

## 2023 Stahlman Beekeeping E-mail Notes Issue #41a

There is still time to do some bee work. I have put my bees to bed for the year. I will check on them from time to time, but I started thinking about winter survival back in August and feel somewhat good about the bee populations, health, food supply, and equipment of my bees.

I have kept bees for many years and look back at mistakes I have made. Topics I see such as hive wraps etc. are very typical for this time of year. I have relied on techniques that have worked for me -- nothing original. I look back at Langstroth with advice about good ventilation. I look back at C.C. Miller, A.J. Cook, Frank Pellett, Everett Phillips, John Eckert and others for bee management. I have kept bees in Ohio, Indiana, Georgia and North Carolina. Each region is unique. Winter is always a challenge.

Right now as I write, many commercial beekeepers have broken hives down into single deep supers, put them on trucks and are shipping them south. Weather is a factor. While queens in colder regions have reduced brood production, those bees going south are going to be supplied with corn syrup by the truck load, re-queened, and split so that by February they will be ready for the pollination of Almonds in California, and the demand for package bees and queens by the beekeeping market in March and April.

The year cycle of winter to spring has begun. For many of us, we will have some hives die out no matter how hard we work to save them. If you have been following these notes, I have been writing about getting ready for winter. I have gone from 8 hives down to four. I gave some bees to help those I mentored. Several of them had problems with queens or hives that were weak. But I realize that bees die. Sometimes even when everything that should be done is done.

This week I am sharing a visit to one of my bee buddies. My feeling is "the key to over wintering is knowing before winter begins what you are working with!" If hives are weak in bee populations, don't waste time trying to save them. Combine them with stronger hives. The time to save a hive of bees was back in August or September. It is late but combining hives is still possible. The earlier the better.

Langstroth put together some Axioms as he called them. First Principles in beekeeping -- 10 of them. And he shared what was known as the golden rule in beekeeping "keep none but strong colonies." I don't care how you keep bees -- wrap or let be. Strong hives will survive if they have good ventilation and food stores. In today's beekeeping -- healthy bees survive. Those weakened by Varroa do not!