

Spring Examination of Hives; Destroying Diseased Hives

WITH another honey season under way beekeepers should thoroughly examine all hives until the main honey flow begins. Early spring examination of hives is most important, as on it rest decisions that will determine the progress and welfare of the colony during the critical months to follow.

WHEN hives are first opened early in spring a quick glance at one or two frames taken from the centre of the brood nest is usually enough to give the beekeeper some idea of the condition of the hive generally. Though the condition of colonies will differ in various districts, the competent beekeeper should be able to assess in a few moments the immediate requirements of the hive.

The primary features to observe are the vigour and health of the bees, the colony strength, and the amount of surplus honey in each hive.

The presence of a queen should also be determined. If there are no eggs

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and both unsealed and sealed brood, the colony is probably queenless. The age and egg laying ability of the queen can be fairly accurately gauged by noting the "brood pattern" or the uniformity with which she lays. The brood should be even in a pattern of concentric circles and show very few empty cells within the brood area. If the actual age of the queen is known, so much the better. For maximum efficiency and honey production hives should be requeened at least every two years with queens from a good Italian strain.

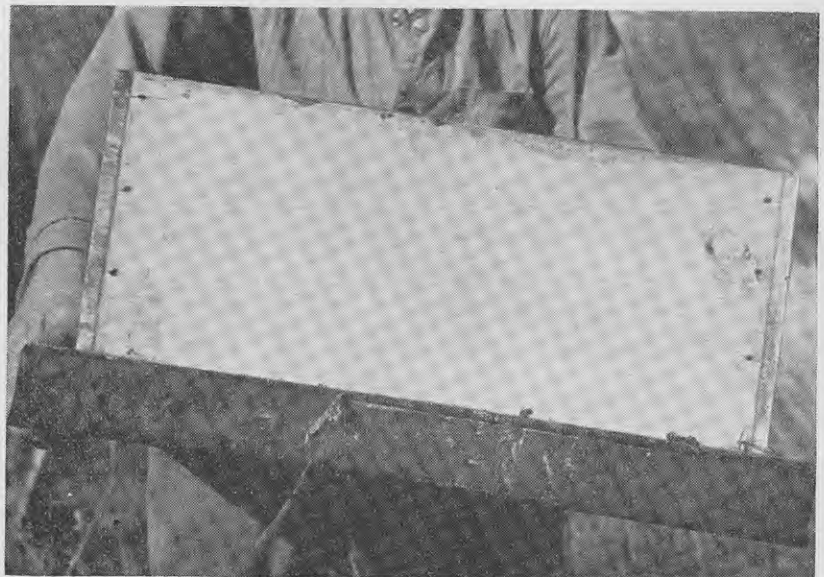
A check on these features early in the season is essential, as later it is sometimes not possible to remedy a trouble which could have been checked if discovered earlier.

In spring, when brood rearing within the hive is in full swing, large quantities of the honey and pollen reserves are consumed and a break in the nectar flow often leaves the colony with very little stores. At this time of the year at least 25 lb of surplus honey stores are necessary to maintain each colony until the main honey flow begins. To avoid risk of loss through starvation colonies with less than this

Seasonal Notes for the Domestic Beekeeper



Gassing of diseased bees with calcium cyanide. The powder is spread on damp cardboard or several thicknesses of paper and pushed into the hive entrance.



Carrying a super of combs in a hive cover for burning prevents dead bees from spilling on the ground.