

Twickenham and Thames Valley BEE-KEEPERS' ASSOCIATION



Ted's Tip

Swarm Control

All beekeepers should be familiar with at least one method of positive swarm control. This should be a routine procedure as soon as the hive shows positive signs of swarming, the presence of several queen cells or sealed brood in such quantity that there is no more space for egg laying. Among the techniques taught by the T&TVBKA, Pagden and Taranov are methods which will involve first the finding the Queen, whilst with the Demaree procedure, this is not necessary. All the methods are based on the provision of a brood-less box of comb for the old Queen to lay in and separation of the young brood.

The Demaree method of swarm control is the one of many techniques which I consider is probably the easiest to achieve, not having to find the Queen, and where there are limitations of apiary space and equipment .

A description of the Demaree Method follows:-

The Demaree Method of Swarm Control

From the originator's description in The American Bee Journal April 1892.

"I begin with the strongest colonies and transfer the combs containing brood to an upper story above the queen excluder. One comb containing some unsealed brood and eggs is left in the brood chamber as a start for the queen. I fill out the brood chamber with empty combs. Full frames of foundation may be used in the absence of drawn combs. The colony thus has all of its brood and the queen, but the queen has a new brood nest below the excluder, while the combs of brood are in the super. In twenty- one days all the brood will be hatched out of the combs above the excluder, and the bees will begin to hatch in the queen's chamber below the excluder, so a continuous succession of young bees is sustained"

Ted's Notes.

The essential feature of this method of swarm control is that the frames of young brood and eggs (without any bees) are moved to the top of the hive, above two honey supers, while the queen and all the bees are left in the lower brood box with empty comb or foundation. The nurse bees migrate to the brood at the top and the older bees stay with the queen below the queen excluder, as if they had swarmed.

Inspection of the top box seven to nine days later, will most likely reveal open queen cells in various stages. These can all be destroyed or perhaps more usefully used : After selecting the best two, a screen floor or false floor may be inserted and the a new queen raised in the top box. This new queen, once established and laying can be used replace the old queen.

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