



Fall Management

**Producing Healthy Honey Bees for
2010**

The best fall management is to have all colonies strong and healthy with lots of young bees and young queens, and with plenty of honey and pollen.

Plan to requeen every two years, or even annually, to keep bee populations high.

Young queens lay longer into fall than do older queens.

Young queens swarm less often than do older queens.

September is a good month to requeen:

queens are cheaper and will lay into fall.

But, it is hard to find the queen in late summer and early fall, and robbing can be a problem.

Make sure your colonies are free of diseases and mites.

Make sure colonies are located in a good area with abundant sunlight from the east and south, and good air drainage.

Never put bees [Apiaries] on the north or northeast side of a mountain.

10 Basic Steps of Fall Management:

1. Combine weak colonies with strong colonies; never combine two weak colonies.

2. Leave plenty of honey for winter:

- Never take all honey in July**
- 60 lbs per colony in Morgantown.**
- 75-90 lbs in higher elevations
[Preston County, Garrett County, etc.].**

Many bees are killed by beekeepers who take off too much honey too early in the year [late June, July].

3. Remove all queen excluders and empty supers from the tops of hives.

These will separate the bees from the queen, or become bee traps without honey for the cluster.

If left on, bees will die.



Remove
Queen
Excluder

4. Repair or replace damaged supers, hive bodies, top covers, bottom boards, etc.

Get rid of rotten equipment.

Make sure hives are sound and there are no unwanted holes or openings.

Repair
Old
Equipment



5. Feed syrup before September 10 (if possible):

Feed cane sugar or beet sugar, that is, sucrose, or granulated sugar, as a 1:1 syrup (one part water, one part sugar).

Never use 'high fructose' corn syrup.

Add MegaBee (Dadant) or other protein to the syrup along with Honey B Healthy.

If you wait too long, the weather is likely to become too cool to feed bees. Provide two one-half gallon jars of syrup per hive, per week, if possible.



Top Feeder



**Boardman
Feeder**

5. continued.

Add cream of tartar (1 tsp. for each 2-3 gallons of syrup) to prevent crystallization.

Each gallon of syrup that is fed to bees, increases “honey stores” by 7 lbs.

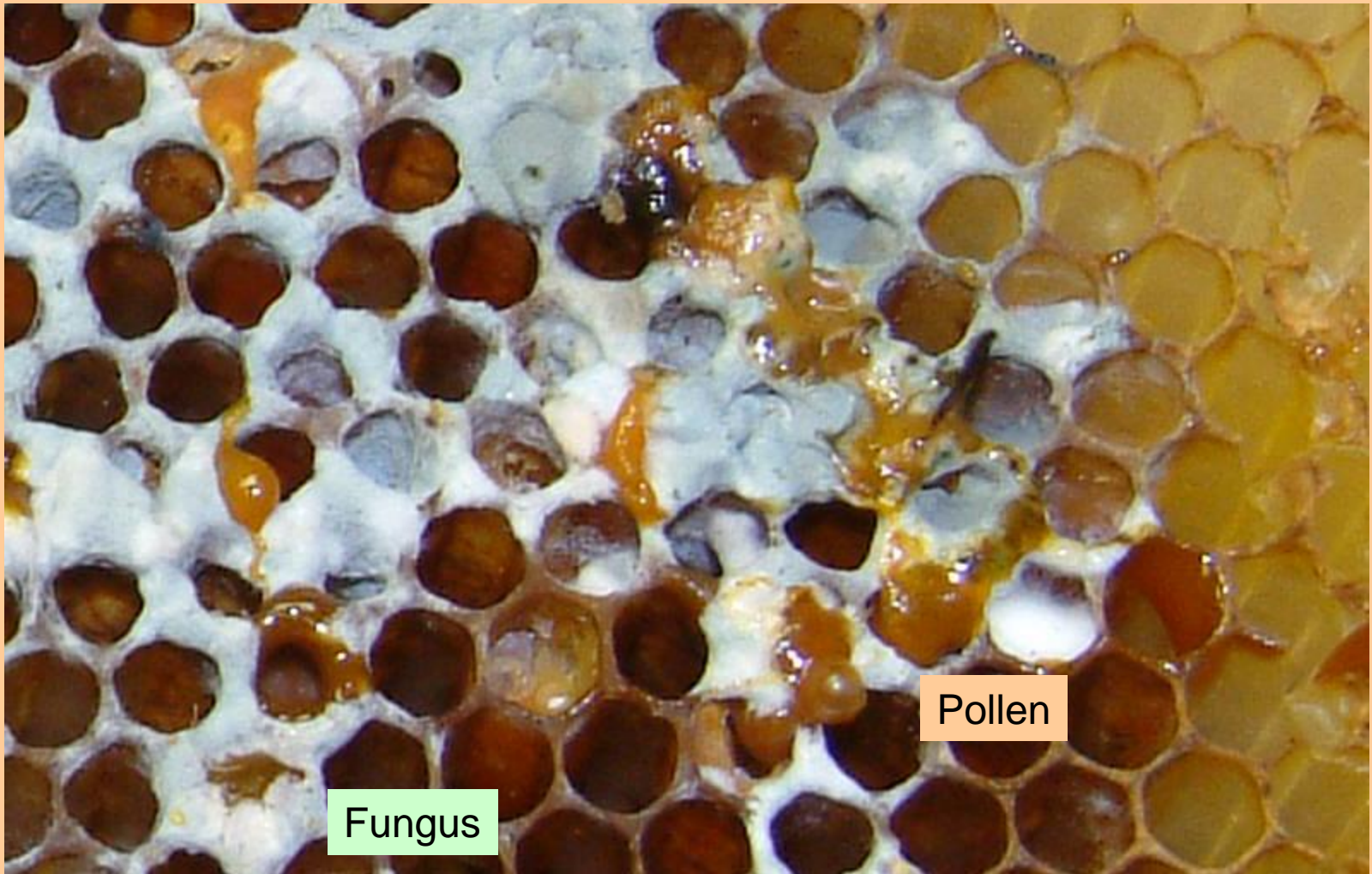
[1 gallon of syrup weighs 10-11 lbs.]

[Bees must remove excess water from syrup to make “honey”.]

6. Provide Upper Ventilation:

a. reverse the inner cover so that extra space is above the bees, providing communication for the cluster.

b. drill a 3/4" hole in upper brood chamber; this will allow moist air and bees to exit, & fresh air to come in; it prevents blockage by snow.



Result of poor ventilation and excess moisture.

7. If necessary, provide a means to absorb excess moisture: remove inner covers, replace with fiber board with a hole near the center; place twigs between this and the top cover for increased bee space [for winter communication].

Avoid plastic inner covers or plastic top covers; when bees consume honey to keep warm, their “breath” condenses on cold smooth surfaces causing a “rain” that drops back into the bees, wetting them and then killing them.

8. Reduce the entrance to prevent entry and damage by mice:

a. Reverse the bottom board.

b. Or, place an entrance reducer in the entrance, with the small opening at the top of the cleat; or use 1/4" hardware cloth to keep out mice.

A mouse can enter any hole larger than 3/8", the diameter of its skull.



Entrance reducer - a wooden cleat.

9. Provide a wind break in exposed places, especially to the north and west sides.

You can use a snow fence, bales of hay, or you can plant shrubs. Leave at least one foot between bales and hives. Be sure the hive entrances face toward the south (where sunlight will fall on the entrance and help warm the bees).

10. If you wrap colonies in black tar paper, be sure you have good ventilation and an upper entrance.

Don't wrap them until late November or December. Unwrap them in March.