Kelley Bee News

Issue 21—March 2012

Modern Beekeeping

Photo by Charlotte Hubbard

In This Issue

> "You may have a vast scholarship, fame or fortune. But, the bee can give you a lesson on how to be free from torment.
>
> ~ Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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The Buzz

Have you seen your bees yet? If so, isn't it just the most wonderful sight?!

Due to this unusually mild winter, our southern beekeepers' hives are already amazingly busy, and our northern beekeepers report witnessing several cleaning days January and February.

It is too early to tell the net effect of the mild weather, but preliminary reports are so far, so good, although the increased activity may result in bees having insufficient stores. You may need to be feeding.

If hives didn't come through the winter as expected, you're not alone. There's an article in this issue that lends some insight on how to handle them.

Also in this issue is a new section, called A-Bee-Cs. It'll cover bee and beekeeping basics. We're thrilled that more and more people start beekeeping every year, and we wanted to provide them fundamental information.

Many of you email each issue and ask us to change your email address. Sorry, we can't do that for you, but you can easily do it on the home page.

We're here for all your new beekeeping season needs, and look forward to helping you.

Thanks for your continued loyalty.

Jane Burgess
CEO/Partner
The Walter T. Kelley Company

Healthy Bees

Dead Outs

by Sean Burgess, Kelley Employee & Beekeeper

Every beekeeper hates to open a hive in spring and see dead bees. Photo by C. Rosenthal.

One of the realities of keeping bees is losing the occasional hive. Through sound beekeeping practices we can minimize these losses—but we will never be able to eliminate them completely. The boxes, frames and foundation left behind are a valuable resource and should be treated as such. (Remember it takes about 8 pounds of nectar for the bees to produce 1 pound of wax.) I have installed package bees regularly onto drawn comb and produced surplus honey the first year.

When you first discover a dead hive you should act immediately to protect it from wax moths. Wax moths, if left unchecked, will not only ruin your foundation, but will also cause damage to your woodenware. A fact of the wax moth is that they do not like bright sunlight. By exposing the boxes and contents to the light you can go a long way to protect it. Sometimes however, if you have discovered a dead out late and infestation has already advanced, you will need to do more as the damage can continue for some time due to the sheer numbers of eggs, larvae, and adults present. Equipment may have to be placed in sealed bags and Paramoth added to kill the moth and its larvae. There is another option called BT aizawai (see sidebar).

Sometimes a dead out will still have resources of pollen and honey left behind; this can also be beneficial to the other hives in your apiary. Upon discovering a dead out you should first determine the cause of death. This may be any number of things and possibly a combination of things but let's first consider the time of year.

Early Spring

In many cases dead outs will be discovered in the early spring when the temperature is warm enough for us to be able to do inspections. It can be heartbreaking to approach a hive and see no activity at the entrance and upon opening it find piles of dead bees on our bottom boards. A pattern I have seen in the past on my frames will be a bunch

EXTOXNET

Extension Toxicology Network
A Pesticide Information Project of Cooperative Extension Offices of Cornell University, Michigan State University, Oregon State University, and University of California at Davis. Major support and funding was provided by the USDA/ Extension Service/National Agricultural Pesticide Impact Assessment Program
"Bacillus thuringiensis (B.T.) is a naturally-occurring soil bacterium that produces poisons which cause disease in insects. A number of insecticides are based on these toxins. B.T. is considered ideal for pest management because of its specificity to pests and because of its lack of toxicity to humans or the natural enemies of many crop pests. There are different strains of B.T., each with specific toxicity to particular types of insects: B.T. aizawai (B.T.A.) is used against wax moth larvae in honeycombs … More than 150 insects, mostly lepidopterist larvae, are known to be susceptible in some way to B.T."
I am not sure as to the specific labeling or uses in regards to honeybees however I do know that some are using this as a sprayed application on stored foundation and equipment and reporting good results.

Such a sad sight ... hundreds of dead bees, with obvious stores of honey and pollen. Readers, any insights / theories on what happened to this hive? Photo by C. Rosenthal.

of bee butts sticking out of the cells in a circular pattern. This can occur very close to capped honey. I have been told by my betters that this usually indicates starvation. I think to myself, how could they have starved when it seems a bounty was right there within their reach? One school of thought suggests that they were covering brood and refused to move. I have been told that their last act before dying is to cannibalize the brood. We know bees in winter cluster will face head down into a cell and vibrate their wing muscles to create heat. I would have to think that the bees take turns doing this so everyone gets a chance to eat but I have never observed the activity of bees while clustered. I do know they form a ball and move around in mass utilizing their winter stores. It seems more likely to me that there were other forces at work here resulting in the die off. This may have been a failing queen in the fall and there not being enough young bees going into the winter. Or it could be an unchecked Varroa infestation resulting in poor numbers and the health of the fall bees. As the numbers of bees die and the cluster shrinks the comb around the cluster cools. I have read that the bees do not prefer to move onto cold comb and this may explain the patterns we see.

Is there any brood present?

If brood is present you should examine it for sunken or perforated cappings as this may indicate a brood disease. (This may only indicate chilled brood also.) Also examine any larvae under cap. If you see any anomalies you should investigate further by consulting any resources available to determine causes and effects. You would not want to introduce diseased equipment to otherwise healthy bees.

Is there extreme fecal matter on the inside or outside of equipment?

This could be an indication of Nosema disease. In this case I personally would not introduce this equipment to other bees unless the bees have been medicated with Fumagilin-B. Even then I would do my best to remove fecal matter from frames and boxes before introduction.

Okay so my hive is dead, I am pretty sure it's from starving, bad queen or Varroa. There is no wax moth present. I also have a lot of honey left on the hive, what should I do?

- I would remove the equipment from the immediate area of my apiary; 200 feet should be far enough.
- Dump out dead bees.
- If bees are stuck in cells lightly rap frame to dislodge and use your bee brush to remove most of them.
- Turn the boxes up on end resting on the short side so the frames stay separated.
- Try to protect from the rain somehow.

- Allow the bees to rob out the resources.
- Once dry and clean store safely or use quickly.

Things to consider:

- If using Paramoth during storage, air out your equipment for several days prior to introducing bees to it. I understand BT stored equipment can be used immediately.
- If combs are moldy expose to sunlight as this will kill most mold and the bees will remove it.
- Turning frames upside down and shaking will get rid of most water trapped in cells.
- The bees are experts at cleaning and repairing combs and do it rapidly—I have seen them clean up a really bad mess.

Try to remove most webbing if wax moth has been present. If the infestation was recent you may want to freeze your frames for 48 hours and scorch the inside of your boxes with a propane torch. Use common sense and don't turn it into charcoal.

Tearing down the deadout is no fun, especially if the bottom board is covered with dead soldiers. Photo by C. Rosenthal.

Small Hive Beetle

If you have ever experienced the mess left by a dead out or absconding bees due to Small Hive Beetle (SHB) as I have, you will understand what a true mess is. The fermented honey, fecal matter and the larvae all combine to put on a pretty good horror show. This equipment is somewhat salvageable if you take some necessary steps. While I am still in the early stages of trying this I have found some good benefits to using salt. The salt that is available at co-ops for mixing with animal feed is relatively cheap and so far I have seen no adverse effects while using it. I will pull the frames from the slimed box and in the case of solid bottom boards scrape all loose material out and liberally salt the inside of the box. The frames can be saved by scraping and cleaning but in severe cases the majority of drawn comb cannot be salvaged. If using one piece plastic frames or wooden frames with plastic inserts you may want to hit them with a pressure washer and then recoat them with wax. I have had hives that were under attack by SHB that I have successfully removed the frames from and put back in clean boxes with good results also. We are also throwing a handful of salt into the entrances of hives with solid bottom boards. When the SHB larvae leave the hive to pupate in the ground they have to crawl through the salt and apparently this is desiccating them. After further trials I will do an article on my findings.

In summary it sucks to lose bees but if you can at least put their life's work to a benefit they have not died in vain.

Happy beekeeping - Sean Burgess.

Why do you keep bees?

We're compiling another list of those thought-provoking reasons.
Please share any or all with us by emailing KelleyBeesEditor@gmail.com.

Feeding Bees in the Spring

By Michael Bush

Editor's Note: Michael Bush, a well-known beekeeper, researcher and spokesperson, provided us with some of his extensive writings. We're delighted to share excerpts here; thank you Michael!

Spring for the beekeeper starts at the blooming of the maples. This is when the bees start rearing brood in earnest. It's important from this point on that the supply of pollen and stores is not interrupted as this can interrupt brood rearing. If this is a problem, pollen patties are a common solution.

