Why Feed Honey Bees?
Supplemental feeding is necessary when bees lack these critical food resources: nectar or pollen.

NECTAR
Nectar, which becomes honey, is the carbohydrate source bees need to produce energy for life and work. They store honey to eat during a nectar dearth in the environment.
To supplement nectar, create sugar water.

POLLEN
Bees also collect plant pollen as their source of protein, primarily for raising their brood.
To supplement pollen, provide a pollen patty.

SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING

NEW COLONIES
Feed new colonies supplemental sugar water until they have built comb in both deep brood boxes.
On average, for every 10 pounds of honey a colony produces, they are only able to produce one pound of beeswax.
As long as they are building comb, you should be supplementing with carbohydrate-laden sugar water.

SPRING FEEDING
1:1 granulated cane sugar to warm tap water + Honey Bee Healthy (1 tsp per quart)
Warmer weather encourages bees to leave the hive. Unfortunately, early spring offers very few natural nectar sources.
Spring ushers in a rapid increase in the colony population. Often colony growth outpaces the available natural resources, which results in the bees consuming most or all of their stores.
In early spring, track the weight of the hives by gently lifting the back of the hive with one hand. By feel, you can tell if the colony is getting too light on honey stores. If they are, and if the ambient temperatures allow, begin supplemental food, including sugar water and a pollen patty.

FEEDER OPTIONS
- Entrance feeder
- Top hive feeder
- Division board feeder
- Baggie feeder
- External hive top feeder

FONDANT
Fondant is a supplemental source of carbohydrates. It’s essentially sugar candy placed inside the hive over winter. It softens as warmth and condensation form from the bee cluster.

POLLEN PATTY
A pollen patty substitute gives bees a protein when they need it most. Place it on the top bars of the top box in a Langstroth beehive.

FEEDING DON'TS
- Don’t use brown sugar, beet sugar, powder sugar, or honey as a supplement.
- Never feed bees while honey supers are in place.
- Bees should not be fed all year long.

FALL FEEDING
2:1 granulated cane sugar to warm tap water + Honey Bee Healthy (1 tsp per quart)
After you pull honey supers in late summer, evaluate how much honey is available for winter stores. If it’s not enough to get the colony through, start supplemental feeding.
Leave at least one full deep box of honey for a full-sized colony. This is about 90-100 pounds.