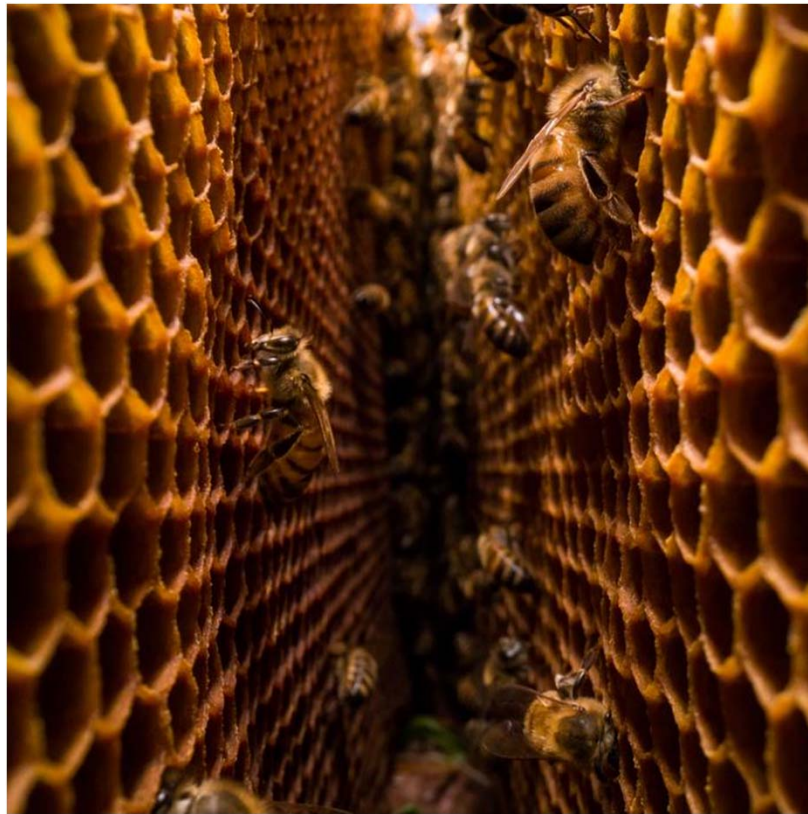


Inside the Hive – September & October



Fall Transition

- Spring and summer nectar flows are winding down.
- Fall brings a second, generally less intense, period of nectar and pollen availability.
- Colonies begin preparing for winter.
- Late-summer and fall workers become important winter bees.
- Varroa management becomes especially important.
- The goal is to enter winter with a **strong, healthy, well-fed colony**.



September Priorities

The September Hive Check

- Check overall colony strength.
- Confirm queenright status.
- Evaluate the brood pattern.
- Check honey and pollen stores.
- Monitor Varroa mites.
- Watch for robbing.
- Look for Small Hive Beetles.
- Identify colonies that may need feeding or combining.



Varroa Mites: A Fall Priority

- September is a critical time for Varroa management.
- Winter bees need to develop under low mite pressure.
- Don't rely on visible symptoms to determine whether mites are present.
- Perform a mite test using an appropriate monitoring method.
- Alcohol wash is one commonly used method.
- Record the results for each colony.
- Treat when monitoring indicates treatment is warranted.



Protecting the Winter Bees

Why Fall Mite Control Matters

- Bees produced in late summer and fall are important to winter survival.
- Varroa mites can transmit viruses and weaken developing bees.
- High mite levels can result in a smaller, less healthy winter population.
- The goal is to have **healthy bees going into winter—not simply a large number of bees.**

Queen & Brood Evaluation

What Are We Looking For?

- A present and productive queen.
- Consistent egg laying.
- A healthy brood pattern.
- Appropriate brood production for the season.
- Adequate adult bee population.

Warning Signs

- Spotty brood
- Little or no new brood
- Unusual drone brood pattern
- Declining colony population



Fall Nectar & Pollen

Important Midlands Fall Forage

- Goldenrod
- Asters
- Late-blooming wildflowers
- Clover where available
- Other local late-season plants

What to Watch

- Bees returning with different pollen colors.
- Increased foraging activity on fall flowers.
- Changes in nectar availability.



October Priorities

Preparing for Cooler Weather

- Recheck colony strength.
- Reassess food stores.
- Continue monitoring Varroa.
- Watch for queen problems.
- Reduce unnecessary hive space.
- Address weak colonies.
- Prevent robbing.
- Prepare colonies for winter.



