

Next Meeting:
Thursday, July 28, 2016

7:00-8:00: Beekeeping 101 / 201
8:00-9:00: Program

First United Methodist Church
Georgetown (MMC bldg.)

Beekeeping 101: Laura Colburn
"Supercedure & New Queens"

Beekeeping 201: Art Thomas

Program Speaker: Les Crowder
"Keeping Honeybees Healthy"
(see Les Crowder's bio on pg. 9)

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Do you Smell Garlic?

Mosquitos vs. Honey Bees

by Mary C. Gardner



photo credit: Diet and I

Summer is the season when I always hope to have a chance to slow down and relax. Ideally, my days (or at least my weekends) would be filled with trips to the lake, lounging poolside, hiking, biking, picnicing, barbequing, camping, gardening, or even just being lazy and relaxing in a hammock. I love doing all these things, but each one seems to be an invitation for mosquitos to join me!

One day recently, when I was driven inside by a particularly bloodthirsty swarm of mosquitos, I took to the internet to research some solutions. Let me start by saying, on any given day in my neighborhood, I can smell garlic on the wind when I walk outside. This is a big fad in my area for mosquito control, with homeowners believing these types of pest control products are organic and safe.

The problem with organic pesticides is that they still kill bees! Garlic extract has proven to be toxic to bee larvae, resulting in lower body mass and decreased rate of walking in adult workers (Oxford Journal of Insect Science abstract).

Terminix describes its monthly treatment as "a spray based on plant sugars and garlic [that] will kill disease-causing insects. The insects are drawn to the sugar, feed on it, and die from the garlic." Barefoot

Mosquito says their product is an "organic-based, 99.5% natural mosquito control system that minimizes pesticide usage and is environmentally responsible."

Another problem with this approach is the potential for garlic to mask floral scents, thus confusing bees, rendering them unable to locate food sources, and resulting in them spending more time out foraging and bringing home less food.

Yet another problem occurs if your pest company does not adhere strictly to application recommendations regarding best time to spray and where to spray. If they are spraying before dark (which I assume most are working 9:00 to 5:00) or they spray blooming plants, then honey bees are highly likely to come into contact with the pesticide.

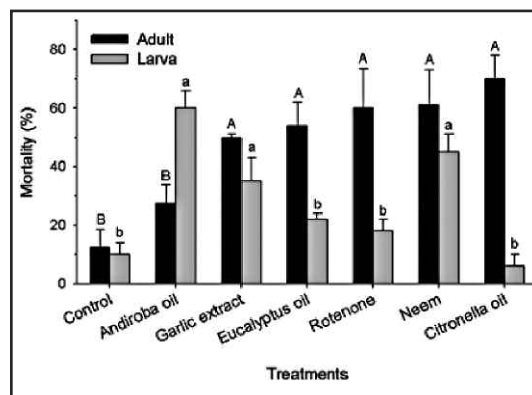
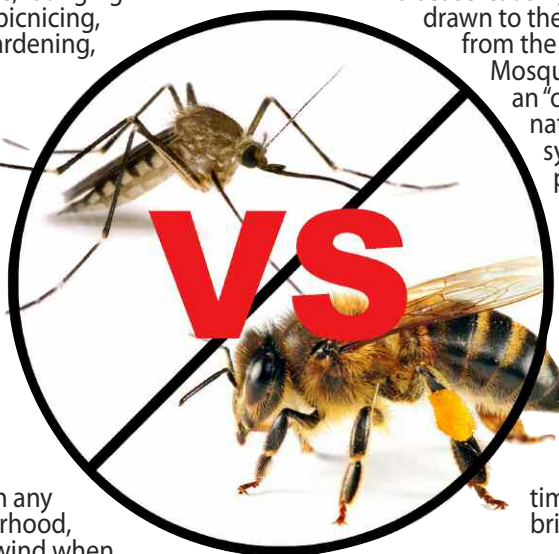
What can you do?

