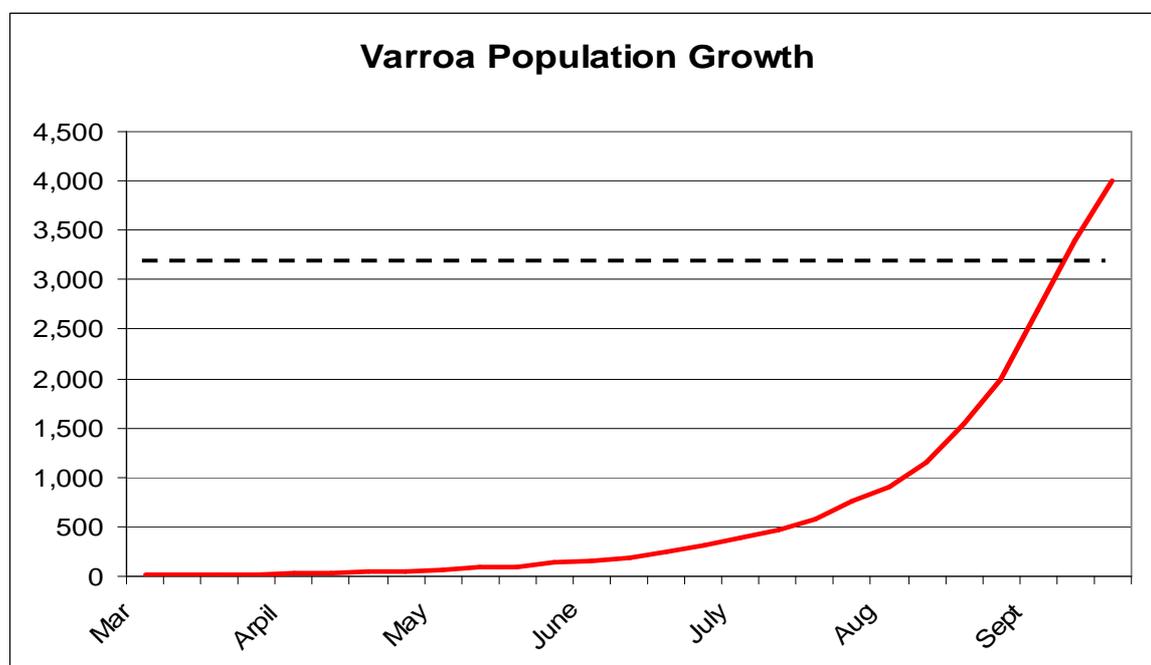


VARROA MITES

COLONY SURVIVAL AND NEXT YEAR'S HONEY CROP DEPENDS UPON THE **SUMMER** TREATMENT FOR VARROA MITES.

- ❖ It is critical that beekeepers understand how and why the Varroa Mite population explodes in the summer. Mites require honey bee brood to reproduce. When a lot of bee brood is available and the weather begins to warm up in the spring, **THE VARROA MITE POPULATION CAN DOUBLE IN THREE OR FOUR WEEKS.** In early spring, doubling from 50 to 100 mites or even 200 to 400 mites is not a real problem. However, we cannot use chemicals just prior to and during the honey flow, so the mites are free to rapidly reproduce. A strong hive can tolerate several thousand mites, but will not survive if the mite population is allowed to continue to grow. Figure 3 shows how the mite population explodes because of the doubling effect. Even beginning with only a hundred in March, the Varroa Mite population can reach deadly levels by September. Even if the colony survives into fall, the mites will weaken the fall brood so the colony is likely to die off in the winter.



- ❖ **My procedure has been to apply Apiguard immediately after extracting in mid-July.** Apiguard is not a harsh poison, has less tendency for the mites to develop resistance to it, and has been highly effective. Do your own research and select your own treatment. Be sure to study the above chart and understand that the Varroa population will explode in the summer.
- ❖ It's easy to overlook the need for a lot of healthy brood in the fall. Fall brood must produce adults healthy enough to survive into the winter and begin raising next year's brood. Fall brood that has been fed upon by Varroa mites cannot do this. To be successful, kill the mites before fall brood rearing begins. A colony with Varroa mites in the fall is in real danger of dying out in the winter.
- ❖ If more than one treatment per year is required, rotate the chemical used for treatment to reduce the chance of the mites building a resistance to one chemical. Currently, I use Apiguard in the summer and Apistan in the winter. Other options are available. Be sure to study the directions carefully before using any chemical. Last summer's treatment with Apiguard – combined with a screened bottom board - was so effective I did not have to treat in the winter.