### Backyard Beekeeping Timeline for Southern California

#### First Year Beekeeper

**JANUARY-FEBRUARY**
Read & take classes; talk to other beekeepers; select a mentor; order packages/nucs and equipment; prepare hive; determine feeding and IPM protocols; if weather permits, inspect hives, do not break cluster; study apiary safety; practice lighting smoker

**MARCH** *(swarm season)*
Install packages/nucs; ensure presence of egg-laying queen; ensure comb is being drawn properly; feed syrup to packages/nucs; add drone frame if desired & check every 3 weeks; remove robbing screens and enlarge entrances; watch for early blooming flowers; study IPM

**APRIL** *(swarm season)*
Inspect colonies regularly; become more comfortable in the hive; ensure queen and/or all stages of brood are present; consider splitting strong colonies and/or if multiple queen cells are found; stop feeding when bees no longer take syrup; look for pollen on returning foragers

**MAY-JUNE** *(swarm season)*
Assess mite thresholds & treat if needed; inspect for queen cells, laying pattern, all stages of brood, and remaining cells for egg-laying; split colonies or add deep box/super to avoid “honey-bound” hives; watch for swarms; monitor for pests & diseases

**JULY**
Assess mite thresholds & treat if needed; IPM; monitor for space and back filling; “super” hives as needed; too late in season to split hives; feed as needed to prepare for limited nectar sources

**AUGUST**
Nectar flow is generally minimal; consider honey extraction; prior to winter bee production (September), assess mite thresholds & treat if needed; limited inspections; reduce, equalize, and combine colonies as needed; monitor adequate space and queen laying pattern; consider requeening with mated queen; add entrance reducers or robbing screens to deter robbing

**SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER**
Feed if needed to increase stores; nectar dearth is occurring; limit inspections to deter robbing; winter bee production starts; assess mite thresholds & treat if needed; based on temps, bees may cluster in late October

**NOVEMBER-DECEMBER**
Equalize/combine colonies; determine colony losses; clear dead-out equipment; deter robbing; feed 2:1 syrup to build up winter stores winter as needed. Limit inspections do not break cluster; add wind breaks in apiary; provide ventilation holes to release moisture; insulate lids & restrict entrances. Bees become quiet, but undergo hygienic flights when temps permit

#### Beekeeper w/Previous Hives

**JANUARY**
Check colony survival and strength; order packages or nucs; clean dead-out equipment; determine feeding and IPM protocols; limit inspections; do not break the cluster; plan IPM for the year

**FEBRUARY**
Check colony survival and strength; feed syrup and pollen as needed; assess mite thresholds in larger colonies; treat as needed; watch for pollen on returning foragers; study weak areas of your skills

**MARCH**
Provide space/supers for expanding colonies; evaluate queen laying pattern; assess mite thresholds & treat if needed; add drone frame if desired & cull every 3 weeks; when weather stabilizes remove entrance reducers and robbing screens; order replacement packages/supplies; ready equipment

**APRIL**
Provide space/supers for expanding colonies; evaluate queen laying pattern; split strong colonies; consider rearing or replacing poor/failing queens; install packages/nucs and feed; monitor for queen cells and/or swarm preparations; assess mite thresholds & treat if needed; monitor for pests and diseases

**MAY-JUNE**
Monitor space; super as needed; watch for and capture swarms; split strong colonies by early June; Feed if needed; assess mite thresholds & treat if needed; monitor for pests and diseases

**JULY**
Provide space/supers for expanding colonies to prevent being “honey bound”; remove drone frames; consider honey extraction; prior to winter bee production, assess mite thresholds & treat if needed (Proceed to August on the left)

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