

Northeast Ohio Practical Beekeeping: Trish Harness and Sustainable Beekeeping

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- I. Sustainable Hive Management: Don't have to buy bees or honey
 - a. Mite management – check!
 - b. Inspection records
 - c. Set up hives so ready for what's next
 - d. Manage for higher bee populations
 - e. Manage single hive sustainably, and the apiary
- II. Growing Hive: Queen less than 6 weeks old, or does not have fully drawn out brood chamber and 3 supers.
 - a. Queen quality: Suspect until hits 6 weeks
 - i. Only way to detect is weekly checks; want to see NO QUEEN CELLS and brood nest expanding
 - ii. Indicator frame from Donor Hive! Shake bees off frames before transfer between hives. Add frame with eggs/young larvae from donor hive; check in 7-10 days; a queen cell means NO QUEEN PRESENT (and safe to either add a purchased queen, or let them raise one, or combine with another hive).
 - b. Ensure comb construction is happening!
 - i. Helping bees know there is space... They can swarm with 5 undrawn frames at week 2-3!!!
 - ii. Put undrawn frame in center once a week – until 8 frames covered with bees
 - iii. Then add the next box – even though not all frames drawn out
 - iv. And... aim for ONLY ONE BOX with undrawn frames!!!!
 - v. No comb construction? Are you sure there's a queen? Then there isn't enough feed. 1 gallon of 2 parts sugar to 1 part water PER BOX per week, if after June or very rainy
 - c. Inspection Sheet Notes:
 - i. Note "Danger Zone" dates
 - ii. Note frame # and type of brood
 - iii. Note drawn out frames
 - iv. Remember: Frame 2-4 have all necessary info; Brood nest is same on both sides
- III. Mature Hive: is queenright, and has all drawn comb, including drawn honey supers.
 - a. Make sure Queenright
 - i. Check eggs/larvae every 10-14 days; frames 2-4 will have that answer
 - ii. Don't trust entrance activity or population in top boxes
 - iii. Don't trust capped brood
 - b. Get hive ready for next 10 days
 - i. Give bees room (remember that nice frame of capped brood becomes 2 more frames of bees, on top of what you have).
 - ii. Give nectar room (this means adding drawn out supers, helps with giving bees room!)
 - c. Make sure not hungry in summer
 - i. Outermost frame: no nectar, they are hungry and queen will slow/stop laying
 - ii. Do not harvest all supers in July; leave 1 super of the uncapped or partially filled frames
 - d. Inspection sheet:
 - i. Note outer frame contents – if "dry" or no nectar, or no honey, then hive may tell queen to stop laying – bad.
 - ii. Note position of 1st frame with brood
- IV. Sustainable Apiary – thinking past single hive
 - a. 2 hives minimum
 - b. Have 25% more hives going into winter than you need for honey in the summer – seems like 25% are "offline" at any given time in summer!
 - c. Have 1 spare hive body for every 3 hives or so.
 - d. Aim for MORE mature hives (all comb drawn out & queenright), and fewer growing hives.
 - e. Consider setting up Inspection Day, and Follow-Up Day, as separate days.
 - f. Have a drone frame. Cull if don't like queen's temperament.
 - g. Swarms!
 - i. Means checking all your hives for queenright
 - ii. Pop extra queen cells – there can only be one...
 - iii. Afterswarming will cut your hive population from 2 brood boxes + 3 supers of bees to less than 1 box of bees.