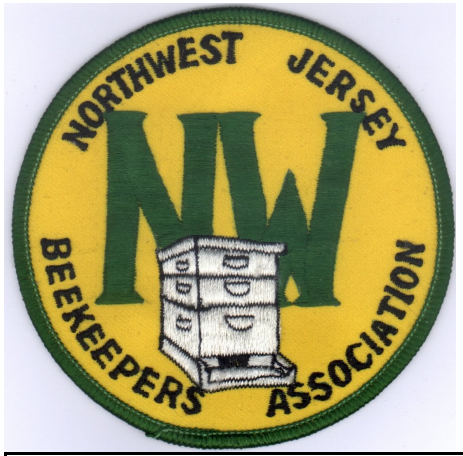
NORTHWEST NEW JERSEY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

May/June Newsletter 2008



From the President

To the membership: For those of you who missed the Foul Brood Workshop, we are sorry for those of you could not attend. We had a great meeting. As you are aware, Tim Schuler our State Apiarist conducted the seminar. We were presented an infected hive, and saw the signs and symptoms of foul brood. We also learned what to do about suspected foul brood. Please remember to register your bees with the State. You may register at the New Jersey Beekeeper's Website: http://www.njbeekeepers.org

Seasonal Management:

Swarms, Installing Package Bees and Nucs

Hey I got a swarm!

With a natural swarm, a queen and a few thousand workers leave their original home, and move into an empty cavity and set up a new colony. A newly established colony is a delicate thing vulnerable to disease and starvation. Attention must be paid to the new colony to nurture it through this critical time. The same is true of the installation of a package of bees. The swarm is the natural split of a hive. A package of bees is produced and, this brings us to a fundamental objective of honey production. That is: to maximize colony production populations before the nectar flows begin, if you're into honey production. There is no other way because large populations of bees produce more honey than small colonies. There are only a few weeks between installation into a new box and the major nectar flows.

Honey and drawn comb and healthy bees are the desirable outcomes. Honey and packed pollen stores from areas that are inaccessible to bioactive pesticides save weeks of labor from a new colony. Very much nectar must be consumed by the honey bee to produce an entire box of new comb. The comb must be produced before new eggs can be laid by the queen. It is necessary therefore to feed new colonies so that populations of bees can develop. Installing packages into hives is not difficult. Here is what you do:

1. Whether it is swarm, nucleus colony, or package, you have to bring what you need to the site selected for the bees to live. The site should be a cove composed of open space and trees with neutral slope, and a southern exposure. Trees protect the bees from wind and snow accumulations. My bees have some shade, but always have the afternoon sun.

2. All of my boxes and box tops are painted white for that reason. Two coats of good quality latex paint, and do not paint working edges. Working edges are those parts of the bee hive that are common to the bee or where parts of the bee hive come together. We will present a management letter on the proper construction of a bee hive in the autumn and winter. For now make boxes as you need them. New beekeepers must follow instructions in the construction of the hive supplied by the manufacturer. Otherwise contact a nearby member of the association for a mentor. Usually the mentored buys the beer. This is a time honored tradition, sometimes requiring that the mentor be

mentored about the ride home from the party.
3. Put the bottom board on cinder blocks. Prop it forward so that the rain or snow melt runs out of the front of the hive. Set the hive body on the bottom board and the remove and set aside about half of the frames. Insert the feeder on the left side of the box using the back of the hive as reference, and then and fill it with 50:50-syrup. If you do not have a feeder with a means for the bees to climb out, put sticks or Styrofoam for floatation so the bees don't drown.
4. Put on your protective clothing. If you have a swarm it is time to understand how to clip a limb without dumping 3 to 6 pounds of bees right down on the ground. I have done both. I'm no luminary; luck lives large around here. Just figure, if it can go wrong it will. You know, a cardboard box with handles will help catch those dump jobs. You cannot assume that the limb you are about to clip will come off the way you want. Sometimes one may go up the ladder and come down with swarm in hand, and sometimes something will happen, resulting in the swarm dumping on the ground. So during your preparations remember to ask yourself and actually mentally think through a what-if scenario. Don't just go for it and hope for the best/
5. Half of the frames were removed from the box already, so the swarm can be laid directly on top of or into the box. I spray the bees with 50:50. Once in the box they will go for the refuge of the remaining frames. Slowly, but deliberately shake the bees off the limb into the cavity created by removing the frames. Then after the limb has been shook off slide the inner lid over the bees. The majority of the bees will be inside the box. A percentage will be buzzing around outside. They will circle around looking for the queen. Actually they are trying to re-acquire her scent trail. So you will see a few go back to the place where the limb was if that is possible and start to accumulate again. If the process continues the whole swarm will be back where they were, so be prepared. You might have to go back and get them again.

