

# Williamson County Area Beekeepers Association

## NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, August 24, 2017  
7:00-8:00: Beekeeping 101 / 201  
8:00-9:00: Program

First United Methodist Church  
Georgetown (MMC bldg.)

Beekeeping 101: Laura Colburn

Beekeeping 201: Chris Doggett

Question and answer session  
during ice cream social!!

**Program Speaker: Cooper Terrill**

*"Mosquito abatement in  
Williamson County and how  
to help minimize impact to our  
hives"*

## Club Officers:

**PRESIDENT: Jim Colbert**

512-863-7183  
colbertj@hotmail.com

**VICE PRESIDENT:**

**Laura Colburn**

512-751-6347

lcolburn0617@gmail.com

**SECRETARY: Ginny Stubblefield**

512-252-9954  
ginny@options2sell.com

**TREASURER: Phil Ainslie**

254-718-3255  
beeuser46@gmail.com

**MEMBERSHIP: Shirley Doggett**

**co chairs: Fred & Cecilia Richter**

512-924-5051  
sdoggett@mindspring.com

**PROGRAM: John Hibbard**

512-341-3675  
jhibbard55@att.net

**HISTORIAN: Jennifer Shear**

512-507-7746  
jennifer.shear@dell.com

**LIBRARIAN: Barbi Rose**

512-799-0616  
barbirose@yahoo.com

## REFRESHMENTS:

Sherry Smith, Jill Douglas,  
Matt Ludlum, Leigh Ann Brunson,  
Janine Hall

**SCHOLARSHIP & QUEEN CHAIR:**

**Jimmie Oakley**

512-507-3009  
jimmie.oakley@gmail.com

**Newsletter Editor:**

**Maryalice Herring**  
maryaliceherring@aol.com

August 2017

## Summer Dearth -

### Don't let your bees starve!

by Laura Colburn WCABA Vice President

If you've been keeping bees for more than even a few months, you've probably heard the term "summer dearth." In other parts of the country grass is green, flowers are blooming, rain is replenishing the earth on a regular basis. Not so in Central Texas. July hits with a hot punch: little rain falls, the grass turns brown and crunchy, and foraging sources are scarce. In the hive, that means resources may also be scarce. I've talked about the importance of nutrition and tend to speak about nectar and honey stores more than pollen. This is in part because when sources are available, the bees really pack it away. But this year has been different, at least in my hives.

I keep notes on every inspection and transfer them to my online records in HiveTracks. Here's what I've noticed: beginning of June, my strongest hives had 8 frames of brood spread across two deeps. Several frames of pollen and honey as well as a little in the supers. Middle of June, similar setup. Skip to the middle of July. It's hot. It's dry. The robust populations no longer have a strong food source to support them, so the brood nests are contracting. Instead of eight frames, there are around five. Then beginning of August I was shocked to find only about 4 frames of brood in my typically strong hives. So I looked closer. The commodity I had seen in great supply through spring and early summer was gone. There was almost no pollen. No pollen means no royal jelly, it means the queens are fed

less which means she isn't laying as much. This is especially problematic because the eggs she will be laying over the next few months will be the winter bees that care for the hive until spring. Without proper nutrition they won't be fat enough to survive.



Pollen Feeder

Photo by LColburn

I turned to Randy Oliver and his series on the role of pollen in the bee hive as well as his comparison of pollen substitutes. He explains: "When a colony goes into protein deficit, the nurses cut back on the amount of royal jelly to feed larvae. And] pollen-starved nurses may also consume newly-laid eggs, and eventually larvae." Low pollen is even more detrimental than low honey stores. Fortunately Randy isn't all doom and gloom. While nature may not be providing, a beekeeper can intervene when pollen runs short. Pollen patties are not a good solution this time of year because small hive beetles love to hide and and reproduce there. Yuck. But dry pollen is a viable solution. Placed in feeders, honey bees collect it just as they would pollen from flowers.

(continued on page 2)



*Summer Dearth - continued from page 1*

Flying produces static electricity which allows the tiny grains of pollen supplement to adhere. They fly away from the feeder coated in bright yellow replacement and happily carry it back to the hive.

