



Backyard Beekeeping Timeline for California

First Year Beekeeper

Read and Take Classes; Talk to other Beekeepers; Order Packages or Nucs; Order and Prepare hive equipment; Determine Feeding and Mite management protocols

JANUARY–MARCH

Pick-up/Install Packages and/or Nucs; Ensure queen is present and egg-laying; Ensure bees are drawing the comb properly; Feed syrup to all packages; Add Drone comb if desired

APRIL

Feed syrup to hives with undrawn frames; Inspect colonies regularly; Become more comfortable in the hives; Ensure all stages of brood are present

MAY

Test mite levels in colonies Potentially treat; Unlikely to extract honey from a package; Likely add second super to hives

JUNE

Test mite levels in colonies Potentially treat; Unlikely to extract honey from a package; Likely add second super to hives; Remove Drone comb

JULY

Nectar flow is generally over or very minimal; Test mite population and treat as needed; Reduce and equalize/combine colonies as needed; Check queen has space to lay; Ensure colonies are still rearing brood; Extract and bottle honey; Add Entrance reducers and prevent robbing

AUGUST

Equalize/Combine hives, clear dead-out equipment, define hive losses; Continue to prevent robbing, reduce colonies if needed; Ensure an egg-laying queen is present; Test and treat for mites if needed, feed syrup, feed pollen patties

SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER

Beekeeper w/Previous Hives

Check hives for survival and strength; Order replacement/expansion Packages or Nucs; Clean dead hive equipment; Determine Feeding and Mite management protocols

JANUARY

Continue to check hives for survival and strength; Feed Colonies Syrup and Pollen; Test For mite levels in larger colonies; Potentially treat colonies

FEBRUARY

Provide Space/Supers for expanding colonies; Evaluate Queen laying pattern; Test mite levels in colonies Potentially treat; Add Drone comb if desired

MARCH

Provide Space/Supers for expanding colonies; Evaluate Queen laying pattern; Split strong colonies; Queen Rearing; Replace poor/failing queens; Monitor for Supercedure; Test mite levels in colonies Potentially treat

APRIL

Provide Space/Supers for expanding colonies; Avoid hives from being “honey-bound”; Add honey supers to production colonies; Watch for swarming/ Capture Swarms; Split strong colonies (by early June); Test mite levels in colonies Potentially treat

MAY–JUNE

Provide Space/Supers for expanding colonies; Avoid hives from being “honey-bound”; Add honey supers to production colonies; Test mite levels in colonies Potentially treat; Remove Drone comb; Extract and bottle honey

JULY

More information at: cambp.ucdavis.edu
Questions? Email: camasterbee@gmail.com

