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THE NEBRASKA BEE-KEEPER.

Vol. 4.

April, 1893.

No. 4.

Devoted to Bee-Culture, Honey Production, Fruits, Flowers, Etc.

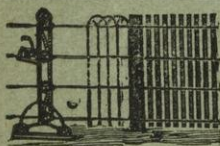
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York, Nebraska.

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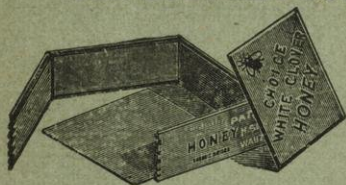
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HENRY STEWART, WAUZEKA, WIS.



J. M. Carr.

NEBRASKA BEE-KEEPER.

Vol. 4.

April, 1893.

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NEBRASKA,

A HONEY PRODUCING STATE.

Her Location and Natural Flora.

From papers prepared for Farmers' Institutes.
By L. D. Stilson.

NUMBER ONE.

The geographical position of our state entitles us to be called a central if not *the* central state in the Union. Midway between the east and the west, we are at the meeting place of eastern ideas and western energy and push. Also in our location between the north and the south, we receive some of the zephyr breezes from the cold north, as well as those from the tropics, each in their time, giving us the early and late rains, as well as a glorious seed time and harvest. Little was known of the territory embraced within our state, previous to the past thirty years.

During the earlier gold excitement at Pike's Peak, the gold seekers and freighters crossed these prairies as speedily as possible. Each, in their race for wealth, cared nothing for the land they passed over, except as it gave them grass for their ponies and freight teams.

The Mormons also on their way to

Salt Lake, passed through our state its entire length, from east to west. Whatever these different classes of pioneers could, or did say of our country and soil, created but little enthusiasm among us easterners, who had studied Morse's or Mitchell's geographies, and still believed this to be the "Great American Desert," as by them taught, and pictured out in their maps. Later, when the Union Pacific R. R. was pushed up the Platte valley, the occupation of the freighter was gone, and in his place came pleasure seekers, who told marvelous stories of the beauty and wealth of the land. These corroborated by hunters and trappers, who, to be near their special line of work, camped along the streams, sometimes planting a little garden truck, which grew luxuriantly. Some of these same trappers are camping here still. No longer living in the adobe hut, or in cloth tent, but in fine houses, surrounded by rich farms.

The Indians cared not to have the white man for company, and only 25 years have passed since a battle was fought within gun shot of where our office now stands, while on the other side, a stone's cast away, are the still visible tracks of the old Pike's Peak trail. As the Indian and Buffalo have given place to the white man with his cattle, so, too, the once wild prairie has given place to the finely cultivated farms, dotted here and there with or-

chards and groves.

Towns and cities have grown up as if by magic. Railroads, telegraph and telephone wires run in every direction. And in matters of education and intelligence of our people, we stand well alongside the states, which, as states, have doubled the the years of our quarter century. Thus we point with pride to what has been accomplished in the past, looking forward to still higher achievements in the future.

As the early settlers found the territory of Nebraska, some would doubt its capability as a honey producing state, but the more observant student, could readily see that there were great possibilities in the future. As we are situated at the meeting place of eastern and western push and ideas, so are we at the meeting place of two distinct floras. The eastern, or as we term it, the cultivated, transplanted to our fair land by loving hands, where finding a congenial soil and climate, they grow to perfection. And the western, or Rocky Mountain flora, brought down from the crags and peaks, or from the the valleys by wind and stream, finding here a lodging place, retaining many of their original characteristics. These plants put forth their leaves at a lower temperature than other plants of like species, whose native home is at a lower altitude and warmer climate. Thus they furnish food for our bees in the form of pollen and some honey, in some cases, before the frost has left the soil at their roots. In early spring as soon as bees can fly, they work busily on red cedar, gathering loads of pollen from the tender twigs of late autumn's growth, and often, as the bees work among the branches, in such numbers, and its harvest of pollen so great, that it arises in a fine dust from the leaves.