Package-Bees

The packaged bees are much easier. The "swarm" is already in the box. The box will have a wooden cover on it. Before removing the wooden cover, spray the bees with 50/50 sugar water. After this remove the wooden cover and then the queen cage, which includes the queen and her attendants.

The cage is under the wooden cover. Pry off the wooden lid. There will be a syrup can underneath the wooden cover. The syrup can will stop the bees from coming out, but they will be coming out the small hole the queen cage was in.
6. Spray the package bees once more with 50/50 sugar water. Remove the syrup can and shake/pour the bees into the space in the box created by removing about 4 of the frames as mentioned above. Don't worry about shaking every last bee out of the box. Between the feeder, the bees, and the queen cage, there will be room for only 8 frames. We want 10 frames for the brood nest, so the remaining frames can be put in later. However, careful attention must be given the hive to ensure that the frames are not filled out before the remaining frames can be placed into the box. Just give a look-see every 3-4 days to determine how fast the frames are being filled out. Remember, we have a feeder in the hive supplying nectar.
7. Place the queen in the center of the box. There will be a circular metal cover over the candy plug. I have used this to suspend the queen cage and I have removed it and used nails to suspend the cage. Just remember to remove the cork from the candy plug from the end opposite the metal cover. I haven't seen cork in both ends of the cage. The idea of a slow release mechanism for the queen is that the workers imprint on her scent. If the queen is released too soon, the workers might not accept her. Check the cage 48 hours after the queen cage has been suspended in the center of the hive. We will cover the introduction of the queen separately because of its importance. Close the hive up after suspending the queen from the top bar and replacing the remaining the frames. Leave the hive alone for 24 hours after introducing the bees. A new colony might abandon the hive and fly away.

Releasing- the-Queen.

Twenty-four hours after the introduction take a look inside the hive, provided the weather is OK. It should not be windy or raining and it should be above 50 degree F.

The bees will become somewhat defensive about the hive so be careful, especially if you check into the hive without smoke. I definitely do not use smoke. If you must use smoke, use it sparingly. Consider smoking your gloves or hands and your jacket; but try not to smoke out your new hive.

Look at the queen cage. If the candy is penetrated and the queen is gone, the queen is

probably free and gallivanting about the hive. Try and see if you can find her. Carefully remove frames and look for the queen. My way is assume that each frame I pick up will have the queen on it. Please observe that bumping and banging frames on the box gets you stung. And for that matter, loud, obnoxious language, dropping tools, and forcing frames back into position with reckless abandon are also unwelcome by the little ladies. They're simply not impressed by this behavior. So be gentle, slow, and deliberate, and use soft language. Put the frames back from where you took them from in the hive. Number the frames with a Sharpe if you must, but just remember the act of removing the frames from the nest disrupts it. Shuffling the frames out of order exaggerates the intrusion.

If the queen is still in her cage after 24 to 48 hours, check to see if the candy is not obstructed. Give the bees another 24 hours to remove the rest of the candy.

