

Beekeeping Tips for January

1. Be sure your hives are prepared for cold and windy winter conditions.
 - a. Provide a windbreak from cold winter winds.
 - b. To further protect your hives from the wind, either add weight to the top of the hive to prevent it from blowing over or strap the hive together. Strapping protects it from the wind as well as ornery critters.
 - c. If you have extra ventilation in your hives for summer weather, be sure these holes are plugged and that all parts of the hive fit snugly together.
2. Order queens and package bees for an early April delivery if you did not do so in December.
3. The first brood nest exam may take place in January. Examine the hives when the temperature is at least 60 degrees, the sun is out, and very little wind. Make sure the exam is quick as possible. Check for honey, pollen, brood pattern, and number of bees.
4. Check hives for sufficient food supplies. This can be done by lifting the back of the hive box. If it is light, further examination is needed. A single medium frame holds approximately 3.5 lbs of honey and a deep holds 5 – 6 lbs of honey. A colony rearing brood will consume 10 lbs of food a week. Always feed a hive that is in danger of starving with sugar water since hives with small food reserves will quickly starve to death. In a mild winter you should find about one frame of brood and at least 3 deep frames of honey.
5. Inventory, repair, order, and assemble woodenware and supplies. Clean old frames and hive boxes to be used in the spring.
6. Check hives for mites. Order Apiguard if needed for Varroa mites. This should be ordered no later than February 15.
7. Check stored supers for wax moth or mice damage. Add more PDB (Paradichlorobenzene) if needed as it evaporates quickly on warm days. In freezing weather there will be no wax moth activity.
8. Locate or set up a record keeping system.
9. Check and repair your bee clothing; read and learn something new about bees and beekeeping.