



# *STAHLMAN BEEKEEPING*

## *NOTES FOR 2025*

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Published free as a public service to anyone interested in honeybees. Email me to be added to my  
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**It's May -- the bees are working hard and it is time to check for Varroa!**

**As years go by, I am reminded about this time every year that there is a difference between veteran beekeepers and new beekeepers. The language of beekeeping is always a factor in talking to new beekeepers. There are so many ways individuals keep bees.**

**I had a call from a beekeeper that just acquired a flow hive in fact several of them. It was something given to him by a friend. Fads come and go in beekeeping. One reason the standard Langstroth hive has been adopted by so many beekeepers is the simple fact that it represents a standard hive sold by almost all bee supply businesses. Equipment to harvest honey – extractors, frames, and queen excluders for example are designed and sold for the Langstroth dimensions used in 8 or 10 frame hive bodies. In fact, the value of hive equipment is based upon demand. Homemade off brand equipment has always had poor resale value.**

**The interesting thing about beekeeping is one just beginning is faced with many decisions – the most important in my opinion is keeping all equipment standard. A decision must be made on going the top bar route (these hives are quite common), the 8-frame route, the 10-frame route or something else like the “flow hive”.**

**The selection of foundation to put into frames is another issue encountered by new beekeepers and only experience will determine their preference and use.**

**The learning curve for keeping honeybees extends far beyond the first year. Perhaps the easiest thing about keeping bees is getting a good**

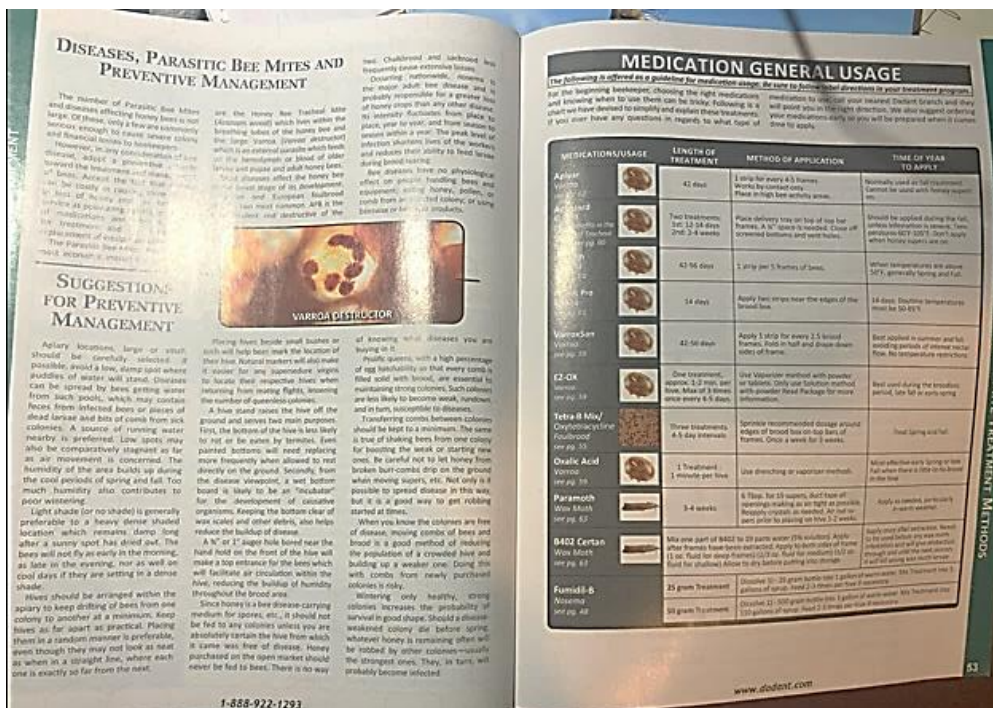
**understanding of the biology and behavior characteristics of honeybees. Honeybee development is a fixed biological fact and something that is very handy to understand when doing hive inspections and using various management techniques.**