If the queen has not found her way out after about 2-1/2 or 3 days it is time to determine if she should be released mechanically. Remember that the queen is being attended by bees if they are not busy trying to reject her. Do not release the queen if the nest bees are rejecting her. When you look at the queen in her cage, look at the workers on the outside of the cage. If they are forming a tight rigid cluster they are rejecting her. By tight I mean they will not move off their spot. This is in contrast to nest bees, which have imprinted on their queen. The move freely about on the cage and will quickly fall off or walk the cage when you remove it. Make sure the cork is placed back into the cage and leave her there for another 24 hour period. If after this the workers are still aggressive, remove the queen and obtain another after checking the nest after 48 hours for eggs and sign that there is another queen about the palace grounds. This is the main cause of rejection. If the workers are moving freely about the caged queen, which is normally the case, they will be trying to feed her with their tongues. There is no need to delay the release any longer. I remove the remaining candy from the cage and the re-suspend it from the top bar using nails. Just remember that a caged queen is light weight and defensive because of all the handling. So if you open the cage on the outside of the hive the queen just might fly away. If this happens she might come back to the hive in minutes. If not, she must be replaced as soon as possible.

Installing NUCs

What's a NUC? A NUC is beekeeper jargon for a nucleus colony. Just remember that is it needs a queen. The seller usually retains the queen and then sells the queen separate. Otherwise it is a small established colony complete with pollen, 4 of 5 combs full of adult bees and stored honey. The only difference between a NUC and an established colony is the beekeeper has to get involved with the maintenance of the NUC. That is; make frames and boxes and build it up.

Spring Meeting State Beekeepers:

We will again host the Spring Meeting on June 7th at Rutgers Snyder Research Farm., Pittstown, NJ.

Agenda: **9 – 9:30 AM** Registration
9:30 – 10:30 AM Business meeting
10:30 AM – 12 Noon Diana Cox-Foster, PhD, Penn State University will present a CCD update she co-authored Dennis Van Englesdorp of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture entitled "The Role of Pathogens in CCD and the Impact of Migration and Other Stressors on Bees". Q&A follows presentation.
Noon – 1 PM Lunch – Barbecued and roasted beef, baked beans, pasta and regular salads, cole slaw, ice tea and water.
Noon & 12:30 PM 30-minute research wagon tour of Snyder Farm.
1 – 2:30 PM Maryann Frazier from Penn State University will speak on "Role of Pesticides in CCD and Overall Concerns Impacting Honey Bee Health". Q&A follows presentation.
* If you RSVP ahead of time, the cost of the barbeque will be $20 per adult, $10 for young adults (Ages 13 to 18) and free for children younger than 13 years of age. If you don't RSVP, the cost is $25 at the door. Please confirm your attendance to Charles Ilsley at 732 469-0043 (before 8:00 p.m. please, and RSVP may be left on answering machine) or by email to c.ilsley@verizon.net. Send checks made payable to Northwest Jersey Beekeepers Association to:
Charles Ilsley
704 Kline Place
Bridgewater, NJ 08807

Directions: **FROM NORTH:** Take I-78 to Exit 15. Turn left (south) at bottom of exit ramp onto Pittstown Road (Route 513S). Stay on Pittstown Road for approximately 6 miles (DO NOT TURN WHEN ROUTE 513 BEARS RIGHT). Turn left onto Locust Grove Road at Rutgers sign. Snyder Farm is 1/2 mile on the left.

Directions: **FROM SOUTH:** Take Route 202/31 North to the Flemington traffic circle. Take Route 12 West at circle. Go approximately 5 miles to Pittstown Road (second right after Shell Gas Station). Turn right (north) and go 3.5 miles to Locust Grove Road (look for Rutgers sign) and turn right. Snyder Farm is 1/2 mile on the left.

Treasurer Contact Information

Membership dues ($20.00) for the year 2008 are due on January 1, 2008. Please send your payment to: Karin Weinberg, 337 Tunnel Road, Asbury NJ 08802. Thanks! Payment of dues entitles you to receive the State Newsletter and also provides our chapter with operating money.

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