



Honey Bee Winter Preparation Checklist

Ohio - October 2025

by Tom and Fran Davidson - Master Beekeepers

Plan to control Mite population (Test)

- ☐ If you have bees, you have mites! Use one of the following to evaluate infestation level.
- ☐ Use alcohol or Dawn detergent wash to test 300 bees for dead mites. If more than 9 dead, treat.
- ☐ Use powdered sugar shake with 300 bees for mite count. Only 70% accurate, so treat with 6 dead.
- ☐ Use Oxalic acid vapor and count dead mites on whiteboard after 3-5 days. Treat if over 50 dead.

Treat for mites using one of the following approved methods:

- ☐ Apivar - Uses synthetic chemical "Amatraz" to kill mites.
- ☐ Apiguard - Uses Thymol organic compound (extract of thyme oil)
- ☐ Oxalic Acid Vapor
- ☐ Formic-Pro strips - (Kills mites under capped brood)
- ☐ Oxalic Acid Dribble - crystals diluted in sugar water or glycerin
- ☐ Hopguard 3 - Freeze capped Drone brood before birth

Feed fall for winter bee health and provide emergency food for winter

- ☐ Feed sugar water (1 to 1) and protein supplant for healthy winter bee production. (Early fall)
- ☐ Feed solution of (2 sugar to 1 water by weight) to hives in order to provide 1-2 boxes of capped syrup per hive if bees failed to make that much honey.
- ☐ Provide emergency feed of sugar brick or fondant in top of hives in case bees run out of food before spring.

Inspect Hives and:

- ☐ Identify and correct queenless conditions
- ☐ Remove unfinished supers and excess comb or foundation. (Reduce empty space for winter).
- ☐ Store frames of comb and foundation safe from moth, beetle and physical damage.
- ☐ Consider use of Para moth or CERTAN for comb storage protection.
- ☐ Ensure that ample honey and pollen stores are in hives for new bees in spring
- ☐ Distribute capped honey frames from stronger hives to needy ones if necessary.

Other Overwinter Recommendations

- ☐ Insulation – Especially inside the top cover
- ☐ Provide a windbreak against sub-zero winter winds
- ☐ Provide mouse guard at entrance to hives
- ☐ Replace winter losses in spring with queens you raise from survivor colonies

References and further education:

Tools for Varroa management - Honey Bee Health Coalition

Free (1 August 2022) <https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/resources/varroa-management/>

Beekeeping: Advanced Fall Feeding Techniques for strong winter colonies. Daivid Burns U-Tube

GoldenQueenHoney.com

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