

Month to Month Summary of Management Practices

Southeast Kansas, SW Missouri, NE Oklahoma

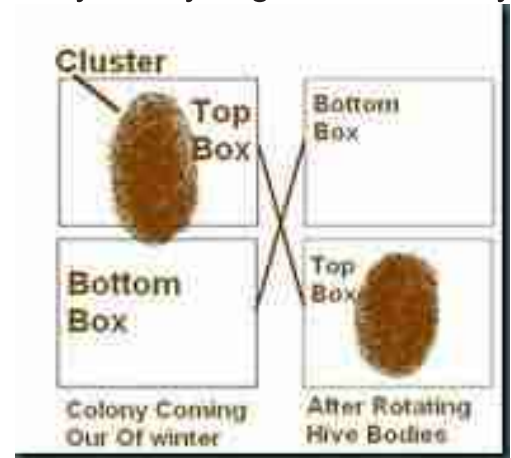
“BEE SPRING”

February

- Check colonies for honey stores
- Continue emergency feeding with frames of honey, sugar candy, or dry sugar, if necessary
- Continue to prepare equipment for coming season

March

- Continue emergency feeding, if necessary
- Feed pollen supplements or substitutes, if needed
- First quick inspection of brood nest, if weather permits
- Check for and clean up dead colonies
disinfect hives if reusing equipment
- Rotate out portion of old frames and put replace with new - 1/3 each year
- Clean out entrances, rotate double deep hive bodies, and clean bottom boards
- Finish assembling honey supers and other new equipment
- Swarm season has begun!



April

- Monitor colony stores, especially if weather is cold and wet
- Do full inspection - check brood nest for laying queen signs, disease, etc
- Introduce package bees - on drawn combs if possible
- Requeen colonies with failing queens
- Reverse brood chambers when weather moderates on double deeps
- Add supers to strong colonies at the time of maple or dandelion bloom
- Unite weak colonies (add to a strong colony). Equalize colonies in yard prevent robbing

“BEE SUMMER”

May

- Monitor colonies for queen cells
- Control swarming - add supers and checkerboard frames
- Add more supers as necessary (Oversuper)
- Place queen excluder below super on colonies for comb-honey
- Install packages on foundation if just now receiving them & feed 1/1 syrup & HBH
- Split strong colonies with hygienic queens or queens from strong local stock
- Capture swarms / set up swarm traps baited with lemongrass essential oil
- Cull and replace defective combs with full sheets of foundation.
- Begin implementing an IPM program for the control of varroa mites.

June

- Continue to check for queen cells
- Rear queens if you prefer your own stock
- Check colonies for disease and monitor for varroa mites
- Remove comb honey supers when properly sealed 80% or more, do field shake test
- Provide plenty of super space to help control swarming
- Capture swarms / re-bait swarm traps

July

- Remove comb-honey supers when properly sealed (80% or more)
- Freeze comb-honey to prevent wax moth damage if storing
- Check for queen cells, especially in colonies used for queen rearing
- Add sufficient super space (Undersuper)
- Remove and extract early season honey crop (80% or more) - do field shake test
- Our region usually goes through a dearth/drought at this time -
bees may need to be fed 1/1 syrup w/HBH and have constant water available
- May need pollen patty (use sparingly) so bees consume easily not breeding SHB

“BEE FALL”

August

- Remove and extract summer honey crop
- Check colonies for disease and monitor/treat for varroa mites - Apigard (if not done yet)
- Remove upper supers or frames that are harvest-ready - at least 80% capped
- Do Not overwork bees to avoid robbing
- Add more supers if needed for fall honey flow- Goldenrod and Aster
- Fall requeen during the goldenrod and aster flow in August or early September so that colony has time to build up and organize its nest before winter

September

- Check colonies for disease and monitor/treat for varroa mites if needed - Apigard
- Provide supers for fall Goldenrod and Aster flows if you have not already added them
- Requeen colonies if necessary
- Unite weak colonies making sure they are disease free to best of knowledge
- Extract fall honey crop, leaving one super of honey on for winter
- Place weight or straps on hives to keep tops on
- Begin planning / placing windbreaks to stop north & west winds
- Become aware of consistent night temperatures - at 50 - 70 degrees - start clustering
- Do Not open hive under 55-60 degrees - Never in the evening - Never when its windy

October

- Check colonies for disease and treat for noseema now - Nosavite: cure and preventative
- Prepare colonies for winter, Queen has slowed down immensely
- Last bees coming out of brood frames are “winter bees”
- Begin fall feeding with heavy syrup if needed
- Unite weak colonies with stronger colonies if you have not already
- Put on entrance reducers to keep out mice, or 1/4” to 3/8” wire cloth over entrance
- Close screen bottom boards (optional for our area), or protect from wind gust
- Reconfigure frames - brood frames in bottom center, flanked by pollen, capped honey top box has 1-2 empty empty combed frames in center & capped honey on both sides

WINDBREAKS



- Windbreak should be close enough to break the N & NW winds
- Make sure you can get into hive easily for emergency feeding, cleaning entrance of snow, debris or dead bees
- Allow air space behind /around hive to prevent sweating / mold
- Reinforced or heavy enough not to fall / tip over hives



Hay bales too tight around hive, will cause condensation build up. Hard to get to hives.



