

**Bringing Your Hives Out of Winter
– February 2018 –**



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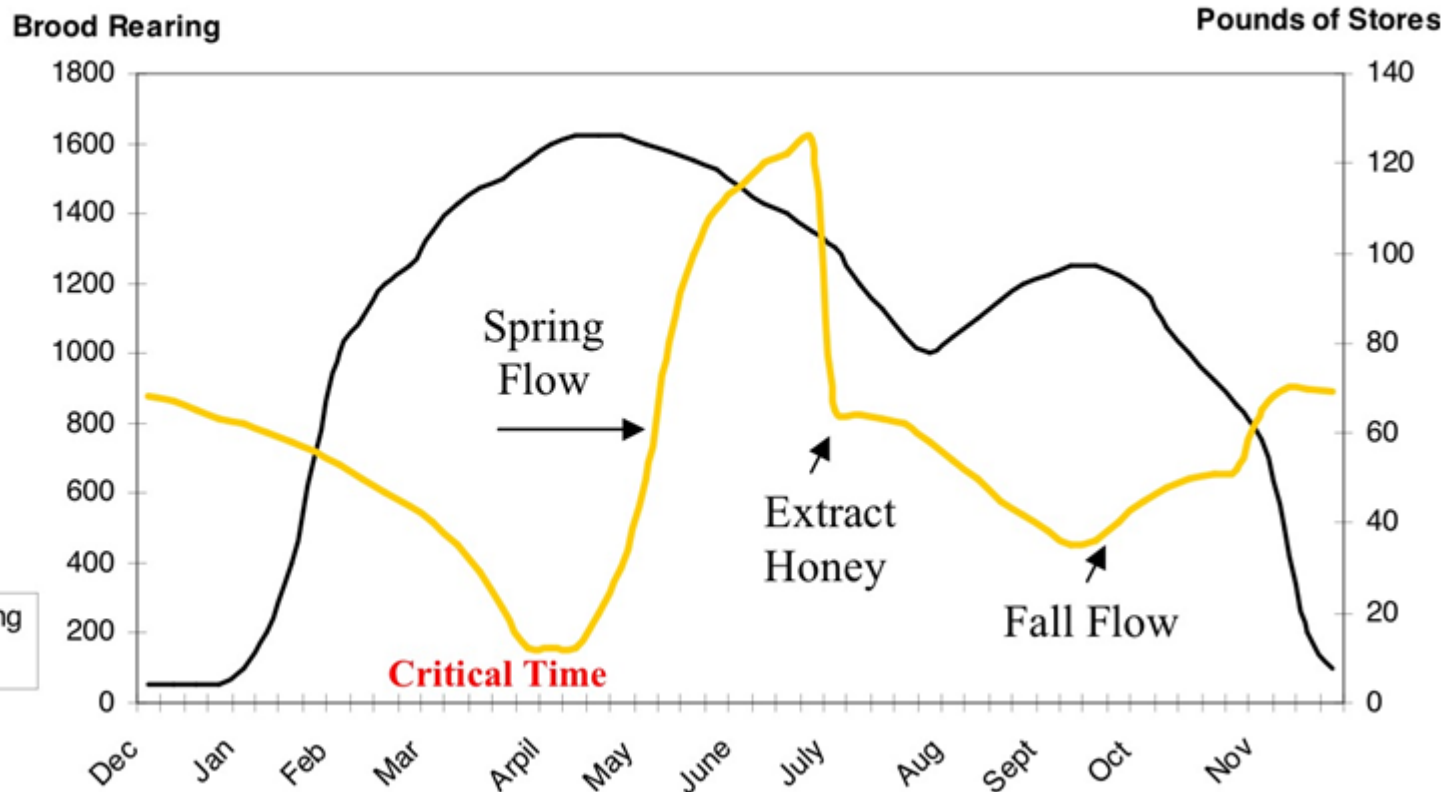
Overview

- **Spring Food Stores**
- **Hive Frame/Box Management**
- **Weak Hives**
- **Swarm Indicators**



Spring Critical For Nutrition

FIGURE 2: BROOD REARING & FOOD STORES



Brood Stimulation

- Sun Location
- Longer days
- Trees budding



Jerry Freeman photo



Early Spring Colony Growth

Other factors influencing

- **Overwintered Adult Population**

- “Frames of Bees”
- 1 Frame = Both Sides
- Good Way To Track Strength



- **Remaining Honey Stores**

- “Tilt” Test
- Aggression -- Can be Sign of Starvation
- Larvae Condition – Dry cells?
 - May Indicate Need For Pollen Supplement



- **Weather conditions**

- **Nectar and Pollen availability**



Food Supplement

• Carbohydrates

- Honey, Nectar, Sugar Syrup, Sugar Candy, etc.
- Back to “1 to 1” Sugar Syrup
 - Remember – One to One By Weight, Not Volume
 - One Cup Nearly Boiling Water Weighs ~ 8 ounces (1/2 a pound)
 - One Pound of Sugar For Every Two Cups of Water
- Consider Supplements Like Pro Health or Honey B Healthy