Goldenrod & Asters

Fall's Important Forage

Goldenrod

- Important late-season nectar and pollen source.
- Often attracts large numbers of honey bees.

Asters

- Provide both nectar and pollen.
- Bloom during an important transition period.

Feeding Decisions

Don't Feed Automatically

- Before feeding, evaluate:
- Colony population
- Honey stores
- Pollen availability
- Current weather
- Local forage

If Feeding Is Needed

- Follow appropriate seasonal feeding practices.
- Clemson guidance notes that **1:1 syrup can be used during October while brood rearing and fall activity continue.**
- As temperatures fall and the colony moves toward winter, heavier feed such as **2:1 syrup** may be appropriate.
- Avoid unnecessary stimulation of brood production late in the season.



Food Stores

Ask Three Questions

- **1. Does the colony have enough honey?**
- **2. Does it have adequate pollen/protein resources?**
- **3. Is the colony strong enough to defend its food?**
- Light colonies may require feeding.
- Strong colonies are generally better able to protect their stores.
- Continue checking food stores as fall forage declines.



Robbing Prevention

Fall Dearth Can Increase Robbing

- Keep inspections short and purposeful.
- Don't leave exposed honey or syrup near hives.
- Avoid spilling syrup.
- Reduce entrances when appropriate.
- Be especially careful with weak colonies.
- Watch for yellow jackets and robbing bees.

Remember:

- **A small colony may have food but still be unable to defend it.**



Small Hive Beetle Management

Keep Watching!

- Strong colonies are better able to control beetles.
- Avoid giving weak colonies excessive space.
- Remove unnecessary equipment.
- Monitor brood boxes and honey supers.
- Look for adult beetles and larvae.
- Watch for fermented or slimed honey.



Wax Moth Awareness

Especially Important With Stored Equipment

- Wax moths prefer weak or unprotected comb.
- Don't leave large amounts of unused comb in weak colonies.
- Inspect stored frames.
- Protect stored equipment appropriately.
- Strong colonies generally defend comb better than weak colonies.



Reducing Hive Space

Right-Sizing the Hive

- Remove supers that the bees are no longer using when appropriate.
- Avoid leaving large amounts of empty space for a small colony to defend.
- Store removed equipment properly.
- Maintain enough space for the colony's food and winter cluster.
- Don't reduce space simply by calendar date—consider **colony strength and conditions**.

What About Weak Colonies?

Make the Decision Before Winter

Evaluate:

- Adult bee population
- Queen quality
- Brood production
- Food stores
- Varroa level
- Disease/pest problems

Possible Management

- Requeen when appropriate.
- Feed when needed.
- Reduce excess space.
- Combine colonies when appropriate.

Preparing the Hive for Winter

October Checklist

- Strong population
- Healthy queen
- Low Varroa pressure
- Adequate food
- Adequate pollen/protein resources
- Defensible hive space
- Good hive condition
- Entrance properly configured
- Stored equipment protected

September Checklist

- ☐ Check colony strength
- ☐ Verify queen performance
- ☐ Inspect brood
- ☐ Test Varroa levels
- ☐ Treat when indicated
- ☐ Check honey stores
- ☐ Check pollen availability
- ☐ Monitor fall forage
- ☐ Watch for robbing
- ☐ Check Small Hive Beetles
- ☐ Evaluate weak colonies
- ☐ Make feeding decisions

October Checklist

- ☐ Recheck Varroa
- ☐ Evaluate winter bee production
- ☐ Check food stores
- ☐ Assess colony strength
- ☐ Address queen problems
- ☐ Reduce unnecessary hive space
- ☐ Remove/store unused equipment
- ☐ Prevent robbing
- ☐ Check Small Hive Beetles
- ☐ Inspect stored equipment
- ☐ Prepare entrances
- ☐ Complete winter preparation

What We Want Going Into Winter

Our Goal

A strong colony with:

- Healthy winter bees
- Low Varroa pressure
- A productive queen
- Adequate food
- Adequate nutrition
- Manageable hive space
- Minimal pest pressure

Remember:

- **Winter preparation begins months before winter arrives.**

Key Takeaways

September

- Monitor • Evaluate • Treat • Feed When Needed

October

- Consolidate • Protect • Prepare

The Fall Goal

- Healthy bees + low Varroa + adequate food + strong colonies = better preparation for winter.