The pollen from the red cedar is never entirely over before the native cottonwoods and willows are furnishing pollen and the box elder, or "ash leaved" maple, both pollen from

its buds and sap from its branches, in places where broken, or where eaten into by an insect, which is also fond of its sweet sap. These last until the native plum, growing in thickets along the streams, and in the canyons, begin to bloom, yielding a rich flow both of honey and pollen. The plum bloom is followed by the wild grape, raspberry wild currants wild bush or "sand" cherries, buffalo peas, and wild gooseberries, with small grass flowers, all furnishing a goodly amount of nectar, from which wild bees or those of the early pioneer gather sufficient honey to build up with. These sources of honey were followed quickly by the rose which grows wild on our prairies, in all its glory, where before the breaking-plow had left its mark, acres of these flowers were to be seen, scenting the breezes with their perfume of rich nectar, and from which, at times our bees have stored such quantities, as to thoroughly impregnate the entire contents of the hives with the delicious perfume, giving a peculiar tasting honey owing to presence of the perfume, and never was "Attar of Roses" gathered more pure.

A little later comes the heart's ease, sometimes called ox heart, smartweed etc. This plant grows everywhere as a weed, and it matters little, whether the plant is dwarfed by drouth to a plant a few inches in height or watered by copious showers it has grown to a plant four feet high. It blooms early and continues until killed in the fall by frosts. This yields an abundant supply of rich amber colored honey and probably from this one plant at least one half of all our Nebraska honey is produced.

Several species of the golden rod family are at home on our prairies, but as a class produce but little honey.

At times the sunflower produces some honey of rank flavor and some pollen. Milkweed gives a fine flavored honey, and at some seasons, much of it. Along the water courses and steep

banks of canyons, weeds of various kinds sometimes furnish abundant pasturage for our bees. Certain localities of course have different sources of honey than others; but our aim in this paper is to show in a general way, those most general all over the state, found in a wild state, or as generally termed weeds.

◆ ◆

His Way of Looking at It.

On page 31 of the N. B.-K. you say: "We have a crow to pick with Mr. E. Kretchmer, when on page 28 of this issue, he advocates feeding bees by pouring syrup on the floor of the hive."

Very well, we pick the crow, in fact I have my half already picked and find it is not just the right kind of a fowl.

I admire the tenor of your criticism in advocating cleanliness about everything that is done about a bee-hive or the entire apiary. As a rule, I do not advocate the feeding of bees in any other way than with a proper feeder, but my advice, in the article referred to, was to the beginner with one or two colonies only, and I did not wish to have him purchase a full supply of implements for so few bees, even if we did have them for sale, or because they were better than the plan I named.

Your article brings very forcibly to the mind of all, the importance of local bee-journals, as for instance the NEB. BEE-KEEPER, for the state of Nebraska and adjoining territories. You state in the article referred to, that feeding on the bottom board causes annoyance from the ants; such annoyance is not experienced in our apiary, although we are located just east of the "Big Muddy" as the Missouri river is frequently called.

Are you not a little severe in your article entitled, "Our way of looking at it."? I know of about a dozen bee-journals that started out with great promises and after a few months ended their existence; and the remarks made

about such journals cannot possibly have any reference to the "NEBRASKA BEE-KEEPER"; it is too well established, it is getting better every issue, now nearly four years old and continually pointing out those essentials for that particular locality for which it is intended.

E. KRETCHMER.

Red Oak, Ia.

Referring to that part of the above regarding trouble from ants, we will say that with our dry porous soil, we have more trouble from ants, than in states where a fall and winter rain-fall is had, or on clayey soils, as the ants were domesticated on our prairies before white man ever settled here, living in great numbers in the ground, retaining their former life, as the lands are cultivated, so that it is impossible to locate an apiary on land not already pre-empted by them, and it is well known, that they are great lovers of sweets, they naturally congregate where the "feast is spread." As would be the case where bees were fed as referred to. In such numbers do these ants enter the bee-hives of the sluggard bee-keeper that we have known instances where the bees swarmed out to get rid of them.

We have seen the time in our own apiary when in the summer, the ground was soaked full of water, when in a few hours the ants would wish to seek better shelter, and move, taking eggs and furniture and take up their abode inside the hive in such numbers that a half pint could be scraped out. Only by proper attention to cleanliness can they be kept in check, therefore we do not advocate putting anything anywhere as a bait for them, because it is easier to feed bees that way.

