

Williamson County Area Beekeepers Association

June 2018

NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, June 28, 2018
7:00-8:30: Beekeeping 101/201
First United Methodist Church
Georgetown (MMC bldg.)

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Vectors of Disease

By Laura Colburn WCABA Program Director

There are some tiny insects out there that can cause big health problems for us. The common brown tick, found over much of the United States carries Lyme Disease, which has no known cure. A growing population of ticks in the east called the Lone Star tick carries an antibody called alpha-gal which causes an anaphylactic allergy in mammals to beef and pork!

Mosquitos carry malaria, dengue fever, West Nile, and now Zika viruses. Too many to list here, actually. They also carry heart worms that infect dogs and cats.

Even fleas carry diseases like typhus and Bubonic Plague!

These insects are vectors of disease: transmitting illnesses caused by parasites, viruses, and bacteria. The CDC recommends insect repellent when in areas that have these pesky pests. Your vet will recommend heart worm prevention as well as flea and tick repellent. There are treatments for some of the diseases these insects carry, but others are untreatable and can cause debilitating health problems. The county extension office has a list of recommendations to help control mosquitos and ticks.



Varroa Mites - from nwf.org Credit Zachary Huang

Why am I writing about these insects in a beekeeping newsletter? Because beekeepers encounter another vector of disease: Varroa Destructor.

You'd never hear your doctor or vet suggest you simply develop a resistance to the carriers of diseases, or that if you get an infection or illness caused by one of them you simply ignore it. And yet, that is exactly what we hear in the beekeeping community: don't treat so you'll have stronger bees. If that doesn't work with dogs, cats, or humans, why do we think it might work with bees?



Bee with varroa mites -
Credit: Bee Culture Magazine

*Continued on p.3

A Message From Our President

If you haven't noticed, summer is here. Today (June 22) is the first full day of summer and the temperature reflects that. What does that mean for us beekeepers? It means the summer dearth is right around the corner and that means our bees will no longer have a rich source of nectar and pollen. I noticed a few weeks ago that my hives were no longer taking the feed I provided, so I quit feeding. Last week I fed them and about half are taking the feed and the other half are not. If you're not feeding, you may want to keep an eye on them so that they will be ready for the fall honey flow. Another thing to watch as the dearth approaches is the mite count. As the population in the hive stops growing, the mite count can increase.



WCABA President Jim Colbert

Of course, the best thing about this time of year it's that it is time to start taking some honey for us. One of the perks of membership is free use of the extracting equipment. The reports I am getting is that this has been a pretty good year for honey production, although mine has not been anything to write home about. If you have made some honey, be sure the keep a little back for our annual honey tasting and judging later this summer.

I hope everyone is having a good summer and I'll see you at our monthly meeting this Thursday.

COMING SOON...

WATCH FOR OUR NEW, UPDATED, AND IMPROVED
WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION WEBSITE!!
IT IS ON ITS WAY!!



Vector.....Continued from page 1

By ignoring the issue or putting the burden on our honey bees to develop a resistance, we may be making the problem much worse. A hive won't just die from a Varroa infestation or the illnesses they carry. Instead, the bees in that hive will spread it to others in what's known as a Varroa bomb. They try to escape the infection at home by absconding, spreading the Varroa and diseases to other hives. They encounter bees while foraging and a dead hive will be robbed, picking up remaining Varroa and diseases in the process.

It would be great if honey bees could solve this problem on their own through breeding and resistance, but it seems highly unlikely and we'll lose a lot of our bee population hoping it will happen. There are some lines of honey bees that have shown a greater resistance to Varroa, which is progress to be sure. But we can't control the mating habits when hives swarm or supersede or when we raise queens ourselves.

The other end of the spectrum is to treat without need. That's like taking antibiotics for a cold.

Check your hives by a reliable sampling method (sugar shake or alcohol wash, not a visual inspection), and if your numbers are beyond the acceptable tolerance, choose a treatment method that's right for the season (many treatments are temperature sensitive), hive conditions, and your own beekeeping style.



