

Florida Beekeeping Management Calendar¹

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Florida's warm temperatures are very conducive to beekeeping; however, the climate, plant community, and floral resources timing differ significantly between the three main regions in Florida: north Florida, central Florida, and south Florida. North Florida encompasses the panhandle region, down through Alachua, Levy, Putnam, and Flagler counties. Central Florida includes Marion County down through Sarasota County. South Florida encompasses the remaining counties including the Keys.

Several factors influence the flora throughout the state, including annual freezes, average temperature, annual rainfall, and soil composition. Because of these variations, plants that grow well in one region may not grow well in another (Sanford 2003).

While many plants are acceptable pollen producers, very few yield enough nectar to produce a surplus honey crop. Those that do generally are indigenous to Florida and may be in danger of being lost to urbanization. As such, the third column on each chart includes a list of nectar-bearing plants that are present to some degree in each region and the plants' respective bloom times.

The following beekeeper management calendar was created for beekeepers in Florida. It is specific to region (north, central, south Florida), quarter (spring, summer, fall, winter), and month. The calendar includes recommendations for major management considerations like when to treat for parasites or pathogens, and the local flora in bloom at that time. This management calendar is NOT exhaustive. It is meant merely as a reference or starting point for

honey bee colony management in Florida. It is important that Florida beekeepers consult their local Cooperative Extension office <http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/map/> or Apiary Inspector <http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Plant-Industry/Bureaus-and-Services/Office-Locations/Apiary-Inspector-Directory> should any specific management questions arise.

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Table 1. Management calendar for north Florida

Notes	Month	Management Calendar	Blooming Plants
<p>Nosema can be a problem in north Florida, often in January and February. Monitor closely and treat if needed. Are you moving bees to citrus? Are you pollinating blueberries?</p>	<p>January</p>	<p>1) Feed colonies if light (colonies can starve!). 2) Nosema can be a significant colony problem this time of year. You can treat colonies for Nosema disease using Fumigillin. Colonies may need as much as 4 gallons of medicated syrup to control <i>Nosema ceranae</i>. 3) Repair/paint old equipment.</p>	<p>Sand Pine^E, Maple^E, Willow^{FM}</p>
<p>Attend UF College</p>	<p>February</p>	<p>1) Feed colonies if light (colonies can starve!). 2) Can treat colonies for Nosema disease as needed using Fumigillin.</p>	<p>Plum^M, Cherry^M, Viburnum^M, Sweet Clover^M, Blueberry^M, Haw^M, Fetterbush^M, Oak^M, Swamp titi^M</p>
	<p>March</p>	<p>1) Colony populations begin to grow! Add supers and/or control swarming as necessary. 2) Can treat with Terramycin or Tylan for American foulbrood (AFB) prevention. 3) Make nucs/splits.</p>	<p>Orange, Spanish Needle, Sparkleberry^{MU}</p>
	<p>April</p>	<p>1) Disease and queen problems should be remedied. 2) Make splits/nucs—new queens and packages become available. 3) Control swarming 4) Add supers, the primary nectar flow begins this month!</p>	<p>Sweet clover, Wild Blueberry, Haw, Fetterbush^M, Orange, Spanish Needle^{MU}, Galberry^M, Dog Hobble^{MU}, Palmetto^{MU}, Mexican Clover^{MU}, Blackberry^M, Butter Mint^{MU}, Tupelo^M, Swamp Galberry, Tuliptree</p>
	<p>May</p>	<p>1) Continue to inspect for colony maladies, but don't treat for diseases while producing honey. 2) Continue swarm control. 3) Super as necessary.</p>	<p>Palm^I, Gopher Apple^I, Joint Weed^I, Sandhill Prairie Clover^I, Spiderwort/day Flower^I, Partridge Pea^I</p>
	<p>June</p>	<p>1) Remove and process honey—main flow stops. 2) Varroa populations begin to grow—monitor colonies closely and treat if necessary.</p>	<p>Red Bay, Low Bush Galberry, Chinese Tallow, Palmetto^I, Red Cabbage Palm</p>
	<p>July</p>	<p>1) Remove and process honey—main flow stops. 2) Varroa populations begin to grow—monitor colonies closely and treat if necessary. Treatment options include: Apiguard, Api lifeVAR, Apistan, Mite Away II, Hopguard and Apivar.</p>	<p>Spanish Needle^{AS}, Mexican Clover^{AS}, Buttermint, Palm, Gopher Apple, Joint Weed^A, Redbay^{AS}, Sandhill Prairie Clover^A, Partridge Pea^A, Primrose Willow^{AS}, Cotton^A, Spiderwort/Dayflower^{AS}</p>
	<p>August</p>	<p>1) Monitor colonies for Varroa (see July!) 2) Treat with Terramycin dust for American foulbrood/European foul brood. 3) Feed colonies if light. 4) Monitor for and control small hive beetles. 5) It's hot! Ensure adequate colony ventilation.</p>	<p>Spotted Mint^S, Goldenrod^S, Vine Aster^S, Sumac^S</p>
	<p>September</p>	<p>1) Monitor colonies for Varroa (see July!) 2) Consider treating colonies for Nosema disease using Fumigillin. Colonies may need as much as 4 gallons of medicated syrup to control <i>Nosema ceranae</i>. 3) Continue to feed colonies if light.</p>	<p>Smart Weed, Bush Aster</p>