What we said last month was not in reply to any thing said of our own paper, but what we saw regarding others, which we thought ungentlemanly and unbecoming to make. When our paper dies we will send obituary.—ED.

Notes from Maple Apiary.

We have had a winter this year and no mistake about it. Commencing with a big snow storm Dec. 7th, which placed one bee-keeper at least, in a situation something like this:

Out on the desolate prairie,
 Away from all neighbors and kin,
 We look through the frost darkened
 windows,
 Snowed in.

The drifts in front of the stable,
 The fence posts have hidden within,
 The horses and cattle imprisoned,
 Snowed in.

The chickens call out to each other,
 The geese raise a terrible din.
 As loudly they ask for their dinner,
 Snowed in.

The bee-cave, a white mound arising
 Appearing to the grave yard akin,
 With inmates as dead as the winter
 Snowed in.

The big snow bank, a part of it at least, still remains just where it fell 90 days ago. The bees that were buried so nicely under the snow, as well as those wintering in chaff hives outside, have had just one good waking up during the time. Feb. 18 and 19, all had a good flight, those in the cave being carried out for that purpose, during the middle of day.

I about half expected to find quite a number of them dead after the long spell of zero weather we had been having, as there were several rather small colonies in the cave that I was sort o' experimenting on; but only one colony in cave and one outside have decided it was not worth while to live. The one in the cave apparently starved failing to get over to the frames of honey, placed at one side of cluster. The one in in chaff hive outside, had been in some manner overlooked when the others were prepared for winter, and had no sack of leaves placed over cloth covering frames; so I did not

blame them for getting "too cold to thaw out."

Perhaps we will have an early spring this year, and not be obliged to go through the trials of an April and May, almost destitute of sunshine; but whatever may come it will pay to take just the best care we can of our little workers, in order that they may be able to repay us just all they can when their turn comes. Mrs. A. L. Hallenback.

 Blacks vs. Italians.

About four years ago, I sent to a prominent queen breeder for an untested Italian queen. I received her "Majesty" in due time and successfully introduced her and she commenced to lay, but by some hook or crook in a few days she came up missing. I was terribly troubled about loosing my fine Italian queen; but the bees went to work and reared a queen from one of the Italian eggs, and as I had nothing but blacks and hybrids, and there are no pure Italians in this community, the queen must of a necessity be impurely mated, hence her bees would be hybrid, and I must say, if I could get pure Italians as good as them for all practical purposes, I would be well satisfied; but I doubt its being done though, for they are very large, good defenders against robbers, very hardy, you might say none of them—very few at least—died during this very severe winter, and as honey gatherers, they are the best I have. During this very poor season, they gathered in the neighborhood of 50 lbs. of nice comb honey, while very many of my other colonies gathered nothing. They are very industrious, perfect hustlers. Two years ago, I sent and got another Italian queen, introduced her successfully, and she lived all right, and during the summer I tried to get them in as good fix as I could by helping them along and I did get them in pretty good order before winter came on, that was winter before last:

but during the winter they nearly all died, but I did manage to save the queen, and during the last summer, I built them up again until in the fall they were very strong again; you see last fall we had a pretty heavy flow of honey just as I had about given up to feed up for winter, the flow began, and the hive I was speaking of, was full to overflowing with bees and drones plenty of them, and they stayed in the hive till the severe cold weather of this winter killed them, and most of the workers, too. They suffered worse than any bees I had, and were stronger than any when cold weather began. Now if that is the way Italians are going to do, I don't know, but I believe that I should prefer the blacks. I have some stands of blacks that hardly any of them died off so far, and I hope they won't. My bees all alive so far. I have never lost a colony in winter in my life.

Flag Springs, Ky. A. F. McKibben.

Gentle Bees vs. Cross Ones.

WM. CAMM.

