

STAHLMAN BEEKEEPING

NOTES FOR 2023

Issue # 25 July 1, 2023



There will be no Stahlman Notes published for July 8, 2023. Judi and I will be in Europe visiting Germany and Austria. I am not sure what I might find as far as bees, but travel plans are to visit Munich, Bavaria and Salzburg to see the medieval heartland of picturesque villages, Baroque places, and walled cities. We will end up in *Füssen*. I have no idea what I will see other than I have been to Oktoberfest in Munich in the past.

Most bee hives I have seen have been from a train window or travel on the autobahn (no speed limits) with *Autobahnkreuz (intersections)* about 20 miles apart. Telephone poles fly by the window (zip, zip, zip) and when you see a bee yard it is gone in a second – no time to take a picture.

I have had some comments about contacting local web sites but I have a language barrier. Thus, I will be traveling with the hope I can talk to a real German beekeeper. I know I will come home with some honey. I always collect honey from my travels and buy it from local sources. Many shops sell honey such as we would see in our grocery stores – not real raw local honey.

I am right now working on learning a few “Survival Phrases” and counting on my son-in-law to guide me in the right direction. Both my son-in-law and daughter-in-law are experienced world travelers -- Judi and I just follow along.

July as a beekeeping month presents us with hot weather. Keep in mind that hot weather also is a problem for honeybees.

- Provide good ventilation for your bees!
- If the bees are not gathering pollen and nectar, provide them with water and feed them if necessary.
- Queens generally reduce egg laying during this period.

IMPORTANT POINTS

Have you noticed how often the word “bee” is used in quotes?

“A still bee gathers no honey.”

“As busy as a bee!”

“He has a bee in his bonnet.”

“To have your head full of bees.”

“One bee is better than a handful of flies.”

“Where there is honey, there are bees.”

“No bees, no honey, no work, no money!”

“Bees that have honey in their mouths have stings in their tail.”

On these hot days, one could find a good bee book to read.

Just a suggestion:

The Backyard Beekeeper, now in its 4th edition, makes the time-honored and complex tradition of beekeeping an enjoyable and accessible backyard pastime for urban and rural beekeepers of all skill levels.

With this complete resource and the expert advice of Bee Culture editor Kim Flottum, your bees will be healthy, happy, and more productive.

- **Pest – wax moth, small hive beetles and mites do the most damage right up to the point of causing a hive to crash before September.**
- **It is also important for beekeepers to work smart in hot weather. Drink a lot of water, take breaks, and work early in the mornings if possible.**

I received several comments about last weeks newsletter.

From an old friend: He is a well known Honey Judge (Jim Thompson)

Dana,

I find that the light box works better if the light source is from the bottom. Thus the jars are resting on a transparent/translucent lens. Why so many jars? Is this for show or for judging?

Yep, there are many individuals out there selling things that look like honey. The last time I checked, McDonalds had real honey while Kentucky Fried Chicken had honey sauce or spread. (Artificial)

It is getting to the point where people think that honey judging is purely a matter of tasting and not on skill of presenting a quality product.

Jim

From -- Nina Bagley regarding the picture I used for last weeks article.

Dana, good morning. Hope you are doing well! I have been busy pulling honey off and giving talks on grafting queens. Busy year for beekeepers. Thank you for posting my honey. I have had a good honey year lots of locust and bass wood. My hives are all looking good

Nina



Regarding Nina: I was lucky enough many years ago to be her mentor. The goal of a mentor should be to see your students advance and make a go of it. I received this email about Nina:

From another friend: (Geoff Leister)

Dana,

Yes! I just read an article in the April 2023 issue of Bee Culture entitled **Bees and Women The Acklin Women**. She is a writer, a speaker <<https://www.beeculture.com/beeing-diverse-inspiring-leaders-in-beekeeping/>> and the Franklin County, OH bee inspector

<<https://www.beeculture.com/franklin-co-ohio-apiary-inspector/>>

The results of some great mentoring of

She is a person willing to make mistakes, pick herself up, and go at life – full speed ahead! She has developed her own beekeeping style and studied hard to achieve. What I see her doing now makes me proud to have had a chance to be lucky to have been her mentor very early on.

Nina by you.
Keep those
Beekeeping Notes
coming!
Take care,

Geoff

I do appreciate feed-back and suggestions. My mailing lists are growing. Each year more new beekeepers are added and I must remember to write about things that are useful to them. Thus, these newsletters will continue to report what I

am seeing and hearing from other beekeepers. I am asked often to collect all these articles and put them into a book organized by topics. I have no plans right now to do that. You can visit one of the bee club web sites that carry past articles. The one with the most complete list is: www.ccbec.org (A Pennsylvania club with a lot of useful information).

