

Spring Management

Early Spring through May

By: G. Mehl, March 2021



Packages are here!

- ❑ Some packages already installed
- ❑ Many arriving early April
- ❑ Special considerations installing near over-wintered colonies
 - ❑ Robbing screens?
 - ❑ Smallest entrance
 - ❑ Feed one, feed all, at least until the flow starts in earnest



Its Spring!!

- ▶ What's Blooming near you?
- ▶ Mark the calendar and note what's blooming
- ▶ What color pollen is coming in?
- ▶ Are you seeing nectar?
- ▶ Are the bees building comb?



Watch the entrance

- ▶ Pollen coming in?
 - ▶ Brood stimulates foragers to collect pollen
 - ▶ Note the color and try to figure out what is blooming (record it?)
- ▶ **Water collectors** (water is needed to thin down honey for use)
- ▶ New bees conducting orientation flights
- ▶ Guard Bees
- ▶ Undertaker bees (chalk brood?)



Dead Hives

- ▶ Clean and secure equipment
- ▶ If they didn't survive, why and what to do differently?
 - ▶ PMS (Parasitic Mite Syndrome)
 - ▶ Too Small a Cluster (maybe lost the queen?)
 - ▶ AFB
 - ▶ Starvation
 - ▶ Water/Moisture



First Spring Inspection

- Remove wraps
- Remove winter food and shims (bee space)
- Inspect when warm enough, in the middle of the day, *when bees are flying freely*
- Check for evidence of a laying queen
- Look for stores/resources
- Check equipment condition
- Clean the bottom board and remove burr comb
- Look for disease, pests
- Don't break the brood nest if still cold at night
- Verify the queen has room to lay



Record Keeping

- ▶ Date
- ▶ What you found
 - ▶ **Frames of bees**
 - ▶ **Stores** (honey and Pollen)
 - ▶ Queen
 - ▶ Broken, damaged equipment
 - ▶ Varroa Count?
- ▶ What you did
 - ▶ Fed and what
 - ▶ Ordered a queen
 - ▶ Replaced equipment
 - ▶ Treated for Varroa?



Stimulate Growth/Expansion

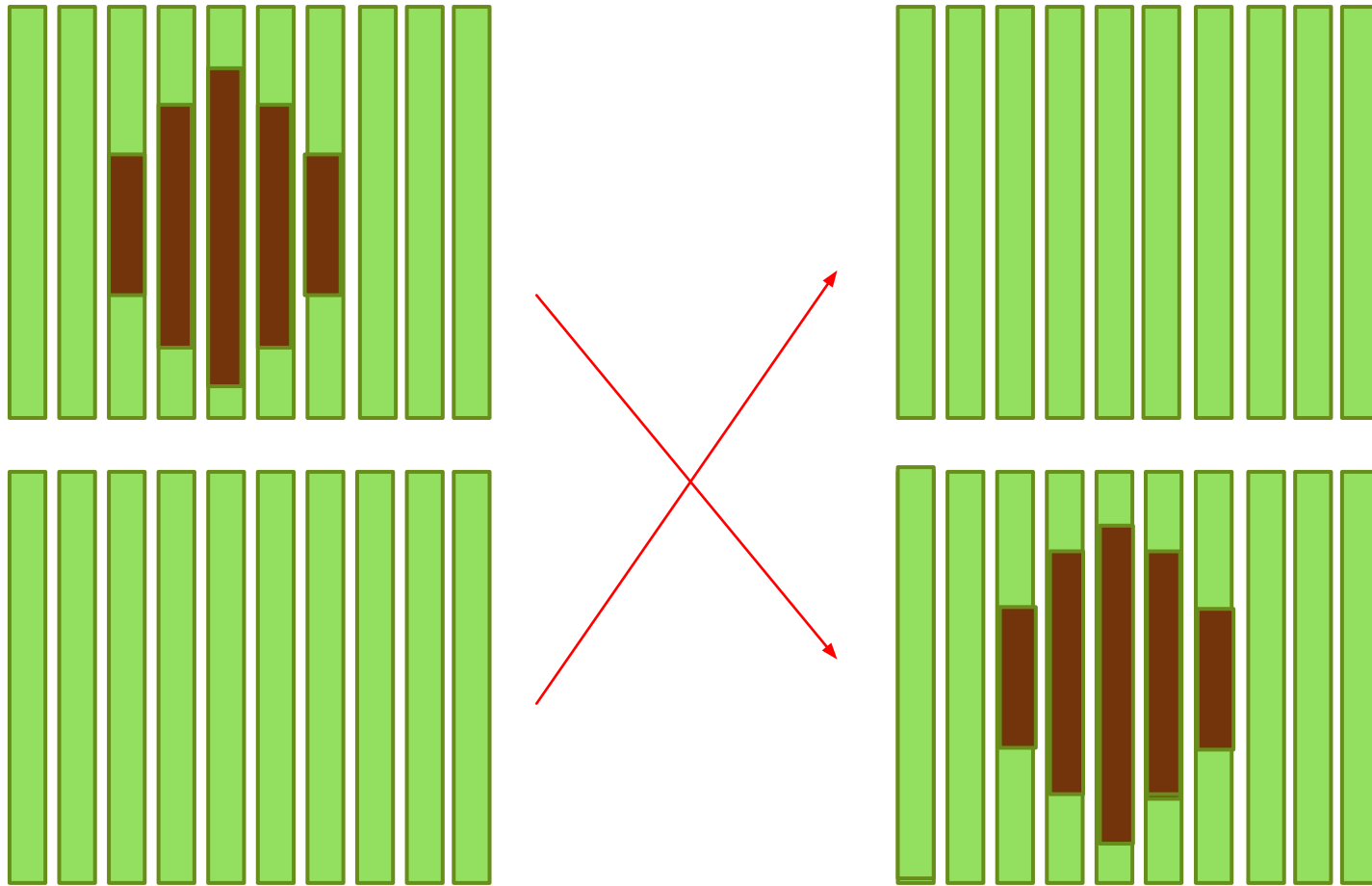
- ▶ Once *above* approx. high 30s to 40F *at night*, start feeding 1:1 sugar syrup (NOW)
 - ▶ Stimulates/frees up foragers to collect more pollen
 - ▶ Stimulates Queen to lay more
 - ▶ Stimulates comb building in new colonies
 - ▶ If feeding one colony, feed all colonies in a yard
- ▶ Consider feeding Pollen Substitute (i.e.—Pollen Patties) *SHB danger