Before me lies a copy of the American Farmer, whose principal apicultural correspondent is Mr. J. W. Teft, a bee-keeper, evidently, having a good deal of practical experience, but who, in this copy at least, seems to sling ink very recklessly. He heads an article "Gentle Bees Unprofitable," and proceeds to demolish at least one of the best characteristics we have given the coming, or ideal bee. I have been for many years not only a close student of apiculture, but during all that time a practical apiarist too. I have kept bees for the same purpose that Mr. Teft says he has, to make the bees keep me, and not for the fun of keeping the bees. I have kept blacks that we call natives German browns, gentle Italians, skittish Syrians, stinging Cyprians, and all of their crosses; and my experience has always and continually been exactly reverse of what Mr. T.'s seems to have

been. I have found cross bees that were excellent honey gatherers, especially the progeny of black drones mated with Italian mothers, but I cannot recall ever having had a gentle colony, of any strain, that was not good at honey-gathering in proportion to their gentleness. I have had colonies of every distinct breed, except Cyprians, that were remarkable for their docility, and they were, without a single exception, just as remarkable as honey producers. I am at a loss to know what Mr. T. means by his assertion, unless he simply desires to challenge for the sake of arousing interest in the question, and to bring it up, in this way for searching discussion. It may be, however, that my brother bee-keeper is one of those bee-sharps who go at a bee hive with a brick-bat in one hand to knock the cap loose with. I have noticed that the colonies that are gentlest under ordinary handling are the most irascible, and the hardest to subdue, when once fully exasperated; and if our friend goes at a colony of bees as a man does a cross bull, there is nothing to be surprised at in the conclusion to which he comes. Perhaps he lives in a hollow where polecats are plenty and very aromatic, so that his bees are continually in a sort of hornet state of existence? I have on several occasions had all my bees get on a rampage, and sting every living thing they catch out of doors, anywhere near the apiary, whenever one of these mephitic pussies was near. I never had an occasion of this kind favorable for very deliberate observations as veils, smoke and gloves were far from giving the necessary protection, but it seemed to me that the gentlest Italians were just as naughty as the wickedest Cyprians under such provocation. Whatever may be the cause I cannot help thinking there were some outside or extraneous conditions that brought Mr. T. to such a very erroneous conclusion. This very day I lifted my

hives off the stands, in order to sweep away dead bees and dirt, and I found my gentlest colonies heaviest in honey and strongest in bees. To put the matter to a better test I propose this for your next question box: "*Which are the best honey-gatherers, gentle bees or cross ones?*"

I have always made it a point, in selecting colonies to rear queens from, to find not only the most profitable honey gatherers, but at the same time, the gentlest bees, for I have never lacked colonies in which both qualities could be found.—*Bee-Keepers' Guide*.
Murrayville, Ills., Feb. 19, '93.

Spring Management in the Apiary.

Spring Feeding.

M. H. DEWITT.

As the time of year has again rolled around to commence work in the apiary such as feeding to stimulate brood rearing, a few suggestions to the beginner would not be amiss. If bees have plenty of sealed stores in their hives I do not think it necessary to feed them; but some times they run short of stores, and the bee keeper should look well to his bees, and not let them run out of honey and starve; give them the same attention you would your horses or other stock. As it is often too cool for them to take the feed out of the feeders I often pour the syrup in the empty combs. Hold it up a little distance and let it fall into the comb. Or if you have many combs of sealed honey give them that, you should use every caution not to get your bees to robbing, as this is the time of year that robbers are abundant, trying to gain an entrance to every hive. You should feed about one half pint of thin sugar syrup every night to each colony that you wish to stimulate in order that brood rearing shall receive no check and thus have each colony in a normal condition at the commencing of the

honey flow, we should get each colony full of young at the beginning of the honey flow if you want your bees to give you much surplus honey. They should be tucked up good and warm so that if there should come a cold snap they will be all safe. Do not remove any of the chaff packing until about June first.

If you have any unfinished sections left over from last year, put them in the center of the surplus case with full starters all around them of thin foundation, and this will not fail to start them to work in the sections if there is any honey in the fields and your bees are in the right condition.

Again, I will caution you to look out for robbers, until the honey season opens.—Sang Run, Md.

Theodore Bender's Timely Jottings.

The winter has been the coldest for many years. At the beginning of warm weather all colonies should be examined to ascertain their condition. If they have plenty of honey and bees with a good queen they will not require much for a few weeks, if not, their wants must be supplied.

The bees that were in the cellar wintered nicely, the unprotected ones out doors lost heavily.

Honey dew and poor dark honey caused death to a good many colonies in this vicinity by dysentery. Those having wholesome stores either good honey or sugar syrup came through all right.

A good honey season is expected after a severe winter. Will we get it?

