

2024 Stahlman Beekeeping E-mail Notes Issue #40a

This is the 40th issue for 2024. My plans are for two more before the end of the year. Temperatures here in Raleigh indicate winter has arrived. It looks like the flight time for my bees on a daily basis has ended for the next several weeks. However, those bees in the North are getting slammed with snow -- new reports that the area in upper N.Y. are going to get up to 6 feet of snow.

If you have hive blankets now is the time to get them on. Do not disturb your bees if at all possible.

This article is more information about honeybees. I have always had an interest in history and honeybees do have a history. This will be my 86th winter and I have seen many changes in land use, human population growth, and changes in the way bees are now handled. If you cannot remember 60-pound tins, then consider yourself lucky when you handle your 5-gallon buckets. The biggest change has been in the commercial beekeeping business.

As a small boy I can remember that all hives were loaded on a truck by hand. The truck headed south on roads through every town and stopped at every stop light. U.S. Route 25 has been replaced by I-75. Grandma packed a picnic basket, we stopped over-night and actually slept under the truck in farm fields along the way. Grandpa moved bees by rail if they were to be taken far away. Those days had small railroad stations where honey or bees could be loaded on a train car.

I have vague memories of those days. American foulbrood was the most serious disease facing beekeepers followed by wax moths. If you have no interest in history, please hang in there because I have plans for 2025 to share weekly news items about bees not their history. One final comment, the bees I knew in the 1950's act just like the bees I own today. The basic principles have not changed nor has the hive and frames we use to manage them. I have always admired how honeybees could adapt to our management techniques. This short series could be titled "Looking Back."

Dana