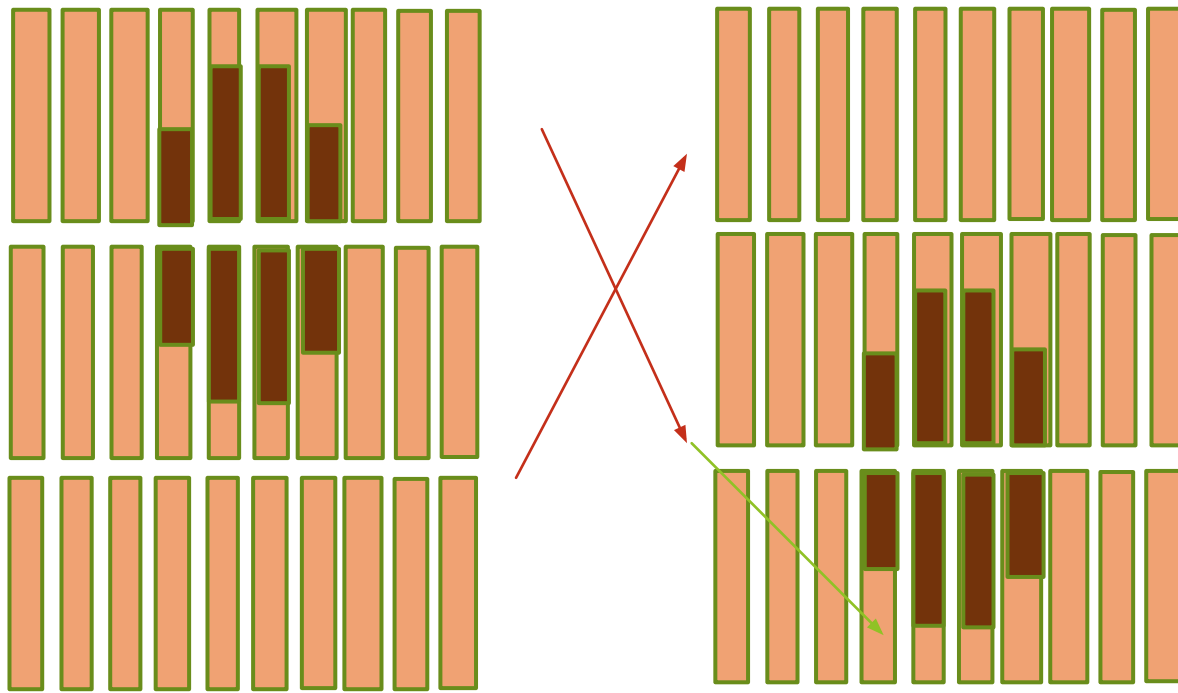
Stimulate Growth/Expansion

- ▶ Consider reversing boxes
 - ▶ If brood nest is entirely in upper box or two boxes, if using all mediums
 - ▶ If not too cold that brood gets chilled down low
 - ▶ If you are not sure its warm enough, wait a till next inspection
 - ▶ Don't split the brood nest! (yet)