Program Notes:

Beekeeping 101 for June will be managing hives and what to expect in summer months. This will be the last Beekeeping 101 until October as we have our Queen and Ambassadors presenting in July, the annual ice cream social in August, and the annual honey tasting in September.

Beekeeping 201 for June will be presented by Art Thomas from At It Again Apiary who will be talking about queens.



Buzz Fest 2018

by Sebastian Urban, WCABA Ambassador

I had a blast at Bee Weaver's BuzzFest in Navasota, Texas. The best part was meeting new people and talking about bees. I was paired up with Jake Harris, Laura Weaver's nephew. I assisted in greeting people, handed out maps and made sure visitors understood that an apiary has lots of live bees everywhere. Ultimately, Jake and I manned the dunking booth; which wasn't a half-bad situation in the hundred-degree weather. Participants had to correctly answer a flash card question about bees to earn three balls to throw at the target. Here is a sampling of questions:

- *Who chews the queen out of her cell?
- *How many times does the queen mate?
- *Who takes the longest to develop; drone, workers or queens?
- *What are the work stages of the worker bee?
- *How many times can a bee sting before it dies?
- *Where do drones go to mate with the queen?

Participants had a good time while they were tested on their knowledge and learning new facts about bees. As a matter of fact, when it was my turn to sit in the dunking booth, I discovered that my seven-year-old sister has some pretty good knowledge about bees and she has an exceptional pitching arm. Next time, I'll remember to bring a change of clothes!

No matter what job I was doing, I had fun and look forward to next year.



Sebastian in the dunking booth. Photo supplied by Sebastian Urban



Sebastian at Buzz Fest. Photo supplied by Sebastian Urban



It's Extraction Time!!

By Mary Bost, WCABA Member

It's that time again. In fact, some of our members have already been using the club's extracting equipment. For our new members or any of you who have not used either of the two club extractors previously, here are some reminders of what you need to do to check out one of the two sets of equipment:

1. Call Mary Bost (512-863-3656) to request a date to use the equipment. Have an alternate date in mind in case your first preference is not available.
2. If you have not checked out the equipment previously, tell Mary and she will ask you to call Jimmie Oakley (512-507-3009) to see if he can meet you at the Bost Farm at a specified time (to help you through the check-out process). If Jimmie is not available at your chosen time, work with him to choose a date, then call Mary with the new date.
3. Members have 3 days to use the equipment, not counting Sunday as one of those days.
4. When you return the cleaned equipment, call Mary (or knock on her back door) to let her know it is returned and now available for the next member.



WCABA Extracting Equipment - photo provided by Jimmie Oakley

WCABA extracting equipment is pictured to the left and includes the extractor, a variety of filters, plastic buckets, and uncapping tub with tools.

You must supply your own plastic or glass jars or plastic bears to store your extracted honey!



Notes on Extracting Honey

By Jimmie Oakley, WCABA Scholarship Committee Chairman

I. Honey Flow: A time when nectar is plentiful and bees produce and store surplus honey.

- A. When does the honey flow occur? Spring and/or Fall
- B. How long does the honey flow last?
- C. What does the honey taste like?

II. Hive Capacity: The amount of surplus honey a honeybee hive can produce and store without extracting.

- A. Number of bees (field force) available to forage for nectar (honey).
- B. Number of cells available to receive, cure, and store surplus honey (supers).

III. Ripening (curing) Honey: The process of changing the nectar to a new form or to a level that the bee consider mature and ready to be capped for storage (honey).

- A. Nectar is predominantly the sugar sucrose and water (35%).
- B. Enzymes add (by the field bees) change sugars from sucrose to glucose and fructose.
- C. Ripening process takes 24-48 hours reducing moisture down to 18 or 19%. (refractometer)
- D. Increase the amount of capped (ripe) honey by moving open combs to just above the broodnest.

