



# Fall Management & Preparing for Winter

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# Hive losses



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- 65% of all hives were lost in the previous year
  - 75% loss - new beekeepers

**So what can we do about it?**

# To Do List



- 1) Remove empty supers and queen excluders.
- 2) Confirm you have a laying queen.



# Weak Hives



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- Combine weak hives with strong ones.
    - Newspaper method
  - Most small or weak colonies are not going to winter well unless you use special management techniques
    - “Piggyback” smaller hive on top of strong hive with double screen board

# Winter Stores & Feeding

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1. How much stored honey is enough?
  - 70 - 100 pounds of stored honey.
  - Deep super = approx 70 lbs (if full!)
  - Medium super = approx 50 lbs
2. Make sure top super is PACKED with honey - no spaces in the middle!
  - If you don't have 10 frames of honey, leave empty frames in #1 and #10 slots.
3. Three frames of pollen in top box
4. If your hive is short on stored honey, FEED!
  - Feed 2:1 sugar water in the fall.

# Feeding



- Fall Formula - 2:1
- When: Stop feeding liquid when consistently too cold to fly (under 55 degrees)
- Winter:
  - Best food - stored honey!
  - Next Best: Candy Boards, fondant,
  - Pour sugar on inner cover





# Robbing!



## 1. Watch for robbing

- Robbing is more of a problem during the fall dearth.

## 2. What's a dearth?

- Summer and Fall

## 3. Robbing screens



# Ventilation



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- 1) VENTILATE make sure you hive has some sort of upper ventilation. It does not have to be much but something.
    - 1) Leave screen bottom boards open all winter. BUT if high winds are a problem you may consider adding a skirt around the base of your hive to reduce drafts.
    - 2) Weight or tie down lid
    - 3) If wrapping hives, be sure to allow upper ventilation.



# To Wrap Or Not To Wrap



1) Windbreak - Bees can keep themselves warm but need some protection from cold winter winds

2) Wrapping materials

- Roofing paper ( 3 sides)
- Commercial materials
- Clear Packaging wrap

3) Insulate the top

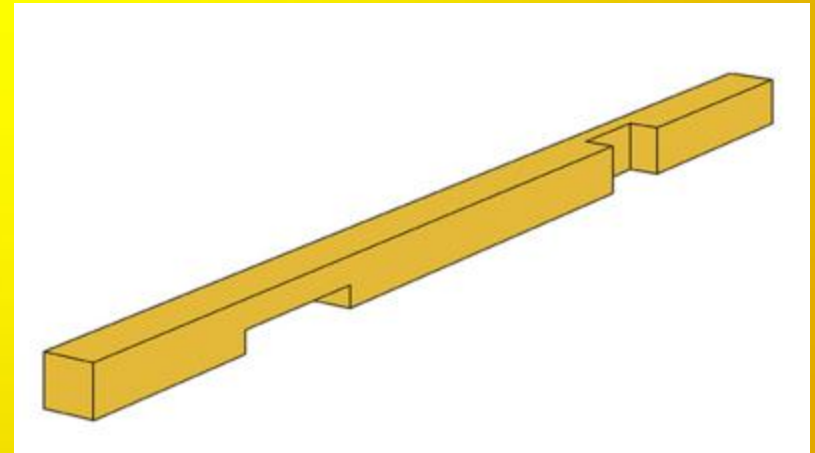
- Foiled faced!



# Mouse Guards & Entrance Reducers



- Use good mouse guards, either metal or wooden entrance reducers to keep mice out.



# Additional Equipment

- Moisture Boards
  - Homasote - natural, recycled paper - very absorbent
  - Also can be made of soundboard
  - Usually available at big box stores
- Slatted racks



# Mites



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Measure mite load and treat if necessary

- MAQS
- Oxalic Acid
- Thymol (thyme-based)



It doesn't matter what you use,  
**USE IT!**

# Winter To Do



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- Repair/paint equipment
  - Plan for next year
  - Check hives for stores
    - Lifting
    - Looking In

# Questions from Sept 9, 2017 MVBA Meeting

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- Q. What do you do with partial frames that have open honey?
- A. Put them in an empty box above the inner cover - the bees will bring it down into the hive.
- Q. When should I start doing these preparations?
- A. Except from wrapping the hives - now!