I built two feeders from a 2' section of 4" pvc pipe, capped on one end and with an elbow at the other. By morning of the next day, one little bee was checking out a feeder. A few hours later, there were five or so. By the afternoon, it was a popular site. By morning of the second day, many bees were in and out. I turned the opening slightly down-



*Pollen Feeder Entrance.jpg Photo by LColburn*

ward so if it rains the pollen substitute would not get wet. I'm hoping to see an improvement in my hives in two or three weeks. I'll continue feeding until the fall flow begins. I encourage you to check the pollen stores in your own hives. If they're low or out, begin offering a dry pollen substitute. You can buy it from various online sources or at Busy Bee Beekeeping Supplies in Florence.



*Pollen Feeder - side view Photo by LColburn*

I also encourage you to read more on the topic. Visit Randy Oliver's website, [scientificbeekeeping.com](http://scientificbeekeeping.com) for his series on bee nutrition and on his comparison of pollen substitutes.

<http://scientificbeekeeping.com/fat-bees-part-1/>  
<http://scientificbeekeeping.com/a-comparative-test-of-the-pollen-sub/>

From the July meeting -

THANK YOU to our Door Prize Donors:

- Lorainna Christian
- Lisa Hoekstra
- Barbi Rose
- Cecelia Richter
- Laura Colburn
- Brandy Eves
- Rebecca Ramage
- Helen Hubbard

Congrats to our Door Prize Winners:

- Jill Douglas
- Brent Betts
- Karen Duncan
- Rebecca Ramage
- Charles Powell
- Mia Koepp
- Tiesa Hollaway
- Loran Powell
- Linda Hunter
- Sarah Dorn

There were 66 members in attendance.  
 We welcome our newest member: Tiesa Hollaway of Florence  
 We had one renewal: Mike and Rhonda Tenbrook of Volente





## A Message From Our President



WCABA President Jim Colbert

As I have been out and about this week, I have noticed how green things are after last week's rain. The sage is blooming like crazy and it almost seems like spring again (except for the 100 degree days). But don't let that fool you. We are still in the summer doldrums and your bees know it. This is a hard time for bees, somewhat analogous to winter. Their numbers have probably been reduced, food is scarce and pests like varroa and small hive beetles are a constant threat. What's a beekeeper to do? The two most important actions you can take are to control varroa mites and feed. We talk about varroa mites constantly, but they are the single biggest threat to bees in this area. As for feeding, if you extracted honey this summer, your bees may not have had time to replenish their stores and need to be fed. A 1:1 sugar water mixture is just what they need right now. One other problem that can show up is robbing. If you see bees trying to get into a hive at places other than the entrance, they could be (and probably are) robbers. Another sign of robbing is bees fighting at the entrance of a hive. Once it gets started, robbing can be a serious problem. The simplest solution is to use an entrance reducer.

Between the dearth, mites, feeding and robbing, this is a busy time for beekeepers. Even though it's hot and that bee suit is uncomfortable, don't neglect your bees. This is a critical time of year. Hopefully, in another month, the rains will come, the weather will cool down and life will be a lot more comfortable, both for us and our bees. Until then, take care of yourself and your bees.

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A special note from Phil Ainslie - WCABA Treasurer -

From Temple Bee Club member Bob Billings -  
Bees for sale -

**The bees are a colony in a 5 frame nuc with brood and honey. I would transfer the frames into the buyer's box and you would give me 5 frames to replace mine. We would leave the box on my property until dusk to allow foraging bees to return to the hive at which time the buyer will pick up the hive. The cost is \$100. For more information call 254-231-5993.**





## Extracting Workshop Held at the Bost Farm

by Jimmie Oakley - WCABA Scholarship and Queen Chair



An "Extracting Workshop" was held on Saturday morning July 29th. at the Bost Farm Honey House from 10 AM to 1PM. It was attended by about 20 members who wanted to learn more about the extracting process using the WCABA club equipment. There were more than enough frames to be extracted for everyone to have an opportunity to get great "hands on" experience scratching the capping, spinning the frames in the extractor, straining, and even bottling the honey harvested of which a portion went to the administrative and custodial staff at the First United Methodist Church where we meet. A special thanks to Dodie Stillman for attending and lending her knowledge of the extracting process, and to Jennifer Shear, our Historian, for coming and bringing hot biscuits so we could enjoy the freshly extracted honey.

Remember when you extract honey, make your donation to the Scholarship Program, the Honey Tasting Contest and Judging, the State Fair display and the TBA Honey Show Contest competition. The workshop was a lot of fun, so let's plan to do it again next year.



Shannon Montez scrapes the cappings from a frame.



Getting a good spin on the frame slings out all the honey..



Chris Huck pours the extracted honey through the strainer.

