

Beekeeping Tips for April

1. April is the start of honey flow. It is also when queens and package bees arrive.
2. If you ordered packages of bees or queens, make a five-frame nuc. Install queens and package bees upon arrival. Alternately, make nucs from strong colonies—the earlier in the month the better.
 - a. To make a nuc, remove two frames of brood and bees and one frame of pollen and honey from a strong colony. Place the two frames in the middle of a five frame nuc box and add two frames of foundation at each outside wall.
 - b. You may substitute a ten-frame brood box for a nuc box, keeping brood in the middle surrounded by honey and pollen. Place the empty frames of foundation on each side. Introduce the new queen. Feed with sugar water at a ratio of two parts sugar to one part water when the bees are drawing comb.
3. Do not disturb brood any more than necessary in April.
4. To prevent swarms, make sure brood is not overcrowded. There must be plenty of empty cells for egg laying. Check for and remove swarm cells.
5. Watch food stores carefully. Maintain at least two frames of honey for each frame of brood in the hive body. If there is not enough honey, feed sugar water at a ratio of one part sugar to one part water (this stimulates brood rearing better).
6. Stay ahead of the need for supers.
 - a. If supers were stored with paradichlorobenzene, be sure to air out these supers for at least three days to one week to eliminate the odor from this chemical.
 - b. Watch for nectar flow and add supers when honey flow starts.
 - c. Have one empty super on the hive at all times during honey flow
OR
Have one empty super on hand and ready for installation on the hive at all times during honey flow.
7. NEVER medicate a hive which has frames in it which will be used for harvesting honey. Do not feed sugar water when honey supers have drawn comb, or bees will make “sugar honey.” Watch honey supers closely. When bees are working on six to eight frames, it is time to add another super either above or below the filled super. Give bees enough space so that they don’t try to store nectar in the brood box.
8. If you want comb honey, prepare frames with pure wax cut comb foundation.
9. Cut the grass and trim foliage so that hive entrances are not blocked. Treat for fire ants.