Let your neighbors know you have bees - they might be willing to change their habits if they realize they are harming bees.

Educate people about the importance of the time of day when treatments are applied - near dark is the best time because hopefully your bees have returned home from foraging and this is the time mosquitos are most active.

Encourage people to choose solutions that are bee safe: Granular applications are safer than spray formulations, which are safer than dusts, which can drift (a problem that leads to pesticides ending up in water and on blooming plants where bees feed).

continued...



Effects of botanical insecticides on honey bees.
Only andiroba oil demonstrated no lethality in adult workers.

Mosquitos vs. Honey Bees cont'd.

Eliminate stagnant water that can breed mosquitos, and if you leave water out for your bees (which they would greatly appreciate), replace it with fresh water often so mosquito larvae don't have a chance to hatch.

Plant mosquito repelling plants around your yard and in your garden:



Basil

strong bug-repelling scent even without crushing the leaves; basil essential oil is toxic to mosquito larvae



Citrosium

this plant is also known as "Mosquito Repellent Plant"



Marigolds

contain pyrethrum, an ingredient found in many insect repellants



Lavender

mosquitos hate the smell; the lavandin variety contains high levels of camphor



Mint

keeps mosquitos away; mint essential oils help soothe bug bites



Catnip

insect repellent containing nepetalacton



Lemon balm

contains high levels of citronella



Sage

burn this herb and the scented smoke repels mosquitos (Rosemary works too)

photo credits:
Country Living

Recipes for Natural Solutions for Summertime Woes

Bug Bites, Chapped Lips, Ants at Your Picnic...Oh My!



DIY All-Natural Mason Jar Bug Repellent

Ingredients:

- 1 Mason Jar
- 2 Lemons
- 2 Limes
- Water
- 5 - 7 sprigs fresh rosemary
- Lavender oil
- Tea candle

Directions:

Cut 2 lemons into wedges or slices
Cut 2 limes into wedges or slices
Fill mason jar with water (2/3 to 3/4 full)
Add lemons and limes
Add 5 - 7 fresh rosemary sprigs
Add lavender essential oil (1 eyedropper full or 15 - 20 drops)
Float a tea light candle on top and light
Enjoy sitting outside!

Herb Combo Witch Hazel Spray Recipe

This spray uses multiple fresh or dried herbs and smells great while keeping bugs at bay. Tweak your batch to make your own signature scent.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup distilled water
- 1 cup witch hazel
- 4 Tbsp dried herbs or 1 cup of chopped herbs (include at least 1 mint family herb)

Directions:

Bring distilled water to a boil and add herbs. Stir well and turn off heat. Cover and let steep until cooled. Strain herbs and mix remaining liquid with witch hazel. Pour into a spray bottle and keep refrigerated.

You can also use this recipe to make a homemade "mosquito strip" by spraying it onto pieces of cloth and hanging near your outdoor spaces. To keep the odor strong, you'll need to keep the strips moist, though, so the concoction doesn't quickly evaporate.



DIY Reusable Food Wrap

Supplies:

- Thin cotton fabric
- Scissors
- Beeswax
- Cookie sheet
- Paintbrush

Directions:

Cut fabric to desired dimension.

If using a bar of beeswax, grate ~2 Tbsp. per 12" sq. of fabric. For wax pellets, skip this.

Preheat oven to 200°. Place fabric on cookie sheets. Sprinkle beeswax over top. Place in oven until wax melts (~5 min.).

Once wax is melted, use paintbrush to spread evenly over fabric. Hang up to cool. Now it's ready! Each wrap should last several months, and can be hand washed in cold water. Repeat process to re-wax it for grip.

