

# MIDWEST BEEKEEPING IN A YEAR



CENTER *for*  
RURAL AFFAIRS



# MIDWEST BEEKEEPING IN A YEAR

## 01. JANUARY

Start reading a book on beekeeping, sign up for specialized classes, join a group, or subscribe to magazines.



## 03. MARCH

During a warm day, examine all of your hives. Double-check the bees that are not active (flying). You should see bees flying in and out (cleansing flights) when it is around or above 40 degrees F. Remove any hives that are dead to prevent pests from destroying drawn-out comb. Check on food stores, add more sugar or a candy board.



## 05. MAY

Watch for population growth on overwintered hives; early May is a good time to do a split to prevent swarming. Check for varroa mites with a sugar roll, and make a plan to treat. Pay attention to time between supering the hive and treating the hive, if needed.



## 07. JULY

Watch the flow of honey. Continue to monitor population growth, how much of the previous super is drawn out, and floral resources.



## 09. SEPTEMBER

Honey harvest! Honey should be harvested before the goldenrod starts to bloom. Make sure you have an indoor space that is warm to store supers. Honey harvest is quicker when the room is warm.

After honey is harvested, do another sugar roll and check for varroa mites. Make a treatment plan, if necessary.



## 11. NOVEMBER

Winterize. Cover hives with black tar paper or hive covers for insulation and wind protection. Make sure hives are protected from the north wind. Be sure you have a vent hole on top; this is very necessary to prevent moisture accumulation. Place candy board or granulated sugar in hive for extra food stores.



## 02. FEBRUARY

Order bees, get supplies ready, fix or replace anything you need to.



## 04. APRIL

Check food stores. Completely remove all winter thermal insulation. Clear off bottom boards and check for a laying queen if warm enough. Feed colonies with sugar water to stimulate wax production and colony growth: 2 cups water:1 cup sugar

Bee packages will arrive. Prior to installation, make sure you prep your site.



## 06. JUNE

Swarms in June are worth a silver spoon! Watch out for swarms, and have a set-up ready to move one in if you want. Supering may be needed; pay attention to population growth.



## 08. AUGUST

Start preparing for honey harvest. Watch hives for robbing behavior and monitor floral resources in case of a dearth.



## 10. OCTOBER

Feed 2:1 syrup (2 cups sugar to 1 cup water) to help bees fill up the two deeps needed for winter survival, and treat for mites. Continue mite treatments if needed; do a final check. After the first frost, put on mouse guards.



## 12. DECEMBER

Review your beekeeping year. What went well? What could have gone better? What do you want to change? Do you need to expand? Register hives with USDA Farm Service Agency for ELAP (Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-Raised Fish) protection by Dec. 31.

