

Le Butineur

Pollinium, créateur de biodiversité



Newsletter of bees of ADELAC .

Summer 2021

Committed to protect biodiversity, ADELAC invests in sponsorship of bees. Come and get an inside peek of the incredible life of foraging bees. If you are a nature lover, you will certainly enjoy it.

 ADELAC

– Beehive history –

Harvesting without abusing

For a beekeeper, harvesting honey is the moment of reward for his hard work. Bees, on the other hand, don't see it that way. When they see their honey leaving the beehive, they will try to defend it with all their stings. The beekeeper will, therefore, need to take some precautions. He will generally choose a beautiful sunny day when as many foragers as possible are working outside.

The day before, he will mount a "bee escape" on top of the frames which will allow the bees to descend into the hive for the night, but which will block them from flying up. Thus, the frames will be almost deserted when he takes them out. This will allow the beekeeper to pull the frames out one by one in order to harvest the honey. He will then place the frames in a special container and quickly close it with the lid. The beekeeper will only remove the frames with capped honey (i.e. the cells capped with wax): this proves the maturity of the precious liquid. Once in his honey house, he will remove the wax from the cells and place the honeycombs in an extractor which will extract the honey



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from the frames. The honey is then transferred to a maturer - a large stainless steel container with a tap at its base - where it will sit for a week before being put in jars.

Most hobbyist beekeepers only harvest once a year. Others, as well as professionals, may harvest several times per year,

depending on the type of honey.

The beekeeper will never take all the honey from a beehive, he will only take the surplus located in the frames, leaving the rest for the bees.

– Beehive history –

Maturation, a "finishing" step



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Once extracted, the honey will be kept in a ripener for a week. This step, which takes place just before the honey is put in jars, will allow any impurities (wax debris, pollen, etc.) in the honey to rise to the surface and the air bubbles to disappear.

Equipped with a tap at its base, the ripener is used to extract honey without its impurities. The last jars, which will contain the waste floating on the surface, are usually kept by the beekeeper for his own consumption.



- Bees and men -

Responsiveness and agility

As long as there are flowers around the hive, the bees will go and look for nectar: it is a kind of precautionary principle taken to excess. As for the beekeeper, he will usually set up his hives in flower-rich habitats, which will allow him to collect the surplus honey stored in the frames without harming the bees. The foragers can optimise their nectar collection thanks to a "report" of floral resources established by the early-morning explorers. By performing a bee dance, these early-morning explorers will update the other members of the colony on the best location to find nectar. If this particular resource dries up, scout bees will look for an alternative flower patch rich in nectar to propose to the other bees in the hive.

This responsiveness, combined with very elaborate exchanges of information and the multitude of foragers (several tens of thousands in good weather), explains the overall performance of the colony. Without this, the beekeeper could not hope for significant harvests.

In a complex and uncertain economic environment, companies must also count on this responsiveness as well as the quality of exchanges and relations among their employees.

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apiculteur, sociologue et fondateur de Melilot Consulting.

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- Beehive history -

Harmless "bee-escapes"

To facilitate the harvest, beekeepers often use a funny little plastic part called a "bee-escape". Bee-escapes provide one-way passages so that once the bees leave the super, they can't find their way back in.

Fixed in the center of a wooden board of the same size as the beehive, a bee-escape is placed between the body of the hive and the super on the evening before the harvest.

In the evening, the bees working in the super descend to find the queen and

their sisters. The honey super is then deserted. The next morning, when they want to go back to work, they can't get past the obstacle!

The beekeeper can then deal with the frames without being attacked. As soon as he's done with harvesting, he will remove the bee-escape. Bee-escapes are a clever invention making the harvest easier both for the beekeepers and the bees, and the hive will be less exposed to the looting of the neighbouring hives thanks to this process.



Brief

Proverbs and sayings

« To collect honey, the bee must not stay in the hive »

Proverb

MICRO-PLASTICS

For the first time, a team of Spanish and Danish scientists has demonstrated the presence of microplastics on the wings of foragers in an apiary in Copenhagen. We already knew they were present in our seas and oceans, and now we know they are also present in beehives.

Rain

This rainy spring does not bode well for the 2021 harvest. Many beekeepers were forced to feed their swarms in May: the honey collected before had already been entirely consumed by the colonies ...