There is much talk about the sugar honey business by some of the leading bee keepers of this country. The sugar that I fed last fall has not changed to honey yet. Perhaps it was on account of the cold weather or because it was in the sections. Mr. E. E. Hasty in the *Bee Keepers Guide* for March says that "there are two states to the bee, the active and the inactive" and further on he states that "very many bee keepers

have experience with syrup stored at the inactive time and no other experience whatever". I have had a good deal of experience in the inactive state or in the fall and a little in the active state and could see no difference whatever in the syrup when stored.

Now is the time bees need the protection so that their brood will not chill if there should be a cold wave.

To feed bees take two pounds of sugar to one of boiling water (a pound of water is a little more a pint) take the water from the fire pour in the sugar and stir till all is desolved making a clear syrup if the weather is cold it is best to feed while warm as the bees will take it from the feeders faster.

Syrup made in this way does not candy very soon.

Canton, O. Theodore Bender.

—THE—

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County Bee-Keepers' Associations.

We have many times urged our readers to form local, or county societies of bee keepers. Some have thought we had an "axe to grind." Others, taking a different view, realize why we advocate the formation of these societies.

There is something in bee-keeping that, especially to a new beginner, feels as though he had rather see some one experiment a little first. And these meetings of bee-keepers, where they are held at different apiaries, gives a fine chance to have some one who is competent, open a hive and give a practical object lesson in the handling and manipulation of the hive and its con-

tents. Theory can be learned from text books and papers, but some experience is also very essential to the proper understanding of the theoretical part of bee-keeping.

Many seem to think they cannot spend the time necessary to attend meetings during the working season. That is just the time to attend every meeting of bee-keepers possible. Every day brings its work, and often some new phase of our work and if we can get the counsel of others, we are helped out of difficulties.

Our state society has never given encouragement to the foundation of local societies, but a proposition has been made which will be printed and sent to all the members and others we can reach asking to change the Constitution so as to recognize local societies and have a uniform system so far as practicable. In this way we may get more interested, and enlarge the scope of our work.

We are in receipt of letters from several points in the state, regarding Constitution and By-Laws for local societies. We think something uniform could be gotten up suitable for all, except the names, etc. If so, they could be sent out for a merely nominal amount. If local societies wish to correspond with us regarding the matter we may be able to get up something of the kind.

Mistakes, yes we all make them, and the farmer who undertakes too much work, is making his mistake too. He gets overworked and lets the littles take care of themselves. The chickens find their feed as best they can. The cows shrink of their milk because the owner cannot get time to properly feed and water; the hogs get sick and the horses get poor; the bees swarm and go to the woods because the master cannot get time to look after all the little things. As a rule the hired man may tend the crops all right, but generally he does not take good care of the little chores. The owner should look to these to get the most profit.

Sealed Covers Again.

Bro. Hill of the *Bee-Keepers' Guide* seems aggrieved at what we said last month regarding sealed covers. He takes a different view of the matter from anything we intended. As we did not propose to criticise the actions or opinions of those who advocated and practised "sealed covers." What we did intend to emphasize was that *we want no more of them ourselves*, and from what we have learned the past month there are a good many more Nebraska bee-keepers who think the same way too.

We have yet to find a single colony nicely tucked up under a good chaff cushion last fall having died this winter; while all those reporting losses so far this spring have all been sealed covers or no care at all. We do not claim that we have an absolute certainty in wintering, but we do say that we have lost bees every time under sealed covers and we think about five or six years of experimenting on this line sufficient to convince us that we want no more of it. Let others do as they choose.

G. M. Whitford, of Arlington, Neb. writes us: "Have tried sealed covers this winter to my sorrow."

This month we show to our readers the picture of J. M. Carr, of Harvard, Nebraska. He is one of Nebraska's go ahead bee-keepers, and queen breeders. Although something of a young man in the business, he has by his straight forward manner of dealing, built up a good supply and queen trade in connection with his apiary, never keeping so many bees as to overstock, but always making a good profit on what he does keep.

Cellar Wintering.

Our bees have been in the cellar since November; I think they will come out pretty mouldy.

We lost 3 swarms last summer

by the bees going away.

Last year was a pretty fair honey year here in Iowa. We got from 30 to 150 lbs. apiece from each colony besides the increase.

