

# Spring Beekeeping & Hunter Honey



# Winter Jobs Done

- Wax cappings processed
- Feed stores; weigh colonies, fondant available
- Winter mite treatments done; oxalic vapour
- Build new equipment; frames, woodenware

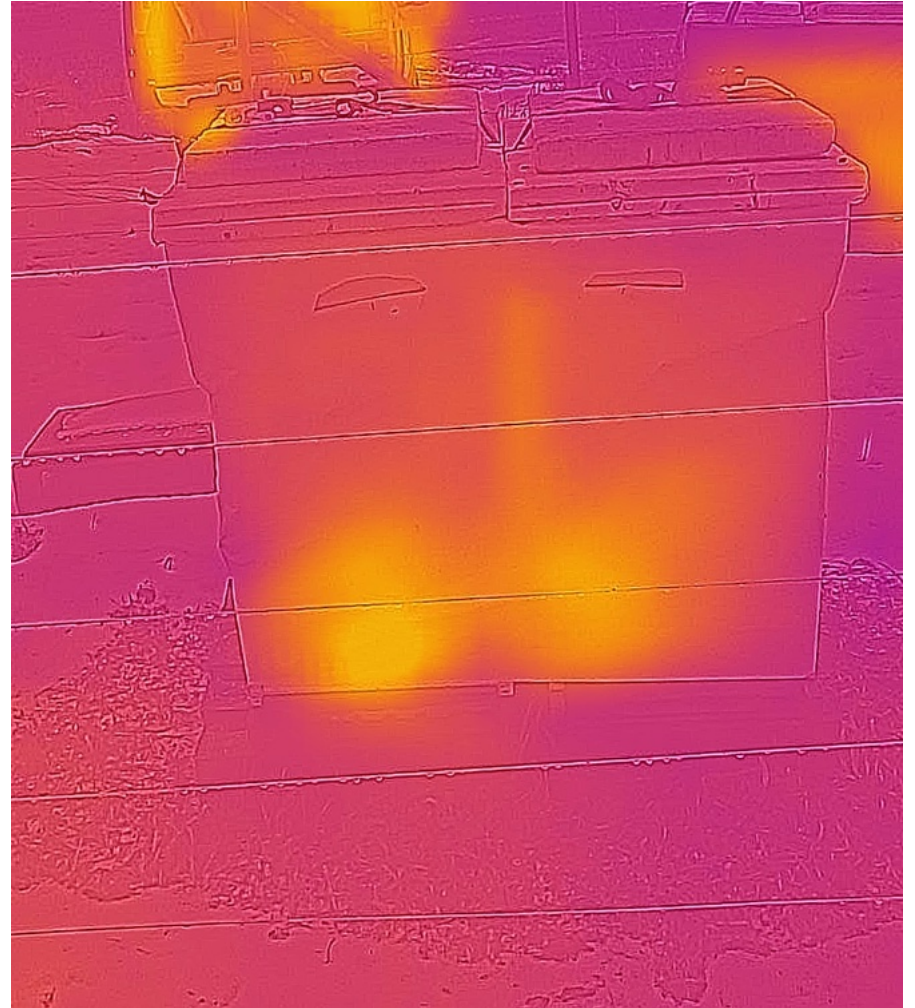


# Colony Weight & Feeding

- Fall weight 2 Br boxes; feed 2:1 syrup if <120lb min. until “0 C”
- Fondant for winter temperature feed
- Winter Weight; Jan, Feb, March visual check fondant if “warm “day
- Spring Weight; March feed 1:1 syrup when 10C BUT Close watch if colony is <80lb . Condensate Moisture/Water in frames can make empty frames seem heavy. Colony disposition can tell a lot about feed stores available. Strong colonies can be quite demanding and heavy feeders and are often early to swarm. Heavy feeding, especially pollen patties, can overstimulate brood production.

