Seasonal Management
During winter, make your beekeeping plans for the year.
Bees begin to fly in late winter or early spring. Time for inspection.
Things to Look for During your First Inspection

Queen
Brood
Disease
Food
Miscellaneous
Attempt to find the Queen. A marked queen will be easier to find.
The presence of brood indicates an alive, viable queen.
If no brood is present, look for eggs.
Incoming pollen indicates brood production.
Population level
A good brood pattern will mean a good queen and a populous, vigorous colony.
Inspect for diseases.
Few, if any, should be present this early in the season.
Nosema
Adequate food stores:

Keep at least 30 pounds of honey on the colony all times. This is roughly a full shallow super.
Miscellaneous
(e.g., mice)
Weak colonies are at risk of being robbed by stronger colonies or invaded by wax moths.
Combine weak colonies
Keep the queen in one colony; kill the weaker queen.
Place newspaper over stronger colony.
Make slits in newspaper with a knife or razor.
Place weaker colony on top of stronger colony.
Let bees get acquainted for several days.
Bees should accept each other once they have chewed up and removed the newspaper.
April - June: Swarm Prevention and Control
Sample for varroa mites.
10% or more infestation = treat immediately.
Apistan or CheckMite-Plus
Place stored supers with empty drawn-comb onto colonies.
Place queen excluder if you want. This prevents queen from laying brood in the honey supers.
The scent of exposed beeswax stimulates nectar collection.
Remove honey after honey flow.
Do not take frames that have less than 75% of the cells capped.
If less than 75% capped, leave for a few more days.
Removing bees from supers
Smoke bees down. Be careful of soot.
Use a bee brush. This may agitate the bees.
Use a fume pad and bee repellent.

“Bee-Go”
or
“Honey Robber”
Bee or Leaf Blower
August-September: sample for varroa mites.
Treat with chemical if needed.
Preparing a hive for winter

- Final disease check
- Food stores
- Entrance reducer
- Ventilate hive top
- Aster honey
- Frame positioning
Inspect for brood and adult diseases.

Treat with Fumidil-B if apiary has a history of Nosema
Adequate food stores:

Keep at least 30 pounds of honey on the colony all times. This is roughly a full shallow super.
Feed bees sugar water if necessary
Reduce entrance
Ventilate hive top to reduce moisture stress

Place a toothpick or small twig at back of hive.

Rising heat from bees will draw off moisture-laden air.

Cold air flow

Limit amount of aster honey in overwintering stores.
Aster honey granulates quickly.
Place one or two empty drawn-comb frames in middles of supers to allow space for upwards-migrating cluster.

Frontal, see-through view of hive
During winter, make your beekeeping plans for the coming year.