

The next article is from Julian, a 30 year beekeeper. This year he did a rooky mistake that cost him lots.

HOW EASY IT IS TO LOSE HIVES.

I had a very good summer with my bees (but not my garden) and got lots of honey. I only made one mistake this year????

Because the spring was slow to develop, I let the hives increase till early June before I did splits etc. I moved seven hives to the strawberry farm and did not treat them for varroa. By then it was too hot for the formic acid pads. They produced well all summer even though I knew they had mites in them.

On August 24th, I got the large pads on them and fed them sugar syrup till they took no more syrup in September.

All of these hives were average to strong queen-right.. When I opened them up to apply oxalic drizzle In late October five of the seven hives were empty of bees but with still sixty plus pounds of honey. The other two are weak and I might get them through winter if lucky.

My assessment is no winter bees were laid in late August and though there were queens in the hives all fall, they did not produce winter brood and all the foraging bees just died and left the hives empty. I gathered up the heavy brood boxes and stored them in the shed.

My home yard (six hives) were treated in June and September with formic acid and they are all healthy and wrapped for the winter.

After thirty years of bee keeping, I still have a lot to learn .

Julian Montpetit