

LOGO

# Swarm Control

**Bee School 2017**



# What is a swarm?



# When is swarm season?

- Usually between May 10 to July 1
- A process that healthy spring colonies go through to divide into two or more colonies.
- An amazing event that typically takes place in the spring when conditions are right.

# When is swarm season?

- Each swarm will have a queen bee and up to half of the colony's worker bees as well as some of the male drones.
- They all take flight in order to establish new colonies in an effort of survival of the species.
- Instinctual for colony survival

# My swarm



# My swarm



LOGO

# What do you do now?

- RUN LIKE HELL?



# What do you do now?



- **When encountering a swarm, it is best to allow a knowledgeable beekeeper, comfortable with handling bees, to deal with the removal.**
  
- **Location of swarm**



# Swarm Causes



- Strong spring build up
- Brood growing stronger
- Abundant foraging
- Needs more space
- Weather is improving / summer
- Queen cells start
- Less Eggs noticed

# Swarm Indications



- Queen behavior
- Hive Inspection for Queen cells
  - Natural
  - Supersedure
  - Swarm
  - Numbers

# Swarm Indications

## Queen Cells

**Supercedure cells** are queen cells found along the center of a given frame.

**Swarm cells** are found clinging to the bottom of the brood frame and are used to rear a **SECOND QUEEN**



# Supersedure Indications

- Hive Inspection
- Queen cell location
- Current queen emergency
  - Dead
  - Old
  - Diseased
- Current queen failing

# Supersedure Indications

- Increase in drone brood
- Laying worker / low to no brood
- Fanning increase / noisy
- Increase defensiveness
- More bees in flying nearby
- Agitated

# Swarm Indications



- Hive Inspection
- Queen cell location
- Inspection of queen cells
  - Eggs/larvae
- Queen reduces egg output

# Swarm Indications



- Slims down
- Foragers stay home
- Queen larvae pupates
- Bees spill out

# Swarm in Flight





# Not to be confused



**Bearding  $\neq$  Swarming**

**Bearding = Crowded / Hot**

**Crowded  $\Rightarrow$  Swarm**



# Swarm Prevention



- Strong overwintered hive
- Once prepared, inevitable
- Early prevention starts March/April
- 7 step process

# Swarm Prevention



- Plan on early splits
- Reverse brood chambers
- Requeen
- Bee Breed tendencies
- Regular spring inspections

# Swarm Prevention



- Monitor Mother Nature
- Give them space
- Add brood chamber early
- Checkerboard new frames
- Add supers
- Slotted bottom rack