

The Nebraska bee-keeper. Vol 8, No 1 January, 1897

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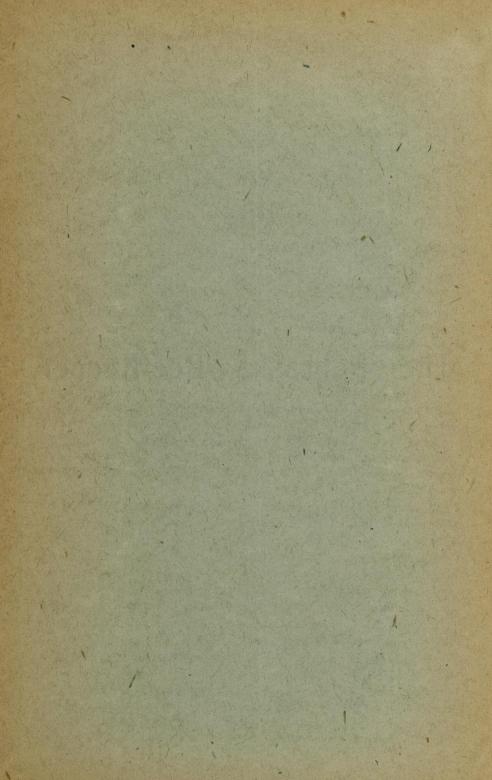
The Nebraska Bee-Keeper.



Vol. 8.

YORK, NEB. JANUARY, 1897.

No. 1.



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No. 1.

Some Conditions of Nebraska. No. 2

While at the meeting of the North American, at Lincoln we were very forcibly reminded that we had several very peculiar conditions here in Nebraska connected with bee-keeping, which our eastern friends knew nothing of. For many years we had known that we could not make a success by following the methods advocated and followed in some other states, but untill the various points were brought out in the discussions we did not know that very many of our practices were so different from others. The Nebraska bee keepers may have theories which will not stand the light of searching investigation. Some of us have learned in the bitter school of experience what is best in certain cases for us to use. We also have learned that we can realize more by working along some particular lines.

One of the subject of greatest variation between our practice and that of our eastern friends was in the production of comb or extracted honey.

Our Nebraska bee-keepers claimed they could produce three to five pounds of extracted honey as easily as they could one of comb. While our eastern friends only placed the amount at one fourth to one half more and could hardly believe that there could be the difference, we claimed.

We say that both were right in their ideas, being based on conditions very different and widely seperated.

In order to understand the situation here, we ask our readers to study their map, and see how we are located. As we told you in the last paper, only a little ways from our western border is the line of perpetual snow. From 500 to 600 miles to the east is the Missouri River, our eastern boundary, Between these two points lies the great prairie state of Nebraska. Commencing at the river the land rises five to seven

feet to the mile as we go westward, gradually increasing in altitude, this seemingly level prairie rises higher and higher, until the last fifty miles on the western border, the average rise is fifty feet per mile. This places the most part of our state upon this great elevated plateau and with our light dry air, we practically know nothing of hot sultry nights, our nights are cool and dews abundant. Honey is secreted in abundance but must be gathered early in the morning, before the hot sun evaporates the nectar. These are some of the conditions. How to make the most of what we have, is the aim of every intelligent apiarist. We have in the past been obliged to face these conditions and wondered why success did not always follow our efforts. In looking from cause to effect it is easy to find past mistakes. We do not claim that we now know it all or that we have found the sure road to success, but we do say that we are having a greater degree of success than in former years.

In all our experience of late years, we think with our honey flow, our location and our system of handling, that we produce at least four pounds of extracted honey as cheap and as quickly as one pound of comb honey in the section. Now do not all hold up your hands in horror and say it can't be true. Wait until I give you my ideas, which if good, go and do so too, if not study out your own way.

In working for extracted honey I always aim to have combs ready drawn out at time of honey flow for storing all the honey the bees can gather. As noted above the honey must be gathered within two to four hours in the morning or the hot sun will dry it all up. Our nights are cool and bees in single walled hives or supers can not work wax ready to store this honey as gathered, during the past summer the nights were so cool as to drive the bees all out of the surplus in our own yards, and many days those colonies with drawn combs, were storing five to eight pounds per day, while those working in sections, could not work wax for comb building before afternoon, when the honey would be all dried up.

Then again, honey must be coming in, in fair quantities before the bees will work at all in the sections, when if they have combs ready drawn they will store it away if only a little is gathered. As an experiment this season we kept a double cover around and over one of our hives worked for comb honey, there the bees staid in the supers over night when driven out of the single wall supers by the cool air.

