

To Be A Queen Is No Easy Task— Especially With A Mite On Your Back

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Penn State is studying the causes of increased rates of queen loss and supersedure in mite-infested honey bee colonies. The study is to determine whether tracheal and/or Varroa mite feeding produces smaller, less productive queens and what kinds of diseases mites may spread to queens.

Some of the queens examined will be commercially-available queens sold by queen breeders and

package producers. However, these young queens have only been exposed to mites for a few weeks. In order to determine the full effects of mite damage, the study will also need a large number of older queens that have been in mite-infested colonies from two months up to two years.

Penn State is asking beekeepers for help. "We are only interested in queens that are failing (laying spotting brood patterns and/or little brood compared to other colonies. During the spring and summer of 1997, if you notice that one or two of your queens is failing, consider contributing the bee to the study," said a spokesperson for the Queen Project.

Send a pair of live queens in two queen cages with attendants for evaluation. One queen should be a failing queen from your colonies. The other should be a healthy queen, also from your colonies, which will be tested for comparison. No more than two failing queens paired with two healthy queens per beekeeper accepted.

Penn State will compensate you for your queens.

For detailed information on how to participate, call Albert Rozo or Jennifer Finley at (814) 865-1895. Call before sending any queens.

you last growing season, you will need a plan for this year.

As woodchucks, we hate giving this information out but . . . there are different strategies to rid us from your garden.

Use fencing made of heavy poultry wire (at least 3 feet high) to deter us. Bury the lower edge of the fence into the ground 12 inches. The lower 6 inches should be bent outward in a L-shaped angle. Some gardeners use metal coat hangers cut in half to form a large bobby pin to secure the fence into the ground. A single wire of electric fence could be used by itself or with the poultry wire. Place the electric strand 4 to 5 inches off the ground.

Scarecrows and other dummies can sometimes provide temporary relief. Move them regularly and include a high level of human activity whenever possible. Remember that we learn quickly.

The gas cartridge (carbon monoxide) is the most common means for woodchuck control. They are available from local farm supply stores. Please read the directions before purchasing and using the cartridge. They can pose a fire hazard and should not be used under buildings.

Live traps (10 x 10 x 24) can sometimes be effective. Use apple slice, carrots, broccoli or lettuce as baits. Change the baits daily. Place the trap at main entrances or in travel lanes. Captured animals can be relocated to other areas where no damage can be caused. Trapping may be unlawful in your community. Please check with

officials. After an animal is trapped, transport it at least 10 miles away.

There are no repellents or toxicants registered for woodchucks. However, red hot pepper (cayenne) sprinkled on the leaves of growing plants teach us not to dine in your location.

Other techniques for effective control are available from your Extension Office. Ask for wildlife damage control sheet # 8 on woodchucks.

Thanks to Garden Clippings, University of Mass., Vol. 16, No. 3, 1996 for this information.

Any questions regarding the above article can be addressed to Tom Becker, Penn State Cooperative Extension at (717) 840-7408.

All Gardens Great & Small by York Co. Horticultural Agent Tom Becker



THE CRITTER THAT ALWAYS SEEMS TO WIN

We've recently consumed your tomato patch. Allow us to introduce ourselves. You have probably seen us around your beans, squash, peas, sunflowers, and fruit trees. Allow us to stay and we will take advantage of your invitation.

What are we? We are vegetarians but we may consume grasshoppers and snails on occasion. We are quite common in the Northeast.

Some people call us woodchucks, groundhogs, or whistle pigs. We can weigh 4 to 12 pounds and we come in varying shades of reddish brown (albino and black-furred individuals are possible). Our average life span is about five years.

We prefer to live in farmlands but make use of any open and sunny location. Well drained knolls and abandoned foundations are preferred for our burrow sites. We have at least two openings to our burrows. You have probably

noticed we sit at the main entrance with a mound of fresh earth around the opening. We have escape routes as well. Our burrows can be as deep as five feet and spread several yards in any direction.

Our typical family has four to six members. Our young are born underground. By June and July our family begins to forage seeking everything that's green and tender in your garden. They soon strike out on their own seeking their fame, fortune, and a place to call home. If you have seen one of our family — expect more.

We prefer the early morning and evening hours for feeding. When not feeding, we are sun bathing. We can climb trees, fence posts, and the like if need be. We generally do not travel more than 50 yards from our burrow.

Our enemies include hawks, owls, foxes, coyotes, bobcats, weasels, dogs, and humans. If woodchucks were a problem to

Brillion

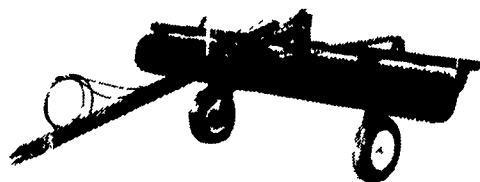
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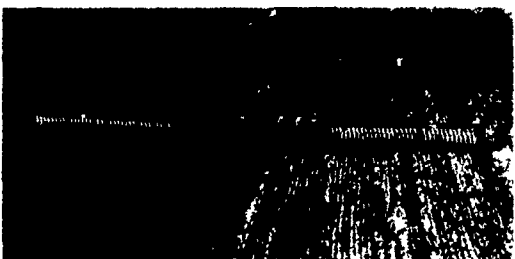
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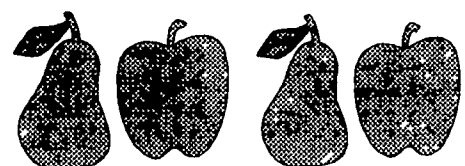
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