

SUDBURY AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION
BUZZWORD
MARCH 2021

WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT, Richard Conrad

Please accept our sincere condolences Nicole, Marie-Noël, André and family. Serving as president of the SDBA, I can honestly say that Noël was instrumental in most of our members' forays in beekeeping. He did this by sharing his decades of acquired knowledge, supplying necessary equipment and most of all by offering willingly his personal help to us in achieving success in our bee yards.

Over the years, when a question was put forward, we all looked over to him, up in the second row, in room 319, to get his response. We just have to look a little higher now.

Rest in peace.

UPDATE

Bee-Care Full Apiary, late Noël and Nicole Shank's business has been sold to the Mikkola Family Farm in Lively. Dawn Lalonde and Derek Mikkola will attempt to serve all of Noel & Nicole's clients. They can be reached at mikkolafamilyfarm@gmail.com, 705.207.2155.

Otto Rost wrote an update on the work being done on the observation hive at Science North. Thank you Otto. Over the years Otto has sent many articles that were published in the Buzzword.

Dickey Bee Honey has all your spring feeding & treatments and is open for business. You can reach Peter and Sandi Dickey at 705.3458.1258, dickeybeehoney@bell.net or www.dickeybeehoney.com

If you are looking for flowers and trees this spring, or someone to prune your fruit trees, you may find all this from Ron Lewis and Phil Beauchamp at Lewis Hardy Fruit Trees in Naughton. Ron has been one of our presenters in the past. You can reach them at lewishardyfruittrees.com, lewishardyfruittrees@gmail.com. You can place pre-orders beginning March 27 at 10 am.

A site to visit. abcbees.ca. Check the "Seasonal Indicators of Management".

DEAD HIVE(S)

Why did my hive die? Investigate, analyze, try to find out what caused it. Here are some of the reasons that may be the cause.

N.B.: The reason one hive died is not necessarily the same reason a second hive died.

- 1- Starvation (finding bees with their heads to the bottom of the cell)
- 2- Excess Moisture (water dripping or ice on the side of the boxes)
- 3- Temperature Fluctuation (example - plus 8C during the day minus 30 at night)
- 4- Weak hive going into the winter (did not merge two weak hives together or one strong merged with one weak one)
- 5- Strong winds (make a barrier around your hives: , trees, 3 sided building, burlap fence, etc.)
- 6- Ill or infested hive (high varroa count, small hive beetle, or wax moths)
- 7- Not replacing frames (pesticides, herbicides, fungicides over time will weaken a hive)
- 8- No available exit – entrances blocked (for bees cleansing flight)
- 9- No mouse guard (invasion of the critters)
- 10- Failure to check the weight (Is there need to feed during winter/spring)
- 11- Bees absconded after winterizing (no bees left inside).

Here is an article that might shed even more light on “why your colony died”.

[How to Autopsy a Honey Bee Colony - Beverly Bees](https://www.beverlybees.com/how-to-autopsy-a-honey-bee-colony)

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MITES

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU HAVE MITES?

You Do HAVE mites! (How many is the question)

Visually

- 1- if you can see them on the bee (you are in deep trouble)
- 2- deformed wings sick looking bees,

Physically

- 3- you do a test

VARROA

This is a reminder about different methods of doing a mite count. Unless you have great eye sight you can't see the varroa. You might have to use a magnifying glass. For testing, you need approximately 300 or so bees (a big handful).

1. Sugar Roll: Cheap (icing sugar), fast, doesn't kill the bees but not very effective and you need to find the mites covered in sugar.
2. Alcohol Wash: Any alcohol, not your favourite, or even windshield washer fluid can do. Washing will kill the bees but dislodge the varroa. Shake well as some mites are hidden under the bees' scales and do not want to let go. Easier to do a count. Killing a handful of bees is easier to accept when compared to losing your colony. If you are not sure that you got most of the mites, you can do another alcohol wash.
3. Sticky Board: Not a very reliable method but better than nothing. The mites fall off and stick on plastic cardboard or on old election signs smeared with Vaseline.
4. Another way to see if you have any varroa is to sample your drone brood. Take a toothpick or any sharp object, open a drone cell stick it in and remove the larvae. If you have mites you will

see them walking around the larvae. The first time Claude, the former bee inspector, did this, he had to open three drone cells before he saw a varroa. His comment, “Treat”.

5. Inserting a drone comb frame. Once it is full of drone, check to see if there any varroa. You can kill all the varroa and give it back to the bees to clean, clean or get rid of the complete frame or feed it to the chickens (for those into chickens).

ROTATING YOUR BEE BOXES

Are you rotating or reversing your boxes? Box 1 moves to the # 2 box space and box 2 moves up. Why?

- 1- The cluster has moved up all winter This means you are saving them many trips down.
- 2- To avoid swarming. Since the bees are now in the number 1 box, supposedly with empty cells, the queen can be laying with many empty cells to fill. Due to increased egg production, once the box becomes congested this can also cause swarming. At least that is one of the theories of swarming.
 - a. It gives room for the queen to lay her eggs and the foraging bees to store their honey where it is the warmest – above the rood cluster.
 - b. For good results, provide drawn comb (if possible) to reduce swarming.
 - c. Remember that swarm cells means your colony is healthy
3. While moving your boxes around, it is also a good time to check that everything is all right. Cleaning out old comb. Remove and cull old frames. With time, the old wax comb contains herbicides, pesticides, and residue left after new bees are born. Eventually the cell becomes smaller and smaller and the new bees being born are smaller. The magic numbers seem to be 5, cull the two dirtiest frames every year.
4. From all my reading, over the winter, I realize that moving the boxes is an either/or decision. I would ask some of the old timers to give their version of this.

NOTE:

In January, I wrote 'why my beehive died this winter'.

The reasons are still valid in March and you can add to that list “Temperature Fluctuations” . This is one of the main reasons we do lose our hives in March. The bees where out in droves last week. That night it went down below 10 C. If the cluster broke during the day, they did not have time to re-cluster and to protect themselves for that night. They might have died. Whatever you do, don't go knocking on the side of the hive to see if they are still alive.


ADELAIDE'S HONEY BEE

I read the following article from ([Adelaide's Honey Bee, Pollinator and Wildflower Reserve, Newfoundland](#) – February 1st, 2021) on Facebook. It hit a nerve with me, because quite a few of us suffer from overcrowding. A commercial pollinator beekeeper brings truckloads of starving bees and drops them near our established bee yards. The forage that was sufficient becomes overwhelmed with these invading armies. Honey production and colony survival are seriously affected.

BEEKEEPER TIP

Too many beehives in one location can make survival difficult for native pollinators. It may also limit honey production especially if you are in an area with limited diversity of forage (flowering trees, shrubs and wildflowers). Ask yourself why am I feeding my bees sugar syrup or pollen supplement? Is it a lack of forage or am I taking too much honey?

Give your bees lots of room to spread their wings. It deters robbing and is more natural. Your bees will be much calmer because they are not spending all of their time defending their hive. Use local honey bees that are from your neighbourhood and are thriving in your local climate. Remember imported honey bees from warmer climates may carry pests, diseases, may have unwanted genetics, and queens may be infertile due to temperature fluctuations during shipping.

Local bees that have survived here in our harsh #Newfoundland climate have proven themselves year after year are the only bees we need. Talk to beekeepers in your area and buy the best bees,
Buy Local.  #BestForTheBees

N.B.: If anyone has anything to sell, trade or want to buy, let me know. I have 1/2 an April Buzzword ready. Just need more material.

Stay Safe

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