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COMPARISON BETWEEN DIFFERENT MULTIPLICATION METHODS FOR STINGLESS BEE COLONIES.

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The demand for stingless bee colonies has increased a lot and the conventional multiplication methods are not enough. The aim of this study was to compare different possibilities for establishing new colonies: (1) Conventional method, using 50% of biological material from the mother-colony; (2) Queenless mini-colony, using about 10% of biological material from the mother-colony; (3) Queenright mini-colony, similar to the previous method, but received a physogastric queen; (4) Confined queenright mini-colony, similar to previous method, but was kept closed for 80 days. Five colonies were produced with each method and observed for 80 days. At the end of this period the number of brood cells was counted. The experiment was performed at Belém-PA, between January and March 2012, with *Melipona flavolineata*. The results were: (1) Conventional method: three colonies developed quickly and healthy, average of 458 brood cells at the end of experiment; two colonies died; (2) Queenless mini-colony: three colonies survived, but developed very slow and needed much more care; average of 134 brood cells; two colonies died; (3) Queenright mini-colony: one colony killed the physogastric queen and needed a new one; the other four colonies accepted the queen and survived, but developed slowly; average of 156 brood cells; (4) Confined queenright mini-colony: three colonies survived but also developed very slow; all of the colonies were very weak and stopped brood construction around 70 days after being settled; average of 32 brood cells; two colonies died. We can conclude that the conventional method is still the most adequate method because the daughter colonies did not need much care and developed faster. The other three methods, which used less biological material from the mother colony, were very laborious because the daughter colonies needed much care to survive and colony developed too slowly.

Apoio: Fapespa-PA, Embrapa-CPATU.

Palavra chave: Production - Nest - Beehive - Queen – Demand.