You would think something as simple as feeding would not be controversial, but it is—on several fronts. Since feeding in the spring and feeding in general overlap and since feeding in the fall when needed or leaving enough stores is how you avoid feeding in the spring, we will touch on that as well.

First, when do you feed?

Q: When is the best time to feed the bees?

A: The best thing is never to feed them, but let them gather their own stores. But if the season is a failure, as it is some years in most places, then you must feed. The best time for that is just as soon as you know they will need feeding for winter; say in August or September. October does very well, however, and even if you haven't fed until December, better feed then than to let the bees starve.

—C.C. Miller, A Thousand Answers to Beekeeping Questions, 1917

In relation to spring management, one of the issues is the amount of stores they burn up rearing brood. They often starve in late winter or early spring because of brood rearing. They burn up a frame of honey and a frame of pollen for every frame of brood they rear. From my point of view avoiding starvation is the reason to feed. We will talk about stimulative feeding shortly.

There are many reasons to avoid feeding if you can:

- It sets off robbing.
- It attracts pests (ants, wasps, yellow jackets, etc.)
- It clogs the brood nest and sets off swarming.
- It drowns a lot of bees.
- It's a lot of work.
- If you use syrup there is the effect of the pH on the microbial culture of the hive and difference in nutritional value compared to what they would have gathered on their own.

Some people feed a package constantly for the first year. In my experience this usually results in them backfilling the brood nest and swarming when they are not strong enough and often failing. Some feed spring, fall and dearth regardless of stores. Some don't believe in feeding at all. Some steal all the honey in the fall and try to feed them back up enough to winter.

Personally I don't feed if there is a nectar flow and they have some capped stores. Gathering nectar is what bees do. They should be encouraged to do it. I will feed in the spring if they are light, as they will not rear brood without sufficient stores. I will feed in the fall if they are light, but I always try to make sure I don't take too much honey and leave them light. Some years, though, the fall flow fails and they are on the verge

of starvation if I don't feed. When queen rearing, during a dearth, I sometimes have to feed to get them to make cells and to get the queens to fly out and mate.

So while I do try to avoid feeding, I end up doing it very often. There is nothing wrong with feeding if you have a good reason for doing it, but my plan is to try to avoid it and leave the bees enough to live on. Also, while I think honey is the best food for them, it's too much work to harvest it and then feed it back, so when I feed it's either dry sugar or sugar syrup, unless I have some honey I don't think is marketable.

Pollen, if fed, is usually fed before the first available pollen in the spring. I have not had luck getting bees to take it any other time except a fall dearth. They often won't take it in the spring as they prefer fresh pollen.

Stimulative Feeding

A lot of literature suggests that stimulative feeding is an absolute necessity to get honey production. Many of the greats of beekeeping have decided this is not productive:

The reader will by now have drawn the conclusion that stimulative feeding, apart from getting the foundations drawn out in the brood chamber, plays no part in our scheme of beekeeping. This is in fact so –Beekeeping at Buckfast Abbey, Brother Adam

The feeding of bees for stimulating brood-rearing in early spring is now looked upon by many as of doubtful value. Especially is this true in the Northern States, where weeks of warm weather are often followed by 'Freeze up.' The average beekeeper in the average locality will find it more satisfactory to feed liberally in the fall—enough, at least so that there shall be sufficient stores until harvest. If the hives are well protected, and the bees well supplied with an abundance of sealed stores, natural brood rearing will proceed with sufficient rapidity, early in the spring without any artificial stimulus. The only time that spring feeding is advisable is where there is a dearth of nectar after the early spring flow and before the coming of the main harvest.—W.Z. Hutchinson, Advanced Bee Culture

My Experiences

I've tried about every combination over the years and my conclusion is that weather has everything to do with the success or failure of any stimulative feeding attempt. Some years it seems to help some, some years it misleads them into rearing too much brood too early when a hard freeze could be disastrous, or having too much moisture in the hive in that precarious time of late winter when a hard freeze could still happen. Plus, the really impressive results are usually from feeding a hive light in stores. Leaving more stores still seems to be a more reliable method of getting a lot of early brood in my climate.

I have fed really thin (1:2) thin (1:1) moderate (3:2) and thick (2:1) syrup at every time of the year except a honey flow, but again to simplify the issue to stimulating brood rearing, let's stick with the spring.

I see no difference in brood stimulation between any of the ratios. The bees will suck it down if it's warm enough (and here it seldom is in early spring or late fall) and it will induce them sometimes to start brood rearing when the bees' common sense is that it is too early. So for simplifying even further, let's just talk about feeding or not feeding syrup.

Difficulty Getting Bees to Take Syrup Early in Northern Climates

If you try to feed any kind of syrup to bees in my climate in the late winter or early spring, the results usually are that they will not take it. The reason is that the syrup is hardly ever above 50º F (10º C). At night it is somewhere between freezing and sub zero. In the daytime it's usually not above freezing on those rare

occasions when it's actually 50º F in the daytime, the syrup is still below 32º F (0º C) from the night before. So first of all, trying to feed syrup in the late winter and early spring usually doesn't work at all—meaning they won't even take it.

Downsides to Success

Then, if you get lucky and get some warm spell somewhere in there, long enough for the syrup to get warm that the bees will take it, you manage to get them rearing a huge amount of brood, say near the end of February or early March. Then you get a sudden subzero freeze that lasts for a week. All the hives so induced to raise brood die trying to maintain that brood. They die because they won't leave it and they die because they can't keep it warm, but they try anyway.

Variable Outcomes

This might be an entirely different outcome in one year than another. Certainly if your gamble pays off and you get the bees to brood up in March and you manage to keep them from swarming in April or May (doubtful), don't get any hard freezes that kill some of the hives off, or they are built up so far by the time those freezes hit that they can manage, and you manage to keep that max population for the flow in mid June, maybe you'll get a bumper crop. On the other hand, you get them to brood up heavy in March, get a subzero freeze that lasts a week and most of them die; it's a very different outcome.

In a different climate, this might be an entirely different undertaking. If you live where subzero is unheard of, and clusters don't get stuck on brood from cold and can't get to stores, then the results of stimulative feeding may be much more predictable and possibly much more positive. Then again they may brood up too early and swarm before the flow.

Feeding Considerations

Dry Sugar: This is not the best spring feed, except as left over from winter, but in my experience it made a lot of difference overwinter and in the following spring. Most of the hives ate the sugar. Some ate most of the sugar. They did brood up while eating sugar and they could eat it even when it was cold. They don't go as crazy over it or as crazy on brood rearing, but I see that as a good thing. A moderate build up from stores they can get at, even in the cold, is a much better survival bet than a huge build up at a time they could get caught in long hard freeze on syrup that they won't be able to get to if it's cold.

Type of Feeder: I will admit that the type of feeder also plays into all of this. A top feeder in the early spring (in a colder climate) is worthless. The syrup is hardly ever warm enough for the bees to take it. Baggie feeders, on the other hand on top of the cluster, they seem to be able to get at, as well as dry sugar. A frame feeder (as much as I don't like them) against the cluster is taken much better than the top feeder (but not as well as the baggie feeders). In my climate (Nebraska) any feeder very far from the cluster will not get used until the weather is consistently in the 50s F (10s C) and by then the fruit trees and dandelions will be blooming so it will be irrelevant.

You might get some syrup down them in late March or early April with a baggie feeder or a jar or pail directly over the cluster or if you reheat the syrup regularly, when everything else fails.

What do you feed? I prefer to leave them honey. Some think you should only feed honey. From a perfectionist view, I like that. From a practical view, it's difficult for me. Honey:

- sets off robbing a lot worse than syrup.
- spoils a lot more easily if I water it down, and I hate to see honey go to waste.

- is very expensive (if you buy it or just don't sell it) and labor intensive to extract it. It seems wrong to me to go to the trouble of extracting it, only to feed it back.

I'd rather leave enough honey on the hives and, in a pinch, steal some from a stronger hive for the weaker hives, rather than feeding. But if it comes down to needing to feed, I feed off, old, or crystallized honey if I have it, otherwise I feed sugar syrup.

Pollen: The other issue of what to feed is pollen and substitute. The bees are healthier on real pollen, but substitute is cheap. If I feed pollen, I try to feed all real pollen, but sometimes I can't afford that and I settle for 50:50 pollen substitute. On just substitute you get very short-lived bees. I don't notice any difference at 50:50, but I still think 100% pollen is best.