Reversing Boxes

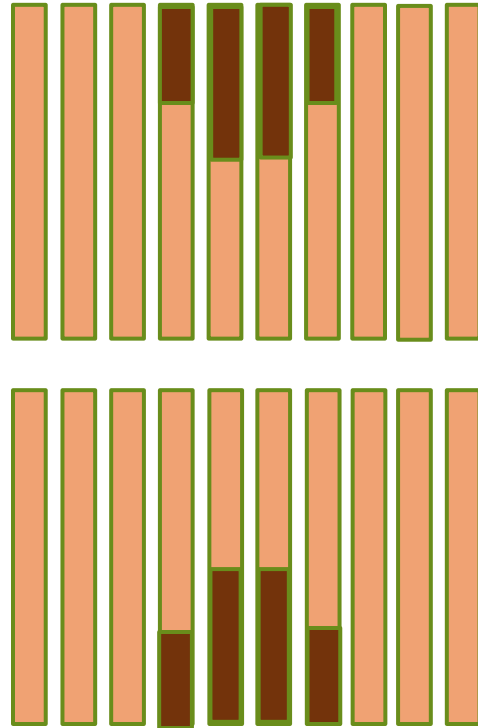


Reversing Boxes (3 mediums)



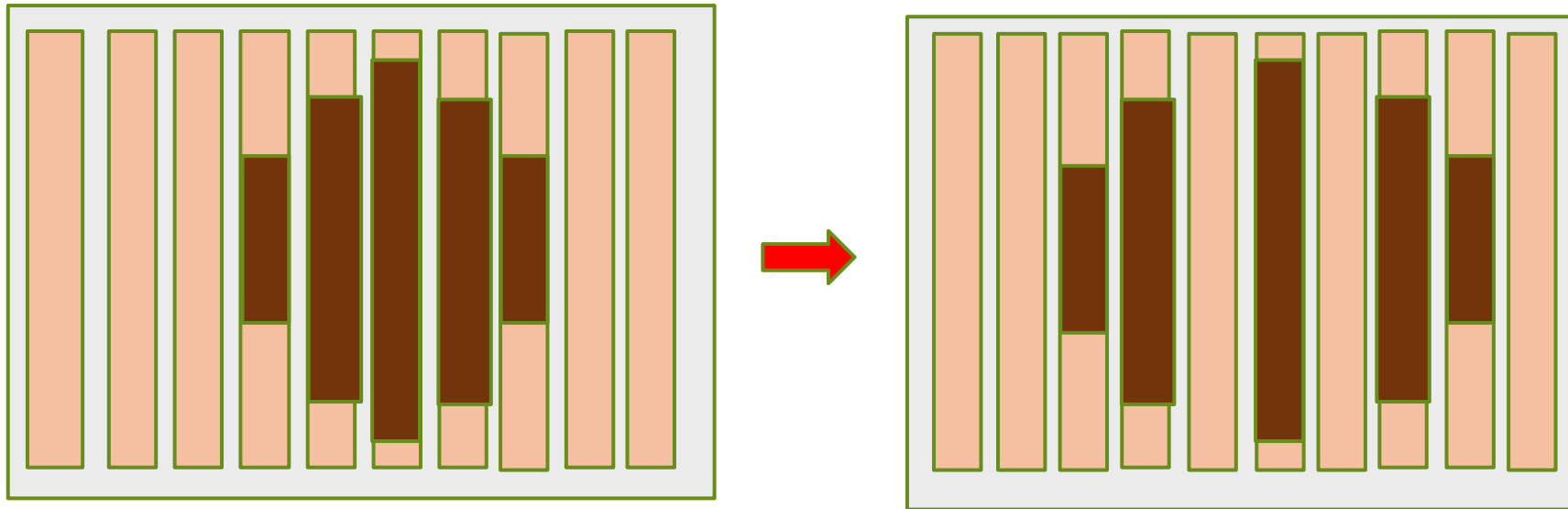
Incorrect Reversal, Splitting the Brood Nest

