

Darwinian Beekeeping

By Thomas D Seeley

As Published in

Bee Culture Magazine

January, 2019

Feral Colonies are:

- **Genetically adapted to their location**
- **Widely scattered in their environment**
- **Occupy small cavities**
- **Cavity walls have propolis coating**
- **Cavity walls are thick**
- **Entrance is high and small**
- **Nest has 10-25% drone comb**
- **Nest organization is stable**
- **Nest relocations are rare**

- **Colony is rarely disturbed**
- **Colonies deal with familiar diseases**
- **Colonies have diverse pollen sources**
- **Colonies have natural diets**
- **Colonies are not exposed to novel toxins**
- **Colonies are not treated for disease**
- **Pollen not trapped, honey not taken**
- **Beeswax is not removed**
- **Bees choose larvae for queen rearing**
- **Drones compete fiercely for mating**
- **Drone brood not removed for mite control**

Suggestions for Darwinian Beekeeping:

- 1. Work with bees that are adapted to your location**
- 2. Space hives as widely as possible**
- 3. House bees in small hives**
- 4. Roughen the inside walls of hive boxes**
- 5. Use hives whose walls have good insulation**

- 6. Position hives high off the ground**
- 7. Allow 10-20% of the comb in your hive be drone comb**
- 8. Minimize disturbances to hive organization**
- 9. Minimize disturbances to nest organization**
- 10. Refrain from treating colonies for varroa**