Michael Bush has had an eclectic set of careers, currently he is working in computers. He has been keeping bees since the mid 70s, usually from two to seven hives up until the year 2000. Varroa forced more experimentation which required more hives and the number has grown steadily over the years from then. By 2008 it was about 200 hives. He is active on many of the Beekeeping forums with last count at about 45,000 posts between all of them. He has a website at www.bushfarms.com/bees.htm.

Michael Bush

Springtime Inspections

By Sean Burgess, Kelley Employee & Beekeeper

As you read this, I hope that spring has arrived in your part of the world and with the warmer days and nights, plant production is in high gear and your bees are taking full advantage of the foraging opportunities available. As you observe your hive entrances you should be seeing lots of activity as the bees perform their various tasks while building their colonies' strength. A thorough inspection of your hives should be performed when daytime temperatures reach 50 degrees and above.

Generally I like to choose a warm sunny day in the afternoon for my inspections. I like the afternoons because a large portion of the colonies' field force will be out foraging and the sunshine will give me a much better view into the individual cells on the foundation in my frames. Most of the time, I will smoke my hives lightly at the front entrance and under the covers prior to beginning my inspections. I believe it is beneficial for the beekeeper to have a plan prior to opening a hive. That plan may consist of the following:

Observing the bees at the bottom of the outer cover and the top and bottom of the inner cover: I am looking for my queen (rarely found on this part of the woodenware, but I have) but also for any abnormalities in my bees such as deformed wings, obvious mites, small hive beetles, odd behavior, hairlessness, trembling or just about anything that I feel is not normal and could be an indication of other problems.

Where are the majority of my bees: are they all in the top box if wintering in a two deep box arrangement or are they divided between the two boxes including the developing brood?

Drones: It is always good to know that you have mature drones in your hives especially if splitting colonies or raising queens.

How are the stores: pollen, honey and or nectar?

What does the brood, and the various stages it may be in, look like—eggs, larvae in different stages of development, capped brood and emerging brood?

How is the pattern my queen is laying? Is it solid with few holes missed or is it spotty with drones developing amongst worker brood

Am I only seeing the obvious larger drone cells or is there the flatter cappings of developing workers?

When I observe my capped brood cells are they only slightly convex or are they sunken and perforated?

Am I seeing any white mummified larvae at the front of the hive or in the cells?

Is the uncapped larvae in my cells pearly white in color?

Am I seeing any queen cells being constructed and if so, where are they on the frame (not to be confused with emergency queen cups).

Is there room available for my queen to lay eggs in or do I have an abundance of nectar, honey or pollen filling most cells?

This list may seem daunting to the uninitiated, but as your career as a beekeeper matures this will become second nature. You will also be able to make good educated guesses as to how to deal with various problems.

Why do I observe the bees on my covers?

As stated above, I want to make sure my queen is not wandering around up here because I am going to set these covers on the ground and she is too valuable to treat this way. Also because there are fewer bees here and they are easier to examine in a quick check. That is not to say the other bees in the hive should not be examined, this for me, is just my natural starting point.

Why do I want to know where the majority of my bees are?

As the winter cluster consumes stores in the first deep brood box they will travel in an upwards direction. Sometimes the queen will establish a brood pattern that comprises part of the bottom box and part of the top box. A popular method for years (somewhat controversial) is to reverse the brood boxes—moving the top to bottom. If your brood nest is divided you should not do this as it may spread the resource of nurse bees out too thinly to adequately cover and care for the brood.

Why look for drones?

Drones are integral part of the makeup of your colony. Even though their sole purpose is to mate with queens, the abundance or lack of drones will help you to better understand your colonies workings. Drones will emerge about 24 days after the unfertilized egg has been laid and they will be sexually mature at about 35 days. Knowing these numbers will help you when doing walk-away splits or grafting queens.

How are the stores: pollen, honey and or nectar?

When bees are starting out in the spring you may not have reliable sources of nectar and pollen. In many cases supplemental feeding will be required. If using antibiotics such as Fumagilin-B for the prevention of Nosema disease this will be an opportunity to deliver it with your sugar syrup. Knowing the amount of food already available in the hive may help you to determine if they are consuming or storing this medicated syrup. In addition, if a brood nest becomes bound with pollen and honey, it can start the bees towards

swarming tendencies. By monitoring your hives you will also know when you are approaching the time to add supers.

What does the brood, and the various stages it may be in, look like?

By knowing your bee math you can get a determination of hatching rates, and by recognizing healthy brood in all stages you can determine overall colony health. In a lot of cases by spotting problems early you can help your colony to thrive.

Here's a great brood pattern.

How is the pattern my queen is laying? Is it solid with few holes missed or is it spotty with drones developing amongst worker brood?\

By watching what your queen is doing you will be able to spot problems with her. If I saw a spotty pattern and drones mixed with workers it would indicate to me that she is on her way out. This is the time to requeen. You do not want to miss an entire brood cycle or leave the luck of the hive to a virgin, or worse yet, develop laying workers.

When I observe my capped brood cells are they only slightly convex or are they sunken and perforated?

While seeing perforated sunken cappings can indicate a serious brood disease (American Foulbrood, AFB) it can also be caused by chilled brood. They will present in a similar fashion in the early stages. Chilled brood is generally caused by a lack of nurse bees to keep them warm and the larvae dies and the cap sinks in on it. In AFB you will see a sunken cap and perforations where the bees have gone to remove the cap but were driven back by the fumes. If this is the case you should do the rope test by stirring the contents of the cell with a toothpick and slowly withdrawing it. If the contents rope out you may have AFB. If there is no roping it is probably not AFB. If you are in doubt you should call your state apiarist for an inspection. If the inspector suspects AFB a sample will be sent in to a qualified lab for analysis.

Am I seeing any white mummified larvae at the front of the hive or in the cells? Are the uncapped larvae in my cells pearly white in color?

White mummified larvae at the door or in the comb probably indicate Chalkbrood. Chalkbrood is generally thought not to be that serious of an issue. We normally see this in the springtime during periods of unsettled weather. In a lot of cases you will see the mummies that the bees have hauled out of the hive on the landing board and also in the comb at the fringes of the brood pattern. If you crush one of these white mummies and it crushes easily you can be sure this is what it is. Normally as the weather and nutrition im-

Have any great bee photos?

We'd like to publish them! Please send them to KelleyBeesEditor@gmail.com.

A queen cell.

proves it will clear up on its own. In severe cases it may be necessary to requeen as some queens tend to be more prone to it. A break in the brood cycle may help. When I observe Chalkbrood I generally will lightly tap my frame to dislodge the mummies but if these exist on a frame with brood I would resist this action. The mummies are loose in the cells and the bees can take care of them pretty easily. Uncapped larvae in a healthy hive are pearly white in color. Any darkening of the larvae or any developing rings around them can be an indicator of a problem.

Am I seeing any queen cells being constructed? And if so, where are they on the frame? (Not to be confused with emergency queen cups)

Queen cells resemble a peanut in shape when fully developed, and have a lot of stippling on the outer surface. These can be found on various parts of the foundation and can be an indicator of what's happening in your hive. It has been commonly observed that if a queen cell is being built in the middle to upper parts of your foundation that this is an indication of supercedure. In the case of supercedure this means that the bees currently do not like their present queen and are preparing to replace her. This may be due to the queen wearing out or an injury. If a cell or cells are being constructed at the lower parts of foundations or frames this probably indicates the bees are preparing to swarm.

Emergency queen cups are present in almost every hive I have seen. I believe the bees construct these to have a quicker way of growing a queen should the need arise. I have observed that my Russian hybrids construct a lot more of these than my other colonies. This is probably due to the fact that these bees tend to swarm more.

These are just a few of the things to look for in your colony. If you understand what you are seeing in most cases you will be able to make an educated determination if action needs to be taken.

Happy Beekeeping, Sean Burgess

Doing it Write This Season

Photo by Jesse Lewis.

By Camilla Bee, Editor

We have the greatest of intentions. We tuck a small notebook in the pocket of our beesuit and head to the apiary, ready to jot down what we find as we check the hives. Or, we hang a clipboard on the hook where we hang our veil. Surely that will remind us to write down what we find when we return.

Some of us are great at recording what happens in our apiaries. It is important information.

And some of us? Not so much.

I've got an extensive Word document detailing what happened in my apiary last year ... until September. I know things happened in September—important things. I combined a few hives, offing queens that were golly, first year or did I off the second year queen? I know the one to the left of the pine was weak going into winter, but here in February it is still depositing fallen comrades out the front step on nicer days. Was it the one to the right of the pine that was weak instead? And I know one of the three by the bushes didn't take any supplemental feed. Was that the one that died? Why oh why oh why didn't I keep up my Word document last September?

