

**SPRING MANIPULATION OF BEES**

Third in a Series of Articles on Bee-keeping, by Dr. E. F. Phillips

THE work of the beekeeper in the spring, before the honey-flow begins, is to get plenty of bees in each colony to gather the crop. If they



DR PHILLIPS

have been properly protected in winter and have plenty of stores, a colony with a good queen will build up rapidly to full strength. With open winters when there are many days when bees can fly they are usually in good condition and need only an increase in strength to be in condition to gather.

Brood-rearing may begin in January or even in December, and is often commenced when the weather is quite cold. The brood does not increase in amount to any extent until the early spring flowers furnish nectar and pollen. It is then increased with great rapidity.

There is rarely need to examine a well-protected and well-stocked hive until spring is well advanced. However, on some warm day it may be desirable to examine the bees to find if any are queenless or unexpectedly short of stores. If queenless or weak colonies are found it is usually best to unite them with normal colonies rather than to attempt to provide queens. It is best not to unite two or more weak colonies but to put each week one with a strong colony. Any feeding that may be needed should be done all at once, a thick syrup made of granulated sugar being used. Bees need water at this season and it is often desirable to provide a watering place nearby so that they will not need to take long flights to get it.

As the colonies increase in strength, it will be noticed that some grow faster than others. They may be equalized by removing combs of brood with the adhering workers (without the queen) from the strongest and giving them to those not so strong. This gives each colony a better chance to get to full size.

It is desirable as spring progresses to clip a wing of each queen so that later when swarms emerge they cannot fly off to the woods. To do this, lift the queen gently from the comb and cut off a wing with fine scissors. If the beekeeper fears that he may damage his queens by clumsy motions he can practice on workers or drones.

The conditions which are favorable to rapid increase in the spring are (1) successful wintering (2) a good queen (3) plenty of stores (4) favorable weather (5) prolific race of bees (6) good brood-combs of worker-cells so that brood-rearing may progress rapidly and regularly.

Some beekeepers prefer to stimulate the colonies by feeding a little syrup every day. This requires considerable labor and is little if any better than to feed, if necessary, all at once.

It is useless to expect a colony to gather a full crop unless it is strong. To reach this condition they should receive the care in the spring which has been described. After they are strong they must not be allowed to spoil it all by swarming. This will be discussed next month.

E. F. PHILLIPS.

**STATE SHORTHORN ASSOCIATIONS' ATTENTION**

All state Shorthorn associations are invited by the American Shorthorn Breeders' Association, Chicago, to furnish the name of the state association and the name and address of the secretary for publication in "The Shorthorn in America." The list should be completed not later than March 15.

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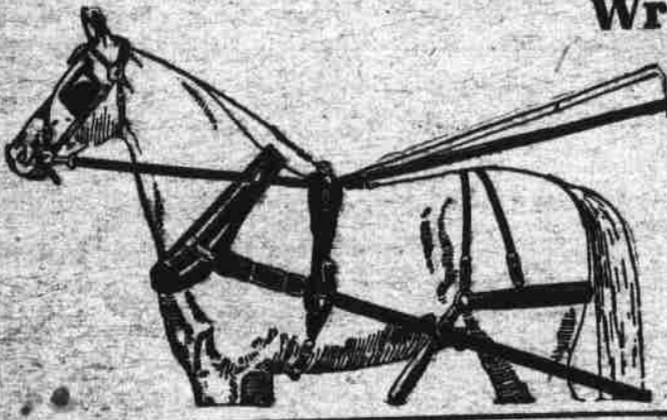
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