

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS 2019

There have been frequently asked questions regarding the OTS (On-The-Spot) queen rearing method described in my book for which I offer answers below:

1. When is the swarming time in my area?

On page 31, I give a swarming guideline date of May 1 on the 43rd parallel. That guideline is not accurate enough because if you are at different elevations the dates will be different. A reliable swarming indicator worldwide, wherever there are honeybee colonies, is having at least 6 frames of brood in the spring and seeing live drones in your apiary before you make the artificial swarm and notch so that both the virgins and drones will be sexually mature for successful mating. Remember that it is essential to have at minimum 4 frames of brood to rear quality queens so that when you make the artificial swarm with 2 frames of brood you still have the 4 frames on the original location to rear the new queen cells.

2. Why are OTS queens so much better?

In the back of the book is a reprint of my research that led to the discovery of the OTS queen rearing method and brood-break that reduces varroa mites. On page 146, Chapter 1, entitled FARRAR'S LAW from the USDA explains that honeybee queen larva must gain 1500 times in weight in 5 days from emergence to sealing the cell. That is 120 hours or 12.5 times in weight every hour. To give a couple of examples..... If you have a pound of hamburger, in 5 days it would be 1500 pounds of hamburger, or 3/4 of a ton.....If you weigh 100 pounds then in 5 days you would weigh 150,000 pounds or 75 tons. Such exponential increase means that any break in larval nutrition will stunt the growth and quality of the queen. With OTS the larva is left untouched so that there is no break in larval nutrition and the new queen is reared by her own bees which results in a quality queen every time. Note: if you click on the queen bee on my page you can read the entire research free-of-charge.

3. Why is this brood-break that I discovered in the 1980's so important?

It is proven in nature that African bees have varroa yet it never kills them because they swarm so much that they are constantly creating a brood-break. This biologically innate behavior interferes with the varroa mites' reproduction cycle for which they can't build immunity. As a result, the African bees don't need miticides. All swarms cause a brood-break, even packages.

4. Why is your book so expensive?

My book isn't expensive when you consider that you can rear 3 queens in a morning or save one hive which is very cost efficient. However, you have to follow instructions. Novice beekeepers are successful their very first time if they properly follow the instructions given in my book. Therefore, before you get advice from anyone make sure they are successful and understand my OTS method or email me. OTS has worked for me every time for over 25 years, which makes it good science.

5. What is the most important objective of the OTS?

Farming honeybees and providing offspring for next year is the most important objective. OTS allows everyone to farm honeybee livestock. Honeybees are livestock but for the last 100 years we have been programmed to buy packages or nucs in the spring to replace winter losses. A

cattle farmer has a calf for next year's cow. A sheep farmer has a lamb for next year's sheep but beekeepers don't know how to provide bees for next year's bees. I have introduced a new term to beekeepers and wrote a chapter on what I call ALPHA bees. You don't see that term in beekeeping literature but they are the control bees in a hive. We have been taught that the queen is royalty but if you remove the queen in the spring to make the artificial swarm (page 31) there should be no order at the original location without the queen, yet there is complete order because the alpha bees which control the hive immediately give the order to rear queen cells. The queen can't even lay an egg unless the alpha bees give the order to the nurse bees to feed her. Same for swarming, the alpha bees give the order to the nurse bees to stop feeding her so she can be light enough to follow the swarm. The queen makes no hive decisions as the alpha bees do it all. Therefore, to be successful you need to know how to give direction to the alpha bees to do what you want them to do. In other words, the beekeeper must be the head alpha bee.

6. Is there a way I can save the old queen when I make the July start?

After re-evaluating this issue, the answer is yes. Simply take the old queen and one frame of honey (no brood) and shake a pound of bees in it. Treat it just like a package. If in 35 days one of your July starts doesn't mate, unite this old queen with a newspaper before the alpha bees rear laying workers in order to save this start.

7. Do you use miticides?

For well over 25 years, since the late 1980s, I have not used miticides as it would have tainted all of my research to design a brood-break to reduce varroa mites. I had to do 2 things, change the direction of the alpha bees and make an artificial swarm. I know that in the spring strong overwintered colonies can out-breed the mites until July 1 or after the summer solstice when the alpha bees slow down the queen. Then the mites can out-breed the bees and have the collapse as shown (on page 105) which puts the hive in decline. By making the artificial supersedure, you are giving new direction to the alpha bees as they will now give orders to feed the new queen just like in the spring because of shorter day length. Therefore, they won't shut her down and you will have lots of young bees going into winter. This is not only an artificial supersedure but also a swarm the first of August. Remember, all swarms break the mites breeding cycle. Old school states "a swarm in May is worth a load of hay," "a swarm in June isn't worth a tune," but I will now tell you that "an August swarm brings us back to norm."

Since this strong July start can become re-infested by mites when they rob out MITE BOMBS (weak, failing, unmanaged hives in the area), I now give an Oxalic Acid vapor treatment in the middle of November.

8. Do you do mite counts?

No, with the OTS it is unnecessary because I know I have mites. My reasoning is that it is nice to have a mite count but it is an unreliable diagnosis that can confuse novice beekeepers. Let me explain. Again (on page 105) it was determined by the USDA that 5 mites per one hundred is fatal to the hive. I must now use direct and circumstantial evidence to further explain my position. If you have 1 mite per one hundred, that is direct evidence, but because you have emerging mites in the hive you know that you have breeding mites under the cappings. That is circumstantial evidence and each mite produces 3 fertile mite offspring that emerge in 13 days. You now have your fatal mite count of 5 mites per one hundred in less than two weeks. The only cure is that you have enough emerging clean bees to keep the ratio at 1 per one hundred. Now if the alpha bees decide to shut down the queen, after the solstice, you have a dead hive even though they will fly until fall. Therefore, depending on mite counts gives the novice a false sense of security that everything is fine when it really isn't.

9. What do I think about the beekeeping future?

My OTS method has the unique ability to survive honeybee colonies through difficult circumstances in that there are colony gains in spite of losses. Let me explain how this works by using the difficult weather pattern of late winter/early spring 2019:

In spring 2018, I had 10, 8 brood frame, artificial swarms from which I made 40 nice July starts. In early March, I had 80% survival (32 out of 40) but then during the last part of March we had a severe polar vortex with temperatures down in the single digits. This severe cold weather coincided with the period during which my colonies were rearing a lot of brood, which they must keep at 92F. As a result, I lost 14 more colonies so I had 22 losses and 18 survivors. But even with this kind of loss I still made increase as I gained 8 hives over winter because I had originally started with 10. How can you have 22 losses and still gain 8 hives? Only with the OTS which farms and reproduces honeybee livestock. Because of the brood-break that is built into my method, I have controlled varroa and should maintain an 80% overwinter success. That would mean 10% loss naturally (weather) and 10% loss chemically (unexpected pesticide encroachment in the bee pasture that is, unfortunately, not within my control). And when weather conditions aren't too bad and the bees aren't harmed by pesticides, the colony increase potential is virtually exponential.

I am optimistic about the future of beekeeping after having used and tested the OTS method of rearing queens and healthy honeybee colonies for over 25 years. The way OTS exponentially increases the rate of healthy population reproduction puts the honeybee colonies in steadfast position to endure much loss during tough conditions. I personally know many beekeepers having huge successes including a 14-year-old boy who sold over 100 OTS quality queens last year and many other beekeepers creating great increase with OTS.