

NOTES FROM THE APIARY

SEPTEMBER 2016

Robert Crouse

Just a quick note on what is going on here at Dogwood Apiary. I had a couple of Nucs that did not except the new queens and developed laying workers. As it was too late to requeen and all of my other hives were full of bees I was in a quandary over what to do. I decided to just shake out the bees on to the ground several feet from the hives. I placed the combs that had brood, eggs, larva and stores into hive boxes. I then placed the boxes on top of my strongest hives so that the bees could remove and clean out the comb. The bees on the ground returned to the hive stand where they use to be. By the next day a lot of the bees began to move into the other nearby hives. I was surprised to see that most of the bees were able to find a home. After a couple of weeks I removed those extra boxes and placed the now cleaned comb into storage.

I started feeding 1 to 1 syrup this week using hive top feeders. I want to get the queen into heavy laying mode for winter bees. I will switch to the standard 2 to 1 syrup by the end of the month if needed. I want the top box of each Hive full of stores and a good part of the bottom box also with stores. You don't want to feed too much too early or you might crowd the queen out of brood space. She needs to be able to produce young bees through early November to have young stock to get through into January and February when she has replacement bees coming along. I will have to keep checking on hive stores to be sure the queen has room.

I want to feed 50 lbs. of sugar to each hive. To keep track I have 5 gal. pails set aside for each hive that has that hives syrup in it. Each pail will hold a mix of 25 lbs. sugar and water. Therefore after I have fed two pails to a hive I know I am done.

You should have already gotten your feeders cleaned and ready. If there is mold or mildew you can use a vinegar and water mix to clean them up. If using soap be careful to make sure there is nothing left behind that will harm the bees. You do have extra supers with comb for winter stores don't you? If not you may be able to get the bees to draw comb by feeding heavily now with foundation in the super, but you risk the bees placing the sugar water in the bottom box thereby displacing the brood area so keep a sharp eye out.

Remember, what you do now will effect what you get next year.