Taken in localities where the honey flow comes when the nights are warm so that bees can carry on the operation of comb building uninterrupted. I do not think the difference in the amount of comb and extracted honey would be near as great as with us and our conditions.

"Apis Dorsata" and the Lincoln Convention.

I have been reading with some interest the discussion, pro and con, of the action of the Lincoln Convention in regard to the importation of "Apis Dorsata".

Now I wish to say, that, I think but one or two gentlemen know that such a resolution was thought of until I read it and moved its adoption.

Now as to the why I feel opposed to the importation of "Apis Dorsata", by the general government, at this time and in the manner asked for by the Ontario County Bee Keepers Association.

First, I do not think it is a bee that would do us any good. Half a score of years ago we had in our employ a bright young man. A year of so later found him on his way as a missionary to Africa. Three or four years more pass along and he revisits his boyhood home and parents in our town. While here, he described animals, insects, and bees, as found in that far off land. Although not particularly interested in "Apis Dorsata" at that time, from his descriptions and those read later, I think they may be identical or nearly so, and I at present believe worthless to us, other than as curiosities.

As to the action of the Ontario Bee Keepers society, I received three communications, one addressed to the Editor Nebraska Bee Keepers, one addressed to the secretary of the York County Neb. Bee Keepers Association, and one addressed to me as secretary of the Nebraska Bee-Keepers Association, at least two of these, I think, came from the secretary of the Ontario Bee Keepers society while the other may, or may not have come from him, I do not know, all contained the action of the society asking similar societies to co-operate with them in trying to have the government undertake the importation of the "Apis Dorsata."

One of these letters contained the intimation that as the secretary of agriculture was a Nebraska man, if the Nebraska bee keepers would help in this matter it would have a great influence in the matter. There was no name signed to this sheet but being sent in the same envelope with the other which was signed by the secretary of the Association and bearing the stamp of the society it is fair to presume that the secretary wrote the letter. However the person who wrote the letter thinking I would help along a doubtful scheme by getting the bee keepers of Nebraska-to use their personal influence in the matter struck the wrong chap as Nebraska bee keepers have no use for Government Aid for anything which will not bear the broadest investigation. The present Secretary of Agriculture is a hater of shams and put up jobs, but would do all in his power to aid in the upbuilding of the bee and honey indus

try in the U.S.

He will soon retire from the office and I trust will be succeded by as good a man in that respect.

If the bee keepers would demand of the new Administration the enactment of a pure food law, regidly enforced, it would help every bee keeper on the continent instead of a soft snap for one. Every bee paper gives the experience of some one who sells his honey cheap. It is not bees that build combs as large as a barn door, but a market for honey, that is not flooded with trash called "honey," at honey prices, that the bee-keepers need.

Now gentlemen instead of growling and throwing stones and slurs at "Root, Miller, York or Mason," who did not introduce the resolution at the Lincoln Convention, throw them at some one out in the Pacific Ocean. If Root or Miller or York had needed the Apis Dorsata in their apiaries, like gentlemen, they would have enclosed a \$10 bill with a well provisioned queen cage to some agent or missionary in far away lands and had "Apis Dorsata" queens to sell to their customers before the Government agent could pack his grip sack ready to start. Whenever we have learned that Apis Dorsata is anything desirable it will get here.

Spreading the Wonderful Sweet Clover.

MRS. A. L. AMOS.

I DO NOT WRITE of this wonderful honey plant just to be "in the swim", as they say, but because I was impressed, while at the Lincoln convention, with the thought that there was no other subject in which more interest was manifested. It seems to me then that two classes included most of us, namely, those who had sweet clover and recognized in it a honey plant without a peer—at least for the west—and those who had not, but were awakening to its importance, and were eager to know how to get a start in growing it. It is to this latter class that I would like to be permitted to say a few words, for I have been spreading sweet clover very successfully, and at no great outlay in cash—that article being rather scarce, I gave as a substitute time and energy.

My attention was first directed to sweet clover as it grew in my father-in-laws garden, the first summer I kept bees—four years ago. The bees revelled in it, and I greatly admired its magnificent growth and thrifty appearance, but I was far from realizing its full value or the possibilities it opened up to me. It had been brought there originally as a sweet smelling garden-flower, by one of the daughters of the house some years before, and, as is the way with sweet clover, it had over-step-

ped the bounds allotted to it. On that account the folks had been fighting it for several years, but, fortunately for me, without a knowledge of its nature or how best to cope with it. It is still there, and they no longer talk of extermination, but actually think of planting a field or two since it has established its merit as a forage plant.