# Wrapped hives

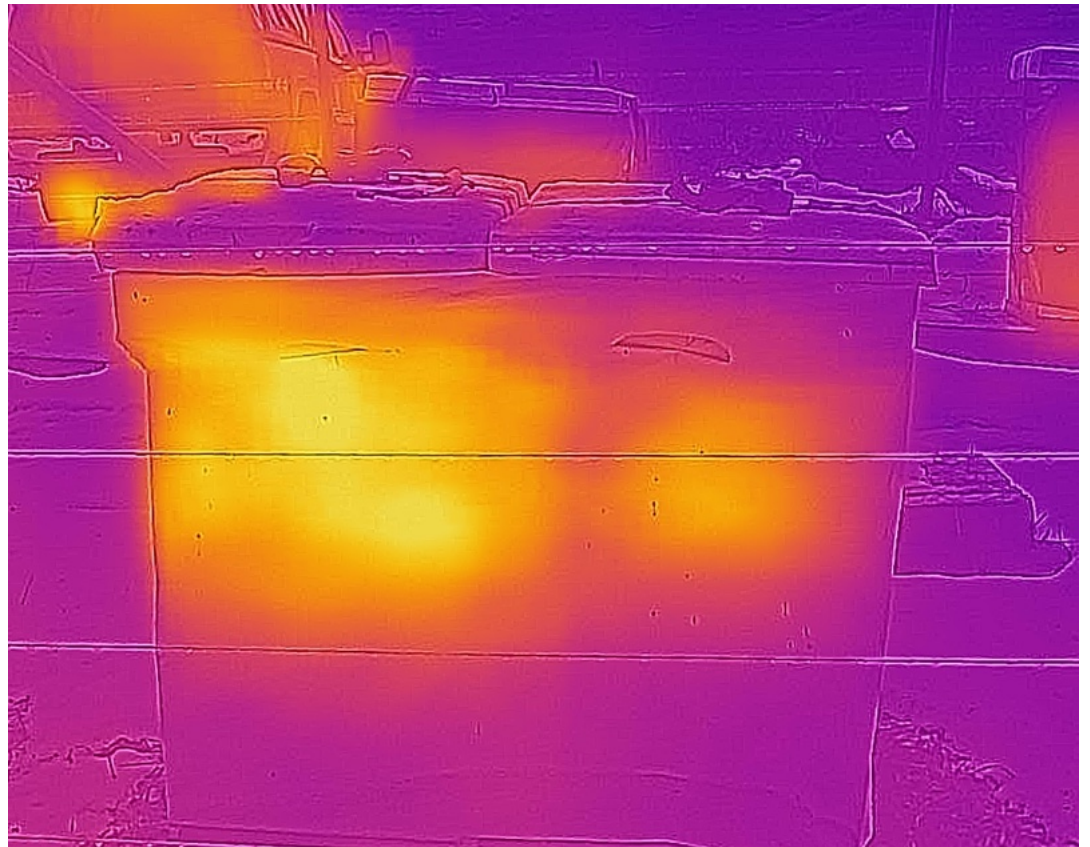
Infra-red image of 2 colonies wrapped together with large populations in lower brood boxes





# IR image of 2 wrapped colonies

Different sized populations in upper brood boxes



# Insulated colony

Large dispersed population  
in lower brood box





# Looking ahead to growth and recovery



## Jobs



- Apiary work - fence repair
- Hive work – colony and bee health
- Equipment work – build repair and clean, hive ware and machinery
- Records work – planning for increase & swarm management
- Honey and Wax sales – income tax and records

# Colony and Bee health

- Clean bottom boards
- Torch and rewax BBs
- Dead-Outs; bring in for post-mortem
- Cull old dark brood frames
- Trap early wasp queens
- Assess colony strength; divide? or graft?