*\*all pictures courtesy of J Oakley*





## More Extracting FUN!!



*Thankfully there is always someone to help with cleanup!*



*Leah gets a picture perfect pour as Lori bottles honey for the Church.*



*Shannon and Belli Montez enjoy the fruits of their labor, biscuits & honey!*

## There's More Than Honey In Your Hive! – Beeswax

### Vintage Wood Polish

Vintage Wood Polish is a great way to use your yellow or brown wax. The beeswax acts as a sealant to lightly waterproof wooden items. Be sure to filter the sediments out of the beeswax so your polish is smooth and free of particles that may scratch furniture.

**Ingredients:**  
 1/2 cup Beeswax  
 1/2 cup Turpentine

**Equipment:**  
 Double boiler  
 Glass Jar with Lid

#### Instructions:

- \* Slowly melt Beeswax in double boiler, stirring frequently.
- \* Remove from heat as soon as the beeswax has melted.
- \* Slowly pour in the turpentine and stir. It's OK if there are clumps of cooled beeswax.
- \* Pour into glass jar.
- \* Allow to cool completely. Put on lid.
- \* Let polish sit a few days before using. It will thicken as the turpentine dissolves the beeswax.
- \* Apply polish to wood surface with a clean cloth.
- \* Buff it off after about 10 minutes.



*submitted by Barbi Rose – WCABA Librarian*



From our July program -

Barbi Rose, WCABA librarian, did a great job introducing the membership to the many, many products that can be created from “the hive”. Be sure to look for her beeswax polish recipe in this newsletter and watch your email for notices about future workshops with Barbi.



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## Don't miss out on these upcoming events...

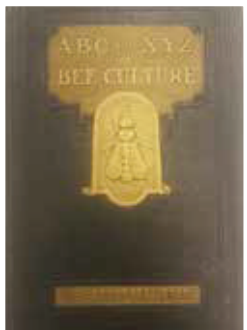
- \* WCABA oxalic acid vapor workshop - September 9
- \* National mite-a-thon week - September 9-16
- \* WCABA meeting - September 28
- \* Brazos Valley Beekeeping School - September 23  
fmi - <http://www.bvbeeks.org/events/bee-school/>
- \* State Fair of Texas - September 29-October 22

Watch your email for more announcements and registration information!





### *Book Nook - by Barbi Rose (WCABA librarian)*



This month's feature is the 1940 edition of ABC and XYZ of Bee Culture by A.I. and E.R. Root. It is on loan to WCABA from Matt Ludlum.

Take a peek into beekeeping as it was 77 years ago...before the

dreaded Varroa destructor mite, small hive beetles, tracheal mites, modern honey ex-

tractors, and plastic beekeeping supplies. Yep, there was

beekeeping before plastic foundation!

***Stop by the library to browse through this vintage goodie.***

### ***New Books***

Check out the new library books. Both are suggested reading for all levels of the Texas Master Beekeeper Program.

1. The Biology of the Honey Bee by Mark L. Winston  
This book is a deep dive into bee physiology, chemicals, and instincts. You'll learn the answers to questions like these:

- What is the banana-like odor that we smell in a hive of highly agitated bees?
- We've all heard about the queen's pheromones, but where are they produced?
- How do foragers choose which pollens to collect?

Answers:

- The banana-like odor is a chemical released from the sting chamber of workers.
- The queen's pheromones are produced in her mandibular glands.
- Foragers choose which pollens to collect based on the odor and physical configuration of the pollen grains.

### *Backyard Beekeeper cont.*

2. The Backyard Beekeeper by Kim Flottum

This is a "beginning to end" book that covers beekeeping basics starting with deciding the hive's location and ending with beeswax and honey recipes. There are a lot of pictures that reinforce every topic.

I especially appreciate the large amount of comparison pictures, such as; wet vs dry cappings, healthy larvae and pupa vs those with chalkbrood, American and European foulbrood, and Varroa mites, good brood patterns vs spotty brood patterns.

He includes Sucroside (Sucrose Octanoate) as a soft/beginning treatment for Varroa mites, which can be used in hot temperatures like ours. He also suggests to give the bees grease patties to prevent and treat tracheal mites, and includes his recipe.

### WCABA Library Resources

Sharing knowledge is one of the benefits of being a club member. Our library contains a wide variety of materials for beginner to advanced beekeepers that can be checked out by members.

Please browse through the list of materials online at:  
<https://wcaba.librarika.com>

See something you'd like to reserve? The WCABA librarian can provide a login so you can reserve online, then pickup at the next meeting.