- ▶ If the Brood Nest spans between boxes, don't reverse **while danger of chilled brood exists.**



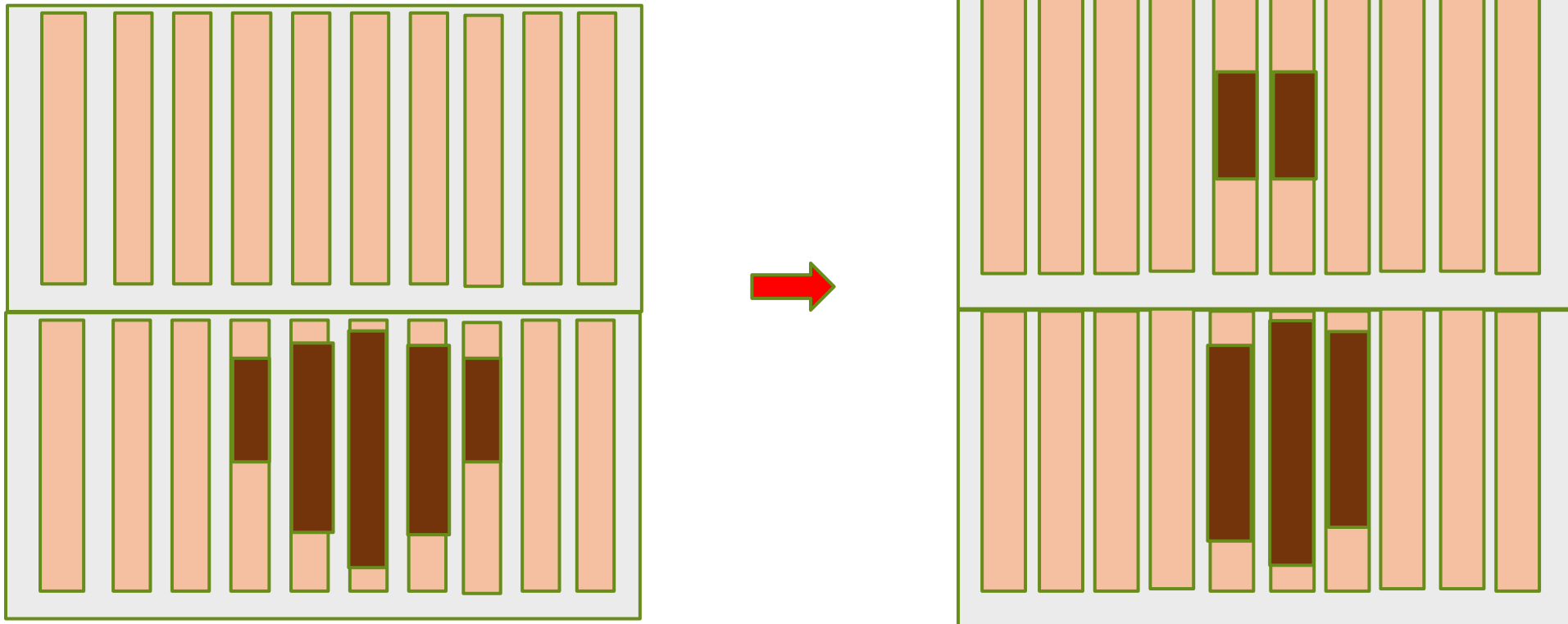
Once it warms up a little more, Another way to open the brood nest

- Open the brood nest by adding drawn out Comb between brood. This should only be done once the nights stay above 50 degrees or so.



Once warmer, Another way to open the brood nest

- ▶ Open the brood nest by moving one or two frames up to higher box.



Managing for Spring Nectar Flow to maximize honey crop

- ▶ Hive population ideally should be at maximum to take advantage of Nectar Flow, not just using the flow for growth.
 - ▶ Young Queen (born after the summer solstice--*remember this for next year!*)
 - ▶ Stimulate brood production early by:
 - ▶ Feeding 1:1 sugar syrup
 - ▶ Reversing boxes and/or expanding the brood nest
 - ▶ Cleaning the bottom board, keep pests, disease in check
- ▶ Give them enough room or extra space!
 - ▶ For queen to lay
 - ▶ For the nectar coming in (not yet a full flow, but they still need some space)

Managing for Spring Nectar Flow to maximize honey crop

- ▶ *Prevent Swarming!*
- ▶ Super at the right time
- ▶ Consider extra ventilation using screened inner covers once they are bringing in large amounts of nectar
- ▶ *Prevent Swarming!*
- ▶ Every colony is different. Read the colony.



Questions?