



# Fall Beekeeping Management

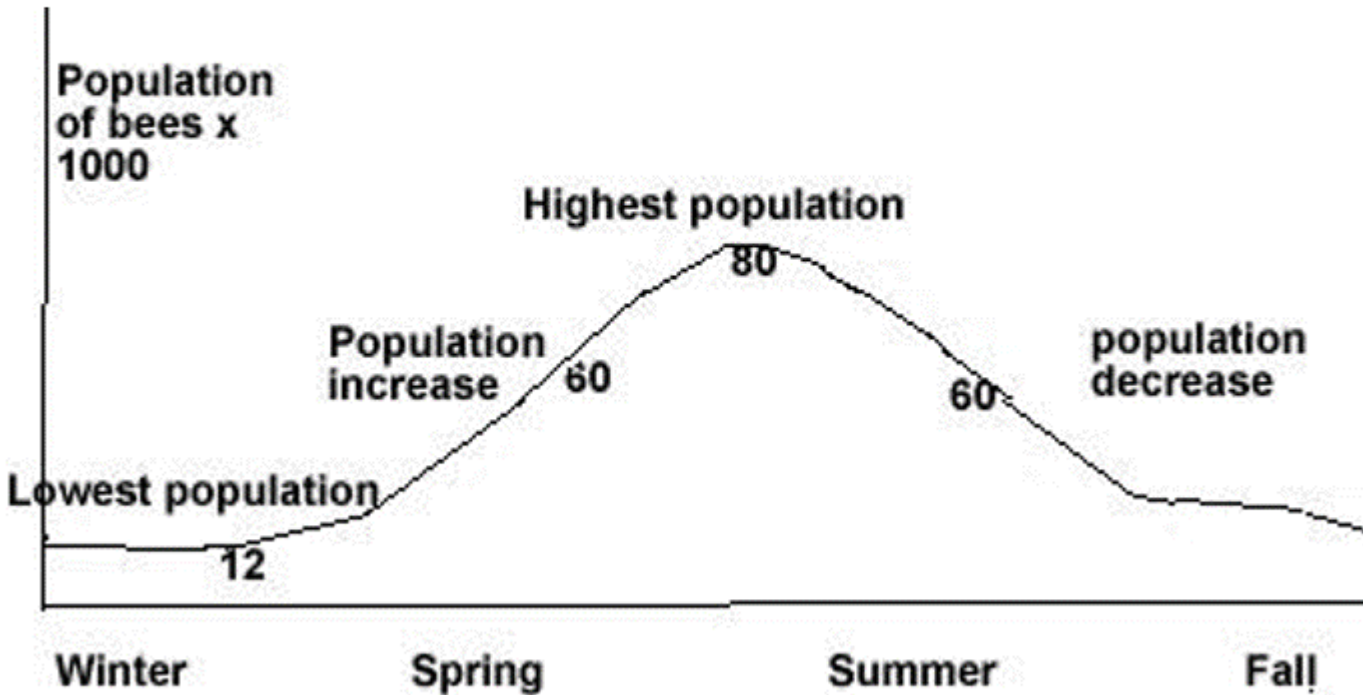


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Author of Stahlman Beekeeping Notes**

This is a summary of Basic Fall and Winter Beekeeping management



# Population Cycles





Keep in mind that depending where you live, this chart may not be exact. For example, if you live in Florida, you will see little of a winter.

**Bee populations decline starting with the end of the honey flow season. By the time fall arrives a good bee population will fill a single deep super. Egg laying continues until the onset of cold weather and then resumes by late winter when some pollen may be available. All depends upon food sources being brought into the hive and the weather conditions which are warmer in the southern states..**








# The Reality of Keeping Honeybees

**There are beekeeper who will have live bees starting the spring of 2024. And there will be beekeepers that will not. For those that do have live hives, the rewards are early honey crops, making hive increases, and selling bees. They will be rewarded for the effort put forth to follow basic beekeeping practices.**



