

Surry County Beekeepers Association  
Beekeeper's Management Calendar

### January

- The bees will be clustering with only the occasional cleansing flights.
- Check your hive weights.
- If needed, on a warm day (> 50°), feed light hives sugar syrup directly over the cluster (use a jar or bucket inside an empty hive body) or scratch frames of capped honey.
- If it is too cold to open the hive, sprinkle sugar around the hole in the inner cover.
- **Mid-January** brood rearing starts, so consider feeding pollen or pollen substitute. Just remember, early feeding may lead to a faster build up of brood and early spring swarm preparations.
- Read, take part in bee-club meetings and get ready for Bee School in February!
- If you have not already done so, don't forget to pay your dues.
- February 1: Brushy Mtn and Miller Bee start taking orders for package bees. They go fast!

### February

- Brood rearing should be well under way.
- On a warm day (> 50°) check your pollen and honey stores. If less than half a super of honey, feed sugar syrup directly over the cluster (use a jar or bucket inside an empty hive body or plastic baggie) or scratch frames of capped honey. Consider feeding pollen or pollen substitute. Feeding at this time of year stimulates brood production and early spring swarm preparations.
- **Tracheal mite peak.** Consider treating with menthol crystals or sugar/grease patties. **To make grease patties:** combine 2 parts Crisco vegetable oil with one part white or powdered sugar. Place patties on the top bars of the brood chamber and let the girls eat!
- **Check for varroa mites** using sticky board or sugar shake test and treat if above the threshold. Remember some treatments take 45 to 55 days and need to be installed by Feb 1 in order to install honey supers April 1.
- Order bees packages and queens
- Read, take part in bee-club meetings!
- **Blooming:** Red and silver maple, willow, alder (pollen).

### March

- Check food stores (honey and pollen), feed 1:1 sugar syrup and pollen patties if necessary.
- Check brood and bees: make sure there are eggs and brood.
- Consider combining weak hives or equalize brood by adding 1-2 frames of brood to weak hives.
- Check for honey bound hives: move empty frames with drawn comb in upper brood chamber to prevent overcrowding.
- Remove dead-outs and empty hive bodies and clean bottom board.
- Attend NCBA spring meeting

### **Last 2 weeks of March**

- Swarm season approaches: watch for queen cells and reproductive swarm preparations
- Reverse hive bodies every 10-14 days; try not to split the brood.
- Make splits or nucs from strong colonies with queen cells. This will also help reduce varroa mite populations.
- Add super to strong colonies in preparation of early nectar flow
- Place bait hives to capture swarms.
- **Blooming:** Red and silver maple, and dandelion, fruit trees.

### **April**

- Swarm season is here: check brood and queen and look for queen cells for swarm preparations.
- Continue to reverse hive bodies every 10-14 days, split strong colonies with queen cells.

### **Second week**

- Queen reduced laying as nectar begins to flow.
- Add supers to all hives in preparation for major white wax nectar flow. Your bees can store up to 20% more honey if you add all with supers (with drawn combs) you expect the bees can fill. Supers with foundation must be placed on one at a time.
- **Blooming:** Blackberry (P: 4/10 - 4/30), Clover (P: 4/4 - ), Tulip poplar (P: 4/25 – 5/24), Black gum (P:4/26 – 5/10), Black locust (P: 4/27 – 5/7).

### **May**

- Brood nest is reduced as honey production increases.
- Remove the entrance reducer.
- Check every 7 to 10 days and add supers as necessary. Too many supers can leave the hive susceptible to SHB and wax moths.
- When the honey flow starts, minimized checking the brood nest and only when trouble is suspected.
- If you haven't done so already, install SHB traps in hive and place wax moth "coke bottle" trap outside apiary.

### **June**

- Check for signs of SHB; SHB activity will be high for the next couple of months.
- Mid June harvest honey crop after major spring honey flow is over.
- Put bee escapes on the day before taking supers off; any longer may leave the super susceptible to SHB and wax moths,
- Or use fume board or leaf blower to harvest supers; extract honey within a couple of days or freeze frames to kill SHB and wax moth eggs.
- Replace wet supers on hives or place supers 150 ft from apiary for bees to clean up.
- June 17<sup>th</sup> super each hive with drawn comb for sourwood flow.

## July

- Check supers every 10 days, move full frames to the outside of the box and empty one towards the center, add additional supers as necessary.

## After sourwood flow

- Harvest sourwood honey at the end of flow (20<sup>th</sup>). Leave enough honey on your hive to get through the winter, at least one super of honey
- Check queen and brood nest.
- Reduce entrances of weak hives.
- Feed wet combs back to bees and then store dry supers.
- Feed light hives.
- Check for Varroa mites and treat as necessary.
- Consider making splits or nucs if there is adequate brood. This is one effective method of controlling Varroa.
- If re-queening hives, plans should be made early in the month to order queens so they will be available at the end of the honey flow.

