

# Hive Management for Section Comb Honey Production

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**C**OMB honey as gathered and stored by honey bees retains the fullness of its delicate aroma and natural flavour. This feature and the attractive appearance of comb honey make a strong appeal to consumers, and when it is marketed in section squares it finds a ready market at premium prices. Compared with the production of extracted honey, however, the production of section comb honey in commercial quantities is very much more difficult. It demands from the beekeeper more intensive colony management and experienced knowledge of bee behaviour; also of floral sources and the influence of local weather conditions on their secretions of nectar. The production of section comb honey on a commercial basis is mainly specialist work, and in this article, the first of a three-part series, the author describes preparation of equipment. The second article, in next month's issue, describes management after the main honey flow begins and harvesting methods.

**T**HE sale of comb honey sections is regarded by retailers as a speciality trade, and as the market demands only well-finished and attractive sections, section comb honey production can be rewarding to the beekeeper only when whole supers of perfect sections are produced from each colony.

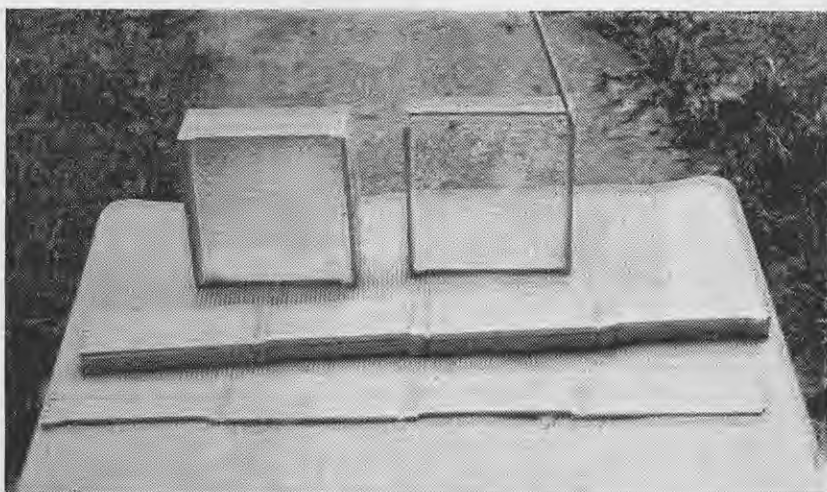
## Localities Suitable for Honey Production

In order that a section comb will be uniformly even in finish and appearance it is essential for the bees to build and finish the comb without any pause to the stage where every honey cell is fully capped. To produce sections of this grade in quantity the beekeeper must be favoured with a locality where there is a profusion of suitable flora and a heavy and sustained nectar flow each season.

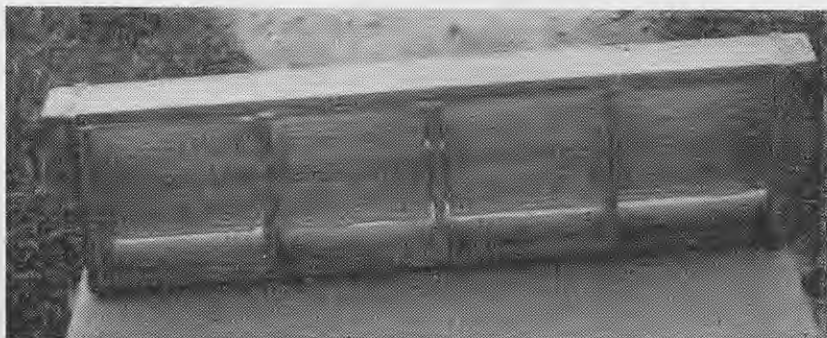
Because there are wide variations of flora and climatic influence between districts, flows of this nature will not occur with reliability in all areas. Therefore, the first point for the beekeeper's consideration is the suitability of his locality for the production of good comb sections.

Unsuitable districts are those where the average honey flows are light or

A separator made from tin plate → has been fitted to the upper section frame, and a separator made from  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. hardboard has been used on the lower frame. With either material the bee space within each section is the same and the honey in section is finished to a similar thickness and weight, but hardboard separators give the frames more strength and rigidity.



Sections in the flat ready for folding, a section partly folded, and a section folded with foundation comb fitted.



Four sections fitted with full sheets of foundation comb in a half-depth section frame ready to be placed in a super.