**Many of the things that lead to successful beekeeping are management techniques that consider all the factors done during the late summer/fall season. When and how fall management is carried out is very important.**








**Other than mites, the biggest concern should always be with going into the winter season with a good populations of bees. By August, any failing queen should be replaced with a laying queen. Now is too late to let the bees raise a new queen to over winter a colony for many reasons!**



**It is important to replace failing queens as early as possible.**



**Since a queen is the mother of all the bees in the hive, a poor queen will produce fewer bees and going into winter with a small cluster of bees is not good. Feeding a hive to stimulate brood production will work with a good queen but it does little for a poor queen and the colony of bees.**



**Honey bees can handle cold.**

**They can not survive without:**

- **Food**
- **Good health & good management**
- **Well arranged dry winter quarters**
- **A honeybee population able to keep the winter cluster warm – results of having a good queen!**

**If any one of these items is missing a colony of bees can not survive!**






# Fall leads to Winter and beekeeping tasks now are about getting hives alive to spring!

Many things are involved in maintaining a hive of honeybees and often many beekeepers find the task of managing bees to be more than they bargained for.




The fall season is full of challenges. In fact, many beekeepers are just now realizing the hope of saving a hive is lost. All of us, new beekeepers as well as old beekeepers are having issue trying to get bees to survive.

I was very lucky in my life to have known Walter Rothenbuhler and Vic Thompson of The Ohio State University. I owe much to their guidance and leadership. Vic often taught beekeeping classes. He would begin with a statement “Don’t shirk any of the basic rules of caring for your bees! In nature they survive without you. The greatest enemy of the bee is you! We try to manage bees to do what we want them to do!”







**This was said during a period when mites were not an issue – They may not survive in nature in today’s world.**





## Here is a list of items that are considered basic tasks for fall management

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- **Inspect hives for disease/ Varroa mites/pests**
  - **Feed as required! Beekeepers use various methods to feed. Do not add moisture to hives in cold weather.**
  - **Replace any poor queen – Weak hives are targets for small hive beetles, wax moth, yellow jackets and neighboring honeybees.**
  - **Provide the bees with protection against elements of weather. Wet, windy locations are not good for honeybees.**
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## **Actions that must be taken to help a colony survive**




- **Unite weak Colonies**
- **Replace undrawn foundation frames with drawn comb frames if possible.**
- **Reduce hive to only brood boxes and stored honey boxes.**
- **Reduce colony entrance for mouse control.**
- **Make sure a colony has an open upper entrance to vent moisture.**
- **Provide wind breaks.**
- **Use Insect Pest Management technique through-out the entire year – not just in the fall!**







