

2024 Stahlman Beekeeping E-mail Notes Issue #13a

Swarming season is on in the Raleigh area. This week's topic has been repeated so often that I have had to do some research to find something new to add to what I have already written in the past. I depend a lot on science to share things that may be interesting. This is not going to be an article about how to stop bees from swarming. I have spent a good part of my life trying to stop my bees from swarming as I indicated in last week's article.

I receive questions from readers every week. I turn to Tom Seeley's book, Honeybee Ecology to read and seek an answer to frequently asked questions. "Why did my bees just leave my hive -- all of them." Often, they indicate that the hive was doing well prior to the bees leaving. Without seeing the hive the bees left, it is impossible for me to make a guess. With mites being a real problem, that is my first guess. There is much more to consider. In the last five years, I have had a few students that I mentor have a problem with very aggressive bees. In fact, in one case we killed all the bees and the queen. That student started over with some bees and a queen I donated. In all my experience, I never had to back my truck out of a drive some distance to get away from stinging bees. I have seen some angry bees but not quite like what I am seeing more of in the past few years. So absconding is added to the topic swarming for a good reason -- in both cases bees leave a hive. There are signs to indicate if a hive swarmed or absconded. I have also listed reasons hives abscond.

This article adds to the information that I can give that might answer some of those questions.