

Swarm Season Indeed

Written by Matthew Reed

Warning: Invalid argument supplied for foreach() in `/home/beethink/public_html/plugins/system/rokcandy_system.php` on line 144



Over the past week I've had 6 swarm calls, of which I've caught 3, 1 was a bumble bee colony, 1 was a bearding hive in a tree, and 1 was too high up to catch. It is both invigorating and exhausting, and I wonder if I'll feel bored when swarm season ends.

Yesterday one of my hive hosts, Eleanore, called to inform me that hive F (Carniolan) was swarming. It landed about 15 feet up in a Pear tree. I arrived a couple hours later to catch it and combine it back with it's previous home. The first knock into the box didn't get the queen, as they quickly moved back to the tree branch. The second was a success, and all of the bees quickly moved into the cardboard box.

While they moved into the box I scoured their old hive for swarm cells and the new, virgin queen. I found 5 cells but my queen search was fruitless. In addition to removing swarm cells I broke up the brood nest by adding 4 empty bars between some of the outlying brood comb. Hopefully this will give them the illusion of space for expansion.

Swarm Season Indeed

Written by Matthew Reed

After breaking up the brood nest I picked up the newly-captured swarm and carefully dumped them into their former home, hoping that they wouldn't realize I'd tricked them. I left them to finish moving back in and proceeded to check the remaining hives for swarm cells. I started with hive G -- Italians -- (in which I found only a single supercedure cell with no swarm cells).

As I was on the second Italian hive I heard it: The unmistakable roar of a swarming hive. I looked over and saw thousands of bees catapulting out of hive B. I squatted within inches of the entrance, looking diligently for the queen in order to catch her before she joined the cloud of bees. Sadly I believe I was too late, and the swarm slowly began to land 30 feet up in the a tree.

I spent 15 ill-considered minutes swatting, prodding, poking and balancing with the ladder in one hand and a 10 foot length of bamboo in the other. Other than facefuls of bees, there was little payoff for my foolish efforts. Remembering that I had a swarm trap in my car, I grabbed it and nailed it 150 feet from the swarm in hope that they will move in. Tomorrow I'll check it out.

So far all of my (3) swarms have been Carniolans. No Italians, Buckfasts, Minnesota Hygienics have swarmed...yet.