## **During the winter season**



- **Repair and refurbish equipment.**
  - **Set a goal for the coming year.**
  - **Assemble new equipment and send in orders for equipment early.**
  - **If one is to replace dead out hives – place orders for package bees early.**
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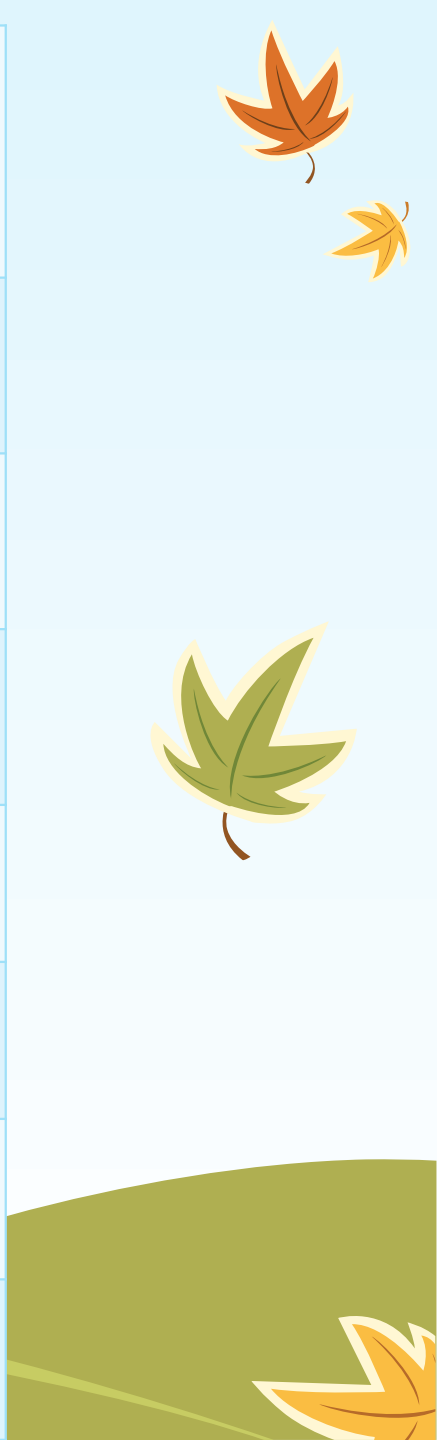
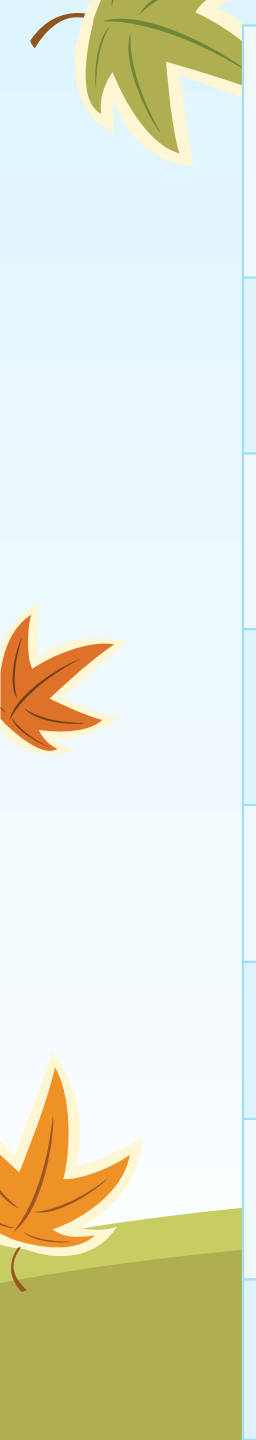
**Cleanliness is important—Follow good hygienic practices for yourself. Keep tools that come into contact with bee equipment clean. Use Clorox and water in a bucket to wash hive tools and your hands while in the bee yard. Wash your smoker as well—Keep it clean especially the bellows where propolis tends to build up. Remember that spores of some diseases can be spread by the beekeeper.**









**Replace old comb because it has a greater chance of harboring various spores and acts as a repository for all the chemicals used in the hive in the past.**



**The following check list may be of some help when you work your bees this fall.**



Yes	No	<b>Answer the following questions to help you determine what work needs to be done with your bees.</b>
		<b>Is there an ample supply of honey stores?</b>
		<b>Is there an adequate population of bees?</b>
		<b>Does the queen have a good brood pattern?</b>
		<b>Is a brood disease observable?</b>
		<b>Are mite levels checked? Are mites visible?</b>
		<b>Does the bottom board of the hive slope slightly downward in the front? (This allows water to run out of the hive)</b>
		<b>Did you place an entrance reducer on the hive? (This keeps mice out and winter wind damage at a minimum)</b>



<b>No</b>	<b>This is a continuation of the hive check list</b>
	<b>Did you provide the bee hive with a wind break?</b>
	<b>Have you provided for good ventilation in your hive? (Air needs to move about within the hive so that condensation does not collect and fall on the bees)</b>
	<b>Is the hive bottom board up off the ground?</b>
	<b>Is the hive cover secure? (Answer no if it will blow off in a strong wind for example)</b>
	<b>Are honey stores above and around the bee cluster? Stores should be arranged so the bees can get to them!</b>
	<b>Does the hive have a queen excluder, or any appliances that need to be removed?</b>
	<b>Is the area around the hive free of anything that could disturb the bees during the winter season?</b>