

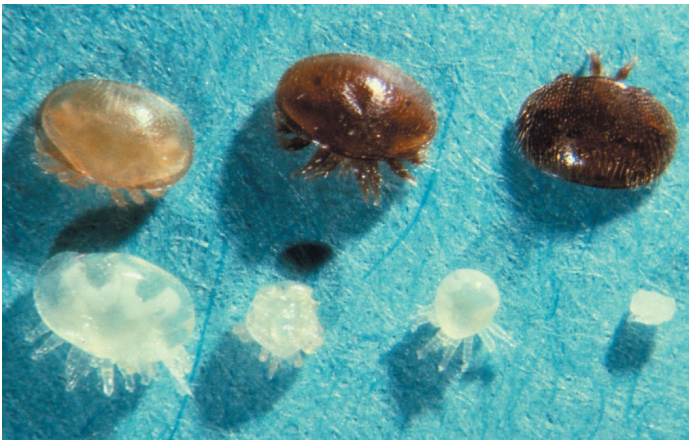
# COUNTRY BIRD & GARDEN



LOCAL HONEY

October 2013

## Public Enemy #1 For the Honey Bee



Varroa Mite Life Cycle Appearance — Courtesy of Apivar

Varroa mites were originally from Asia, but spread through Europe rapidly, and were first found in Florida in the 1980's. They are now widespread throughout the United States, and the world in general. Something like miniature ticks, the mites suck blood from both the adults

and the developing brood, weakening and shortening the bee's life span, and increasing their susceptibility to other diseases. Emerging brood may be deformed with missing legs or wings. Untreated infestations of varroa mites that are allowed to increase will kill

## Fall Bee Calendar

Not quite time to kick back and relax for the winter yet, and my ever-present bee calendar is reminding me it's time to place a little wooden block as a spacer between the outer and inner cover.

Since the bees keep the inside of the hive warm, (92-95 degrees F), yet the out-

side temperatures are cold or freezing, condensation forms inside the hives, much like the inside of a tent when camping when it's cold out. Droplets of condensation fall on the bees, who can then become wet and cold, and subsequently die. Creating a little air space at the top

honeybee colonies.

For some years it has been highly recommended by the NJ State Department of Agriculture to treat bee hives for varroa mites in the fall. This year the situation is so bad, that the recommendation is to treat in fall and spring. I have always treated in late summer/early fall; this year no exception. But...checking my hives a couple weeks ago I found the mites were back in a couple of my bee yards, clearly visible with a hand lens.

Though not the ideal time to treat varroa mites, to not treat at all will have a very unhappy ending in spring. So stay tuned for the spring newsletter to find out how these hives overwintered, and, if successful, I'll tell you what I did.

of the hive reduces the moisture inside, and the bees can still keep the hive warm. Moisture is fatal, more so than the cold outside. This month I am removing all my sugar water feeders and creating an air space for winter air circulation.

## Special points of interest:

- VARROA MITES
- FALL HIVE PREP & CHECKLIST

## October's Checklist:

- Check colonies for a good laying queen, and if there is none, consider combining the hive with another. It may be too late to re-queen.
- Make sure those mouse guards are in place. Mice are looking for a warm place for winter and can really make a mess in there.
- Heft the back end of the hive to make sure it is "heavy" with winter stores of honey, and feed them if they feel light. It may be too cold to feed sugar water, so start cooking up some fondant. If they are super light, fondant isn't going to cut it. Add some frames of honey you may have stored "just in case". If the frames are frozen, thaw them out before you put them in the hive. Use only frames of honey you absolutely know are disease free.

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