depend on a fall flow for honey production or starvation prevention. Place empty frames in the center of the super for faster filling.
4. Remove and store clean empty supers under fumigation.

October and November

1. Place entrance reducers in the hives by the end of October.
2. Work poor combs to the outside for spring replacement.

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