Please be sure to return your books at the next meeting! Someone may have the items reserved for the following month, if you cannot return your items at the beginning of the next meeting, please contact the librarian, Barbi Rose at [librarian@wcaba.org](mailto:librarian@wcaba.org), to extend your check-out.



## Preparing Honey for Show

by Jimmie Oakley

**\*Note:** Bees make the honey and you are not winning on the honey, but your presentation of the honey. Judges look at how you present the honey and taste is a secondary (some-time deciding) factor.

**Make sure you present your honey in the container called for by the contest.**

**Use the right container: Queenline Jar – 1#, 2# - and good lid!!**

**Cleanliness is next to...**

**Make sure your containers are clean. Wash in dishwasher by themselves.**

**Never touch the jar with your hands after that; use lint free cloth (flower sack towels) or photo gloves.**

**Pick the Jar Well (blemish free). Look carefully for bubbles or flaws in the glass, even the bottom.**

**Put Good Honey in your Jars. Honey Quality Check - Choose only fully capped frames (moisture) and taste it for flavor (no bitter weed, leafy spurge, goldenrod).**

**Filling your Jars: Slowly, holding with a towel, tipped at an angle to prevent bubbles.**

**Fill Level of Jar: Up to the top screw thread (the first time). Reduce lever before entering into the contest. This allows for removing bubbles and/or debris later.**

**Cover Jar with Plastic Wrap: Judges look under the lid and no honey should be there, remove the plastic wrap before giving to judges.**

**Bottle Honey Early as Opposed to Late: Give your honey time to settle up and provide opportunity to skim or remove bubbles and/or debris. Remove top layer with a silver spoon to above the inside fill line. You should not see empty space below the lid.**

**\*Honey is judged on three categories, Light, Amber, & Dark, the Appearance of the Bottle (cleanliness of the bottle inside and out, no honey under the lid), the Uniform Fill (up to fill line), Free of Foreign Matter (granulated crystals, bubbles, foam, wax, lint), Flavor, and Brightness (clear, sparking, transparent).**

**Hints: You can heat honey slowly and allow bubbles to rise by leaving the jar in a closed, parked car all day (in Texas = 100+ degrees).**

**To remove specks, wax, or lint try long wooden squares to move the foreign matter to the top and dip off with silver spoon.**

**Polish jars with silk cloth.**

**Use individually cut moist square of lint free cloth (white men's handkerchief) to wipe underside of lid before presentation.**

**Store honey in room temperature above 57 degrees to avoid granulation.**







## Mite Sampling Workshop

By Laura Colburn - WCABA VicePresident

On the morning of Saturday, August 5, about 20 WCABA members came to my apiary in Florence to learn just how easy it is to take a mite sample. I was glad the weather cooperated since forecasts earlier in the week predicted rain. It was just cloudy enough to keep it from getting too hot.

Due to the high level of response, I opened the workshop to a second group and Dodie Stillman was kind enough to help with the split. While I took one group to demonstrate mite sampling, she led a second group in assembling a basket as part of their mite-sampling kits. She was also able to talk in-depth about the Varroa life cycle, why simply looking for them in the hive is ineffective, as well as answering other beekeeping questions.

Meanwhile, in the bee yard, I began the demonstration with what to look for when selecting a frame for sampling (lots of nurse bees), what to do if the queen is on the frame you'd like to use. After collecting a ½ cup sample of bees, I showed how to perform a sugar roll followed by an alcohol wash. The sugar roll proved to be just as effective as an alcohol wash because only one more mite came off the bees. That's good to know. When humidity is too high or the winds are really blowing, an alcohol wash is better. But if I'm only doing a couple of samples and the weather is right for it, a sugar roll is effective.

Each participant and volunteer received a take-home kit so they can get started right away on sampling in their own bee yards. They received a mason jar with screened lid and basket, alcohol and powdered sugar, and the latest Varroa Management Guide by the Honey Bee Health Coalition. The screened lids and guides were kindly donated by Mary Reed from the Texas Apiary Inspection Service.

Late summer is a vital time for sampling your hives for mites. During the summer dearth and going into fall, the brood rearing slows down but mite population are still on the rise. Without knowing your numbers, you won't know if your hive is at serious risk going into winter. It's quick and easy to sample a hive, as the workshop participants today learned, and one every beekeeper needs to learn. I did not see any mites while looking at the frames, but the samples showed how much the eye will miss. One sample had 16 mites, which means it's time to intervene. The other sample had 10 mites, indicating I'll need to take action before fall. Because sampling is so easy, I check at least every other month. If a hive is beginning to show an increase, I sample every month.