Several issues ago I asked readers what works for them so we could share it. Here's some of your feedback:

> It's the first time that I have read your newsletter ... It is really interesting and thought provoking. I really like to compare our British beekeeping with how it is done in America.
>
> You want to know how people track their hives. Often we are encouraged to have a card in the hive lid (mine always blew away in the wind), but I have found that I need the records in two places: at the hive and at home to review, plan and check what it was like last year. So I have two notebooks.
>
> The first is a small ringbound book that I take to the hive. I note down about each hive, weather, number of frames harvested, chemical use, feeding etc. I often refer to this at the hive, especially if I have requeened recently. It gets propolised up by the end of the season.
>
> Then when I get home, I transfer these notes to a nice notebook along with the weather, state of forage. I have an apiary layout too. The same book also has the honey records for each batch bottled and also notes from local association meetings. So it builds up as a resource in its own right. I often compare the season with previous ones. I have looked at online records but they never have a layout quite how I want it.
> Hope that this is helpful.
> T. Colchester

> I use a FREE product that is called "Hive Tracks" (www.hivetracks.com). I like it because when you follow it properly, it leads you through all the questions that need to be answered when working your hives. I also like that it can be reached by any internet browser. So if I am at home or away, I do not need my computer that has the software

installed on it. Anyone's computer with an internet browser will work.
P. Heiskell

We want to help beekeepers succeed! We welcome your:

Beekeeping hints—what's worked for you, or hasn't worked? Beekeeping insights and observations. Please send them to KelleyBeesEditor@gmail.com.

> I'm a simple guy. I used to keep records (poorly), and never referred back to them anyway, so I now just use what God provides. After I check the hive, I put a stick on the top. It goes parallel to the entrance (like a minus sign) if things are not positive; it goes perpendicular to the entrance (like pointing up (or back) as I look at the hive), if things in that hive seem to be on the up-and-up. I put a small rock near the stick if I've found the queen during that hive check. This probably seems silly, but such easy to remember things work for me.
>
> Of course, I only have a half dozen hives, so there isn't too much to remember anyway.
> T. Springson

> I use an Excel spreadsheet; it lets me track my costs and yields easily as well. I like an electronic record because I can easily search it for, example, everything I did in the "blue hive."
> T. Miller

> Back of an envelope, side of my "what to check for" when I'm in the hives list, etc.—and then I transfer it to the computer when I'm back inside. I've got to do better at it though.
> R. Sonday

For most of us, the 2012 season is just beginning. This year, let's do it right by writing it down, each and every time. If there's something that works for you, please let us know so we can help other help their bees. Contact me at KelleyBeesEditor@gmail.com.

Narrower Frames, an Update

By Camilla Bee, editor

Last month we featured an article on narrower frames, reviewing their advantages and the philosophy behind them. We asked for feedback, as we're considering producing them commercially. We hope to have an answer as to whether we can do them or not, and if so, how soon they'd be available, by our next newsletter.

Here is one of the emails we received; we're sharing it because it includes other observations about them. If you'd like to chime in (or would that be 'buzz in?'), we'd appreciate your input as we assess the need. Please send it to KelleyBeesEditor@gmail.com, thank you in advance.

> I would appreciate it if these narrower frames were available from your company. Presently I make many of my own frames and some of my other equipment. I like using wooden frames with 1-1/4" wide end bars that also include 7/8" wide top bars with a comb guide in my brood nests and don't like not being able to purchase them, especially from your company—I've always preferred your wooden frames to any other commercially produced frames.
>
> I use many different frames, and have discovered that the bees seem to have no difficulty when frames of different spacings are used together."
> (J. Clemens)

Bee-Havior

Care and Installation of Package Bees

By Stacy Hill, Kelley Employee and Beekeeper

If you are an established beekeeper and can use drawn combs on which to install your package you should do so. If you can just give them two or three drawn combs it is a big advantage. This allows the bees to get to work without having to draw combs from the foundation first.

Four Important Points

1. Feed package bees heavily until the colony is well established. Sugar and water mixed in a ratio of 1 part water to 1 part sugar, or high fructose corn syrup works well. This is for spring feeding. Consider using a feeding stimulant like Honey B Healthy that is added to your sugar water and treating with Fumigilin B for prevention of nosema.
2. Keep entrances reduced to a small size. This prevents robbing and conserves heat.
3. Do not add supers or a second hive body until the bees draw out 7 of the 10 frames.
4. Do hive inspections to check the condition of the new hive, on a weekly basis, until the hive is well established.

Care of the Package on Arrival

If weather conditions are poor when the package arrives, you can hold the package for several days in a dark room or basement where the temperature is close to 50° F. You should feed the bees in the package by using a clean spray bottle to mist with a mixture of sugar and water (50/50) on the screen of the cage and allow the bees to gorge themselves. You should repeat this process morning and night. If you do not do this, the sugar syrup in the can shipped with the package can go dry and your bees will starve. Bees die of heat quickly—do not leave them in the sun or in a place that is hot.

Installation of Packages

Install the package late in the afternoon. This helps prevent drifting. It is well to mist a little syrup on the screen of the cage 15 minutes before you are ready to move them to the hive for installation. This quiets them down and they will be better natured. There are several ways of installing a package of bees. We recommend the following methods.

A couple newbees install their bees via the shake method.

Method 1

Remove one frame from your hive. Store the frame in a dry cool place. This frame will be put back into your hive several days later. Tap the cage lightly a few times on the ground to jar all the bees to the bottom of the cage. Do not let queen the cage slip down into the cage. With a firm grip on the can, remove it, pull the queen cage out of the package and immediately return the square lid to the hole of the cage. This prevents the bees from getting out.

While Newbee Pete struggles to remove the cork, the worker bees investigate their new home & caretakers.

Now that the queen cage is removed, inspect your queen to make sure she is alive and in good condition. Carefully remove the cork from the candy end of the queen cage. The bees will release the queen from the cage by eating the candy (it usually takes a few days for them to do this). You may choose to take a small nail and make a hole through the candy. This will help release the queen sooner.

Bees don't typically get this excited during an install, but these ladies were! It was probably due to a combo of warm humid weather & a long ride from Kentucky.

Place the queen cage, screen side facing up, between frames 5 & 6 in the hive body. Again, tap the package lightly a few times on the ground to jar all the bees to the bottom of the cage. Remove the square lid and begin to gently shake the bees from the package over the tops of the frames and the queen cage. Once you have shaken the bees from the package, place the inner cover over the hive upside down. You can now close up your hive with the top cover. Once you have shaken the bees from the package and closed up the hive, place the package on the ground in front of the hive so that the few remaining bees can fly out and into the hive. You will need to feed your bees on a regular basis. We suggest using a Boardman entrance feeder with package bees to prevent drowning. You can open the can of syrup that came with the package and use the remaining syrup to feed with.

In about three days, you will want to go into the hive to make sure the queen has been released and is alive. If she is still inside the cage, you can choose to leave her there a day or two longer or release her yourself. To do this, hold the queen cage down inside the hive body and carefully pull back the screen to release her. Remove the queen cage and place the frame you removed before installation back inside the hive body box and return the inner and outer cover.

Method 2

With this method, you do not have to shake the bees from the package. Follow the same procedures as Method 1, except remove five frames from your hive. Place the queen cage, screen side facing up, between frames 2 & 3 in the hive body. Again, tap the cage lightly a few times on the ground to jar all the bees to the bottom of the cage. Remove the square lid and place the package down inside the hive body in the space of the frames you have removed. In about three days, make sure the queen has been released and is alive. Remove the queen cage and package and place the five frames you removed before installation back inside the hive body box and return the inner and outer cover.

Stacy shipping your package bees!

Bee-Yond & Bee-Hind the Hives

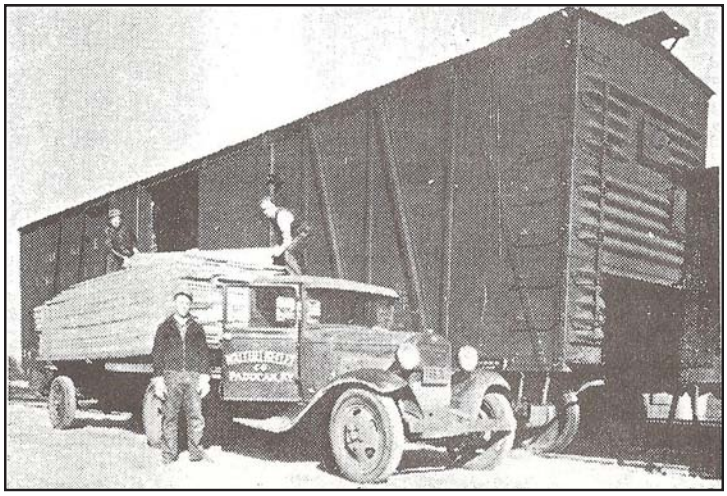
So Well Remembered

By Mary K Franklin, Kelley Employee

Editor's Note: A key part of what makes The Walter T. Kelley Company special is our dedication to our founder's values and philosophy of life. In the months ahead we'll provide more insights into the remarkable man our founder was. We're delighted to share this early piece of history about the company, from one of its treasured employees, and why we now call Clarkson home.

