



# Le Butineur

Pollinium, créateur de biodiversité



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- Beehive history -

Newsletter of bees of ADELAC

Spring 2020

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 -

## A spring visit, the "must" of the season

The month of March is here and the bees are gradually emerging from their winter "lethargic" mode. The beekeeper must also "wake up" to verify that his colonies benefit from all the assets necessary for their good development. Armed with his toolbox, into which he also slipped a spray bottle with some diluted bleach, he will begin by inspecting the exterior of the hives and their surrounding environment. Did they have a good winter? Did the roofs stay in place? Has the wood been damaged?

He will then inspect the behaviour of the first colony. From their way of acting, he can already draw a few conclusions: this colony has lost its queen, the other one should already house eggs ... To be convinced of this, he then opens the hive, if the temperature allows (it should be no less than 12 to 15 degrees Celsius). By inspecting the frames, one by one, he checks the presence of the queen, the normal development of the colony, possible illnesses and the state of supplies.



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To start well, bees need a lot of food: at this time of the year, their consumption is likely to more than double compared to winter. Finally, the beekeeper cleans the bottom board of the hive with bleach, which contains all the winter waste: dead

bees, small pieces of wax, crystallized honey, eggs or nymphs fallen from the alveoli, mould etc. Each of these remains is an indication of the health status of the hive.



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March can be cold and rainy, making a full spring visit difficult. The beekeeper can, nevertheless, discover important information on his colonies simply by observing the behaviour of the bees on the flight board. H. Storch even made a book of it, which became a beekeeping bestseller, entitled "Au trou de vol". Do bees come and go with pollen-laden legs?

This means that the queen has started to lay eggs. Or are they idle on the take-off board? Caution: the hive is certainly an orphan. To be sure, the beekeeper can also knock lightly on the hive walls: if the swarm responds with a loud, buzzing sound that stops quickly, the queen is there. If, on the contrary, the rustling is prolonged or even increases, it is a safe bet that the queen is dead. Are there brownish spots on the take-off board? If it looks like diarrhoea, the beekeeper will have to monitor it ...





– Bees and men –

## Managing means assisting

The beekeeper aims to optimize the production of bees so that he can also benefit from it. The prosperity of the hive is also his own. Bees apply the precautionary principle without limits; so, as long as there are floral resources, they will collect nectar and pollen, even if it means building up stocks greater than their needs for the winter season. The excessive foresight of bees, but also the quantity and quality of resources, constitute the foundations of beekeeping. One of the beekeeper's goals is to increase the productivity of his workers, which can be compared to that of a business manager. There is, however, a major difference - a beekeeper cannot demand quantified

production targets from bees and, even less, show authority over them.

So what is the alternative to an authoritarian management: constraint by objectives or imperative injunction? To "manage" bees, the only possible attitude to adopt is to substitute coercion for support and protection.

These are, undoubtedly, the secrets of a win-win management style based on support ...

### Henri Duchemin,

a beekeeper, a sociologist and a founder of Mélilot Consulting  
For more info, please click on <http://melilotconsulting.com>



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– Beehive history –

## The take-off board - much more than just a runaway

As its name suggests, the take-off board is the board that protrudes under the entrance to the hive. It allows the bees to take off or land. In hot weather, the bees often use it to cool off. Wild bees could probably do without it, but for the beekeeper, it is an essential element which allows him to better observe the comings and goings of his protégés.



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# Brief

## Proverbs and sayings

*« Happiness for a queen bee is to exist. For the man, it is to know this and to marvel at it »*

Jean-Yves Cousteau

# 4 000



This is the number of varieties of vegetables grown in Europe that would not exist without the work of bees.

## POLLINATOR ROBOT

An Israeli start-up is currently testing a pollinating robot in Australia and Israel. The machine could replace the two million beehives used in California in almond orchards. During the last winter, American beekeeping lost no less than 50 billion bees, or nearly 38% of its colonies, mainly due to pesticides.

