EXERCISE 15 TECHNIQUES IN LOCATING QUEEN BEE

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15.0 INTRODUCTION

Many times, beekeepers need to trace out queen bee in a populous colony for various purposes. Queen bee is required to be located for ensuring the presence of queen bee, its age, during division of colonies, at uniting of weaker colonies, for its clipping to prevent swarming, for restricting it into the brood chamber using queen excluder before the onset of nectar flow, restricting it into smaller egg laying part of the brood chamber of breeder colony for getting young worker larvae for grafting for mass queen bee rearing, restricting it onto cupkit or Karl-Jenter apparatus for mass queen bee rearing, etc. In a populous colony, sometimes, it becomes a laborious and time consuming operation if tried to trace it amongst bees by searching combs one by one. Thus, it is very essential to learn techniques for searching queen bee.

Objectives

After doing this exercise, you will be in a position to learn the techniques to locate the queen bee in a populous honeybee colony.

15.1 PROCEDURE

Before explaining the procedure, let us look into the principle of this exercise.

Principle

The following considerations can borne as principle for locating queen bee:

1. Queen bee is larger and easily distinguishable from worker bees and drone bees.
2. Queen bee prefers darker/ enclosed parts of combs to lighted faces of combs.
3. **Queen bee cannot pass through queen excluder while worker bees can pass through it.**

Requirements

You need the following articles to carry out this exercise:

1. A populous honeybee colonies,
2. An empty hive,
3. Protective clothing *i.e.* bee veil and gloves,
4. Smoker, and
5. Horizontal queen excluder.

Steps

1. Practice to find queen bee through routine practice by observing all the combs one-by-one.
2. Learn and practice to find queen bee by following 'Combs Pairing' method.
3. Learn and practice to trace queen bee by 'Hive Displacement' method.
4. Learn and practice tracing queen bee by 'Sieve' method.
5. Record the time taken for tracing queen bee in all the methods.
6. Record the drudgery required in all the methods of searching queen bee.

15.2 OBSERVATIONS AND RESULT

Queen bee is an important member of a hive. Locating the queen bee help in taking care of it properly or it required it may be relocated at a desired place.

15.3 PRECAUTIONS

In order to accomplish the exercise, you need to adhere to the following precautions:

- Do not give heavy smoke to the bee colonies for searching queen bee by conventional method of looking for it on all the combs one-by-one.
- Keep the other chamber under 'Comb Pairing' method close by to the original honeybee colony to ensure little disturbance to the bees and avoiding any drifting of the bees.