## August

- There wasn't a good (if at all) sourwood bloom in our area this year. August is a dearth month, so check stored food supplies and feed pollen patty (only what they can eat in 5 days) and 1:1 sugar syrup as needed.
- **SHB and wax moth populations peak this month.** Make sure there are passive beetle traps in all your hives and possibly one in every hive body. A healthy colony can handle a small level of infestation. Remove highly infested frames and treat colony as needed. Frames w/ SHB infestation can be cleaned w/ 50% bleach solution, rinsed and used again.
- **Check for Varroa mites** using the 24 hour sticky board or sugar shake test and treat if above the threshold. Make a careful assessment of the type of treatment and appropriate temperatures for treatment, August may be too hot for some treatments.
- For hives that were not treated, early August is time to split for Varroa treatment so the split will have time to build up before winter.
- Consider treating for Tracheal mites with either menthol crystals or sugar/oil patties.
- Consider re-queening using queens with hygienic traits.
- Provide supers, if needed for goldenrod and aster flow.

## September

- **Varroa mite peak; check for Varroa mites** using the 24 hour sticky board or sugar shake test and treat if above the threshold.
- Check for fall swarm preps.
- Start checking winter store and hive strength. Feed as needed; remember each hive needs 35 to 40 lbs. of honey for winter.
- Combine weak hives using the newspaper method.
- Consider storing extra frames of honey (in the freezer) to use in early spring for feeding or making splits.
- Start reducing hive entrance.

## **October**

- Ensure good ventilation.
- Check for Varroa mites that were treated last month.
- Check hive weights
- Combine weak hives using the newspaper method.
- Feed colonies pollen and sugar syrup if necessary.
- Reduce entrances/ install mouse guard.
- Place orders for spring queens, nucs and packages.

## **November**

- Egg laying should have stopped and the bees are starting to cluster on cold nights.
- Check hive weight for stored food. You want >45 lbs. of stored honey for winter. Feed if necessary. The cold temperatures will make top feeders useless; feed with a baggy feeder or bucket inside a hive body.
- Reduce hive entrance to the smallest hole (consider installing mouse guard).
- Make sure hives have good ventilation, put block or popsicle stick at the back of the inner cover to increase air flow and consider giving the bees a top entrance for winter.
- Remove queen excluders so that the queen can move up with the cluster.
- Consider combining weak colonies and nucs. The news paper method is always good. It is better to have one strong colony going into winter then several weak ones that might not make it.
- Order your queens and nucs for next year.
- Clean, repair, and store your equipment. Assemble new equipment.

## **December**

- The bees will be clustering with only the occasional cleansing flights.
- Check your hive weights.
- If needed, on a warm day (> 50°), feed light hives sugar syrup directly over the cluster (use a jar or bucket inside an empty hive body or candy sugar on inner cover) or scratch frames of capped honey and place them at the edge of the cluster. Don't break the cluster.
- Brood rearing will start in January, so consider feeding pollen or pollen substitute after Christmas.
- Clean, repair, and store your equipment. Assemble new equipment.
- Read, take part in bee-club meetings.
- Pay your SCBA and NCSBA dues!

# Honey Plants of North Carolina

Plant Name	Blooming Dates	
	Piedmont	Mountain
Red Maple	1-Feb to 12-Mar	5-Mar to 9-Apr
Sugar Maple	5-Mar to 30-Mar	
Dandelion	15-Mar to 14-May	1-May to 20-Jun
Sumac	3-Apr to 1-Sep	8-Apr to 1-Sep
Black Gum	26-Apr to 10-May	5-May to 15-May
Holly	30-Apr to 15-May	8-May to 23-May
Black Locust	27-Apr to 7-May	15-May to 29-May
Raspberry/Blackberry	30-Apr to 20-May	17-May to 3-Jun
Tulip Poplar	25-Apr to 24-May	25 May to 17-Jun
Persimmon	20-May to 2-Jun	22-May to 6-Jun
Privet	8-May to 31-May	
Ladino, White Clovers	14-Apr to 25-Jul	29-May to 19-Jul
Sweet Clover	28-May to 4-Jun	8-Jun to 31-Jul
Basswood, Linden		20-Jun to 13-Jul
Sourwood	10-Jun to 30-Jun	25-Jun to 20-Jul
Buttonbush	Jun to Jul	Jul to Aug
Heartsease, Smartweed		
Joe Pye Weed	Aug to Sep	Aug to Sep
Golden rod	8-Aug to 14-Oct	Aug to Oct
Stickweed or yellow crownbeard	14-Aug to Sep	Aug to Sep
Aster	25-Sept to 30-Oct	30-Aug to 9-Oct

**N.C. Cooperative Extension Service: [Honey Plants of North Carolina](#)**, prepared by: J. Ambrose; revised by S. Bambara