When I arrived in the office this morning there was a beautiful card and a note from Mary Elizabeth Alexander Wurth, one of the (and perhaps the only living) employees of the Kelley Company when it was located in Lone Oak area of Paducah, Kentucky.

From humble beginnings in Houma, Louisiana in 1924, the Kelleys moved their manufacturing facility from Louisiana to Kentucky in 1934. The Paducah location gave them access to railroad and river barge traffic as well as US Mail and bus transportation for securing raw materials and shipping their finished products.



Raw materials were easily and economically delivered to the plant.

Being more centrally located also made shipping costs more economical for customers in the north and east. It was a brilliant move for his mail order business. (Remember, this is the era before FedEx, UPS or DSL existed.)

Mary Elizabeth Alexander came to work for the Kelleys during the summer of 1937, the year of the great flood. However, her stay was short-lived since was not yet 16. She took other jobs but later returned to the Kelley plant. Her brother, along with her soon-to-be husband Charles Roy Wurth, worked there, with about 25 other employees. She lived with the Kelleys for three years and still treasures the friendship quilt given to her by Mrs. Kelley the day she turned sixteen. Mary Wurth will be 90 in April of this year.

Aerial view of the operation in 1941.

The Wurths married in 1940. Charles Roy and Mary ran Kelley's 500-acre bee farm in Houma, Louisiana for many years but returned to Kentucky in 1951. By then, tens of thousands of people had moved into the area to build the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant. Mr. and Mrs. Kelley became discouraged because their plant wages were 'frozen' by

the government (due to the Korean conflict) and many of their workers moved to the much higher-paying plant. They began looking for another place and decided on Clarkson, Kentucky in 1952, meaning 2012 is our 60th year in this same location.

Mary Elizabeth Wurth, who occasionally travels to visit family in Lexington, stops in to visit. And she stays in touch with an occasional card or letter. Today's note included wonderful newspaper clippings and photos of the 2007 demolition of the old Paducah bee hive manufacturing plant and Kelley home. The Kelleys sold the property soon after leaving Paducah. It was used as a kids' recreational center in the 1960s. At the time the article was written, the new developers had not yet revealed plans for the newly cleared real estate.

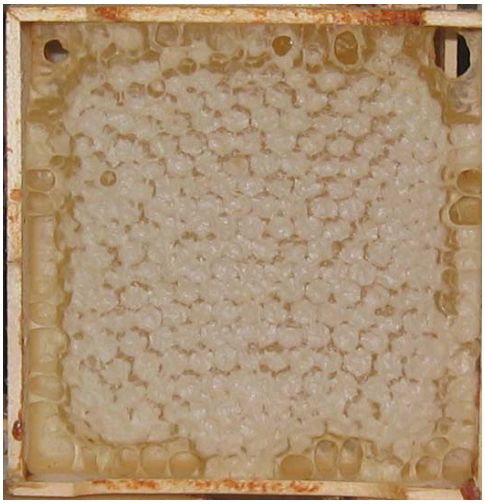
I telephoned the Paducah Chamber of Commerce. I was told the plot of land, once home to the Kelley Company, is now the site of a subdivision of townhouses, fronted by a small office park. Remember the song made famous by Joni Mitchell back in the 70s? "They paved paradise and put up a parking lot."

Ida and Walter T. Kelley.

Comb Honey, Continued!

By Camilla Bee, Editor

Our February issue contained articles from two comb honey producers. The articles generated some feedback, so we're sharing that, along with some other comb honey insights.



Major comb honey production: Earlier this year, we spoke with Dennis Wright, who owns Fruitwood Orchard Honey in New Jersey. He's been producing comb honey for over 30 years. Currently he manages 4,000 colonies, of which about 1,000 are focused on comb honey production, averaging two supers of comb honey / colony.

Wright's bees overwinter in the south, and thus yield a "beautiful white citrus honey." That comb honey is sold by frames—some customers want the "entire experience", along with cut-outs in hard plastic trays, and in quart containers with honey surrounding it.

Wright's enterprise is substantial, and he was more than generous with his time and patience as I asked questions about the buzzing operation. Some of the more interesting points I gleaned include:

- He prefers smaller boxes, 5- or 8-frame, noting that bees seem to prefer smaller cavities, and he and his employees greatly prefer working with the smaller boxes! It's also easier to find the queen.
- He uses thin foundation (see below.)
- A piece of advice about comb honey: "Time your honey flow ... When there's a major flow during a good strong colony, you get that colony almost to a swarming point but don't want them to swarm. Some folks will pull a few frames in the bottom so queen has new space in bottom."
- He finds comb honey immensely popular because after all, "it is the most natural form of honey."

Best bees for comb honey? Reader Dennis shared that he loves his Carnolians, noting that some years he "was taking off honey before most people were putting on supers. One year there was a dearth and I got more honey before others started than they got all year. But they don't make good comb honey. The wax just isn't as good as Italian wax. The color and texture are off."

Dennis has done plenty of research on comb honey, and summarized "as I see it, the main thing about comb honey is knowing if and when to add supers. I know it's not like 1, 2, 3 or A-B-C, but could somebody cut to the chase?"

An A-B-C of comb honey: We posed that question to Carol Mark, author of one of our February comb honey articles. Carol's response: "I don't know everything about bees or comb honey either, however for me it's:

1. Select a hive with lots of new workers which means prime the hive (feed syrup if a nectar flow is not going on before you remove her).
2. Watch that hive so it doesn't swarm before you remove the queen.
3. Remove the queen, put her in a nuc, meaning all those new workers can do while waiting for the new queen to hatch is make wax and fill it with nectar, thus making comb honey. Amen!"

Dennis Wright emphasized that along with knowing when to add supers, it is equally important to ensure the strength of the colony.

About thin foundation: Kelley Bees sells thin foundation for the sole purpose of producing comb honey. The wax is thick enough to provide a base for the bees to draw their comb but thin enough that you wouldn't have a thick mass of wax in the center of your comb honey.

Kelley Bees also sells 7/11 thin foundation. According to Kelley Bees' Jennifer Priddy, "this means that the foundation cells are milled slightly larger than regular (5.4 mm) and not quite as large as drone cell. This is so that the queen would not like to lay in this type of cell, preventing brood from being present in your honey super. This is not completely 100% reliable but works the majority of the time." The 7/11 foundation catalog numbers are #102 for shallow frames and #103 for medium frames.

Show Schedule

For the latest event information, please visit kelleybees.com/Events/

Audubon Bee School
- Saturday Mar 3, 2012
- Located at 3341 Hwy 351 East in Henderson, KY

Tri-County Meeting
- Saturday Mar 3, 2012
- Located in Wooster, OH

Arkansas State Beekeeping Meeting
- Saturday Mar 3, 2012
- The ABA is planning a Spring Conference in Little Rock on March 2-3. The conference will focus on spring colony management, and will include some great guest speakers. The meeting will be held in the auditorium at the UA Cooperative Extension Service headquarters, 2301 S. University Avenue, Little Rock.

2012 Florida Bee College
- Friday Mar 9, 2012
- Located at The Whitney Laboratory, 9505 Ocean Shore Blvd in St Augustine, FL

Bluegrass Beekeeping School
- Saturday Mar 10, 2012
- Located at Bradford Hall on Campus of Kentucky State University, 400 E Main St in Frankfort KY

Beginning Beekeeping Presented by Honey Bee Ware
- Saturday Mar 10, 2012
- Located at the Mosquito Hill Nature Center in New London, WI

March Beekeeping 101 Class
- Saturday Mar 17, 2012
- Last Beekeeping 101 Class until October. Will be held at our Clarkson Facility.