The Pollinator Partnership is holding a nationwide Mite-a-Thon to encourage beekeepers throughout the United States to sample their hives and report the results. The dates are September 9-16, 2017. Find out more about this event at <http://pollinator.org/mite-athon/>

You can download a Varroa Management Guide from [honeybeehealthcoalition.org](http://honeybeehealthcoalition.org) and see more photos from the workshop at the WCABA FaceBook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Williamson-County-Area-Beekeepers-Association-167001426778381/>

Future workshops will be held, so be sure to watch your email for topics and schedules.



*\*photos by LColburn*





## WCABA Summer Workshop: Oxalic Acid Vapor

Our second summer workshop will be held September 9 at 9:00AM. This is a follow-up to our first summer workshop in which participants learned how to sample a hive for mites. In this second workshop, Laura Colburn will demonstrate treating for Varroa using an Oxalic Acid vapor.

This workshop will demonstrate:

- Materials and equipment needed
- Preparing a hive for treatment
- Applying an Oxalic Acid vapor
- Some of the equipment needed for OA Vaporizing

To participate, you must:

- Be a current member of WCABA
- Be 12 years or older
- Register by email by September 1: email

Laura Colburn at [lcolburn0617@gmail.com](mailto:lcolburn0617@gmail.com) using the subject line "September Workshop Registration"

Provide your own protective clothing: veil, gloves, long pants and shirt sleeves (or bee suit), and boots at a minimum. No mesh or open shoes will be allowed

Provide your own organic vapor mask, such as a 3M 6001, and protective goggles. You can find these online or at a local hardware store. A dust mask is not an equivalent to a vapor mask, so be sure to get the right protection before the workshop. ***No exceptions to mask and goggles will be made.***

Bring a signed waiver and \$25 payment (pay by cash or checks made to WCABA) to the workshop. Space is limited and will be reserved on a first-registration basis. No additional guests will be allowed to wait on the property during the workshop. Minors must be accompanied by a paid parent or guardian. If you have an allergy, please bring your own EPI pen; no medication will be provided by the host.

The workshop will be held at 1500 CR 233, Florence Texas and will begin promptly at 9:00AM. In case of inclement weather, the workshop will be postponed or refunds issued if cancelled.

Kay Freund of Humming Tree Ventures will be at this workshop with vaporizers made by her company.

If you have questions, please email Laura Colburn at [lcolburn0617@gmail.com](mailto:lcolburn0617@gmail.com).







**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

**WCABA Seeking Qualified Honey Queen Applicants**

**Eligibility Rules for WCABA Honey Queen Contestants**

**Age:** Any single young lady who has reached her 16th birthday by January 1st and has not passed her 22nd birthday on the year she makes application for WCABA Honey Queen.

**Status:** Applicant shall be single, shall never have been married, nor had a marriage annulled, nor cohabitated with a male in lieu of a marriage contract. Applicants who are pregnant, or have been pregnant are ineligible.

**Sponsor:** An acceptable candidate will be sponsored by WCABA in compaction.

**Education:** Applicant must be enrolled in an accredited high school (home schooling, etc.) and/or college.

Anyone desiring, or knowing of an interested qualified applicant, is urged to contact WCABA President, Jim Colbert, VP Laura Colburn via email, or see Jimmie Oakley, WCABA Queen Chair at the meeting.



# *Oakley*

## Honey Bee Removal

**Austin:** (512)981-9216

**Waco/Temple:** (254) 340-4415

beekeepers@livehoneybeeremoval.com

[www.LiveHoneyBeeRemoval.com](http://www.LiveHoneyBeeRemoval.com)

### Randy Oakley

Live Honey Bee Removal  
& Relocation Specialists  
with 35 years of  
Beekeeping Experience

#### Live Honey Bee:

- Removal
- Relocation
- Repair



*Oakley*  
Family Apiaries



- Local Honey Bees
- Beekeeping Advice
- Beekeeping Supplies

### Randy & Amy Oakley

(254) 307-2337

OakleyBees@gmail.com

OakleyFamilyApiaries.com



*Time to treat for varroa / See us at the meeting for  
Varroa Mite Monitoring & Treatment Solutions*

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

WCABA  
4355 County Road 110  
Georgetown, Tx 78626