

February To Do List In the Apiary

Critical Hive Management

- **Emergency Feeding:** Check hive weight by "hefting"******. If it feels light, or if you see bees at the very top of the frames when peeking through the inner cover, add emergency solid food. Do not use liquid syrup yet; it is too cold for bees to process and adds dangerous moisture.
- **Entrance Maintenance:** Clear the bottom entrance of dead bees or debris using a stick or hive tool to ensure proper ventilation and allow for "cleansing flights" on warmer days.
- **No-Disturbance Policy:** Avoid pulling frames or breaking the cluster unless it's a true emergency and the temperature is at least **40°F–50°F**. A quick "peek under the hood" should take less than 30 seconds.
- **Pollen Supplementation:** Toward the end of February, consider adding a pollen patty to support the new brood, **but be cautious:** too much too early can stimulate a population explosion before the weather is warm enough for the bees to forage, leading to starvation.

Preparation & Gear

- **Equipment Maintenance:** Use the indoor time to clean, repair, and paint your boxes, supers, and frames.
- **Order Early:** Finalize orders for nucs, packages, or **queens** now, as many reputable suppliers sell out of spring stock by late February.
- **Varroa Planning:** Review your mite management strategy and ensure you have the necessary supplies for spring treatments.
- **Check Stored Combs:** Inspect your stored frames for **wax moth** activity; if found, freeze frames for 48–72 hours to kill larvae.

****How to Safely "Heft" Your Hive**

1. **Approach from the Rear:** Stand at the back of the hive to avoid blocking any flight paths if bees are taking cleansing flights.
2. **The Tip Test:** Place your hand under the back of the bottom board and gently tilt the hive forward just an inch or two.
3. **Gauge the Weight:**
 1. **Heavy:** If it resists lifting and feels like it's anchored to the ground, they likely have enough honey.
 2. **Light:** If you can lift it easily with just a few fingers, they are likely out of stores and need immediate emergency feeding.
4. **Listen:** While there, you can place a stethoscope against the side or gently tap the box; a healthy hive will emit a brief, collective "hiss" or steady hum.



January To Do List in the Apiary

Hive Management (Minimal Disturbance)

- **Check Food Stores:** Lift the back of the hive to check its weight; provide fondant or sugar boards if light, but avoid opening the hive unnecessarily.
- **Ensure Ventilation:** Confirm proper upper ventilation to manage moisture, especially if you have solid floors.
- **Monitor for Activity:** On warmer days (50°F+), look for signs of life like bee droppings (cleansing flights) and listen for a unified buzz by tapping the hive.
- **Varroa Management:** If you've monitored mite levels, consider oxalic acid treatment if temperatures allow.

Preparation & Planning

- **Order Bees/Queens:** Place orders for packages and queens now to secure your spot, as suppliers book up fast.
- **Order seeds/plants for nectar and pollen:** Remember to include fall bloomers. **(6a/6b zone)**
- **Design gardens and water sources:** Research/attend Master Gardener meetings.
- **Equipment:** Assemble new hive bodies, paint existing ones, repair frames, clean tools and organize everything for spring.
- **Education:** Read beekeeping books, take online courses, watch YouTube videos, register for TBol Bee School /Spring Conference, February 28, 2026 in Carmel, Indiana.
- **Join:** Join other Facebook groups, local, nationally and international associations
- **Clean Up Deadouts:** Address any lost colonies by cleaning frames and preparing them for reuse.

CLEAN UP AREA BEFORE THE BEES ARE IN ABUNDANCE!!!!