Notes	Month	Management Calendar	Blooming Plants
Ensure that colonies have enough food. It can be cold in north Florida during winter.	October - December	<p>1) Varroa populations peaked in Aug/Sept. Monitor Varroa populations closely and treat if necessary. Treatment options include: Apiguard, Api life VAR, Apistan, Mite Away II, Hopguard, and Apivar.</p> <p>2) Can treat colonies for Nosema disease using Fumigillin. Colonies may need as much as 4 gallons of medicated syrup to control <i>Nosema cerana</i>.</p> <p>3) Monitor for and control small hive beetles (options include Checkmite+, GardStar, Hood traps, West Beetle traps, beetle blasters and more).</p> <p>4) Feed colonies if light (colonies can starve!).</p> <p>5) Can treat for tracheal mites (mix vegetable oil and powdered sugar until doughy—not sticky to touch; place a pancake-sized patty on top bars of brood chamber).</p>	<p>Oct: Spanish Needle, Mexican Clover^N, Primrose Willow^N, Spotted Mint^N, Golden Rod^N, Vine Aster^N, Smart Weed^N, Bush AsterND, Wild MustardND</p> <p>Nov: nothing new blooms</p> <p>Dec: nothing new blooms</p>
<p>^FContinues to bloom in February, ^MContinues to bloom in March, ^{FM}Continues to bloom in Feb and March</p> <p>^MContinues to bloom in May, ^JContinues to bloom in June, ^{MJ}Continues to bloom in May and June</p> <p>^AContinues to bloom in August, ^SContinues to bloom in September, ^{AS}Continues to bloom in Aug and Sept</p> <p>^NContinues to bloom in Nov, ^DContinues to bloom in Dec, NDContinues to bloom in Nov and Dec</p>			

Table 2. Management calendar for central Florida.