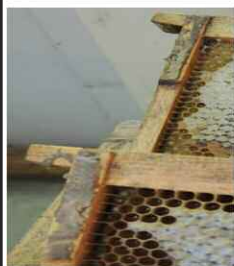
Recipe courtesy of: www.sun-gazing.com

Recipe courtesy of: Julie Fryer for Mother Earth News

Recipe courtesy of: One Good Thing by Jillee

Products of the Hive Recipes

TINCTURE of PROPOLIS



If your bees are producing a lot of propolis, collect the excess or purchase a propolis trap and consider making some *propolis tincture*. Try to collect a clean product - no paint chips or bee parts.
 <<<Collect best Propolis from frame end bars.
 Fresh green Propolis is better than dark black>>>



Collect the clean propolis in a pint size mason jar. Cover approximately 2 inches above the propolis with *Everclear*, a pure 100 proof *grain alcohol*.
 <<<Fill about 1/3 of jar w/Propolis.
 Allow to set for a week to start, tightly capped of course. Shake the jar every few days. Notice that the solution will separate.
 Keep solution in darkness >>>



Add a little more alcohol as needed. This will make tincture. Do not add too much or the saturation point will be absorbed and you will need more propolis. After 2-3 weeks I usually end up with approximately 2" of dark brown tincture setting on top of about 1½" of a milky substance.
 <<<Be careful not to disturb the separation.



Use a very small siphon tube (or eye dropper) to draw off the pure tincture (the top layer). Store tightly in dark bottles to preserve the tincture's strength. Be careful, it stains yellow.

Add more alcohol to the milky substance and the process starts again.

Recipe and photos courtesy of Jimmie Oakley



One of Elise's bees drinking from our swimming pool fountain.

Summertime Checklist

July and August are hot, dry months in Texas. Some nectar sources may still be in bloom, like horsemint, bitter weed and honeydew, but there is little else for the bees to forage. Robbing can become a problem and the nectar dearth can make your bees cranky and bad tempered. Make sure you provide plenty of water if no natural source is available to your bees - they use the water to help cool the hives during hot weather.

In the Beeyard:

- ☐ Provide plenty of water
- ☐ Make sure new colonies have room to grow
- ☐ Feed your bees 1:1 syrup if needed
- ☐ Extract honey
- ☐ Melt wax and clean and store combs
- ☐ Store cleaned supers in a cool dry area:
Place a super on newspaper and stack 2 more on top. Cover the 3rd super with an 8" x 8" piece of paper & pour 1/4 c. moth crystals on it. Continue to stack until all have been stored. Cover top super with a hive cover over the moth crystals and newspaper.

In the Garden:

- ☐ Sow seeds: Cucumbers, Spinach, Okra, Pumpkin, Summer Squash, Cantaloupe.
- ☐ Plant: Eggplant, Peppers, Tomatoes, Basil, Rosemary, Thyme, Geranium, Marigolds, Butterfly Weed, Lantana, Plumbago, Salvias.
- ☐ Feed and cultivate. Fertilize again before fall.
- ☐ Prune dead or diseased wood but hold off on major pruning until mid winter.
- ☐ Investing in soaker hoses or drip irrigation.
- ☐ Divide spring flowering perennials.

Elise's Honey Lip Balm

Ingredients:

1 cup - sweet almond oil 1/2 cup - beeswax 2 Tbsp. - honey

Directions:

1. Put 1 cup almond oil and 1/2 cup beeswax in microwave-safe bowl.
2. Microwave on high for 1 minute.
3. Check to see if mixture is melted and stir.
4. Continue microwaving in 30 second intervals and stirring until melted.
5. Stir 2 Tablespoons of honey into the mixture.
6. Cool completely, then pour into small containers with lids.
7. Great for chapped lips!

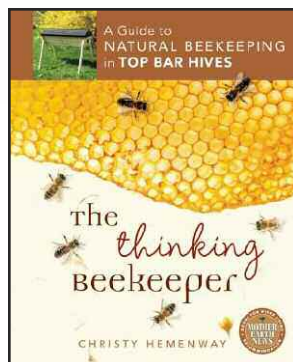


Honey Extracting Workshop!

