

It's September - What's happening?

- ❑ This is the last month of nearly uninterrupted flight opportunity; bees are gathering from fall-flowering plants.
- ❑ This is the time to conduct a thorough inspection before the start of the fall cool temperatures. *What you do here will influence the success or failure of your colonies for the coming winter.*
- ❑ The queen begins to lay the eggs that will be the workers to carry them through to the next spring, most likely in the bottom brood chamber.


September Checklist

- Feed heavy syrup if hive has less than 60 pounds of honey (two full mediums or one deep box). Make sure the hive is not “honey-bound.”
- Estimate colony strength: Combine disease-free, weak or queenless colonies with stronger ones.
- Take off all remaining supers. There is no need for them now, and you will want to tighten up the space available – if they’re not using it, take it off.
- Check mite levels.*** Begin Varroa mite treatment as needed once supers are removed.

It's October - What's happening?

- Some* foraging for nectar may occur, early in the month. Asters, daisies, and goldenrod *may* provide substantial amounts of pollen for winter brood . . . if moisture has been plentiful and it has been warm.
- First frosts can occur towards the end of the month.
- Bees are shifting to Winter mode – less flying, few reasons to leave the hive. Queen is laying fewer and fewer eggs.
- Bees have filled the upper brood box during any fall flow, which forces the queen downstairs – too much food, and they fill both, resulting in no space for brood rearing. If this happens, instead of having lots of young bees for the winter, you will have lots of older bees, and the colony will not successfully winter. What does right look like? 40 – 60 pounds.
- Wax moths enter the hives at night and lay eggs until a hard frost kills the adult moths. (Space and Population)

October Checklist

- Feed heavy syrup if hive has less than 60 pounds of honey (two full mediums or one deep box)
- Combine any remaining weak and queenless hives.
- Place a heavy weight on top of hives. Winds! 
- Watch out for robbing this month.
- Remove all honey supers not intended as a source of honey and extra boxes for the winter – just the space they need.
- If you use solid bottom boards, decide whether to reverse the boards to utilize the small entrance on the "winter" side of the bottom board.
- Remove Varroa control, chemical strips / treatments.



Consider

- Mouse guards.
- Medicate as needed for Nosema after supers are removed.

It's November - What's happening?

- Chances are good, first frost will occur November 1 – 10. Big difference between early and late November.
- The bees take cleansing flights on warm days.
- The bees continue to cluster for winter. They may not yet go into a full winter cluster. They may break cluster frequently on warm days (hive temperature = 57 degrees+) and re-cluster at night.
- The queen should stop laying by the end of November. The population is relatively steady, with a *few* bees lost each day.
- Goal is to ensure each hive has up to 40 pounds of stored honey.

November Checklist

- Feed your light hives as long as the bees are taking the fluid. Finish up all winterization of your hives
- Frost is coming Probably last chance to make hive inspection. Brood area should be in lower box(s) and small in size. Workers will begin clustering around queen and brood on colder nights.
- Change entrance reducers to small opening
- Cover screen bottom board – put insert in.
- Emergency food source – sugar, fondant, candy board, winter patties?

Consider

- Ordering replacement queens, Nucs, and package bees for next year
- Ordering a book you haven't read for December
- Attending Virginia State Beekeepers Association Fall Meeting, Saturday, Nov 9, 2013, Blue Ridge Community College, Weyers Cave, VA
- Cutting weeds around the hive on a cold day, since bees are staying inside.

