

2022 Stahlman Beekeeping E-mail Notes Issue #20a

My bees are bringing in a good crop of honey. The Tulip poplar flow is over here in the Raleigh area but north of us, it is still going on. In the past I have written quite a bit about honey getting methods. Sourwood is now approaching its blooming period and it is a highly desirable crop. Honey flows vary across regions. Weather is a huge factor in getting a crop. Black locust is a crop one can count on in maybe two years out of five. It is a water white honey with a distinctive taste. Too often rain and cooler temperatures cause a crop failure. I can recall driving between Georgia and Ohio on I -75 smelling the delightful aroma and cascading white blossoms and thinking that if I could establish bee yards about 150 miles apart, I could keep my bees busy gathering Black locust honey. I would put them on a trailer and leave them for the local bloom. Then move the trailer 150 miles north and continue to pick up more Black locust honey in each location moving north.

The weather has been up and down here with some low temperatures, lot of rain spaced out over a broad area and otherwise good days for foraging flights. I stood in my beeyard here in Raleigh and saw bees flying in large numbers in a southwesterly direction. I am not sure what they were foraging on, but they were not going in any other direction. They were returning to the hive like a busy airport loaded with nectar and pollen. I could have robbed a few of their pollen loads and put the pollen under the microscope to identify the plant source. But I had a lot of other things to do.

I am teaching a small group how to raise queens. That is the priority this week. The articles over the next few weeks will share various methods on how to raise queens. I would hope you consider to have a spare nuc with a spare queen available just in case you might need a queen later this season. The raising of queens is very easy. The bees do all the work.