



STAHLMAN

BEEKEEPING NOTES

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Email me to be added to my mailing list. Published 11-16-24

Issue #39 A strange November and you know what is coming!

I have attended several bee club meetings and met with a few friends to discuss bees these last few days. It is always fun to look and and see what tomorrow will bring. I spent an hour on

the phone with Roy Henderson talking about the good old times in the 1970's. Those of you who lived thru the 1970's remember big snow storms, and I can even go back to the football game between Ohio State and Michigan played in a blizzard on November 25, 1950. It was called the snow bowl. Memories fade and sometimes they come to the surface as if the world is turned upside down. Bees were put away for the winter and we bundled up by the radio to hear the news.

The reality of today is that my bees have been flying and actually returning to the hive with pollen – not a lot but the occasional bee would land at the hive entrance and disappear inside. I don't think my bees are going to have to worry about not having enough pollen for brood development this spring. I fed them a month or more ago thinking that by now they would be in the winter cluster but I can find them scattered about the hive when I take off the inner covers and find no evidence of brood, and the weather is warm. These bees know something – this is not the time to raise brood. They most likely are going to use a lot more honey stores being active during this unusual warm weather.

I have more or less had a list of things to get ready for winter that I share every fall. This year has been crazy. Hurricanes, and then lack of rain. I left my garage door open this last week just after I had bottled some honey. I do that work in my garage because I sometimes over fill jars and that makes for a sticky mess. Less than an hour later I had a garage full of flying bees. They did a good job of cleaning up my mess. A few bees got into the house which caused a problem. It is good that bees fly toward windows to escape. After I closed the garage door, bees still returned for several days to see if the honey rewards were available. Bees do have a memory.

The weather map shows some areas getting snow and cold but not here in the eastern part of the U.S. At least not up to this point.

My winter check list is as follows:

Check for any potential weather hazard: My heart goes out to those beekeepers who had a real weather hazard with Hurricane Helene. Over 100 individuals here in North Carolina lost their lives, and others almost everything they owned. I am not sure what can be done to protect one's bees when the earth disappears into a mud slide and a wall of water. Various North Carolina beekeepers in this area have adopted some of the western county beekeepers. We are well aware they have lost just about everything so volunteers are being asked to help build equipment, and in the spring help with donating splits, nucs, swarms and anything else to those affected. Donations can be sent to the North Carolina Beekeepers Association to help. Send any donations you might give to - North Carolina State Beekeepers Association, PO Box 99 Hurdle Mills, NC 27541 and indicate the money is for Hurricane Helene relief.

My list:

- Make sure hive top covers are secured.
- Wind breaks help.
- Mouse guards to keep those critters out of the hive.
- Tilt the hives slightly forward to make sure water does not collect on the bottom board at the back of the hive.
- Bees need ventilation and check to make sure the bottom entrance does not get plugged with dead bees.
- Store equipment in a dry place - moisture causes mold in comb
- Plan for this coming year and use your time to become a better beekeeper.
- Include in your plan something about winter losses.

Winter is a great time to read. I have a bee book library that challenges me every day with something new to learn or think about.

If you do not own a copy of *50 Years Among the Bees* by C.C. Miller, I would suggest you get a copy and spend the next few months reading it. It is old. Miller died in 1920 but he put his stamp on beekeeping methods still used today. In fact, this book has helped me understand and follow methods he used to manage his bees. It has been reprinted often and is available on line. Ebay has a variety of older editions listed – some early editions costing several hundred dollars vs. the newly reprinted editions in the \$20.00 range. Topics covered include:

- Swarm Management
- Making increases -- how about making up 56 colonies from 9 hives
- Feeding bees
- Queen management
- Brood management
- Producing comb honey
- And so much more 340 pages of information – some of which is sure to be useful for managing your bees this coming spring.

There is a good article in the American Bee Journal written by Charles Linder for November 2024 regarding a group called GEOCURE. It is a follow up to an article he wrote in the September issue.



The image shows a donation form for the Trillion Bees-Land Healing Institute. The form is titled "Donate to Trillion Bees-Land Healing Institute" with a small bee icon. Below the title is the mission statement: "Creating a bee sanctuary to help stop the genocide of pollinators". The current donation amount is displayed as "\$0 USD". There is a checkbox labeled "Add \$0.00 USD to help cover the fees." which is currently unchecked.

I would advise you to read the articles before you decide to donate to this group.

There are a number of good **SAVE THE BEES** non profit organizations. However, this one is touted as a way to save the bees

and the beekeeping industry by means of **non-GMO bee reserves** and a **global co-op** to match prices paid for honey and pollination by offering commercial beekeepers \$700.00 per hive. They claim to already have 1.2 million hive potentials ripe to purchase. They ask for donations to make this possible. They have according to a statement in the Letters to the editor of ABJ “We look forward to explaining to them (bee industry) in person how their participation in the development of this strategic reserve of honeybees, will not only lower their annual pollination cost but also provide a pool of bees that ensures they will always have a consistent supply to pollinate their crops.”

Isn't it good that the hobby beekeepers in the U.S. have the freedom to save their own bees, set their own prices, and manage bees in any way they choose. As I have pointed out many times, one can not get rich keeping honeybees. I have a couple of hives I could unload at \$700.00 each and if I had 30 thousand hives as some commercial operations have, I could really retire in style. I wonder where these non-GMO bee reserves will be located and who will attend to the bees this group buys. If it gets off the ground, they will do it with your dollars.