Three years ago I bought a few pounds of seed from an Illinois bee keeper. It bloomed this summer for the first time, but I believe Mr. Amos has nearly ruined it. There were some sunflowers in the field, and he cut it to kill them just as the earliest of the seed was beginning to ripen. He cut so low that it never branched again. I will scatter more seed to make sure of a stand there.

The woody stalk that people complain of when it is cut for hay, is the plant's only protection. While our cattle eat it greedily wherever they get a chance, they seldom take it so close as to prevent its branching out again. Its woody stalk saves it from utter destruction. They crop it repeatedly, and as often it comes again. Cut close and it is gone. So much for my field of sweet clover.

What I have started in nooks and corners, being left in Nature's hands, has not suffered, save where the stock had access to it. There it has benefitted cattle and horses at the expense of the bees. For bee forage there is no use of putting it on land to be used for early pasturage. The beautiful, vivid green in sharp contrast with surroundings entices stock and from rabbits to horses, the animals find in it toothsome bites at a time when such are scarce.

But I was going to tell the fraternity how I spread it, for, unfortunately, we don't all have "gravel beds" patronized for the public highways!

I have seen nothing in regard to transplanting sweet clover, but I have done considerable of that for two seasons now, and with excellent results. I regard it as a surer and quicker way of starting the clover in little out-of-the way spots, than simply scattering the seed. Of course for a field it would be too large a job.

I take the plants in the spring, as soon as the ground is thawed enough to spade them out. I get them where they are growing too thickly for the best development of which they are capable, and put them where they have room to grow. Starting out with my basket of plants along a chosen route, I keep sticking one in here and there as I go. I find that they never disappoint me, but bloom and scatter their seeds. The plants left behind also do better than if none had been taken as they have more room.

I have also a way of my own of gathering seed in the spring. Of course, what was not secured in the fall is down on the ground around

the old plants, and may be scooped up with spade or shovel and scattered elsewhere.

These methods grew originally out of hard times and slender resources, but the transplanting, at least, I would practice in any case, because of the excellent results obtained from a few hours' work.

I was looking, the other day, where some of my spring-set plants had bloomed, and I see they have self-appointed successors. I can usually find two or three plants where the seed that was first to fall has sprouted, though the great mass of it will not start until it has had the winter frost and snow, and the spring sunshine.

I feel very hopeful of this as a honey plant since I have made acquaintance with "sweet clover." Like the "Star Spangled Banner"—"Long may it wave!"—Nebraska.—A. B. J.

The Lincoln Convention and Its Work.

There have been many criticisms regarding the work of the meeting of the American Bee-Keepers Association at Lincoln. It is easier for some people to stay back and growl, than to catch hold and push.

One of the matters of interest to all, which was generally published and commented on and written about in all the bee journals of the country was the consolidation of the North American and "Union". Committees had been appointed the year before to prepare a plan and everybody interested knew they would report at Lincoln.

Those who wished, could have written their views, if they could not be there in person.

The report was made, and after thorough discussion, a new constitution was adopted, and everything done, as we think, in a fair manner, by a convention of bee-keepers who were seeking the best interests of the pursuit. They had no friends to boost into positions. Now comes the reaction, criticisms, unjust, unmannerly.

The proposed consolidation may not be altogether the best that can be desired but it is certainly good enough to start on, and when new conditions warrant, it will then be time enough to suggest changes for the future.

Lets hear no more growling, but go to work and make the new United States Bee-Keepers Union a success. Put away personal jealousies and go to work for the good of all. Lets do something to try to stop honey adulteration. If the grocer wishes to sell glucose, let him sell it as such, but when he sells it as honey, let him understand that the Union is after him.

Extensive Farming.

From the earliest settlement, Nebraska, with her rich soil, and broad, level prairies, has been considered the home for the system of extensive farming. Men could plow their furrows, one fourth, one half. or a mile long, as they pleased. The header or the harvester could run. unobstructed over the entire section. The farms were already cleared. All that was needed was to stir the top soil three or five inches, put in the seed, and let nature do the rest: No manure-no draining. Such ready made farms induced a wasteful style of farming. Men with teams and capital for 80 acres farmed 160. Every man undertook to farm on a much larger scale than his means would allow. He farmed his own land and coveted all that adjoined him. He could spend only time to farm what he saw, (the surface soil) and forget to do anything with that below the surface. It had a bigger sound to talk of one hundred acres of corn than only fifty and always ready with some excuse for raising only twenty-five hundred bushels from his one hundred acres instead of three thousand or thirty-five hundred from the fifty acres.

