



Le Butineur

Pollinium, créateur de biodiversité



Newsletter of bees of ADELAC.

Winter 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.



– Beehive history –

Winter vigilance and delicacy

In winter, bees are in "energy-saving" mode. They form a cluster in order to preserve heat. Any intrusion during this period could be fatal to them. A beekeeper must therefore continue to keep an eye on them, but only from outside. However, there isn't much he can do except verify that nothing is bothering them. Green woodpeckers are known for stealing honeycombs. Wind will sometimes destabilise the hive and cause the brood boxes to fall. There are many other enemies of bees: moisture that could seep inside, ice that could block the entrance, a branch that falls on the apiary ...

Throughout the winter, as discretely as he can, a beekeeper will regularly check that no such incident has occurred. He can secure the hives to prevent them from being overturned, clear snow-covered entrances, possibly mulch the ground just in front of the apiary, so that the bees can land somewhere other than on frozen or snow-covered ground when outside the



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hive. These are just some of the many tasks that a beekeeper has to carry out

as discretely as possible while trying not to break up the cluster as much as possible.

– Beehive history –

Urgent cravings... well-refrained!



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In winter, a bee will spend long weeks without leaving the hive, but like everyone else, she also has ... urgent cravings! Actually, urgent is not the most appropriate term since this insect is able to go several weeks without defecating. Since bees strive to keep their living quarters clean, they will empty their rectal bulb outside as soon as the weather allows. A slightly milder winter day, even a cold one, is often the best moment to see them fly right in front of the hive: it's time for the hygienic break!

The surrounding soil will be marked with their droppings, allowing the beekeeper to see if everyone is okay. Small yellowish stains may cover the ground or the roof of the hive, or even the windshield of a car ... Such a cleansing flight may prove fatal to the weakest ones because they may not be able to muster up enough energy to return to the warmth of the hive.



– Bees and men –

Reserves for Winter

It goes without saying that bees don't produce honey for fun but to survive the winter. Honey is, basically, canned nectar that is collected during the summer months to provide food for the colony during the cold period. We can speak of a common and collective project of the entire colony, which is essential to its survival during its winter confinement.

Beekeepers must also take this need into account when harvesting honey. At the end of every autumn, he has to assess very precisely whether the stock of honey is sufficient i.e. it should allow bees to last until spring. If the reserves are greater, he may pay himself dividends just like a responsible and reasonable shareholder. But if this is not the case, he will have to ensure a supplement

of honey or candy. It's a bit like when a shareholder has to strengthen the capital of the company in case of insufficient equity.

What's specific about a shareholder-beekeeper is that he will only set the return on capital at the end of the activity and not beforehand. If he fails to take the needs of his workers into account, he will run the risk of losing the entire colony.

Perhaps the wisdom of a beekeeper could inspire some shareholders!

Henri Duchemin,

a beekeeper, a sociologist and a founder

of Mëlilot Consulting

For more info, please click on <http://melilotconsulting.com>



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– Beehive history –

Sugar to survive

Even though he made sure his colonies have enough food at the end of the summer to get through the winter, a caring beekeeper will often complement his bees during the winter.

This supplement cannot be given in liquid form since it would freeze. He will rather distribute a paste called candy sugar. Neither completely hard nor too soft, the texture of these sucrose-rich sugar loaves will allow the

bees to nibble on them when they feel the need.

Unlike the syrups that they store in the cells like honey, candy is consumed immediately and directly from the block. Placed in the feeder or on the top of the frames, the bees can feed on it whenever they want to, which works as a positive stimulant during long spells of cold weather.



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Brief

Proverbs and sayings

*« We are the bees of the invisible.
We wildly collect the honey of
the visible, to store it in the great
golden hive of the invisible. »*

Rainer Maria Rilke

A "POLLINATOR PLAN"

A "2021-2026 pollinator plan" was announced by the French Ministry of Ecological Transition and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. It focuses on six main areas: improving scientific knowledge on wild pollinators and the causes of their decline; the development of economic levers and providing support to farmers, beekeepers and foresters; providing support to other sectors of activity in order to strengthen and conserve the natural habitats of pollinating insects; the preservation of the good health of bees and other pollinators; regulations for the protection of pollinators against the use of phytopharmaceutical products; the establishment of a collegial system for agricultural practices favorable to pollinators and the promotion of environmental certification.