# Manpower vs Machine power in a one-person operation





# Apiary Visits – plan to meet an objective

- Mite assessment; Mite Drop, Sugar/Alcohol Shake, Drone Brood Pull, Walking or Deformed DWV bees, Brood Cell Perforations, Phoretic Mites (by AI, on Nurse/Drones)
- Colony weights,
- Colony disposition,
- Queen presence or strength,
- # of brood frames/ # of frames of bees,
- “top/bottom” estimate (# frames bees on top-bars/ # on bottoms)
- Pollen frames/honey frames



# Records: how and what to record

- Every Colony needs an identity!
- Many systems tried but immediately accessible info is the most useful!
- Permanent marker notations on top of the outer cover, UNDER a sheet of rigid insulation on every colony
- Eg. NQR “not queen right” or saw ELP (eggs, larvae, pupae)!, Saw Q!,
- + 2 fr P, + PP, +fr H
- SPC B1, SWC B2
- Q '25, QC '25(col),
- ALWAYS dates! And then enter to clipboard of “to do”tasks.
- Harvest info, and late season colony condition eg. Q-, Q+
- Treatment details; FA 1 on B1 etc.

# Swarm control

There are many ways to reduce swarm behaviour, but the thing to remember is that swarm preparation starts 2 or 3 weeks before any visible signs of swarm preparation appears. Prevention is the key to avoidance.

All of the influencing factors must be considered, and some are beyond a beekeeper's jurisdiction, (eg weather) but they can be foreseeable.

Beespace, nectar flows/storage space, age/queen condition. Swarming is a natural tendency: it indicates a healthy colony! But it is very annoying to deal with!





# Queens and Swarms

- Easiest “Walk Away Split”
- Planning for queen replacement;
  - Split and buy queen
  - Split and buy/graft queen cell
  - Graft or cage queen





## Population Dynamics; Varroa & Bees from Scientific Beekeeping/Randy Oliver

<https://scientificbeekeeping.com/ipm-3-strategy-understanding-varroa-population-dynamics/>

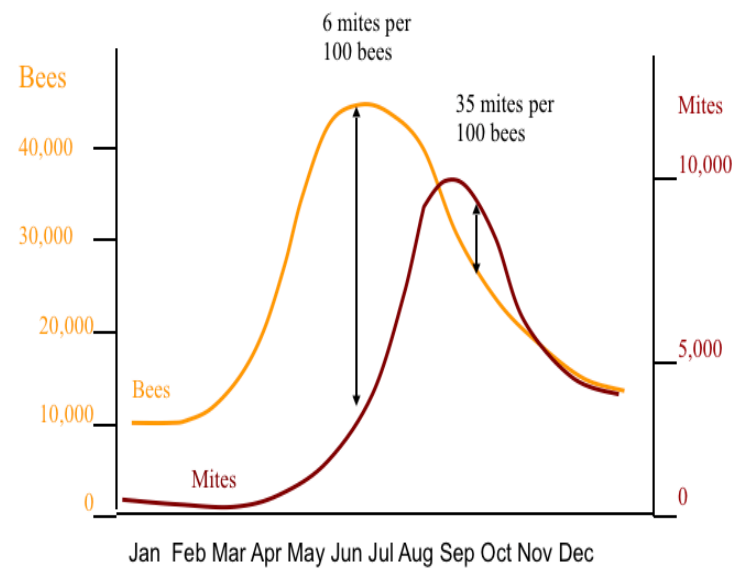
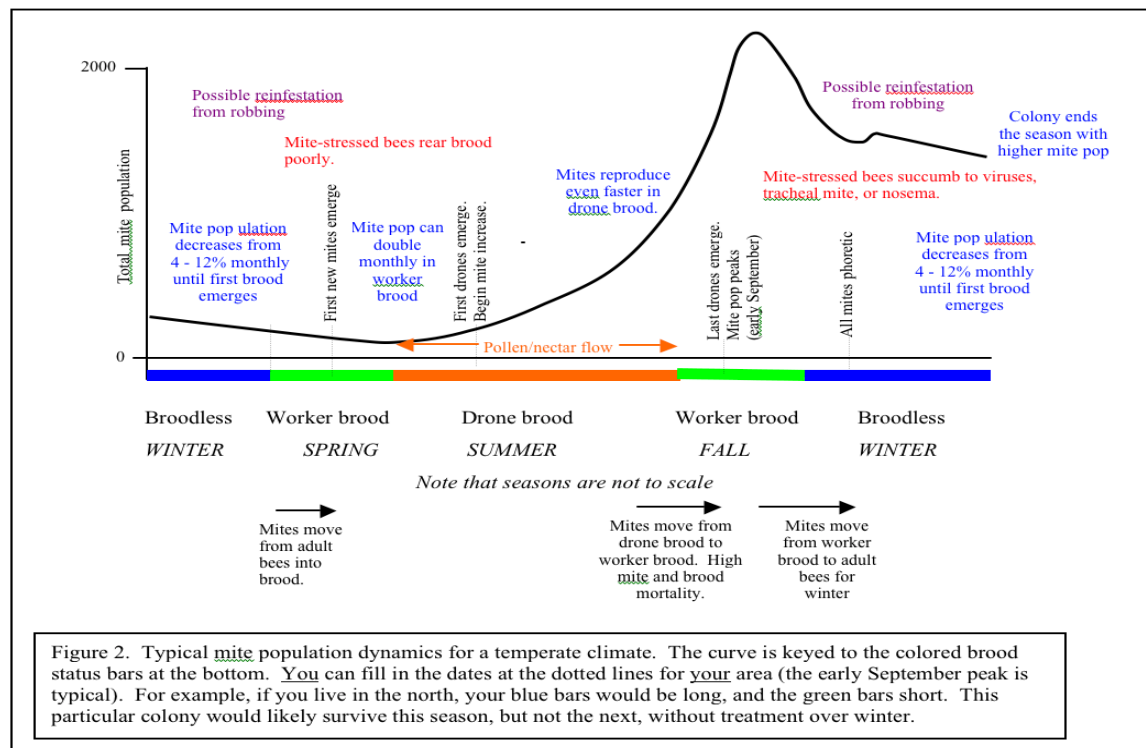