There are crops and seasons when a man well fitted may farm extensively at a profit, but in these days of sharp competition, and low prices for farm produce, the man who makes money on the farm must make every movement count. He must be on the rustle all the time, he must leave no bars down behind him. He must raise grain and not weeds.

The farmer must use his brains, as well as his hands. Order in systematic work are of as much value to him as to the merchant. Intensive farming implies thought as well as action.

Extensive farming, means drudging, for the farmer and his house hold. Trying to work sixteen hours per day and breaking down at forty. A lesson we learned in younger days has never been forgotten. On going to work a short time for a farmer in having and harvest we were suprised to find that breakfast was to be ready at seven oclock, dinner at twelve, and supper at six, and no work was expected of us before breakfast and after supper-except care for our horses and two hours off at noon. I had seen this man's teams and men work and always supposed him a hard master. I never saw a whip around his teams, and the men felt more like school boys out for recess. They had time for rest, and when work time came they did it with a rush. Across the road lived a man of another class with the same force of hands and teams he farmed double the acres of my employer. His teams and men were in the field at sunrise and were there at sunset. At noon time to eat dinner only, was given. While in the field it was almost impossible to keep up motion with whip and goad. The men were tired out, dead on

their feet, and, work as they might, they could not do the amount of work that was done on our side of the road. In after years I watched these two farmers, each a representative of his class. The one invariably with good crops, the other always sour and surly, something always wrong, crops poor and prices low because of inferior grade.

We can find the counterpart of these two farmers in every community in Nebraska to-day. Perhaps not always so striking a contrast, but sufficient to show to which class they belong.

If by study and thought, we can raise the same amount of crops on half the acreage, have we not made a reduction in the price of production? We have at least saved the interest and taxes on one half our land. If we have saved one half our acreage and still raising the same amount of crops, who shall say that we have yet reached the limit. Why may we not, cut down the acreage more vet and still raise as much as before. We no not claim that our soil is inexhaustible, but we do not think the limit of production has yet been reached. Because men have at times, produced wonderful crops, with good care it does not show but that with better care, a still greater crop could have been realized.

I will endeavor in future articles to show how better crops, and better returns for them may be obtained. I believe that along the line of diversified and intensive farming, is the hope of the Nebraska farmer in the future. At any rate that is what we preach and try to practice and these articles will be along the line of our own work on the farm.

The Rebrasha Bee Kesper

Published Monthly.

Subscription Price, 50 Cents per Year.

L. D. STILSON, -:-EDITOR. YORK, NEBRASKA.

Official Organ of the Nebraska State Bee-Keepers Association.

Entered at the postoffice as second class matter,

Officers of the Neb. State Bee Keepers Association:-Pres., E. Whitcomb: Vice Pres., H. E. Heath, Lincoln; Sec. and Treas., L. D. Stilson, York.

Mrs. A. L. Hallenback.

Another of our Nebraska beekeepers has gone home. Mrs. A.

by being thrown from her wagon on Nov. 21.

Although the summons came without warning, we trust she was ready. For some years she has been one of our valued bee-keeping friends. In September she was at the meeting of the Nebraska bee-keepers. Then in Oct. she was present at the meeting of the North American at Lincoln, then little more than a month later she leaves earthy work to join the "loved ones gone before."

She leaves a family of eight children. The older ones grown to manhood and womanhood, the youngest three years old to whom we extend our sympathies and hope they may live so as to be prepared for death. L. Hallenback was instantly killed even though sudden as the mother's.

THE HOME.

LARGE PANSIES.

'Twas a heaven below
My redeemer to know;
And the angels could do
nothing more
Than to fall at his feet
And the story repeat,
And the Saviour of sinners
adore.

Hardy Roses.

It is a wise plan to put a mulch of straw or manure around each bunch or bush The protection thus afforded is a help in keeping the wood from freezing back, also to keep the rabbits from eating off the tender shoots. We recently noticed a fine Crimson Rambler, set out last year, which has been eaten down to the ground. By mulching the freezing and thawing weather does not damage the the roots. The flowers of the early kinds will be a little later in coming out in their respective seasons, but it pays to let the covering stay on in the spring until quite late, and when the flowers do come, they are more profuse in number, and even in form.

Rev. C. S. Harrison, a specialist on evergreens and tender plants for the west, recommends covering the tender roses with dirt; building a mound of it all around and over the plant as protection, and says he has fine flowers all the entire season. Roses are a favorite flower, and easy of cultivation. Many florists advertise them for 10 cts. by mail, and these little 10 ct bushes, we have set in the open ground in May, and had fine flowers from the middle of June to fall. The mulching can be done in December or January, and is all right if left around under the bush during the season and helps to retain moisture!

