

Seasonal Management

August

- Prepare for new season's work.
- Get queen-raising equipment if you are going to rear your own queens.
- Assemble feeding equipment and supplies of sugar.
- Check grass spraying or cutting gear.
- Assemble frames for new season and have wax or plastic foundation on hand.

September

- Apply a varroa treatment if surplus honey flow is anticipated within 8 weeks.
- Check all brood frames for American foulbrood.
- Feed if necessary.
- Spray or cut vegetation around the hives.
- Stimulate drone hives for queen rearing.
- Hives can be split late in the month, or when there are plenty of adult drones present.
- Unite any weak or queenless hives with stronger queenright hives, especially if you prefer not to increase hive numbers.
- Prepare for queen raising programme.

October

- Apply varroa treatment if surplus honey flow is anticipated within 8 weeks, or hives are showing mite damage, or there are more than 40 mites per 300 bees after a sugar shake test.
- Remove entrance guards.
- Feed if necessary.
- Check pollen stores and feed supplements if required.
- Check all brood frames for American foulbrood.
- Control swarms.
- Re-queen hives with mated queens or own queen cells.
- Split hives.

November

- Remove any varroa strip treatment products applied in early September.
- Check that treatments have worked, especially if using organic treatments.
- Feed.
- Pollen check.
- American foulbrood check.
- Rear and mate queens.
- Swarm control.
- Super up hives.
- Re-queen hives.

December

- Introduce nucleus hives.
- Check supers for wax moth.
- Super up.
- Prepare honey house equipment.
- Harvest and extract early crops, especially if in the city.

January

- Check surplus supers for wax moth.
- Super up.
- Extract honey.

February

- Test for varroa mite levels and treat if necessary, especially if in acute phase.
- American foulbrood check.
- Remove honey before applying varroa treatments.
- Extract honey.
- Late summer queen rearing.
- Check for wasps.

March

- Test for varroa mite levels and treat if necessary.
- Extract honey.
- Re-queen hives.
- Check for wasp damage.
- Sell or store honey crop.
- Store honey supers or return to hives.

April

- Remove any varroa treatment products applied in February.
- Apply varroa treatments if necessary.
- Prepare hives for wintering down:
 - » Feed check
 - » American foulbrood check
 - » Scrape surplus wax from hive parts
 - » Check bottom boards and fit entrance reducers
 - » Replace rotten hive parts or tape up any holes to minimise robbing by bees or wasps
 - » Control weed growth and check hives are protected from stock
 - » Apply mouse bait if necessary

May

- Test for varroa mite levels and treat if necessary.
- Remove any varroa treatment products applied in March.
- Feed sugar syrup if needed.
- Winter hives down.
- Bring in supers stored on hives.
- Sort combs before storage.
- Freeze combs for wax moth control.

June

- Render down wax.
- Make up new equipment for coming season.

July

- Remove any varroa treatment products applied in May.
- Make up new equipment for replacement or increase of hives.

(Seasonal Management sourced from Practical Beekeeping in New Zealand, by Exisle Publishing)

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