



Appalachian Beekeepers

April, 2020

UPDATE FROM DON REYNOLDS, Club President:

I hope all of you are doing well, being safe and staying healthy. April is a lot like March in that the same things need to be done with your bees. It is definitely swarm season, so you need to be checking your hives for queen(swarm) cells along the bottom of the frames. If you find any, there are several things you can do:

- Make a split(can be a "walk away split" or you can buy a queen for it)
- A "walk away split" is one where you place frames with swarm cells in the new box, let the new queen hatch, take her mating flight, get back to the hive and start laying. You do not buy a queen for it. Walk away splits can be a challenge in that the new queen can be eaten by a bird or dragonfly either leaving or coming back to the hive.
- Destroy the swarm cell(s) if you do not want more hives and you are absolutely positive your existing queen is okay(laying lots of brood).
- Make a NUC(4 or 5 frame) and sell it to another club member. You will need to buy a queen for it.
- Place several frames with just foundation in them in the brood box. This will keep the bees busy building out the wax.
- Add a super to give them more space.

These are things you can do to hopefully discourage swarming, but sometimes it works and sometimes it does not. If you want more hives, I would keep an extra deep box and super around in case you can capture a swarm. One of our club members has had 11 swarms so far and I have had one(that I know of).

You also need to keep checking your hives for food stores. Again, there are very few things blooming right now, so feed your bees if they are light on stores. I have been feeding mine every day for the past month or so. They seem to be doing okay with pollen gathering, though.

Another thing to think about is varroa mite treatment. The bees have built up quite a lot because of the warm March/April, so that means the mite population is also growing. The nights have generally been too cool to use mite treatments(other than oxalic acid) since most treatments call for nights above 50 - 55 degrees for the 7 - 14 day duration of treatment. If you do not have your preferred mite treatment, I would go ahead and order it to be ready once the nights warm up.

It is also time to put small hive beetle traps in your hives. They have also multiplied as your bees have built up. You may also want to treat the soil around your hives to kill the hive beetle larvae. Putting salt around your hives is a method to do this if you do not want to use a chemical soil soak. There are also beneficial nematodes that you can buy to do this as well.

If anyone needs a queen, Appalachian Apiaries in Franklin has them. I just bought two on Thursday(one for a split I made and one for a queenless hive). They had Carniolians and Saskatraz queens. If anyone is looking for bees, they also will make packages and NUCS.

In closing, I hope all of your bees are doing well and you all are doing well. Please stay safe and healthy and as the summer gets closer, maybe we will be able to start our meetings again.

Don