**To be fair, there are many bee equipment suppliers. I get several catalogs in the mail every year and look them over for new “stuff” that is being offered for sale. You can order catalogs free if you check and google bee suppliers.**

**The best one I have received this year came from [www.dadant.com](http://www.dadant.com) – I like the printed issue. Their web site has some great information about various topics but the special section in the Catalog was not available – at least I could not find it.**

**Bee Nutrition and Medication for diseases and mites have become issues faced by all of us. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) has been a term used for some time, and every year one must find information to keep up with all the current practices to keep bees alive.**



**I would advise all of you to take a look at the special section in the 2025 Dadant Catalog – pages 51 through to 55 if you have access to it. You will find detailed information about new products on the market**

including VarroaSan and Ez-OX treatment for Varroa. Page 52 covers a lot of information about Varroa mites and includes suggestions for varroa management. **You can request a catalog on their web site.**

I am not an expert in feeding additives to my bees (Spring or fall). So many products are now available to beekeepers and when asked about some of them I am completely in the dark. Honey-Bee-Healthy I have used as well as Fumidil-B. New products come onto the market every year to treat colonies of bees and staying up to date on how to use these products requires finding out something about them. Do they really work?

Of special interest to me is page 54 that explains the special relationship beekeepers may need to have with a veterinarian. You can learn a bit about buying VFD required products sold by Dadant. And for the first time for me – something about the future use of VFD products.

**Varroa mite are in your bee hives!** They drift into your hives from nearby bees and are sold along with package bees and nucleus hives. By 2001, Varroa mite (*Varroa destructor* formally known as *Varroa Jacobsoni*) were found in every area of the U.S.



**Checking for mites now is important, and there are a number of ways to check for varroa mites.**

Many use either a sugar roll test or an alcohol test. This requires removing brood frames from a hive. (Mites are generally found on young bees feeding brood). The bee sample should represent about 300 bees – no need to count them – a general idea is about 1 inch of bees in the bottom of a pint jar. Frames could also be shaken into a dish pan. Bees could then be scooped up into a jar as shown, a table spoon of powder sugar is poured on the bees and a lid fastened in place. The jar is shaken for a minute or two to dislodge mites and then mites can be counted. In the sugar powder test, bees and powdered sugar are spread out on a paper so mites can be counted and bee can fly back to the hive. Alcohol kills bees and

**makes counting mites a bit more exact when dead mites are found after the alcohol is filtered off the bees.**

**Another method is to check larvae in cells for mites.**

**Often comb is built by bees between brood boxes. I find**



**a capping scratcher helpful when looking at drone brood where Varroa mites are most likely to be seen.**



**If one waits for symptoms of mite damage to a colony of bees such as:**

**dwindling populations, adults crawling aimlessly near the hive entrance, wingless or deformed bees -- it is too late to do much about saving the colony.**

**THIS EASY CHECK CONTAINER IS USED BY MANY BEEKEEPERS TO TEST FOR VARROA MITES. A GLASS PINT JAR WILL WORK AND GIVE SIMILAR RESULTS.**

**I would suggest checking for mites about every three weeks from now through fall. If you have only a few hives, it should not take long and the information learned about mite populations can help save your bees.**

**Varroa mites are easily spread.**

- 1) Colonies should be arranged to avoid the problem of drifting bees.**
- 2) Some claim putting hives in sunny locations helps with mite control.**
- 3) Transferring combs between colonies is unwise if one has not checked for mite counts. In fact, all diseases of the honey bee can be spread by moving frames of brood from one colony to another.**
- 4) Wintering healthy colonies rather than trying to save weak colonies is most likely going to improve over wintering success and weed out nonresistant stock.**
- 5) If one is using oxalic vaporizers, wear a respirator.**
- 6) Keep in mind that what neighboring beekeepers are doing about mite control will most likely affect your own efforts to control mites. Robbing bees from your colonies will bring varroa mites back to your hives.**
- 7) Check out queen breeders that are rearing mite resistant lines of bees. Buy queens from known sources. Don't buy the survivor bee story – any queen sold is a survivor if she is alive at the time of purchase.**