

A Message from Honeybee Centre's Eric Stromgren

Spring is springing! Yes, we know that it is still freezing every night, we have as much fog and low cloud as we could want, and the snow from our recent bout of Canadian winter still hasn't melted, yet the countdown to summer is on. We are a few short weeks from the first peek at our overwintered colonies, and the arrival of package bees from New Zealand. Here at Honeybee Centre we have been busy scraping off the propolis and burr comb that has built up on our frames and boxes over the last beekeeping season, and preparing equipment to receive nuc, and split colonies this summer. We will soon be in the thick of the beekeeping season, so it is important as beekeepers that we take stock of the current condition of our equipment now, so we can plan for the coming season.

There are three things to do for your bees in the month of January:

1. Take stock of your equipment
 - Clean what needs cleaning
 - Ensure you have enough honey supers (2.5 - 3.5 per colony)
 - Ensure you have enough brood chambers, bottom boards, hive covers, assembled and painted, for any new colonies you will be making or buying this year
2. Ensure your hives have enough honey in the hives to make it until late March
 - You can feed either frames of stored honey (kept from disease free hives last year), or
 - Dry sugar (auger a hole in the inner cover and fill the space between the inner cover and the top cover with dry sugar). Note that this is not ideal because it is difficult for the bees to metabolize dry sugar.
3. Order livestock for the coming year, and sign up for courses at Honeybee Centre
 - Revive the Hive February 7
 - Basic Beekeeping February 14, 15, 21, 22, or May 2, 3, 9, 10
 - Advanced Beekeeping May 23
 - Bee Disease Free June 6
 - No Freeze Bees August 8

In February:

1. Attend Revive the Hive, February 7, 1 - 3 pm (free for basic beekeeping grads)
2. Check all hives February 15
 - If the weather is really bad, you can wait one week. Any longer and you risk not having hives ready in time for the early honey flow (April-May)
 - Begin feeding pollen patties to all hives, and ensure the hives have a continuous pollen supply until dandelions are in full bloom (around April 10)
 - Do not feed sugar syrup to overwintered colonies (okay to feed it to packages) until March 15
 - Sugar syrup early in the spring contributes to moisture related problems, including chalkbrood
 - After March 15 ensure each hive gets 1 feeding of medicated (with Fumagillin) syrup to treat for Nosema
3. Before adding a honey super in April/May, test your colonies for Varroa mites, and treat if required

Best of luck with the rest of the season!

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For additional information, please contact Eric Stromgren by sending an e-message from the "[Contact Us](#)" page of our website www.honeybeecentre.com.