

## Beekeeping Insights #52 email notes

2021 will soon be 2022 and Stahlman Beekeeping Notes will continue as January 1, 2022 arrives. I have found writing these notes to be educational for myself as well as being able to share some views on beekeeping topics. Education is the hallmark of keeping up with all the things we are learning about our bees. For those of you who consider my take on beekeeping -- know that I am not an expert. There have been so many books written about keeping bees and about bees themselves. New things are being discovered. My education has taken place in the bee yard based upon years of experience and reading just about all I can find -- including new research, viewpoints held by others (It pays at least listen to what others have to say), determine what works and what does not work for me, and read thru the library of bee books I have collected over the years.

Basic beekeeping requires knowledge of bee biology. Nothing in the honeybee has changed as far as the way honeybees have over many years (million years or so) developed a social system. It is a system admired by humans. The super family of honeybees requires each individual of the family to carry out task required for the colony's survival.

Our challenge is to manage them in ways that work with their natural instincts. Many things we do really mess up their natural way of doing things. We are trying a number of hive designs. The Langstroth hive design is by far the most popular, but it is far different from what bees do in nature. I received a message from St. Pete, Florida regarding a homeowner that found a 7- foot honeybee nest behind her bathroom wall. When removed it produced 100 pounds of honey. The bees were saved and most likely put into some beekeeper's hive. That has me thinking, "Are those bees better off now?" I will start 2022 with some factual information about natural bee nest and work forward with beekeeping management as I see the seasons pass.

The weather here in Raleigh has been very mild. If you are wondering if your bees are alive, all one has to do is check the entrance to see if bees are flying. They are flying from my hives and bringing back pollen. Of course, in Raleigh we still have some shrubs in bloom -- the camellias have been blooming for some time. We are the lucky ones!

A weather check indicates this weather pattern has warmer temperatures in the mid-west and really bad storms. Raleigh has had tornados in the past and hurricane weather as well. A beehive really doesn't stand a chance if it is in the path of such weather event. Even if bees are nested in a tree, there is no guarantee they have much protection as seen in the TV pictures shown of buildings reduced to rubble and trees ripped from the ground! We should all give some thought to the loss of life and property to those impacted by these storms. We must offer help when we can. If any state beekeeping organization puts together a donation site and works to help impacted beekeepers, let me know. I will contribute as well as pass the word. We can all offer prayer, but what they need is help!