I see in Vol. 4 of the Nebraska Bee Keeper a piece about the old maxim "A penny saved is a penny earned". Yes that is a good rule and as the writer has given a few good points on how to save that penny, I will give another, "Use the best and save the most". Where Mr. Kretchmer advocates feeding bees on the floor of the hive, if he would only use a feeder, he would save a good deal of food and probably save the bees from being robbed.

Worthy E. Stoner.

Atlantic, Ia.

As the country grows older, flower-growing will increase in importance, and great areas will find it to be the most important and profitable branch of soil cultivation. The eastern states, from New York eastward, have already developed great floricultural interests. And aside from all commercial considerations, flower-growing enlists the keenest sympathies of a vast multitude of people everywhere. In fact, we are ready to believe that more people are actually engaged in floriculture in some measure, than all other agricultural pursuits combined! Consider that nearly every home in the land draws to itself some color and cheer from decorative plants, and that every woman and nearly every man, loves a pink and a rose! All this interest cannot be measured by the census enumerator any more than the sunshine can be measured; but it is an indispensable part of the national wealth!—*L. H. Bailey, in April American Gardening.*

The regular monthly meeting of the York County Bee Keepers' Association for April, will be held at the home of Daniel Longwell, five miles east of York, on Wednesday, April 19th. A basket dinner will be served by the ladies.

On Mar. 16, the bee-keepers of Hamilton Co. organized a county society. Not a large attendance, it being one of the stormiest days of the winter. The following were elected as officers of the Association: Geo. Stinson, Pres., L. Fye, V. P., Chas. White, Sec., T. B. Johnson, Treas. Hamilton Co. is one of the best honey producing counties in the state and the bee-keepers are wise to be looking after their interests.

Two bills have been presented to the Legislature relating to bees. The first House Roll No. 437, To amend section 200 of present statutes, so as to have Co. Bee Inspector paid for his services from Co. funds, as other officers are paid.

The second, House Roll No. 438, providing for listing, and taxation of colonies, and to provide special tax for the promotion of the bee and honey interest, also asking for an appropriation to pay for printing reports of state society.

These bills as presented, have the warm support of every bee-keeper to whom the drafts were submitted, and then received the endorsement of the state society at their last meeting Feb. 14th. The special tax asked for upon their own property will, if it becomes a law provide sufficient to pay the entire amount asked for in the bill as an appropriation from the state.

Many who are familiar with the present extent of the cultivation of small fruits will doubtless be surprised to learn that it is less than forty years since this branch of horticulture became a distinct commercial feature. And those who think the business has about reached its limit may be still

more surprised at the developments of the next decade.

In fruit culture it is the man that goes through thick and thin that succeeds. It really does not make so much difference as one might suppose whether the year be good or bad, if the husbanders be wise, for the poorer the year the better the prices. Although, of course, a bad year is not as good for all of us as a good one, yet we know of men who say that they would rather have a bad year so far as their own interests are concerned, for, by taking extra trouble, they manage to get a fair crop and sell it for a fancy price.

The raising of pansies is not difficult, but requires some care. The seeds can be sown from January to May, and from the last of July to the first of September. Early sown seeds will make plants for spring blooming, while those sown later in the spring will produce flowers in the autumn. Plants raised in the fall will bloom the following spring. Sow the seeds thinly in pots or flat boxes in light soil. In the winter this can be done in the house and later in the season in the hot-bed, cold-frame or the garden. When the young plants have made their third leaf they should be transplanted so they will stand about two inches apart, so as to allow plenty of room for them to develop without crowding. Do not allow the soil to become very dry but keep the plants growing vigorously, with a full exposure to the light and a gentle heat. As soon as the weather is suitable in the spring set out the plants in moderately rich soil where they are expected to bloom. Stir the soil frequently about them as they grow, and in the fall they will be strong, stocky plants giving some bloom, and the following spring will bloom profusely. Fall raised plants will also bloom in the spring, but not as freely as those which are stronger.

—*Vick's Ill. Monthly Magazine.*



I didn't order my supplies last year of the advertisers in the Neb. Bee-keeper, but I will this year, and mention the N. B.-K. as all ought to. Yours

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To the Editor.

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