On Saturday, June 25th, at the Bost Farm, Jimmie Oakley hosted a hands on experience in setting up and using the club's honey extracting equipment. Attendees found the workshop very beneficial and helped Jimmie bottle honey for the Church donation. Twenty-four honey bears were donated to First United Methodist Church.

Attendees included: David & Sherry Smith, Mary Bost, George & Bonnie Richards, Jill Douglass, Anna Dzurenko, Linda Donovan, John & Helen Hubbard, Mia & Kyle Koepp, Melissa Tang, Mike Hoff, Ian & Hugh Taylor, Elise & Mary Catherine Gardner, and Charles Goertz.





BOOK NOOK by Holly Medina

The Thinking Beekeeper by Christy Hemmenway

Providing a habitat for bees, pollinating the plants around you, and producing honey are some of the reasons beekeepers take up the hobby of keeping bees. Conventional beekeeping is a hobby that requires an investment in educating one's self and the funds to do it. Some beekeepers choose to let the bees create a more natural hive by using top bar hives, they can be cost effective, simple and easy to sustain. ***The Thinking Beekeeper*** is a do-it-yourself guide to natural beekeeping in top bar hives.



Door prize items in January were donated by: Lisa Hoekstra, Ginny Stubblefield, & Austin Honey.

Winners were: Nissa Walker, Maurine Janke, Frank Morgan, and Tim Falkenstein.



Letter from the President

This year's honey crop turned out to be really good for my remaining four hives in the middle of corn country! Last week I managed to harvest over 150 lbs from the four hives while leaving some behind for the bees. We are into the summer dearth at this point and we need to check our hives for both pollen and honey, feeding where necessary. Pollen patties for protein and 1 to 1 sugar water if they have no honey, keeping this up until September when there should be a fall flow.

Don't forget that our club has two extractors that may be borrowed – contact Mary Bost for availability. If you do use the club equipment, please return it on time and in the same state it was when you took it home.

Tanya Phillips is repeating her very successful Tour de Hives this year on Saturday August 20th – if you wish to help with this program, contact Tanya at tanya@beefriendlyaustin.com.

After a very successful Summer Clinic, Texas Beekeepers Association is working on the program for the Annual Convention to be held at the Belton Convention Center November 3rd through 5th. If any of you are able to help with this, please contact me at ckdoggett@gmail.com or call me at (512) 914-2794.

See you at our meeting on July 28th.



Chris Doggett, WCABA President

Honey Extracting Use of the Club Extracting Equipment

The next two months will probably be our busiest honey extracting months of the year.

WCABA has 2 sets of extracting equipment available for members to use, but the first 2 members to ask for a particular date will be the ones to be written on Mary's calendar, so anyone calling to reserve a 3-day usage should have an alternate date in case their preferred date is not available. Call Mary Bost at 512-863-3656 or Jimmie Oakley at 512-507-3009 to reserve a 3-day extractor use. Also, the equipment is now stored in the garage area, not where it used to be.

If you have not previously used the extracting equipment, you will then need to contact Jimmie Oakley (512-507-3009) to arrange a time to meet him at the Bost farm in order for him demonstrate the proper procedure for checking it out and using it.

We are requesting that users make a voluntary contribution to WCABA of either a money donation or a container of honey to be sold at the Hill Country Fair next November. All money thus received will be added to the Ed Wolfe/Robert Bost Memorial Scholarship Fund.



TBA Summer Clinic

by Elise Gardner (WCABA Honey Princess & Apprentice Master Beekeeper)

Buzzwords:

• Carbon Emissions •

carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide in the atmosphere, produced by vehicles and industrial processes, thought to be harmful to the environment.

We all need to do more to reduce carbon emissions.

"I would like to express my personal appreciation to everyone who has helped to support the queen program (not just at this event) to help us continue to educate others and do what we love!"

