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# ADOPT-A-HIVE

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## Quarter 1 - 2020

Welcome to 2020! The bee colony inside Smokey, the name we've lovingly given to your adopted beehive, is settled down for a long winter's nap. As part of our [wintering process](#), we've stacked Smokey safely in our barn to **keep the bees out of the elements and away from wintertime snackers** (i.e. animals) that can knock the hive over.

During the wintertime, honey bees clump tightly together in what's known as the Winter Cluster. This cluster helps them maintain body heat which keeps the collective colony alive during the cold months. What makes this cluster fascinating is that the bees on the outside will get cold so they will burrow to the center of the cluster where it's warm. All of the bees in the colony will continue this rotation all winter long. It goes to show that **survival really does require a collective effort**.

**Did you know?** Honey bees are the only insects that produce food that is eaten by people. Even better, honey has many healthy elements including enzymes, vitamins, & minerals and is the only food that contains pinocembrin which has been associated with improved cognitive function.

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At this point, we've done everything we can to give the bees the best chance at surviving the winter. Now it's a game of hurry-up-and-wait. We won't be checking on the bees until early spring to allow them to focus on staying warm, conserving their energy, and wisely using their honey stockpile.

While we certainly hope that everything will go smoothly for these bees during the winter, it is possible that the colony won't make it all the way through the colder months. An unfortunate reality of beekeeping is that **it's very normal to lose bee colonies** to disease, disruption, and wintertime

**“There is one masterpiece, the hexagonal cell, that touches perfection. No living creature, not even man, has achieved, in the centre of his sphere, what the bee has achieved in her own”**

conditions. Beekeepers are frequently hit hard by these unfortunate circumstances just like any other agriculturists experience similar hardships and losses.

In the event that Smokey's bees don't survive, we'll order another [bee package](#) to help fill the vacancy. We hope that we won't need to resort to this and that we'll be able to **start the spring strong with this colony**.

When the temperatures reaches 55° F, the bees will begin to come out of the hive to look for the first flowers of spring. If there are not enough flowers out, we might need to feed them sugar water, an interim food solution, until there are enough flowers to support the colony. Here's to a bright outlook for 2020!

**-MAURICE MAETERLINCK**