Southwestern Ohio Bee School
- Saturday Mar 24, 2012
- Located at the Oasis Center: Oasis Conference Center, 902 Loveland-Miamiville Rd in Loveland OH

2012 West Virginia State Beekeepers Association Spring Meeting
- Saturday Apr 14, 2012
- Harrison County Recreation Complex/4-H Center south of Clarksburg, WV

21st Annual Young Harris Beekeeping Institute
- Thursday May 10, 2012
- The Young Harris Beekeeping Institute is located in the Maxwell Center on the campus of Young Harris College.

2012 Alabama Beekeepers Association 6th Annual Picnic
- Saturday May 19, 2012
- Cullman County Fairgrounds in Cullman, AL

Conferences/Seminars/Classes

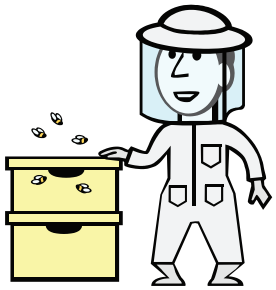
Note: As a courtesy, we're delighted to share your association's major event announcements as space allows. These events are different from the ones listed earlier in this issue; those listed earlier are events Kelley's will be attending. The events listed here we are not (currently) planning on attending. We'd love to, but we can't bee everywhere. If you'd like us to list your event, please send the information by the 10th of each month for publication in the next month to: KelleyBeesEditor@gmail.com.

Michigan
- Comstock: How to Get Started In Beekeeping - For New Beekeepers, Tuesday, March 13, 7 pm, presented by Dr. Larry Connor and Dr. Dewey. For more information, go to: http://michiganbeekeepers.com/coming
- Comstock: How To Get The Best Results From Your Hives - For Intermediate Beekeepers, Thursday, March 15, 7 pm, presented by Dr. Larry Connor and Dr. Dewey Caron. For more information, go to: http://michiganbeekeepers.com/coming
- The Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association (SEMBA) 74th Annual Beekeeping Conference, Saturday, March 17, 2012 at Schoolcraft College, 18600 Haggerty Road, Livonia, MI. For further information, please contact Richard Mendel, 734-660-8621 or E-mail brescue@att.net, or go to www.sembabees.org

Ohio
- Medina County Beekeeper's Association Beginner's Class, March 10, 17 and 24, Medina, Ohio. To register or for further information, contact Kim Flottum at Kim.Flottum@gmail.com or call at 330.722.2021, or Contact Peggy Garnes at 330-723-6265, pgarnes001@neo.rr.com. More information can be found at www.medinabeekeepers.com.
- Advanced Beekeeping Class – Going Commercial, Bee Culture Magazine and The Medina County Beekeepers present a half day Advanced Beekeeping Seminar on Sunday, March 18, 2012, Medina, OH 44256. For more information and to preregister, contact Kim Flottum at Kim@BeeCulture.com, or 330.722.2021. Registration closes Friday, March 9, 2012.

Beek Hint

I use colored thumb tacks in the tops of the bars to indicate what year I placed the frame and foundation into the hive (I use the colors used for queens). I do this for planned rotational purposes.
At the end of three or four years, I will scrape down the wax to the plastic foundation, roll a new coat of wax on, inset a new properly colored thumb tack, and reinstall in the hive. Mike in LA (Lower Alabama)



ABeeCs

It's the time of year when there are lots of new beekeepers. For the next several months, we'll be publishing some bee basics, many of them excerpted from writings by the late Walter T. Kelley, our founder.

The Three Kinds of Bees in a Hive

From How to Keep Bees & Sell Honey by Walter T. Kelley

Worker Bees

Nearly all of the bees in a normal hive are worker bees. They are the bees at the entrance who fan their wings to ventilate the hive and are smaller than the drones or the queen. All worker bees have stingers while the drones do not. The workers are undeveloped females and in emergencies lay only unfertilized eggs. The workers bees, as the name indicated, are the nectar and pollen gatherers, the wax builders, the honey processors, the house keepers and the guards.

Worker bee, working!

Drones

The drones are the male bees. They are shorter and heavier-set than the queens, also larger than the workers, and are easy to locate in the hive. The drone does not have organs for gathering honey or secreting wax and their only value is in fertilizing the queen. They are big eaters; therefore, all combs with excess drone comb should be replaced every year with full sheets of comb foundation. The drones are driven from the hive to starve during a shortage of stores or at the end of the honey flow.

The Queen

The queen normally is the mother of all, slimmer than the drone and larger than the workers but is not nearly as easy to locate as the drones. Beginners often mistake a worker bee gorged with honey for the queen but after seeing a laying queen in the hive there should be little difficulty in recognizing the queen. KEEP IN MIND THAT THE THORAX OF THE QUEEN (THE MIDDLE PART ONTO WHICH THE WINGS AND LEGS ARE ATTACHED) IS BALD AND SHINY while the thorax on the workers and drones are covered with tiny hairs.

Close study reveals all three kinds of bees in this photo. The queen is in the center, headed up and slightly to the left. One of the many drones is just off her right, headed right. Drones have big wraparound "sunglasses."

Featured Products

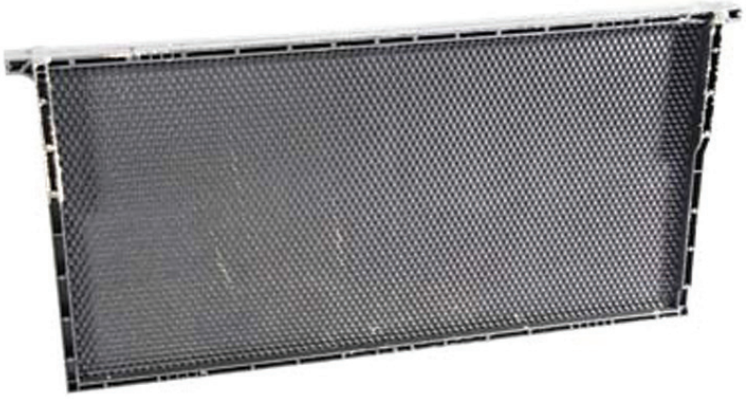
Make sure you have what you need for when your boxes are bursting at the seams! Consider the Kentucky Special for apiary expansion:

The all medium kit, #45-Kit, unassembled.

Available in standard 10 frames (#KS), or medium frames (#KSM in 8- or 10-frame [$190 or $192]).

Frames

Also consider the utility and convenience of one-piece frames, in wood or plastic. Plastic frames offer advantages of durability, and the black plastic Pierco frames helps in spotting larva.



#122BF, the black brood plastic frame.

#122-WF: The Pierco white plastic frame. Like all Kelley's products, discounts on higher quantities.

Protective Clothing

Pants $25.00 257C-Size

$105.00 25NH

$82.95 25PCH

More great products like these at kelleybees.com!

Gloves – we have lots of options. A favorite is the 240-SizeLS, for $18.00.

March 17th Beekeeping 101

On Saturday March 17th Sean Burgess of the Walter T Kelley Co. will lead a one-day class on Beekeeping 101 at the Clarkson, KY location.
The class will begin at 9:00 am CST and end at approximately 3:00 pm.
There will be a morning break and a one-hour lunch break.
This class will cover equipment choices, hive locations, installing package bees and nucleus colonies, when to feed, how to care for your bees, medications, when to add additional boxes, how to determine colony strengths and weaknesses, combining colonies, harvesting overview, requeening, identifying most common diseases and how to deal with them, winter preparations and first spring inspections.
The fee for this class is $30.00 per person; class size is limited to 50 people. This will be the last Beekeeping 101 Class until October. If weather permits we will do a live inspection of an active hive.

Sean and Jane Burgess.

FAQs

Please note: Correspondence submitted to the Kelley Bee News Modern Beekeeping newsletter (or subsequent publications) becomes the property of the Walter T. Kelley Company. We reserve the right to print or not print any correspondence and it may be edited for length and/or clarity. It may be published or republished in any format or medium and/or licensed to others for publication. If we publish your correspondence, we may attribute it to you and may include your name and city, unless you expressly request that you remain anonymous.

Q: I purchased a beehive from your company, but am unsure when to buy bees to get the hive thriving. My father kept bees, and I want to continue that tradition, particularly as honey bees seem to be in some danger.
I'd very much appreciate a recommendation as to when to buy my bees. I live in southern Illinois, if that makes a difference. I understand that you're very busy, but would so love to help our bees survive.
Thank you for your time and attention.
Sincerely, D. Pollack, ILL

A: We emailed D. Pollack directly when we received her question, because by the time this issue is released we will have already sold out of several dates, as will have many bee suppliers. We're using this question to emphasize that now is the time to order your bees. Ordering them now doesn't mean you get them now; it simply reserves them for a particular date.

