

This module was prepared for members of the New Westminster Beekeeper's Association and is intended to be augmented by hands-on experience in the bee yard.

Summary

August 15 (in our climate) is the date the current season is over, and the next season begins. The bees are at their peak population for the year and the honey flow has stopped. The actions taken by the beekeeper over the next six weeks determine the success of the following year's honey crop.

To ensure bees have the best chance of winter survival, the colony must have:

1. Strong population
2. 4 frames equivalent of honey
3. 2 frames equivalent of bee bread
4. New queen (1-2 years old)
5. Low Varroa count
6. No disease

The required tasks are simple but essential:

1. Remove all honey supers and queen excluders
2. Decide which colonies are to be kept over winter
 - a. Combine weak colonies with 1:1 sugar syrup spray OR
 - b. Crash weak colonies or colonies with a poor queen (spotty brood)
 - i. Remove queen
 - ii. Shake bees into grass nearby
 - iii. Remove brood box from the bee yard
3. Feed one gallon of syrup on the same day (or within 2 days)
 - a. Continue feeding at 4 to 7 day intervals, up to six times, or until bees stop taking syrup
 - b. Most colonies stop at 3 feedings
4. If any colonies in the yard have any sign of EFB or AFB, treat all colonies with antibiotic dust per instructions
5. Varroa test
 - a. If >2% (6 mites on a 300-bee (1/2 cup) sample, treat for 21 days
 - b. Retest for Varroa and repeat treatment if required
6. Add entrance reducers September 30 or earlier if wasps become problematic or if bees start to rob each other

Remove Honey Supers and Queen Excluders

- Work quickly to prevent robbing.
- Place supers inside a bee-proof building to prevent robbing.
- Extract the honey within seven days.
- Store empty honey supers in a cool dry location for next season

Decide Which Colonies to Keep over Winter

- Combine weak colonies using 1:1 sugar spray



- Crash weak colonies with a poor queen (spotty brood)
 - Remove queen
 - Shake/brush bees off into grass nearby
 - Remove all equipment



Feed one gallon of syrup on the same day (or within 2 days to avoid starvation)

- Feed one gallon of syrup immediately after removing honey



- Continue feeding at 4 to 7 day, intervals until the bees stop taking the syrup
- Most colonies stop after 3 gallons
- Remove all unused syrup by Sept 30 to prevent fermentation

Dust all Colonies with Antibiotic in Icing Sugar per instructions

- If any colony(ies) have any sign of EFB/AFB



Test for Varroa & Treat if >2% infestation

- 2% of a 300-bee sample (1/2 cup bees) = 6 mites



- Treat with Formic Acid or Apivar per instructions
- Or oxalic acid blue shop towel treatment



Entrance Reducers Sept 30

- Or earlier if wasps are a problem or if bees are robbing each other



end