IV. Harvesting Honey: Robbing or pulling honey is the labor of removing the surplus honey for atop the honeybee colonies.

- A. Porter bee escape used inside inner cover, good only in cooler climates (warm days & chilly nights).
- B. Brushing bees from honey frames one at a time; easy but very time consuming.
- C. Bee Blower (electric or gasoline operated) blows the bees from the frames of the super without removing the frames; effective, efficient, but requires costly equipment and disorients the bees.
- D. Fume Boards (acid pad) using a chemical repellent objectionable to the bees drives them for the super, very effective in warm weather, but smelly and expensive product to purchase
- E. DO NOT pull honey to extract until at least two thirds (2/3) or three fourths (3/4) of the honey cells are capped.

V. Extracting Honey: The process of removing the liquid honey from the sealed honey combs, most commonly by the use of centrifugal force.

- A. Extracting temperature: Choose the right temperature for honey to be extracted, 80 to 90 degrees F.
- B. Uncapping method: Break the cappings on the comb by scratching or cutting with cold or hot knife by hand or automatically (power uncapper w/ steam knives).
- C. Extraction method: The liquid honey is forced out of the comb cells by slinging or turning with centrifugal force (reversible, radial, or merry-go-round extractor) to be collect from a gate or spigot via a gravity flow and deposited into a suitable container for processing or consumption.

**Notes continued on page 7...*



**Notes continued from page 6.*

VI. Processing Honey: The straining or filtering of extracted honey to remove varying degrees of impurities by passing the liquid through cheesecloth, nylon cloth, and/or layers of paper filter. Heating may also be a part of the processing to warm the honey enough to pass through the strainers or filters and also to retard granulation.

A. It is important to strain honey to remove wax chunks, dead bees and other foreign matter, even bulk honey.

B. Filtering removes much, much, more from the honey ie. all the pollen spores and even some of the natural color of the honey. (140 to 160 degrees to filter)

C. Heat to retard granulation also breaks down some of the beneficial enzymes making the honey less effective health wise. (pasteurization @ 140 to 160 degrees for 30 min. or 1 min. respectively)

VII. Honey Storage: Holding honey for a period of time for future consumption or processing while maintaining the purity, quality, taste and color of the product.

A. Bulk storage of honey is commonly done in 60 gallon drums or barrels that have a food liner and removal lids (600#).

B. Five (5) gallon square cans w/ pour spouts were used in the past, but 5 gallon round plastic buckets with snap on lids are becoming popular today. (60#)

C. One gallon glass and /or plastic is still popular as storage and marketing containers. (12#)

D. All storage containers should be clean, dry and leak proof for the best preservation of the stored honey.

E. Store honey away from high heat and excessive light, both darken the honey.

Book Nook

By Barbi Rose, WCABA Librarian

Plan|bee by Susan Brackney



Christmas present alert! I've been looking for beekeeping books that would interest my non-beekeeper family and friends. The challenge was to find something that covers a wide range of bee and beekeeping topics, scientifically sound, yet reads like genre fiction. Oh, and ideally under 200 pages.

Plan|bee is all that and more. The deserving subtitle is "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About the Hardest Working Creatures on the Planet". It is filled with the expected bee topics, but cleverly peppered throughout are little-known facts told in a casual (and slightly humorous) tone, all of which makes it equally educational and entertaining. There are plenty of pictures and illustrations of bees, anatomy, castes, equipment, types of hives, wax scales, people, pollen, stings, bee beard, and tomb reliefs.

A few questions that are answered: Do foragers snack on the pollen they're out collecting? Why doesn't ripening honey drip out of the comb? Where did Sting get his nickname? Check it out!



