

Rolt Method of creating small Nuclei with new young Queens

Three important criteria must be fulfilled to raise really good queens:

1. The queen must be reared from a newly hatched larva
2. A good force of young nurse bees is essential
3. An abundant supply of royal jelly must be available at the right time

The method outlined below fulfils these criteria and was greatly used by Arthur Rolt, one time apiarist at Rothamsted and CBI for Somerset 1944 – 1968.

1. In spring contract the brood nest to nine combs and insert division boards at the flanks.
2. About the second week in May insert a marked frame of drawn brood comb in the centre of the brood nest.
3. Exactly 18 days later add another marked frame of drawn brood comb. Place it next to the first one. The brood chamber now has a full complement. (National)
4. 48 hours later prepare a nucleus as follows:
 - a) The two marked frames are removed and placed with their bees into the nucleus box taking care not to take the queen also
 - b) A third comb, this one containing stores, is placed with them
 - c) Shake in the young bees from two more brood combs
 - d) Insert a division board, close and make up the combs in the parent stock
 - e) The bees will select several cells to become queens
 - f) Feed slowly after a couple of days.

Queens will emerge by 13 days from making up the nucleus. To make use of more than one cell:

- a) Make up other nuclei three days before the queens are due to emerge
- b) 48 hours later each nucleus should be supplied with a ripe queen cell.

New queens will emerge within another 48 hours. These queens will normally mate very quickly and be ready for use in the apiary. On the other hand the nuclei could be allowed to expand and develop into full colonies, for the heather possibly.