

Bees! You might want to start thinking about how many packages of bees you would like to order this spring. With the Dwindle disease in the lower forty eight it would be a good idea to firm up your order. You will have many choices or kinds of bees to get. Italian tend to work longer hours, produce a good crop of honey, and are not as successful in wintering as others. They do not seem to shut down on brood which causes them to consume winter stores and could lead to inadequate food for the winter. Carniolans brood up very fast, tend to swarm a bit more than Italian, shut down for the winter quicker than Italian, and seem to tolerate the winter ok. Their honey production is good but some say the Italians produce better because they are out of the hive earlier and stay out longer than others.

Caucasians are a bit darker bee and have a good brood building trait and produce well, not as prone to swarm as the Carniolans and winter over well in the Dakotas and Canada. When ordering bees remember only the queen is guaranteed to be of the type you want. The attendant bees that travel with her are field run, primarily Italian bees that will help in the start of the hive and die off naturally and be replaced with the new queens offspring.

Double queening is an option to building brood faster in the spring. I suggest you dig into double queening as a way to get a jump start on the season and my experience is that if you use one queen you will get 1X honey; if you double queen you will get 3X honey. Double queening is not for everyone but has been used successfully for years in Alaska with great results. Check the new SABA website for Honey Bee suppliers in our club.

This next club meeting will have many, many handouts, prizes to be given away and more information than you could possibly receive in our newsletter. I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting and appreciate your support as the SABA President.

Dr. Joe Carson