

OTS QUEEN REARING

Winter Survival Updates

I want to thank everyone that has already purchased OTS QUEEN REARING.

2013-2014 has been one of the most brutal winters on record in Michigan in terms of extended cold and frigid temperature extremes. July starts began to overwinter in November with snow and temperatures already in the single digits followed by persistent sub-zero temperatures (Fahrenheit) throughout the winter with only spontaneous breaks in the 20's.

There are reports of much loss but I want to explain how this loss is offset with OTS. For example, I lost 50% of my July starts. If you check the chart on page 26 you will see that I made 4 July starts from my overwintered queen colony on July 1. At first glance, losing two out of four starts equates to a 50% loss but if you figure in that there are two hives instead of one with which I started, then it is actually a 100% increase. This is one way in which OTS embodies the powerful beekeeping concepts that the industry lost in the last 100 years since Doolittle.

In spite of it having been one of the worst winters in history, many July starts survived. I have reports of 100% survival rate (11 out of 11) in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area. Other impressive reports show survival rates of 44 out of 48 and 36 out of 39 which once again prove that even in the harshest winters you can overwinter at least 75% if OTS is performed correctly and insecticides are not involved. As one beekeepers said to me, "These July starts are tough as nails . . ."

Recent research performed in September 2013 using ether roll and alcohol wash methods showed that OTS starts have 0-1 mites per 100 bees. These starts were reared without miticide treatment but eliminated the mites biologically by breaking the mites breeding cycle.

Before overwintering, July starts are fed syrup with Fumagilin-B to prevent Nosema from gaining ground when conditions become more stressful. Fumagilin-B is an antibiotic that has been around for 40 years and is safe for bees.

The OTS Queen Rearing book is a must for every beekeeper to rear quality queens and save colonies. The value of the book is incalculable as all beekeepers world wide can utilize the concepts to increase honeybee colony populations.