In June, I had the privilege of attending the TBA Summer Clinic. The event was a huge success. It is estimated that there were nearly 700 attendees! This years convention was held at the Lone Star Convention and Expo Center with the wonderful luxury of air conditioning, (unlike last year)! I think everyone in attendance appreciated the change in venue.



Guest speaker, Ross Conrad.

There were many well known speakers in attendance, including featured guest speaker Ross Conrad, author of **Natural Beekeeping: Organic Approaches to Modern Apiculture**, who talked to us about the importance of reducing carbon emissions for the sake of our environment and the honeybees. There were countless other sessions given by well qualified beekeepers, Apiary inspectors and scientists, as well.

I had the pleasure of giving a **"Basics of Beekeeping"** presentation in the **Kids Teaching Kids** portion of the event. The children were very receptive to the information and asked intelligent questions at the end. I was also able to use my bee biology game as a hands on teaching tool and the children enjoyed it very much!



This is my honey bee anatomy game. My "Pin the Part on the Bee" game helps kids learn and identify the different parts and functions of a bee's anatomy.

There was a wonderful catered barbecue lunch, followed by more sessions in the afternoon!

The queens, princesses and ambassadors, from all the various beekeeping associations, manned tables with tri folds containing information regarding how bees relate to everyday life. All of the queens also worked to sell our fundraiser notecards over the course of the event and in doing so we raised a lot of money to help support the queen program! I would like to express my personal appreciation to everyone who has helped to support the queen program (not just at this event) to help us continue to educate others and do what we love!



Overall the event turned out to be a fantastic success that ran seamlessly thanks to the hard work of the TBA volunteers!



▲ Janet Reynolds taught a class on Encaustic Painting. It was fascinating to see another use for a product of the hive, wax.



▲ Liz Walsh taught a session on Queen Finding and Requeening Techniques. I think even the old time beekeepers learned a thing or two from her!



◀ Cameron Crane conducted a hands on demonstration on Honey Extraction. The whole class had a chance to get out of their seats and observe his techniques up close.

BusyBeeChic

WCABA Honey Princess,
Elise Gardner,
has started a bee blog.
Check it out at:
www.BusyBeeChic.com

New Members and Membership Renewals

Welcome to our new members:

Felipe Cueva Arias, Georgetown;
Hunter Harms, Cedar Park;
Tim and Cynthia Urban,
Georgetown.

Renewing members are:

Elsa Sorensen, Austin;
Cecilia Cervantes, Austin;
Steve Schiller, Coupland.



"Thank You!" to our Refreshment Hosts:

Maurine Janke
Ginny Stubblefield
Shirley Doggett

August is our Ice Cream Social!

The sign-up sheet will be "floating"
around during this month's meeting.

A BIG "THANK YOU!"

to Barbi Benjamin, our Refreshments
coordinator, for all her hard work
keeping us fed each month!

- All your beekeeping friends in WCABA

Barbi will be stepping down from her role at the
end of the year and we are looking for volunteers
who would be interested in taking her place.
Please let us know if you would be interested.

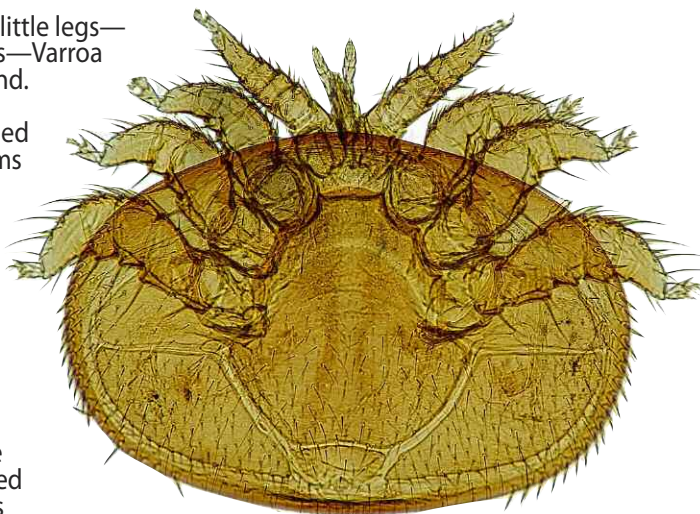


Seven Methods of Varroa Mite Transmission

By Permission from Rusty Burlew of Honey Bee Suite (www.honeybeesuite.com)

