

Our Apiary Guide (Specific to the Appalachian Beekeeper)

	BEEKEEPER – DO THIS	BEES – ARE DOING THIS	NECTAR SOURCES
Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add pollen supplements, if needed; check amount and location of honey stores, and feed (2:1 syrup or fondant) if <3/4 super of stored honey left. • Check/repair/replace stored equipment; order wax/woodenware. • Order NUCS/packages. • Combine or insulate smaller (less than 4 frames of bees) hives. • Combine hives where queen has failed, if they're still alive and haven't absconded. • Move hives if they will need to be relocated this year. • Bees may need help removing dead bodies from entrance area. 	<p>Clustering</p> <p>Queen may start laying eggs</p> <p>Bees will start ridding hive of dead bees</p>	
Feb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most hives need feeding (1:1 syrup in most cases, 2:1 if less than 1/2 a super is left). • Combine hives if needed (see January entries above). • Repair/replace equipment if needed; add move hives if needed. • During last half of February, consider adding super/hive body of wax foundation to allow bees to draw out more comb for spring. (Feeding or nectar is required for this.) • Replace a few (<4) frames where comb is old or has excessive drone cells. • Some hives may need treatment for Nosema disease, especially if too cold for cleansing flights. 	<p>Clustering</p> <p>Brood is building up intensely</p> <p>New bees start to emerge</p> <p>Bees will begin to build out new comb</p>	
Mar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swarming under way; implement prevention measures (make splits, remove queen cells, "checker-board"); set up "bait" hives. • Reverse bottom two or three boxes on hive to give queen more room to lay: most hives have moved up above the bottom hive body, leaving it virtually empty. This measure also helps reduce swarming. Caution: be careful not to split up clusters of brood when you do this. • Two to three weeks after this reversal, it is likely that you'll need to reverse them again. (An alternative to reversal: simply add another hive body.) • Assess for pest and/or disease problems (especially varroa mites, American foulbrood, and European foulbrood) and treat if needed. Treatments should be completed by early April to limit risk of contaminating honey. • Check honey stores; feed (1:1 or thinner syrup) if needed. • Look closely at the brood pattern (should be a football design); order new queen if current one is failing. • At end of the month add at least 1 honey super and remove entrance reducers. 	<p>Population has exploded</p> <p>Busy making swarm cells AND swarming</p> <p>Bringing in pollen</p>	Red Maple

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Apr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nectar flow is picking up this month: make sure that all medications are out of hive unless required for bees' survival. • Be prepared to add new supers every 7-10 days. • Remove feeders from all hives unless weak or new. • Bees should be very busy; closely examine hives that are not, and trim weeds that may be hindering flight. • Swarming is usually heavy. Continue prevention/capture measures. • Look closely at brood pattern; replace queen if needed. • Have everything ready to install nucs/packages that you've ordered; feed upon installation. • Consider adding queen-excluder to prevent brood in honey supers. 	<p>Increasing population</p> <p>Foraging and bringing in nectar and pollen</p> <p>Hive should be extremely busy</p> <p>Swarming is still a thing</p>	<p>Holly</p> <p>Red Maple</p> <p>Sumac</p>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nectar flow is in full force this month. • Check hives weekly; add supers as needed. • Get extraction and bottling equipment ready. • Consider adding an additional hive entrance (via 5/8" hole or shim) above brood area, for foragers. • Swarming continues— keep up prevention/capture measures. • Replace failing queens. • Start planting annuals for future nectar/pollen supplementation. • Install traps for small hive beetles if needed (i.e., if more than 20 adult beetles seen in hive). • Place two or more bee "watering holes" in apiary, if not already present in preparation for the summer heat. 	<p>Foraging for nectar</p> <p>Increasing population rapidly</p> <p>Making honey and capping cells</p> <p>May still be swarming</p>	<p>Dandelion</p> <p>Black Gum</p> <p>Holly</p> <p>Black Locust</p> <p>Raspberry</p> <p>Persimmon</p> <p>Tulip Poplar</p> <p>White Clovers</p> <p>Sumac</p>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider harvesting available honey before mid-June's Sourwood flow to ensure more "pure" Sourwood crop. • If honey being harvested, put "wet" supers back on hives late in day to limit robbing. • Can start late-season splits during last half of June; feed splits initially, even if there is nectar available • Continue measures to control small hive beetle population. • Keep water for bees constantly available. 	<p>Egg laying is coming to an end</p> <p>Bees will be controlling small hive beetles if it is a problem</p>	<p>Sweet Clover</p> <p>Blackberry</p> <p>Basswood</p> <p>Sourwood</p> <p>Raspberry</p> <p>Persimmon</p> <p>Tulip Poplar</p> <p>Dandelion</p> <p>Black Gum</p> <p>Sumac</p>

