

2024 Stahlman Beekeeping E-mail Notes Issue #5a

Every year spring arrives and lately it seems like "spring like weather" gets earlier and earlier. But it is still Winter. Signs in my bees indicate that swarming season is going to be early again this year. Bees are using up a lot of winter stores raising brood.

As is usual at this time of year, we are seeing more new students taking beekeeping classes. Seeing new beekeepers provides me with a little more get up an go. I appreciate those bee club sending me list of names to get this newsletter. I reviewed past issues and look over topics that need to be repeated year after year.

I also went thru a number of bee books in my collection to find interesting things to write about. But nothing beats just asking members of bee clubs what they would like to read about and what is important to them. This weeks article came out of such discussion when I spoke at the Franklin County Beekeepers meeting. That question and the answer is so very important. I have tried to visualize what Varroa mites have done to our bees. So many hive losses have been caused by them. The message this week -- Check mite levels in your hives as soon as possible. When bees break out of the winter cluster and start raising brood mite populations begin to grow. Each brood cycle in a hive adds more mites to the mite population until by June, July, and August many hives collapse. It is too late to save many hives at that point in time.

I have written about this topic almost every year and every year this problem seems to raise its ugly head.

I thought and was reminded that we as beekeepers must get an early start on varroa mite management.

Dana