

2026 Stahlman Beekeeping E-mail Notes Issue #3a

While I am waiting out this winter season, I am also thinking about hive survival and getting ready for Spring. I will be giving several presentations this month and the topics are about making increases. As I look out my window, it doesn't really look like making increases time.

But we are planning and looking ahead. This article is about winter survival and what to look for when hives can be inspected. Early January here allowed me to inspect my hives and photos used were taken early during the winter season.

I like to use photos to illustrate a topic and show what we should be checking for to get to the time when we start making increases. New beekeepers looking for their first hive or hives have so much to deal with. But those of us that already have hives must realize that keeping them alive to spring is a real challenge. One cannot make increases unless one has live bees!

The success of winter beekeeping all started last fall. The bees born in September to November even with a lot of food available to them are now facing the prospect of dying a natural death. Successful colonies should be rearing brood to replace older bees. Thus, knowledge of the life cycle of a colony of bees is important and the last two photos in this article illustrate old bees and new bees. When I recommend that you look at bees during an inspection, this is what you can see and determine to a certain extent for what is happening to bees at this time of the year.

Dana