Typically, late April is a good time to install package bees in southern Illinois.

Please note, Kelley's also has a limited number of five-frame nucs, for pick-up in Kentucky only, for those interested in getting a colony already well underway.

Q: I live in MA and will be feeding my bees this spring. Is the ratio 1 to 1 (water + sugar)? Thanks, Bill

A: Yes, by weight. An easy way to do it, if you don't have too many hives, is to pour five pounds of white sugar into a clean, gallon milk carton. Fill with hot water; you may have to top it off a few times as the sugar combines with the water. Shake vigorously until sugar is completely dissolved.

Q: Do you have ideas on especially winter-hardy hive boxes?
Dale S.

A: Hopefully you're not asking this question now because you lost a lot of bees over the winter! (If so though, know that you're not alone.)

All hive bodies can be readied for tough winters. If you live in a cooler-year-round climate, you may want to pick a darker paint color to absorb heat. Blocking prevailing winds, reducing entrances, and wrapping with roofing paper are three steps northern beekeepers use routinely in preparation for winter.

Whatever you do to prepare hives for cold weather, ensure there's sufficient ventilation. Hives need to breathe because too much moisture will kill bees quicker than the cold.

As for winter-hardy bees, Kelley's CEO Jane Burgess recommends Russian, VSH, or Kelley Hygienic.

We love to eat!

And would like to publish your favorite honey recipes. Please send them to KelleyBeesEditor@gmail.com.

Q: **I have been in love with my bees ever since I started trading with Kelley's last year. Your newsletter is always packed with good information and I had a question for you. A very good friend of mine is thinking of starting a hive and shot me a question I couldn't answer. Why are most hives painted white? I'd be grateful for any insight!**
By the way, my mom and I traveled up to Clarkson in December to purchase my first super. Everything assembled flawlessly; I can't wait to put the bees to work this year! Thank You, Mike N.

We See:	Bees See:	In Sunlight (UV Rays):
Red	Black	Purple
Orange	Yellow/Green	Same
Yellow	Yellow/Green	Purple
Green	Green	Same
Blue	Blue	Violet
Violet	Blue	Blue
White	Blue/Green	Same
Black	Black	Same

A: The reason hives are predominantly painted white or a pastel (light) color is to reflect (not absorb) the sun in the summer, which would make the hive hotter, therefore making the bees work harder to keep cool. People with harsh winters or cooler summers sometimes will paint their hives a darker color (primary colors). Hive color won't make much of a difference to honeybees; they see only a few colors.

If you have many hives, using different colors or patterns helps bees recognize their homes easier. (This was a topic in our newsletter December 2011, available at www.kelleybees.com.) When there are large banks of seemingly identical hives, hives nearer the edges typically have more bees, as returning, nectar- and pollen-laden bees don't take the time to discern exactly which hive is theirs, and they're accepted at a nearby hive, called "drift."

BeeCause

AHPA & AFB—Advancing Honeybees

AHPA

The American Honey Producers Association (AHPA) 43rd Annual Convention was held in Phoenix, Arizona, January 4-8, 2012. The Walter T. Kelley Company was in attendance, supporting the work of AHPA through advertising and donations of products for auctioning.

Bobby Coy of Arkansas received the coveted AHPA "Outstanding Achievement Award" for his years of service to the industry. Bobby founded Coy Honey Farms in the 70s and now operates more than 12,000 hives with his 3 sons. Bobby served several terms on the AHPA Executive Board; his son Steven is now serving on the Executive Board.

Ron and Pam Phipps of CPNA, New York, received the "Friend of Industry Award". Ron and Pam, who are honey importers, have provided a lot of crucial information to AHPA which has been valuable in the Anti-dumping Suit brought against illicitly imported honey. Ron also writes the invaluable "International Honey Market Report". Pam is the researcher who gathers much of the information for Ron's articles and for the AHPA.

The Convention started out with an afternoon Parasite Monitoring and Treatment Strategy workshop led by Randy Oliver, one of the most sought after beekeeper/scientists in the industry. A free welcome reception meal was provided by industry sponsors.

The AHPA Trade Show was one of the largest in AHPA history with vendors from all aspects of the industry.

Across the hall from the Trade Show was the General Session that includes speakers from all the major USDA Bee Labs, scientists from universities, and representatives from the federal government concerning honey importation and others involved in the industry. The meetings were very well attended.

AHPA's 2013 Convention is scheduled for January 8-13, in beautiful San Diego, CA. Go to www.ahpanet.com to get more information about AHPA and next year's convention.

AHPA is a producer group with focus on the economic interests for the commercial beekeeper, the sideline beekeeper, and the hobby beekeeper who are interested in a profitable business, whether that business is 1 or 2 hives, or 80,000 hives.

ABF

Kelly's similarly supports the American Beekeeping Federation, sponsoring both the American Honey Show, and donating a $250 merchandise certificate for the Great Galveston Sweepstakes at the 2011 ABF annual conference. The sweepstakes is a very successful fundraiser that helps ABF on programs to serve our membership and the industry throughout the year.

The ABF is a national organization that continually works in the interest of all beekeepers, large or small, and those associated with the industry to ensure the future of the honey bee. Our members share a common interest to work toward better education and information for all segments of the industry in the hope of increasing our chances for survival in today's competitive world. For more information, check out abfnet.org.

Sweet as Honey

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Dear Walter T. Kelley,
First, let me say I love my Russian hybrid bees I purchased from you. They are the best bees I've ever managed. Secondly, I write a bee column for The Washington Times in the Communities section, called Buzz On Bees. I did some extensive reporting on the parasite fly scare. This situation seems more media hype than real concern. Here is a link to my reporting: http://communities.washingtontimes.com/neighborhood/buzz-bees/ I understand you are also reporting on this matter. Enjoy my column in the Times. And thanks for my great bees!
Wayne Anderson

> Kelley's CEO Jane Burgess responds: Thanks for the link. We also have a free monthly newsletter under the education tab @ kelleybees.com. I agree the Russians seem to handle adverse conditions much better than the Italians.

Wayne later followed up with:
Thank you for the link. I did read Jon Zawislak's article on the parasite fly on the Walter T. Kelley website. His caution on this "new threat" is appreciated. My national reporting showed this situation seems more media hype than a real concern. If you like, you are welcome to post my news column and what some experts across the country are saying about the parasite fly on your website: http://communities.washingtontimes.com/neighborhood/buzz-bees/ Presently I am in southern Mexico, near Lake Chappala, reporting on the bees. So far, the beekeepers I've interviewed here have not seen this fly or witnessed any "zombie" behavior or even heard of this situation. I will be doing a column on Mexican beekeeping next.
Best, Wayne Anderson

Can I make a suggestion for an article in the newsletter that I would find interesting? I would like to suggest you (or someone) interview each member of your team and ask them what one thing they have done with beekeeping or honey production that they thought was a good idea (at the time), but will never do that again! Just a suggestion. Looking forward to a great year.
P. Heiskell

> What a great idea! Readers – I'll collect these over the next few months. Please ponder and share one (or a half dozen or so) so that we may help other beekeepers and their bees. Send your items to KelleyBeesEditor@gmail.com, or simply respond to the email that distributed this month's issue. Thank you in advance.

Hey Virginia residents!
From Arlnow.com: A group of local nature lovers is hoping to attract support for a new Virginia license plate with the inscription "Protect Pollinators." The plate is meant to bring attention to the role pollinators—bees, hummingbirds, butterflies, etc.—play in supporting the vitality of the earth's ecosystem and food supply.

"So far we've had quite a lot of interest from Beekeepers, Master Gardeners, Naturalists (including native plant and pollinator enthusiasts), and the Audubon Society," said pollinator plate organizer Samantha Gallagher. "Like

Joe Willard, a longtime Kelley's friend and customer, passed away in January of this year. We will miss him and the wonderful work he did with bees.

In Memory of our
Friend, "Jersey Joe"
Willard, Crestwood KY
Aug 3, 1938 - Jan. 28, 2012

We and the bees have
lost a friend.
He was a beekeeper,
'til the very end.

He kept a few bees,
and sold lots of honey.
He did it for pleasure,
more than the money.

Through beekeeping,
our friendship thrived.
We enjoyed talks about
our bees and the hives.

God welcomed him,
to Heaven, we know.
May He grant eternal rest
to our friend, "Jersey Joe".

By: Kenny & Flo Schneider

all of the proposed new Virginia plates, we need 450 applicants, the General Assembly's vote, and the DMV's approval."