Notes	Month	Management Calendar	Blooming Plants
Citrus blooms in March. Make sure your colonies are ready. Talk with your growers about their pesticide use habits.	January	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Feed colonies if light (colonies can starve!); also supply pollen supplements if necessary. 2) Nosema can be a significant colony problem this time of year. You can treat colonies for Nosema disease using Fumigillin. Colonies may need as much as 4 gallons of medicated syrup to control <i>Nosema ceranae</i>. 3) Repair/paint old equipment. 	Sand Pine ^F , Maple ^F , Willow ^{FM}
	February	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Feed colonies if light (colonies can starve!). 2) Can treat colonies for Nosema disease using Fumigillin. 3) Can treat with Terramycin or Tylan for American foulbrood prevention. 	Plum ^M , Cherry ^M , Oak ^M , Walther Viburnum ^M , Sweet Clover ^M , Blueberry ^M , Haw ^M , Fetterbush ^M
	March	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Colony populations begin to grow! Add supers and/or control swarming as necessary. 2) Can treat with Terramycin or Tylan dust for American foulbrood/European foulbrood prevention. 3) Make nucs/splits. 	Orange, Spanish Needle
	April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Disease and queen problems should be remedied. 2) Make splits/nucs—new queens available. 3) Control swarming. 4) Add supers, the nectar flow began in late March. 	Orange, Sweet clover, Wild Blueberry, Haw, Fetterbush ^M , Spanish Needle ^{MJ} , Galberry ^M , Dog Hobble ^{MJ} , Palmetto ^{MJ} , Mexican Clover ^{MJ} , Butter Mint ^{MJ}
	May	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Continue to inspect for colony maladies but don't treat for diseases while producing honey. 2) Continue swarm control. 3) Super as necessary. 	Palm ^J , Gopher Apple ^J , Joint Weed ^J , Sandhill Prairie Clover ^J , Spiderwort/day Flower ^J
	June	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Remove and process honey—main flow stops. 2) Varroa populations begin to grow—monitor colonies closely and treat if necessary. 	Mangrove, Red Bay, Cabbage Palm
	July	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Remove and process honey—main flow stops. 2) Varroa populations begin to grow—monitor colonies closely and treat if necessary. Treatment options include: Apiguard, Api life VAR, Apistan, Mite Away II, Hoppguard and Apivar. 	Spanish Needle ^{AS} , Palmetto, Mexican Clover ^{AS} , Buttermint, Palm, Gopher Apple, Joint Weed ^A , Redbay ^{AS} , Sandhill Prairie Clover ^A , Partridge Pea ^A , Mangrove ^A , Primrose Willow ^{AS} Spiderwort/Dayflower ^{AS} ,
	August	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Monitor colonies for Varroa (see July)! 2) Treat with Terramycin dust for American foulbrood/European foulbrood. 3) Feed colonies if light. 4) Monitor for and control small hive beetles. 5) It's hot! Ensure adequate colony ventilation. 	Spotted Mint ^S , Goldenrod ^S , Vine Aster ^S , Sumac ^S
	September	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Monitor colonies for Varroa (see July)! 2) Super colonies if strong for B. Pepper flow. 3) Consider treating colonies for Nosema disease using Fumigillin (see north Florida Sept above). 4) If no nectar flow, feed colonies if light. 	Smart Weed, Brazilian Pepper [*] , Bush Aster

Notes	Month	Management Calendar	Blooming Plants
<p>Varroa remain an issue through winter due to warmer temps.</p>	<p>October - December</p>	<p>1) Varroa populations peaked in Aug/Sept. Monitor Varroa populations closely and treat if necessary. Treatment options include: Apiguard, Api life VAR, Apistan, Mite Away II, Hopguard and Apivar. 2) Can treat colonies for Nosema disease using Fumigillin. Colonies may need as much as 4 gallons of medicated syrup to control <i>Nosema cerana</i>. 3) Monitor for and control small hive beetles (options include Checkmite+, GardStar, Hood traps, West Beetle traps, beetle blasters, and more). 4) Feed colonies if light (colonies can starve!). 5) Can treat for tracheal mites (mix vegetable oil and powdered sugar until doughy, not sticky to touch: place a pancake-sized patty on top bars of brood chamber).</p>	<p>Oct: Spanish Needle, Mexican Clover^N, Brazilin Pepper[*], Primrose Willow^N, Spotted Mint^N, Golden Rod^N, Vine Aster^N, Smart Weed^N, Bush Aster^N Nov: nothing new blooms Dec: nothing new blooms [*]Brazilian Pepper blooms from September through October and is a significant fall source of nectar for bees.</p>
<p>^FContinues to bloom in February, ^MContinues to bloom in March, ^{FM}Continues to bloom in Feb and March ^MContinues to bloom in May, ^JContinues to bloom in June, ^{MJ}Continues to bloom in May and June ^AContinues to bloom in August, ^SContinues to bloom in September, ^{AS}Continues to bloom in Aug and Sept ^NContinues to bloom in Nov, ^DContinues to bloom in Dec, NDContinues to bloom in Nov and Dec</p>			

Table 3. Management calendar for south Florida.

