



• SINCE 1923 •

BEEKEEPING IN APRIL

Spring showers and early flowers bring ... bees! April is here and the hive is beginning to grow. Similar to the hive, so grows the list of to-dos for the beekeeper.

APRIL: BEES

The weather begins to improve, and the early blossoms begin to appear. As the month progresses, more and more pollen and nectar sources become available. Dandelions, willows, fruit trees, maples and some berries will begin blooming and are the major sources of pollen and nectar. The queen is busily laying eggs and the bees are raising brood in preparation for the coming year. The population is growing fast and the drones will begin to appear.

APRIL: BEEKEEPING

Good nutrition for your hives will be naturally a challenge with the irregular spring weather (rain, wind and cold). If there's no food available to your hives; feed, feed, and feed some more! If you think there might be a tiny shortage, feed as early as

you can and check for carbs and protein. A protein patty (or frame of pollen) now is the cheapest insurance you can buy. For carbs, try a sugar board, (or frames of honey). Easy to feed and easy to eat. Feeding syrup or sugar boards will stimulate your bees and encourage them to eat. Continue feeding until they no longer take your offering.

Weather permitting, comprehensive inspection and spring cleaning time is here. Reverse the brood supers, unless the colony and brood are strong (covering both boxes). In this case, you should probably not reverse boxes (as this will split the brood area). You should, however, clean the bottom board whether you reverse boxes or not.

***Note:** Depending on the weather all of the above may need to be delayed until early May.*

Later in the month, check your hives on a warm day for brood pattern, signs of diseases and overall health. If diseases or parasites are found, take necessary action to treat using whatever methods you are comfortable with.

HONEY BEE FUN FACT »

The honey bee's wings stroke 11,400 times per minute, thus making their distinctive buzz.



Be especially mindful of swarming. You may want to set up swarm capture traps and have swarm retrieval equipment ready. Provide more room (if necessary) and consider splitting the hive. In extreme overcrowding (a very strong colony), checkerboarding may be an option worth considering. If swarm cells are present, you may try removing them but chances are the bees will still swarm.

If you're starting new this year, make sure all of your equipment is assembled and painted. You should have at least one deep brood box and frames ready; along with a bottom board, inner cover, outer cover and feeding mechanism and supplies for when the bee packages arrive. If you don't, DO IT now. Then, install the new packages of bees.

Estimated time needed: 3+ hours*

APRIL: CHECKLIST

- Install early ordered bee packages
- Perform spring splits and install nucs and queens starts (if needed) as the weather permits
- Feed 1 gallon of High Fructose Corn Syrup "HFCS" every 10 days
- Feed 1-2 lbs of Fat Bee Pollen Supplement every 10 days
- Remove the mouse guard
- Test and treat (if needed) for Varroa Mites. Read labels carefully and don't contaminate your honey crop.
- Attend your local bee club meetings or workshops

GENERAL NOTES

Weather is the ultimate calendar when taking care of bees. Depending on the weather and your bee type, the time frame for activities should be adjusted earlier or later as necessary. You will have more success adapting to the bee's schedule, rather than them adapting to yours.

Beekeepers are many and varied; some choose a hands off approach, while some are very hands on. Some choose to medicate and others are using other Integrated Pest Management (IPM) methods which do not include medication. Whatever your preference, you can and should adapt this calendar to fit your needs. Thank you for keeping bees, and let us know if you have any questions regarding your hive. We're always happy to help.

**Time estimates do not include equipment repair and cleaning or honey extraction.*



FLOWERS BEES LOVE IN SPRING

**Bloom times vary depending on the variety, seasonal weather and elevation.*

PERENNIAL FLOWERS

- Alexanders
- Anemone
- Bergenia
- Brunnera
- Beardtongue
- Bleeding Hearts
- False Indigo & Wild Indigo
- Goat's Beard
- Hepatica
- Jacob's Ladder
- Lupine
- Peony
- Phlox
- Pincushion
- Poppy (California Orange)
- Poppy (Shirley & Mix Colors)
- Prairie Smoke
- Scorpionweed
- Snapdragon
- Spiderwort
- Waterleaf (Flower & Borage Herb)
- Wild Geranium
- Wild Onion & Wild Garlic (Flower & Edible Root)

SHRUBS

- Chokecherry
- Currant
- Honeysuckle (Vine or Shrub)
- Lilacs
- Redtwig Dogwood

TREES

- Crabapple
- Nectarine
- Peach
- Pear
- Plum

Information for this article was provided by Kent Mickelsen, Utah Certified Nurseryman, IFA Country Store; Utah State University Extension; and Slide Ridge Honey in Mendon, Utah.