• Protein

- Pollen Stores, Pollen Flow, Pollen Substitute
 - Ultra Bee
 - MegaBee
- Dry – “Yard” Feeders, On Top of Frames, Etc.
- Patties – Only Enough For A Few Days At A Time (Hive Beetle Magnets)

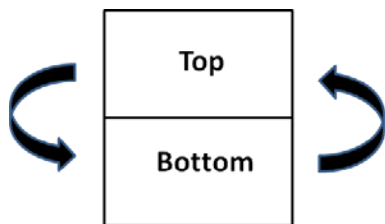




Hive Frame/Box Management

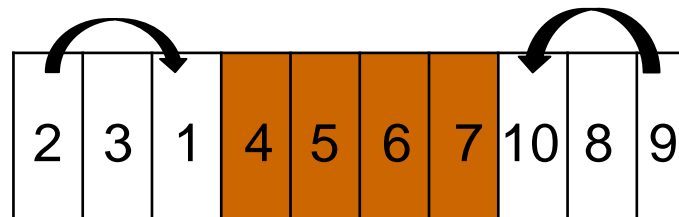
- **Reverse Brood Boxes**

- When temperatures drop (~ 55 F and lower) Bees Cluster
- While In Cluster, They Maintain Close Contact To Food Stores
- As Food Is Consumed, The Cluster Slowly Moves Up The Hive
- Results In Mostly Empty Frames In Lower – Brood in Upper



- **Move Empty Frames Inward**

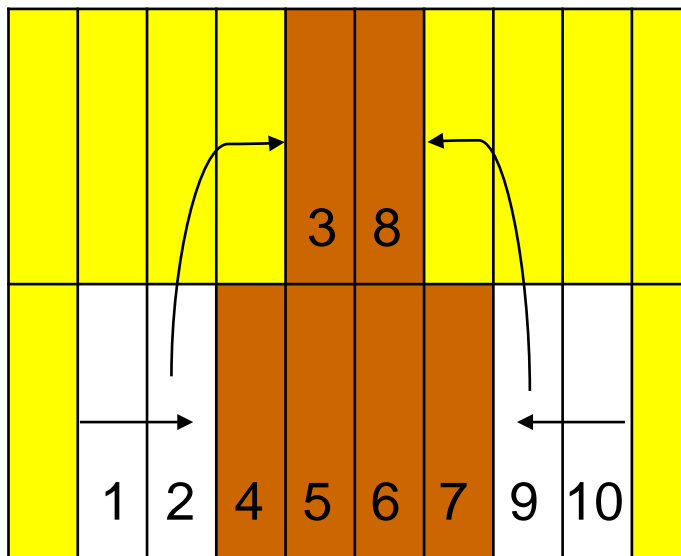
- Consumed Honey Frames (Empty) Can Be Moved Inward To Increase New Brood Laying Areas





Hive Frame/Box Management

- **Add Second Brood Box**
 - **If Bees Are Filling Over 70% Box, Good Time To Add A Second**
- **Use A Process Often Referred To As “Pyramiding”**





Weak Hives

- Consider Combining -

- **Weak Hive? Judge By Frames of Bees**

- **Table of “Strong” Hives**
- **Half or Less of This - Consider Combining**

- **“Newspaper” Method**

- **In the “Weaker”**
 - **Consolidate Into One Box With 10 Best Frames**
- **In the “Stronger”**
 - **Remove the outer and inner covers**
 - **Single Sheet of Newspaper On Top Bars.**
 - **Small Slit Or A Few Holes Helps Hive Odors Pass Back & Forth**
- **Place “Weaker” On Top Of “Stronger”**
- **Feed Sugar Syrup**
- **Check In A Week**
 - **Newspaper Chewed Away – Colonies Combined**
 - **Weaker Queen is ‘History’**
- **Consolidate Three Deeps To Two (20 Best Frames)**

TABLE 1	Frames
January	5 +
March	8 +
May	14 +
November	12 +





Swarm Indicators

- **Sound**
 - Kind Of A Warble To The Hum Instead Of A Steady Hum
- **Highly populated**
 - Cover Filled With Bees
 - No Empty Frames - Congestion
- **“Back Filling”**
 - Filling Empty Brood Cells With Nectar
 - Most Useful Indicator – Early Enough To Do Something!
- **Swarm Cells**
 - Possibly Too Late – But Take Action





Summary

- **Spring Begins Primary “Decision” Season For Beekeepers**
- **Judge Each Of Your Hives**
 - **Food Stores**
 - Feed Sugar Syrup (1 to 1)
 - Feed Pollen Supplement
 - **Strength**
 - Strong – Does It Need Frame Or Box Manipulation
 - Weak – Should It Be Combined
- **Begin Watching For Swarm Indicators**
 - **More On Swarming Next Month**