Notes	Month	Management Calendar	Blooming plants
Varroa numbers begin to grow in south Florida in February. Monitor closely. Are you ready for the Feb citrus bloom? Talk with your growers!	January	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Feed colonies if light (colonies can starve!) – also supply pollen supplements if necessary. 2) Nosema can be a significant colony problem this time of year. You can treat colonies for Nosema disease using Fumigillin. Colonies may need as much as 4 gallons of medicated syrup to control <i>Nosema ceranae</i>. 3) Repair/paint old equipment. 	Maple, Willow, Spanish Needle TM , Mexican Clover TM , Primrose Willow TM
	February	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Feed colonies if light (colonies can starve!). 2) Can treat colonies for Nosema disease using Fumigillin. 3) Can treat with Terramycin or Tylan dust for American foulbrood/European foulbrood. 4) Make nucs/splits. 	Orange ^M , Sweet clover ^M , Oak ^M
	March	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Colony populations begin to grow! Add supers and/or control swarming as necessary. 2) Can treat with Terramycin or Tylan for American foulbrood prevention 	Same as above, Mangrove, Seagrape, Buttonwood
	April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Disease and queen problems should be remedied. 2) Make splits/nucs – new queens available. 3) Control swarming. 4) Flow began in March – continue to add supers as necessary. 5) Orange blossom honey can be extracted (late Apr). 	Orange ^M , Spanish Needle ^{MU} , Galberry ^{MU} , Mexican Clover ^{MU} , Primrose Willow ^{MU} , Smart Weed ^{MU} , Mangrove ^M , Seagrape ^M , Buttonwood ^M , Wild Coffee ^{MU} , Shrubby False Buttonweed ^M
	May	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Continue to remedy colony maladies, especially queen problems. 2) Continue swarm control. 3) Super as necessary. 4) Move bees from orange to other locations. 	Palmetto ^l , Mangrove ^l , Seagrape, Buttonwood, Dahoon holly ^l
	June	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Super as necessary for late flows. 2) If flow is over, remove and process honey. 3) Varroa populations begin to grow – monitor colonies closely and treat if necessary. 	Palm, Melaleuca, Shrubby False Buttonweed ^{JA}
	July	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Remove and process honey—main flow stops. 2) Varroa populations begin to grow—monitor colonies closely and treat if necessary. Treatment options include: Apiguard, Api life VAR, Apistan, Mite Away II, Hopguard and Apivar. 	Spanish Needle ^{AS} , Palm ^{AS} , Mexican Clover ^{AS} , Primrose Willow ^{AS} , Smart Weed ^{AS} , Melaleuca ^{AS}
Attend S. Fl. Bee College	August	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Monitor colonies for Varroa (see July)! 2) Treat with Terramycin dust for American foulbrood/European foulbrood. 3) Feed colonies if light. 4) Monitor for and control small hive beetles. 5) It's hot! Ensure adequate colony ventilation 	Same as above
	September	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Monitor colonies for Varroa (see July)! 2) Super colonies if strong for B. Pepper flow. 3) Consider treating colonies for Nosema disease using Fumigillin. (see north Florida Sept above). 4) If no nectar flow, feed colonies if light. 	Same as above + Brazilian Pepper [*] , Shrubby False Buttonweed ^{ON}

Notes	Month	Management Calendar	Blooming plants
<p>Varroa are an important issue in S. Florida in winter because colonies are rarely broodless.</p>	<p>October - December</p>	<p>1) Varroa populations peaked in Aug/Sept. Monitor Varroa populations closely and treat if necessary. Treatment options include: Apiguard, Api life VAR, Apistan, Mite Away II, Hoppguard, and Apivar.</p> <p>2) Can treat colonies for Nosema disease using Fumigillin. Colonies may need as much as 4 gallons of medicated syrup to control <i>Nosema cerana</i>.</p> <p>3) Monitor for and control small hive beetles (options include Checkmite+, GardStar, Hood traps, West Beetle traps, beetle blasters and more).</p> <p>4) Feed colonies if light (colonies can starve!).</p> <p>5) Can treat for tracheal mites (mix vegetable oil and powdered sugar until doughy—not sticky to touch; place a pancake-sized patty on top bars of brood chamber).</p>	<p>Oct: Spanish NeedleND, Mexican CloverND, Brazilian Pepper* Primrose WillowND, Smart Weed, MelaleucaND.</p> <p>Nov: nothing new blooms</p> <p>Dec: Maple, Willow</p> <p>*Brazilian Pepper blooms from September through October and is a significant fall source of nectar for bees.</p>
<p>^FContinues to bloom in February, ^MContinues to bloom in March, ^{FM}Continues to bloom in Feb and March</p> <p>^MContinues to bloom in May, ^JContinues to bloom in June, ^{MJ}Continues to bloom in May and June</p> <p>^AContinues to bloom in August, ^SContinues to bloom in September, ^{AS}Continues to bloom in Aug and Sept</p> <p>^NContinues to bloom in Nov, ^DContinues to bloom in Dec, NDContinues to bloom in Nov and Dec</p>			