MOUSE GUARDS

- Must allow bees to pass through without tearing up wings
- Small enough to keep mice out!
- 3/8" entrance reducer, 1/4" to 3/8" wire cloth, or holes in wood or metal strips.
- Make them easy for you to remove in case you have to clean behind them
- It will take you one winter to forget, to never forget again



Too much debris will get caught in this design.

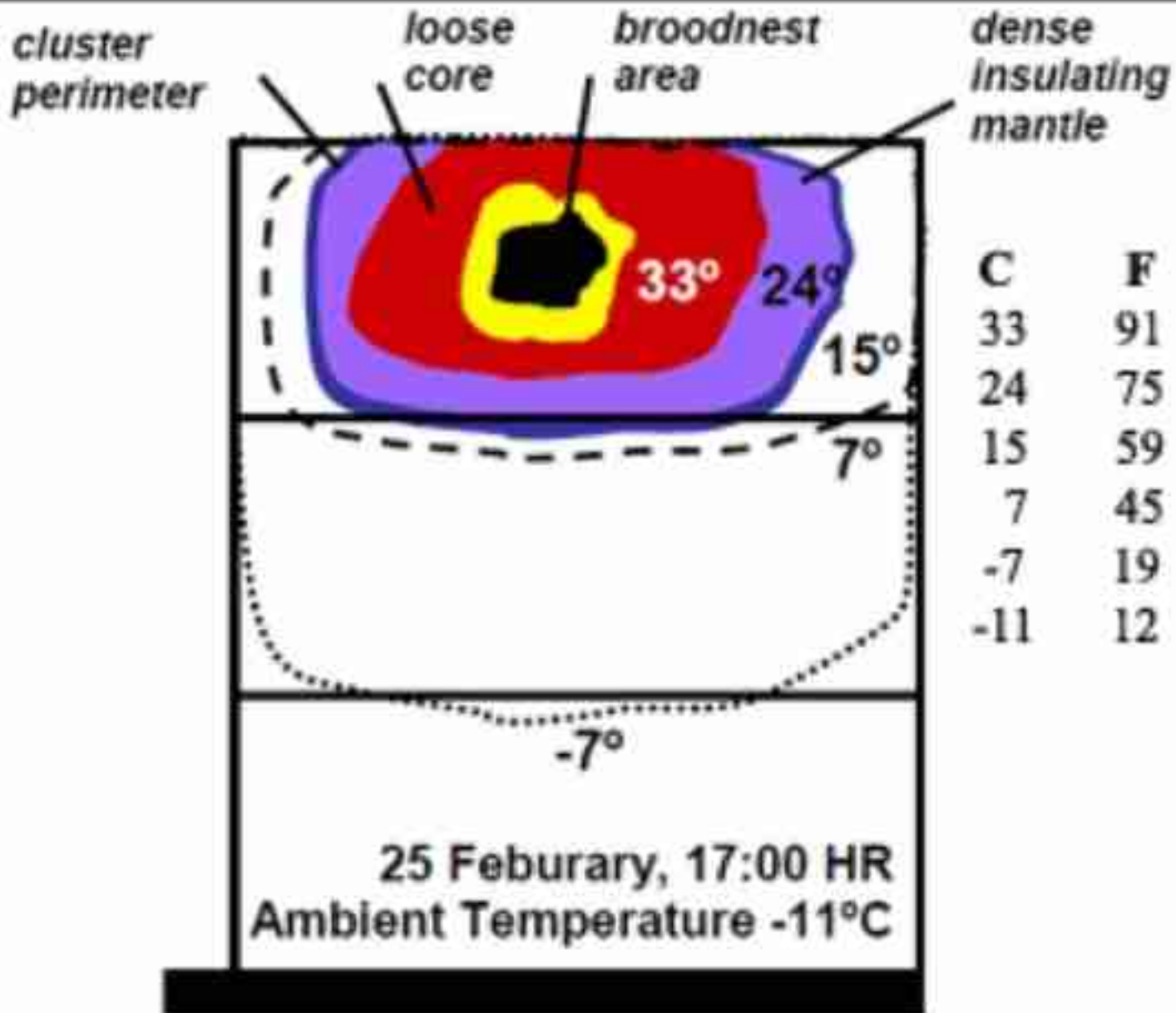


Figure 1. The two part structure of the winter cluster (Owen 1971, redrawn from Seeley).

“BEE WINTER”

November

- Windbreaks and mouse guards should be in place now!
- One deep brood box and 1 super with honey will winter over bees in our area
- Or use candy board with enclosed pollen patty (for spring) to supplement
- Move honey stores in brood boxes closer to center cluster area
- Begin late-fall feeding - heavy syrup, candy boards, etc
- Make sure still have adequate hive ventilation available
- Do Not open hive under 55-60 degrees. Never in the evening. Never when its windy
- Order new equipment for coming season
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December

- Repair and clean used equipment and assemble new hive equipment
- Order packages, queens, nucs, if you know your needs
- Always consider nucs, but do not wait long to order as they may be limited
- Always consider hygienic bees that winter over well in our area
- Check apiary for vandalism, hive covers blown off, and so forth

January

- Begin emergency feeding with frames of honey, sugar candy, or dry sugar, if necessary
- Clean, paint, and repair equipment
- Check apiary for vandalism, hive covers blown off, and so forth
- Order packages, nucs, queens, if not done in December
- Make a mite and disease IPM plan/program and order/construct the necessary materials (monitoring boards, screen bottom boards, drone foundation, chemicals, etc)
- Willow, elm start blooming - providing early pollen when weather permits foraging