Figure 1. Simplified bee and mite population growth curves for a temperate climate. The mite growth curve lags behind the bee curve. Note how the number of mites per hundred bees greatly increases in fall. A colony is unlikely to survive a fall infestation rate this high.

# Spring Varroa Assessments & Treatments

- Spring brood counts are very high so a large proportion of mites can be undetected under the brood cell cappings if mite drops are used to assay mite populations, THEREFORE a treatment that can go past the cell cappings is important in the spring.
- Formic Pro or other formic acid delivery methods are preferred
- Whatever method of mite control is used (chemical (hard or organic) biological/broodless period, or other.....
- Monitoring mite levels should be continuous and consistent throughout the season.

<https://scientificbeekeeping.com/ipm-3-strategy-understanding-varroa-population-dynamics/>



# March

## from KBC Calendar

## BEEKEEPER CHECKLIST

- Attend the Beekeepers' meeting, field day, and the BCPHA semi-annual Conference in Kamloops.
- Check weight of hives to ensure adequate honey stores.
- Bees may start flying at daytime temperatures of 12°C to search for pollen. For later splits and nucs add pollen supplements to increase brood production.
- Monitor for signs of varroa mites. (The sugar shake method or alcohol wash are best).  
  
If needed, treat with an approved miticide.  
(Note: formic acid should not be used in conjunction with syrup feeding as it can harm the bees).
- Replace old or damaged comb.
- On single super brood chambers add a second brood super when the bees have covered 7 of 10 frames, or reverse the brood boxes. If brood is in the middle between the two supers do not reverse as you will disrupt the colony. If you prefer to run single brood chambers, add a queen excluder and honey super.
- Above daytime temperatures of 16°C, do a quick check for eggs and brood. Observe whether the bees are bringing in pollen. Pollen foraging can indicate that there is a live queen.
- If night-time temperatures are above 10°C, you may feed the bees a 1:1 sugar syrup. Beware that large colonies may create earlier swarms.
- New beekeepers should register their apiaries. Established beekeepers must renew their registration every two years. Go to: <http://forms.gov.bc.ca/industry/beekeeper-apiary-registration/>.
- Clean, seal up and store away from the bee yard any hives that have died.
- Inspect all frames with dead brood for signs of American Foul Brood (AFB). If suspected, call the bee inspector. AFB is a reportable disease. The spores can survive in a vegetative state for decades on old equipment.

