

# THE LIST FOR MARCH: CRUNCH TIME FOR NEW BEEKEEPERS

IF YOU'VE DECIDED TO GIVE BEEKEEPING A TRY, IT MAY SEEM LIKE YOU HAVE PLENTY OF TIME BEFORE YOUR BEES ARRIVE. THERE IS STILL TIME TO GET EVERYTHING PULLED TOGETHER, BUT SOME OF THE TASKS NEED TO GET STARTED RIGHT AWAY. ONE OF THE KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL BEEKEEPING IS KNOWING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE AND GETTING IT DONE, RIGHT ON TIME. BEES HAVE SUCH SHORT LIVES THAT DELAYS OF JUST A FEW DAYS CAN RESULT IN A SIGNIFICANT LAPSE IN MEETING THEIR NEEDS. WHEN YOU GET YOUR BEES, THEY WILL REQUIRE ALREADY-PREPARED BOXES, A CAREFULLY CHOSEN LOCATION AND A BEEKEEPER READY AND EQUIPPED TO CARE FOR THEM. BELOW IS A LIST OF WHAT NEEDS TO GET DONE – IN THE ORDER THE JOBS SHOULD BE STARTED - SO THAT WHEN YOUR BEES ARRIVE, YOU'LL BE ALL SET AND READY TO ENJOY YOUR FIRST DAYS AS A BEEKEEPER.

- **ORDER YOUR BEES.** IT MAY SEEM OBVIOUS, BUT IF YOU WANT TO HAVE BEES THIS YEAR, YOU NEED TO **GET YOUR BEES ORDERED** RIGHT AWAY. THEY OFTEN SELL OUT MONTHS BEFORE THEY ARE AVAILABLE FOR DELIVERY.
- **GET YOUR HIVE ASSEMBLED AND GET IT PAINTED.** THE ASSEMBLY PROCESS IS STRAIGHTFORWARD, BUT THE PAINTING TAKES MORE TIME THAN YOU MAY EXPECT. AND THEN IT NEEDS A LONG PERIOD OF DRYING IN ORDER TO CURE. UNCURED PAINT ON THE BOX EDGES WILL RESULT IN THE BOXES STICKING TOGETHER SO STRONGLY YOU'LL HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY GETTING THEM APART FOR INSPECTIONS. A GOOD CURING PERIOD TO SHOOT FOR IS A MONTH; SIX WEEKS IS EVEN BETTER. IF YOU'RE REALLY PRESSED FOR TIME, DON'T PAINT THE BOX EDGES TO KEEP THEM FROM STICKING TOGETHER WHEN STACKED UP. READ MORE ABOUT [\*\*PAINTING BEE EQUIPMENT\*\*](#).
- **DECIDE WHERE TO SET UP YOUR APIARY.** GIVE THIS SOME THOUGHT BECAUSE MOVING THE HIVES ONCE THE BEES ARE IN THEM IS SURPRISINGLY COMPLICATED.
- **GET A SMOKER AND PRACTICE LIGHTING IT AND KEEPING IT LIT.** THIS ROUTINE TASK IS A SOURCE OF CONSTERNATION AND STRESS FOR MOST NEW BEGINNERS. BUT WITHOUT A SMOKER GIVING OFF COOL, WHITE, SMOKE, YOUR BEEKEEPING EXPERIENCE WILL BE MORE FRUSTRATING THAN NECESSARY. ONLY REPEATED PRACTICE WILL GIVE YOU THE SKILL OF RUNNING A SMOKER WELL – SO TAKE THE TIME BEFORE THE BEES ARRIVE TO LEARN HOW TO LIGHT IT AND KEEPING IT BURNING. MAKE IT A RULE TO ALWAYS HAVE A LIT SMOKER WHENEVER YOU OPEN A HIVE.
- **ASSEMBLE YOUR FRAMES AND FOUNDATIONS.** DEPENDING ON WHICH TYPE YOU HAVE CHOSEN, IT MAY NEED SOME FABRICATION OR PREPARATION. STORE READY-TO-USE FRAMES IN A COOL, MOUSE-PROOF, LOCATION THAT'S OUT OF THE SUN. READ MORE HERE ABOUT [\*\*ASSEMBLING FRAMES\*\*](#) AND APPLYING AN [\*\*EXTRA COAT OF WAX\*\*](#).
- **GET YOUR HIVE STAND SET UP AND THE AREA AROUND IT PREPARED.** MAKE SURE THE STAND IS LEVEL, BOTH FROM SIDE-TO-SIDE AND FRONT-TO-BACK AND SET ON FIRM GROUND. MAKE SURE IT IS STURDY ENOUGH TO SUPPORT A LOT OF WEIGHT. A WELL-SUPERED COLONY, FULL OF CURING NECTAR OR HONEY, CAN WEIGH WELL MORE THAN A 100 POUNDS. A LAWN CHAIR SET OFF TO THE

SIDE NEAR THE STAND WILL PROVIDE HOURS OF PLEASURE WATCHING YOUR BEES GO ABOUT THEIR LIVES.

- **DECIDE WHAT LEVEL OF PERSONAL PROTECTION YOU WANT AND ORDER THE GEAR.** AT A MINIMUM, YOU WILL NEED A **NET VEIL AND HAT** TO PROTECT YOUR FACE AND EYES FROM STINGS. MOST PEOPLE START WITH A **HIVE JACKET OR A FULL SUIT**, AND **GLOVES**. BEEKEEPING ISN'T MUCH FUN WHEN YOU'RE PREOCCUPIED WITH WORRY OVER STINGS.
- **DECIDE WHETHER YOU'RE GOING TO FEED YOUR BEES 1:1 SUGAR SYRUP RIGHT AFTER THEY ARE INSTALLED.** IF YOU PLAN TO FEED, PURCHASE A **FEEDER**. IT MAY SEEM PECULIAR TO GIVE YOUR BEES SUGAR SYRUP WHEN YOU ARE EXPECTING THEM TO MAKE YOU SOME HONEY. HOWEVER, SUGAR SYRUP HELPS GET THE BEES OFF TO THE BEST POSSIBLE START AT DRAWING THE COMBS THEY NEED TO RAISE BROOD AND STORE NECTAR. IT PROVIDES A RELIABLE SOURCE OF CALORIES, NO MATTER WHAT THE SPRING WEATHER THROWS AT THEM.
- **SET UP YOUR HIVE ON THE STAND A FEW DAYS IN ADVANCE OF THE BEES' ARRIVAL.** THIS WILL ALLOW YOU TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ALL THE ESSENTIAL PARTS: BASE, ENTRANCE REDUCER, ONE BOX (OR TWO IF YOU'RE USING ONLY MEDIUMS) WITH FRAMES, AND AN INNER COVER AND AN OUTER COVER, AND A FEEDER. SEAL UP THE ENTRANCE SO NO SWARMS CAN MOVE IN AHEAD OF YOUR BEES.
- **BE READY FOR YOUR BEE PICK UP DAY:** SOMETIMES IT HAPPENS ON SHORT NOTICE – LIKE WAITING FOR BABY TO BE BORN. FUEL YOUR CAR AHEAD OF TIME. ARRIVE ON TIME. BRING YOUR JACKET, SUIT, OR VEIL – IF YOU'RE TAKING THE BEES HOME INSIDE YOUR CAR, YOU MAY WANT TO WEAR IT WHILE DRIVING SINCE A FEW BEES MAY GET LOOSE IN THE CAR. PLAN YOUR TRIP SO YOU CAN GO STRAIGHT HOME AND GET THE BEES INSTALLED IN THEIR NEW HIVE (WEATHER PERMITTING).

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