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July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May harvest some (or all) of honey; may continue late-season splits; continue beetle controls; keep water available for bees (see June activities). • Get supers on for cotton honey, if hives near cotton fields. • Replace failing queens; consider replacing any queen that is two years old or older. • Can begin annual varroa mite assessment, and treat if needed/practical. 	<p>Preparing for winter</p> <p>Bees are becoming more assertive</p>	<p>Basswood Blackberry Sourwood Sweet Clover Sumac</p>
Aug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If not in area of significant cotton bloom, harvest remaining desired honey by mid-month to keep bees from eating it. • Pest control is critical this month: hive beetle populations are peaking, varroa mites are nearing their peak populations, some factors increase risk of damage from wax moth larvae, and yellow jackets/hornets tend to be plentiful. • Careful assessment of queen performance—this month is usually last chance to replace queens until the following spring. • Can still make late-season splits early in August if using mated queens. • Keep water available for bees constantly. • Be prepared for "badly behaving bees": because nectar flow is so scarce, bees may become more defensive and more likely to rob other hives. • Install robbing screens or entrance reducers (but be aware of need for ventilation), and keep hive inspections as brief as possible. • Completing honey harvest + decrease in queen's egg-laying = extra empty supers of drawn comb; store them using method that prevents damage from wax moth larvae (freezing, keeping open to light/ventilation, using paradichlorobenzene [PDB] crystals). 	<p>Bee population starts to decrease</p> <p>Mite count will rise</p> <p>Protecting hive from robbers</p> <p>Bees are getting meaner</p> <p>Bees fighting off hive beetles, varroa, and wax moths</p>	<p>Aster Sumac</p>
Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue measures for pest control; if hives exposed to but not sickened by American foulbrood, apply treatment to prevent full-blown disease. • Varroa control should be completed by end of month!! • May feed thin (1:1 or more diluted) sugar syrup for 2-3 weeks to stimulate queen laying—builds up winter population—but by last week of September, begin feeding thicker (2:1) syrup for winter stores, although thicker syrup may not be necessary if >3 supers of honey left on hive and/or heavy fall nectar flow. • Consider Nosema assessment/treatment. • Combine colonies later in the month if weak and/or have failing queens. • Should have brood in bottom box. If not, may need to rearrange things. 	<p>Bee population decreasing</p> <p>Bees are very testy</p> <p>Continue to protect from robbers</p> <p>Bees are expelling drones from the hive</p>	<p>Aster Goldenrod Sumac</p>

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Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-treatment assessment for varroa mites (i.e., did your treatment work?). • Remove all queen excluders, if present. • Combine hives that are weak/have failing queens. • Feed thick syrup, if needed, for winter food stores. • Add entrance reducers near end of month to keep mice out. • Plant (in October and November) herbaceous perennials for future nectar/pollen sources. 	<p>Bee population decreases</p> <p>Bees protecting against robbers, predators</p> <p>Still foraging</p> <p>Sealing cracks with propolis</p> <p>Expelling drones from the hive</p>	Aster
Nov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine hives that are weak/have failing queens. • Ensure adequate ventilation near top of hive. • Feed thick syrup, if needed, for winter stores. • Provide weights (brick, rock, concrete block, etc.) for tops of hives to limit wind-induced topless-ness. • Plant trees for future nectar/pollen sources (tulip poplar, maple, sourwood, etc.). • Consider closing off screened bottom board to improve heat insulation. 	<p>Hunkering down for winter</p> <p>Will forage on warmer days</p> <p>Ridding hive of remaining drones</p> <p>Protecting against robbers</p>	
Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine hives that are weak/have failing queens. • Feed 2:1 syrup, if needed (e.g., if there is not more than one super of honey stored up). • Consider insulating smaller hives (those with 4 or fewer frames of bees). • Do a Year-End-Review & Assessment of your apiary's successes and challenges. • Leave bees alone, if possible. 	<p>Clustering.</p>	