Mr. Burpee tells how to grow them.

To secure the very largest flowers the seed should be sown in the fall and the young plants carefully wintered where they are to bloom, as they will produce the finest flowers in the cool moist weather of early spring. Springsown seed will flower profusely throughout the summer, but the flowers will not average so extra large in size, because the greater heat of summer forces them to develope too quickly. Sow the seed in boxes, or a shady corner, early in August. About the second week in September, or as soon as the young seedlings are an inch in height, prepare the bed in which they are to be grown, digging the soil deeply and making it thoroughly fine. Then dig in a heavy cart of well rotted manure from the pig pen or cow stable, using as much as a large wheelbarrow load to the square yard. The manure should be thoroughly mixed with the soil to the depth of twelve inches; it need not be made very fine, but can be left in lumps as large as a walnut. Transplant on a rainy day, taking up a ball of dirt with each plant sufficient to prevent disturbing a single root. As the seed is frequently slow in germinating, especially in very hot weather, it may be as late as the second week in October before they can be transplanted; but this will be an advantage, as the plants should not be over two inches in height when winter sets in. Where the climate is warmer, as in the Southern States, the seeds should not be started so early, or the plants will be to large to winter properly; to produce the largest flowers they should not bloom before spring. South of Baltimore these beds will need no protection, but further north the ground around the plants should be covered with litter varying in thickness with the severity

The object is to keep the plants entirely dormant throughout the winter; the covering litter or frame should be removed early in the spring. Beds plantfor some time the branches should be pruned or pinched back. If this is done while the plants are still strong and vigorous, and if the faded flowers are kept picked off and not allowed to per fect seed, the blooming period can be extended. Watering twice a week with diluted manure water will greatly help the plants to produce large, finely-colored flowers. If the bed is in a suitable location, where it is partly or wholly shaded from the severe summer heat, and the pruning is carefully attended to, the plants may be kept in fine, healthy condition throughout the season, and if carried through the second season with a mulch of rich manure, will produce equally as large flowers the following spring.

of the winter. The litter should be of When large flowers are desired, and a loose, coarse texture, and should be the bed cannot be made in the fall, seed placed under the leaves and well a- can be sown in February in the house, round the plants by hand. The best and forwarded in pots until the last way of wintering the bed, where it can week in March, or until the bed can be be done, is to cover it with a box of a made ready for them in the spring. cold-frame, putting the sash and straw These plants should be kept cool, and covering on in very cold weather, but should have an abundance of air, care admitting air as frequently as possible. being taken always to give them plenty of food and root room by shifting into larger pots as they increase in size; in transplanting, always be careful not to injure or disturb the smallest rootlet. ed and treated in this manner will pro- They should be planted out as early in duce the very largest and finest flowers, the spring as possible, and have the After the plants have been flowering same attention as those wintered over in the beds.

We think that more states have been holding bee-keepers conventions in the past three months than ever before in the same length of time—"Ain't it." or is only because we see their proceedings published more than ever before.

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The Free Seed Humbug.

It is not often that beneficiaries oppose making gifts, especially when the gifts come from the Government and are paid for out of the public purse, yet if the agricultural and horticultural papers reflect the sentiments of their readers, there is very serious opposition to the present so-called free-seed distribution Can it be that the tillers of the soil think that the principle is wrong, and that for every dollar's worth of seed they get in this way they have to pay many times over for in increased taxes, etc., in other ways? Commenting on the distribution the American Agriculturist says: "After all said and done, there is a chance that the free seed humbug will be foisted on the country another year. The House Committee on Agriculture has inserted in the bill for apropriations for the coming fiscal year an item for the distribution of "free" seeds. There is no popular demand for any such action and it is to be hoped this unnecessary item of expense may be cut out." The New York Farmer also comments on the subject: "The House committee on Agriculture has completed its fiscal bill for the ensuing year, appropriating about the same as last year, \$2,300,000. No appropriation for free seeds was recommended by the secretary, but the seed beggars put one in, all the same. It is a contemptible piece of business, and has nothing to recommend it."

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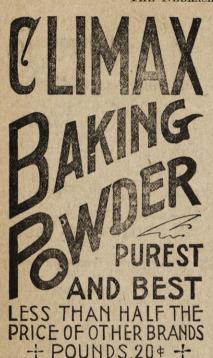
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