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February 2024														April			
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Third Quarter																	
3																	
New Moon																	
10																	
St. Patrick's Day																	
17																	
Easter Sunday														Fu			
24/31																	

Right: **Spring Inspection**  
R Hunter

Below: **Near Perfect Fra**  
Nancy Buckhold

*"The bee's life is like a nectar, the more you draw from it, the sweeter it becomes with water" – Karl*

## BEEKI

"You don't have to s  
you go into the hive  
and eggs, then you k  
laying queen." Joe l

# April from KBC Calendar

## BEEKEEPER CHECKLIST

- Inspect your frames and supers for signs of disease, and for rodent damage. If anything is suspicious, consult the bee inspector. Apply medication only when brood disease has been confirmed.
- Above 16°C daytime temperatures clean bottom boards, if not already done in March. Take off empty brood supers and clean frames and supers to remove burr comb.
- Monitor for signs of varroa mites. (The sugar shake method or an alcohol wash are best).

If needed, treat with an approved miticide. (Note: formic acid should not be used when feeding with sugar syrup as it can harm the bees).

- Replace old and damaged brood frames.
- Install bee packages. Make nucs and add new queens when the brood population is high in the second brood super (usually during dandelion bloom period).

If a bee package or nuc is placed on foundation only (versus drawn comb), feed 1:1 syrup continuously. (Note: formic acid should not be used when feeding with sugar syrup as it can harm the bees).

- Have a clean continuous shallow water source.
- On single super brood chambers add a second brood super when the bees have filled 7 of 10 frames. Or add a queen excluder and honey super if you run single brood chambers.
- For double brood chambers, if brood is in the top super then reverse them.

Sunday

7

14

21

28

Ch  
Supp

BEEKE

"In the spring, scrub  
the top and bottom  
of supers. It makes



# May KBC Calendar

## BEEKEEPER CHECKLIST

A heavy dandelion nectar flow often starts in late April and the bee population will expand rapidly. Sugar syrup feeding is usually not required by dandelion time.

- Place pheromone wasp traps around your bee yard to help prevent future wasps and hornets problems.
- Continue to feed weaker hives to encourage an increase in bee population. If a colony size is not increasing or you see a scattered laying/brood pattern, the queen may be running out of eggs. Replace the queen.
- Consider equalizing your hives (that are free of pests and disease), by either combining weak hives using the newspaper method, or by boosting smaller colonies with frames of brood from your stronger colonies. Typically it doesn't pay to nurse weak colonies. They are more vulnerable to pests and disease, and they may spread disease.
- Develop a plan to prevent or to manage swarms if they occur. Have a swarm catching box ready and available.
- Some beekeepers place swarm boxes near their apiaries and use bee pheromone lures in the box to attract honey bees.
- Take out and replace brood chamber frames with excessive drone cells and replace with worker comb or with full sheets of foundation.

**Varroa mite treatments must be completed and removed before adding honey supers.**

- As the brood chamber fills 7 out of 10 frames with bees, brood, pollen and honey, add a honey super with drawn comb above the top brood super. Add a queen excluder between the brood and honey chamber if this is your practice. If you are adding a honey super with foundation (versus drawn comb) do not use a queen excluder.
- Put on extra honey supers when the first honey super that you added this spring has 7 out of 10 frames filled with nectar and/or honey.

Sunday	Monday																																																																																											
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Check the Support you

- Check regularly (10 days) for signs of swarms. Remove queen cells and space for the queen to lay in the brood chamber.
- If a queen excluder is used, place it above the brood super. If foundation is used to start the honey super, do not use a queen excluder. The comb is build out by bees are storing honey in the honey super.



That's what I'm talkin' about!

