

COMB Courier

Mid-Michigan—Land of the bee

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Editor: mike ffrench

Colony collapse or swarm

Empty hive syndrome; when all your bees have taken a hike for reasons unknown. Colony collapse disorder (CCD) or natural swarm behavior? Is there a difference? Sure there is! With a swarm, only part of the hive takes off with a newly hatched queen, but with CCD the whole darn caboodle takes off. In the case of CCD, is it possible that the queen, for some reason only known to her, has taken a dislike to the hive, or location of, and seeks better or more suitable quarters. Are the bees next door robbing her hive on a regular basis? Once again, we are not privy to the thought processes of queen bees.

I have had apparent CCD behavior on one occasion—it was the middle one of three hives I have in my back garden—but I don't recollect seeing any brood in the frames of the brood chamber. Is it possible to foresee a CCD coming, and take evasive action? We know that queen cells on the lower part of the frame, indicate a possible swarm situation, which may be forestalled by squishing the new queen, adding more supers, or making a split. As for CCD if my assumption is correct, and I need input from you guys on this one, can we discern a possible CCD action by the absence of brood?

Okay Sherlock, your on your own on this one, check it out.

C.O.M.B. Monthly meeting.
2nd Monday of the month 6:30pm.
MSU Pavilion, Farm Lane, E. Lansing

Signs of fall

Coming as I do, from Coventry, an large industrial city in central England, seeing a humming bird was a sight I thought was reserved for a nature documentary on the BBC. Well, what do you know, now I have my very own ruby-throated humming birds visiting me every summer. These delightful creatures add a dimension to my life way beyond my most fanciful dream.

Beekeeping, is also an exotic hobby I once thought beyond the reach of a city boy such as myself. Now, strange as it may seem, the two are now woven into a pattern I am still trying to determine.

I put up humming-bird feeders after the first day of May, they usually return from their migration, at most, two weeks after this date. As a matter of interest, they also leave on the Autumnal equinox, almost to the day. I digress, what I observed is, that nearing their departure, they hit the feeders constantly. Being nectar specific, is this need to use the feeders as a food source indicative of their need to bulk up for their impending 1,500-mile migratory flight, or is it indicative of a nectar shortage? If the latter, then we should pay heed, for our bees the same need exists.

Do we need to feed our bees during the summer nectar slow-down? Has anyone in COMB noticed this behavior? If so, please let me know, and I can pass it on.

Unthinking cap

In regards to haute couture, bee meetings are about as exciting as a deadout.

Which brings us to this month's thought: Should we have a dress code for beekeepers? Beekeepers as a group tend toward the casual in our sartorial tastes, ("How do you like my new veil?") and I include myself in this mild observation. The usual apparel is Carhartts, flannel, suspenders, and denim, with a smattering of bib coveralls. Do we need to be more uniform in our dress, should we be able to recognize a beekeeper by his habit? And there are other items to consider, namely: winter and summer wear, and obviously suspenders will not go down well with the ladies.

If we wish to be taken seriously, perhaps we have to work on our image: would it be a good idea to be immediately identified as a beekeeper. I am not suggesting we should all look like James Bond or Megyn Kelly, but at least I think we should appear in a garb suited in relation to our importance to society.

What do you think, Rufus? Am I on to something, or as usual, floating my *ballon rouge*. Once again, I ask for your thoughtful consideration of this thorny problem.

Surf to Murph

Adjunct to Murphy's Law: If you take the minimum you think you need—it won't be enough! If you take more than you think you'll need—you won't need it!

Read on

You don't have to give it credit
Just because you read it
Or someone said it

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Bee Read

If you have a comment, query, problem, or an interesting story or anecdote concerning bees that you would like to share with your fellow beekeepers, here is your chance. Send it in to mjbusybee@frontier.com or debbie.foote@hotmail.com or hand it in at the meeting. Jane Carhartt may be contacted at janesbees@yahoo.com
This is your newsletter, make use of it!

Bee Classifieds

If you have any bee-related items you would like to buy, sell, or trade, this section is for you. This service is free for members of C.O.M.B. You may submit ads to Mike French or Deb Foote. There will be a nominal fee for associate members.

Deadline for next issue is October 2nd