**September Tips**

September beekeeping activities are a continuation of what we started in August:

* Brood consolidation
* Pest and Disease control
* Feeding
* Winter preparation

1. Colonies should now be into winter configuration -- too much space is a liability at this time of year. Get your hives down to the brood chamber only. Some put on supers in winter. I never do. If you feed your bees and do it proper you should have enough stores to last them over the winter. Also you only have a small area which to keep the bees clustered and warm enough to see them through.
2. Check hives to make sure they are queen right, healthy, and have populations sufficient to over winter. Small hives can be united.
3. Check for adequate food stores -- heft hives (tilt one side up). They should be noticeably heavy. If not, feed for weight -- heavy sucrose syrup, 60% sugar by weight. I cannot stress the importance for feeding at this time of year as with the winters becoming milder and longer; many beekeepers who have underfed have lost their bees.
4. Finish bacterial brood and Varroa treatments. Retest for Varroa to insure efficacy of treatments. Always be on the lookout for American foulbrood. If the hives are free of Varroa, no need to treat as you can wait until later in the year/early next year to carry out oxalic acid treatment.
5. Insure that lids are water tight and that there is an upper ventilation hole. Dry bees can endure cold and survive, but if wet from leaky lids or condensation, they may not. I take off the crown board and keep the open mesh floor on so as to give plenty of ventilation.
6. Add entrance reducers/mouse guards. This will keep down any robbing from stronger hives and wasps
7. If possible, if your bees are in an exposed place, have an ideal winter yard. An ideal winter yard is protected from wind and pockets of cold air, and exposed to the sun. Face hive entrances towards the sun and away from prevailing wind. Tilt hives so that if you get any condensation it will drain away from the entrance, you can ten move the hives back to the original site after the bad weather and when the bees start to fly.
8. Try to prevent robbing. Don't keep hives open too long. If you are feeding be careful not to spill any syrup, as this will certainly attract robbers. Put some wasp traps around and close up the entrance so as there is only a couple of inches for the guards to defend.
9. Protect extracted supers from wax moths. Best way is to stack the supers above some acetic acid. Put the solution in an EKE, then stack the supers on top and tape the joints up and seal the lot in. This will keep the fumes contained. In the spring you can bring out and air them all out before use.
10. Lastly, once your hive is set for winter, don't keep popping the lid off, for when it's cold the bees will be unable to re-glue the lid down. Use a heavy object if you do break the seals.