According to the Virginia Pollinator Plate web site, supporters have signed up 44 people (as of this publication date). They need another 406 commitments by November 2012 to move on to getting legislative and DMV support.

Thank you. I get your newsletter and find it very informative it is always good reading. I do enjoy beekeeping , honeybees are a fascinating part of God's marvelous creation. I have learned a lot from those bees (and from folks like you and my fellow beekeeping friends.)
T Cruce

I have an account with you and am extremely pleased with the quality of both the products as well as the service. I am presenting the equipment component of our club's Beginning Beekeeping course. Can you send me several catalogs I can give away?
VG, Texas

> Thanks to those of you who pass out our catalogs at bee clubs, schools and other events. We generally just ship up to 50 to keep costs down, but really appreciate those of you who want to share our product offerings with others. To obtain more than one catalog, please contact us at sales@kelleybees.com.

You had a great display at our symposium. Earl is so cool and nice with customers coming from all directions. My wife was able to get the 2oz bears she wanted at the best price we have found anywhere. Thanks for coming this year.
Guy Ross, President Etowah County Beekeepers, Auburn, Alabama

We agree, Earl is cool!

Many thanks for the great newsletter and great service over the years.
HAPPY NEW YEAR, E.R.Elliston

Dear Editor,
I enjoy your newsletter and find it has answered so many of my questions including those raised from reading your catalog. I look forward to reading it each month.
I made some nucs from plans I found on the Internet at http://robo.bushkillfarms.com/beekeeping/downloads/ and I am going to try and catch a swarm. They are 7 1/2 inches wide which seems a bit wide for the current 1 3/8" frames. I am guessing that the standard frame has been lowered from 1 1/2" to 1 3/8."
I do not have bees now but plan on starting a hive or two this spring. I cannot envision working up to more then four hives but who knows the future.
I might be interested in getting some 1 1/4" and/or 1 1/2" frames but suspect that the small number I would purchase (provided I bought any at all) would not pay you to crank up production. The article mentioned that the 1 1/2" was a bee-preferred minimum for honey storage and I wonder how wide it should be.
On pg 22 of your catalog you said you had other sized frame parts. Perhaps these are for 1 1/2" so you might be ready to go with this size.
I do have a humble request for your newsletter. It would be nice if people could post comments to the articles. I would enjoy seeing what people who have experience with the different topics could add. Perhaps a button at the bottom of the article to take the reader to the comment page.
I did like the quote about knowledge not being better then wisdom and experience but it is better then ignorance.
Best wishes, Steven

> A reply from Kelley's CEO, Jane Burgess:
> First, thanks Steve, for such kind words. We aim to please. We have received a bit of feedback on the alternate frame size (please see 'Healthy Bees' section of this newsletter.) We're evaluating production on this, and if we do it, it won't be until later this year, so you'll need "Plan Bee" for any current needs.
> As for the posting of comments, we're also evaluating this. We like to keep costs minimized, and there's definitely a cost-component to this, but on the other hand, we want to support the sharing of bee knowledge. Stay tuned, we are working on a blog related to the newsletter – it should be up very soon. Meanwhile, we'll continue to share our wonderful reader feedback through each newsletter. Thanks again for sharing your thoughts with us.

Foraging for Fun

February's cover featured a wonderful photo of honeybees, drawing comments from a few readers. Along with "amazing photo!", people wrote that it made them laugh, and they wondered what those bees were thinking.

We'll never know, but we can have fun thinking about it. We asked a few people around the office for possible captions; here's what they came up with.

- Bring it on ... but are you sure you want to go there?!
- Are we gonna dance or be wallflowers?
- I hear the Queen piping. Sounds like she's going to try to be the next pick on Hive Idol.
- Boy do they ever have a lot to learn.
- As soon as that flower opens, I'm on it!
- Occupy Honey Street did not last long.
- I hope the beekeeper brings a GPS. I'm getting tired of all that dancing.
- Get ready. I spiked the sugar water.
- Hey did you see that hot drone? Shame they only are interested in the queen.
- Hey, you hear the one about the drone who never came back from his nuptial flight? Last thing he said was 'Ouch.'
- Wow—was that the big monster refilling the sugar water—LET'S GO!!
- Are you really sure we can just order out for pollen / nectar?
- Look at those guys thinking they can out work us!
- Drones have all the luck.
- Honeybee Supreme Court Justices again assemble for their annual photo.
- Oh, dear! The sun is shining and there's that groundhog! You know what that means.
- Phoebe's been doing that same "waggle" dance for hours. Must be practicing for "Dancing With the Stars."
- Are they there yet? Why doesn't the Queen just get us a GPS? We've been waiting for nectar all morning.
- Wow! Our keeper has really put on weight this winter!

What do you think they're thinking or saying? We'd love to share your clever inspiration; email us at KelleyBeesEditor@gmail.com. Thank you!

Dronings from a Queen Bee

The "Toy" Catalog

By Charlotte Hubbard

Page 13.

Yes, all the way to page 13 of the 2012 Walter T. Kelley catalog. That's how far I made it this year before I started dog-earring the pages of things I couldn't live without. When the catalog comes in the mail I feel like I'm a four-year-old again, looking through the toy catalog. If only that Santa Claus thing still worked ....

Technically, I found the first items I needed on page 6 of the Kelley's catalog. Page 6 is where you order bees, which I always have to do. My overwintering success rate is about the same as my local weather forecaster's ability to predict the weather.

As long as I'm getting new bees (again), I want the stingless kind. God actually makes those, but they don't make much honey. Come to think about it, I already have a few hives that fit that description; unfortunately, the "don't make much honey" part, not the "stingless" part.

I have enough hive bodies, but I scrutinized those pages anyway, searching for Varroa-free hives. They're probably featured in the non-existent 'fantasy products' section, along with the hives that have a spout on the side you open to extract honey.

Page 13, the location of my first "desperately need this" item, features the 'Gable Roof Copper Top Hive Cover'. It is beautiful. I've seen them in apiaries and they're really eye-catching. If my bees don't make honey, at least they'd look good not doing it.

Cat #49-CH

After page 13, I made it all the way to page 31, 'Tools.' I need another several dozen hive tools, because those fly from the apiary even faster than bees chasing a beekeeper who was stupid enough to check a hive at dusk. As that beekeeper, I can attest to how fast bees can fly.

I dog-eared the gifts and promotional items pages; I love the humorous signs and license plates. We beekeepers can't take ourselves too seriously. Because, for example, when you get stung 26 times because you opened a hive at dusk, all you can really do (beyond swell and itch) is laugh at yourself (and apply lots of sting relief products, found on page 61.)

I'm thinking I need to order myself the Queen Bee sign. But, it isn't all about me—it's all about my bees. Thus, I'd like to order them a sign also, although Kelley's doesn't make it, yet. It would read:
Hey, it seems worth trying. I've done everything the books recommend and my bees still swarm on me.

I spent lots of time looking at the protective clothing section. I appreciated the disclaimer, "All of our clothing is made to be sting resistant, but not sting proof!" The cautions should also include "Caution: protec-

If you don't have your own 2012 Kelley's catalog, email us at Sales@Kellybees.com.

tive clothing can only be protective IF it is worn and not left in the garage while beekeeping." I've learned that lesson the hard way.

Actually, I suspect, er, I know I haven't learned it, but will have the chance to at least a couple times this season. (Note to self: order plenty more of the sting relief products, page 61.)

One of my favorite items is on page 89, the 72-Frame Stainless Steel Extractor. I don't think I've ever had 72 total frames to extract, much less all at one time. So, I certainly don't need one of those, but it is fun to think about having an apiary that size and that productive. (Although I suspect the fun starts to decline around pulling honey from the 50th hive or so.)

Cat #58-QP

SWARM RULES

No swarming!

But, if you must:

Provide 48 hours (or more) notice

Temperature and humidity must both be well below 90

Swarm only when beekeeper is watching

Holiday swarming prohibited

Settle only on small branches no more than 5 feet off the ground, within my yard

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

If you are ordering one of those behemoth extractors, would you let me know so I can hang out for a while? Not only would I like to see an operation of that size, I'd like to meet bees that actually make honey!

Kelley's Field Day 2012

Keep your calendar open for June 2nd, 2012 and join us for our annual Field Day. This event is held here at the Walter T. Kelley facility in Clarkson, KY. Field day is an activity packed day with guest speakers, hive inspections, demonstrations and even a catered lunch! To date this event has been a huge success with over 400 in attendance and we anticipate that 2012 will be even better. For more information email us at sales@kelleybees.com or watch for information on our website at www.kelleybees.com.