I am currently working with my bees to be okay while I am on vacation. This is a short check list that I use:

- Bee populations – I expect all hives to be active with bee flight from the hive entrances. When I open a hive, I expect to see young bees emerging from capped brood and plenty of bees to keep the brood nest well covered.
- Looking at brood -- I expect every hive to have all three phases of brood development. (Eggs, larvae, and capped worker brood). I do not go looking for a queen – takes too long.
- I check food reserves. I check for capped honey and honey stored near the brood nest. These bees need to survive without me feeding them during the period I am gone. If they need food, I must provide it. Top feeders are good for this – but robbing is going on right now. I have robbing screens on a few hives that I am feeding.
- So far I am up to 8 hives of bees. I started with three colonies that overwintered and I used swarm cells to make increases.
- I have also re-queened three colonies. I believe the start of summer is the time to prepare getting bees ready for winter survival. There is still plenty of time to get them to build strong populations by the time September arrives.
- I have treated for mites. I am using Apiguard® this year. I make no recommendation for what products or methods to use. I have tried just about all treatments and had varying results.
- When I return I will begin comb management. Some of the new hives still have some undrawn foundation. I will feed to encourage wax development so the bees go into winter with completely drawn comb and stored food.
- I check for any sign of disease and pests! If you suspect something wrong, call upon an experience beekeeper to take a look or call upon you state inspector to provide an expert opinion. Fortunately if you are a new beekeeper, know that other beekeepers in your community often are more than willing to help you.

The next issue of Stahlman Bee Notes will be published on July 15, 2023.

Just remember that working in hot weather is risky!

Drink a lot of liquid and when you feel like you are putting one foot ahead of the other, it is time to quit. Heat stroke is a serious problem!

I mention this because we are entering a very hot part of the year and what I see in Texas – 14 year old dying on a hiking trip – should be a wake-up call for all of us. See the symptoms below:

- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness and light-headedness
- Lack of sweating despite the heat
- Red, hot, and dry skin
- Muscle weakness or cramps
- Nausea and vomiting
- Rapid heartbeat
- Confusion, disorientation or staggering
- Seizures
- Fainting

With temperatures in the 90°F to 100°+ range it is important for beekeepers to recognize the above symptoms.

It is best to work early or late in the day. Temperatures are high during the mid-noon and a bit later.

Gloves and jackets add to the discomfort when working in hot weather. Most experienced beekeepers at some point decide to work without gloves. They dig out the gloves only when working aggressive hives.

I place my bees in shaded spots primarily for my own comfort. Bees exposed to hot sun are under great stress. Some shading might be used for them. I have seen some beekeepers make use of old pallets placed on the top cover for shade.

Those keeping bees in the southwest often build shade structures for their bees.

Mite Control:

The argument for placing hives in full sun has some merit in the fact that heat reduces mite populations. But what is better for the bees?

I am not a fan of heat treatment: Hyperthermy or thermal treatment, is based on the honeybee's greater heat tolerance compared to the Varroa mite. If heat treatment is carried out at 42°C or 107.6° F. for a few hours, Varroa mites will die whereas the bees will survive.



The following pictures show a thermal treatment given in 2018:

I am fortunate to be asked often to help someone with their bees. In this case, all directions were followed and the beekeeper and I were hopeful that this was the answer to treating for Varroa Mites.

The heat treatment device is placed on the bottom board, Electricity was needed and the device was turned on. Normal hive activity.

This is what we observed after the recommend time suggested in the literature that came with the device.

Most of the bees had left the hive. Talk about stress. I am sure all those mites did not stay in the hive to be killed.



Most of the bees re-entered the hive later that day.

This picture was taken about three hours after the treatment.

Note the green carpet that covers the ground in front of the hive. A number of dead bees littered the carpet and many had clustered under the bottom board. Most bees had returned to the inside of the hive by the next morning.

A check several days later had many more dead bees on the carpet as well as some dead larva that had been removed from cells by the bees.

I guess I would not pay several hundred dollars for a device that takes time (an hour + per hive) to apply the treatment, requires electricity, and causes so much stress to the bees. There are other methods that can be used to treat for mites.

This hive did survive despite what you see in the photos. A mite test afterward did indicate a loss in mite numbers. But some mites did survive this treatment.

If you have had another outcome and would like to change my mind, just send me an email with some data.