WCABA EXTRACTING EQUIPMENT (Check List)

- | OUT / IN | Item |
|----------|--|
| [] [] | Three (3) Frame Mann Lake Extractor w/clear plastic lids, honey gate and attached stand. |
| [] [] | Two Part Mann Lake Plastic Uncapping Tub w/wax excluder, frame rest, honey gate . |
| [] [] | (1) Three Gallon Square honey container w/stainless steel double sieve baskets. |
| [] [] | (1) Five Gallon Pail Honey Bucket Bottling Tank w/lid & honey gate for straining & bottling. |
| [] [] | (2) Micron Honey straining baskets for use with bottling tank. |
| [] [] | (2) honey capping scratcher. |
| [] [] | (1) electric uncapping knife. |
| [] [] | (1) spatula. |
| [] [] | (1) One Gallon hand washing bucket. |
| [] [] | (1) Small Crescent wrench, use on extractor. |



Be courteous and assure all the equipment has been cleaned thoroughly before returning!

Will you consider donating a portion of the honey you extract to the scholarship program? Yes or No

MUST FILL OUT BEFORE PICK UP!

Check Out Date: _____ & Time _____
 Checked Out by: _____
 Phone # _____ e-mail: _____
 Scheduled Returned Date & Time
 (3 Days maximum): _____

-----Keep this portion -----

RETURN REMINDER

Scheduled Returned Date & Time
 (3 Days maximum): _____
 Be courteous and assure all the equipment has been cleaned thoroughly before returning!
 Check to assure all items are accounted for and returned.
 Thank you, WCABA 512/863-3656



W.C.A.B.A. MEETING MINUTES – April 22, 2018

Submitted by Ginny Stubblefield, WCABA Secretary

1. **Opening the Meeting: Jim Colbert, President, opened the meeting.**
2. **Announcements:**
 - **Jordan Heivilin, our Honey Queen, read a letter from a teacher at the Florence Elementary School. It was a thank you letter for Jordan talking with second graders there. Jordan explained one of the students wanted to know about everything going on between the Queen bee and drones up in the sky. Jordan thought quickly and explained they meet each other so high up in the sky we don't know what they are doing. Quick thinking!**
 - **Kay French told the group about the Beekeeping Field Camp sponsored by the Big Sky Beekeepers of Bitterroot, Montana. The Camp will be held at the University of Montana in Missoula, Montana. The dates of the Camp are Friday, July 6 through Saturday, July 7. The event costs \$60 for both days. You can go to <https://www.beekeepersofthebitterroot.org/bee-field-camp> to learn more about the Camp. Kay says, "The scenery in that area of the U.S. would be worth the trip!"**
3. **Members Present: 82**
4. **Beekeeping 101: Laura Colburn led the discussion of "Basics of Inspection"**
5. **Beekeeping 201: The meeting was held in the white house at 13th and Ash Streets.**
6. **Question and Answer Session: Everyone was encouraged to ask questions regarding the programs they attended earlier in the evening. Laura Colburn and Jim Colbert stayed to lead the discussion.**
7. **Closing the Meeting: The meeting was closed by Jim Colbert.**

May meeting notes will be included in the July newsletter.

Welcome New Members:

Larry Judge - Georgetown
Earl and Joanne Tyree - Cedar Park

Trisha Collier - Georgetown

Door Prizes:

Donors -

Pamela Crider
Jimmie Oakley
Kay Oakley
Chris Doggett
Fred Richter

Winners -

Alexandro Talentino
Linda B
Pamela Crider
Gary Castillo
Leah Collins
Chris O'Dell
Edward Heivilin



Membership Application

Williamson County Area Beekeepers Association
Dues \$15.00 per year - Individual or Family Membership

New Member / Renewing Member (circle one)

Date: _____

Name: _____

Amount: _____

Address: _____

City / State / Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

Email: _____

Please print, fill out, and bring to club meeting or mail with check to:

Membership
Shirley Doggett, 400 County Road 440,
Thrall, TX 76578

Williamson County Area Beekeepers Association * 4355 County Road 110, Georgetown, Texas 78626*<http://www.wcaba.org>/*email: info@wcaba.org

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