Considering they have only stubby little legs—and no wings, fins, or driver licenses—Varroa mites have no trouble getting around. In fact, they have an entire public transport system built and maintained by the very host they parasitize. Seems unfair, doesn't it?

While many routes of migration from colony to colony have been documented, some are more important than others. Here's a list of common ways mites get around, and there may be others.



Female varroa mite with stubby little legs. Pixabay photo.

- Mites on flowers. Of all the possible methods of mite transmission, this one seems the least likely. Mites are attracted to the pheromones of bees, so it seems far-fetched that a mite would jump off a bee onto a flower and wait for another bee to arrive. However, if a Varroa-laden bee lands on a flower and begins to groom, it is possible that she will dislodge a mite. If so, that mite has no choice but to wait for another honey bee to come along and give her a lift. Surely this happens from time to time, but it's probably not a major means of transmission.
- Beekeeper assist. Beekeepers can easily move mites between colonies when they exchange frames of bees or brood between hives or when they make splits.
- Drifting. Not all honey bees make it back to their own colony. It is well known that if you have a row of hives, the hives on the ends will slowly gain population while the ones in the middle lose it. If these lost bees are carrying pollen, nectar, or other needed stores, they are usually welcomed into the new colony. The unseen gift, though, may be phoretic mites tucked between the bee's segments which are happy to jump off and make themselves to home.
- Drones. Unlike foragers, drones are not too particular about where they spend the night. Drones are very likely to stop in at any old colony and the foragers usually let them in. Wandering drones may be a major mode of mite transmission.
- Swarming bees. If a colony has mites, so will the swarm. It only takes one mite to begin a new infestation.
- Abscending bees. Bees don't always abscond in massive groups like a swarm, but may leave a hive in onesies and twosies. This can happen when a colony is collapsing from disease or parasitism, when the bees are starving, when a colony remains queenless for a long period, when a colony is decimated by bears or other predators, after fire or flood, or whenever the bees' home is destroyed or becomes uninhabitable. The bees fly off and some may be lucky enough to find another colony to join, carrying with them their trove of mites and/or other diseases.
- Robbing bees. Whenever a bee colony becomes weak it is a potential target. Bees from healthy robust hives are often eager to empty out the pantry of a weaker hive and ferry the treasure back home, a form of kleptoparasitism that is greater in some races of honey bee than others. Oftentimes the weak hive is riddled with Varroa mites, and it may even be collapsing for that reason. The robbing bees end up with more than they bargained for, taking home both honey and a blood-thirsty population of Varroa mites. The take-home message is that your colony can pick up an infestation of Varroa at nearly any time of the year. The best practice is to monitor your hives regularly to see if you have a problem, and then decide on a course of action if you do.

The 4th Annual Central Texas Tour de Hives

The 4th Annual Central Texas Tour de Hives is coming up soon and we have lots of cool stuff planned for everyone to enjoy!

Event Location:
Zilker Botanical Gardens
2220 Barton Springs Rd.
Austin, Texas

Learn more about beekeeping and related topics such as planting native bee friendly plants, how to make a solar wax melter, mead making, and more. We have 3 days with event stuff happening!!!

All events take place indoors at the Zilker Botanical Gardens
2220 Barton Springs Rd, Austin, TX
(except the hive touring, of course)

Products of the Hive Workshop:
Friday, August 19th
from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

\$25 - Learn how to make lip balm and tea light candles, gets some easy recipes, and more. Hands on and you will take products home! (Class is limited to 50 participants, MUST pre-register by August 15th).



Tabitha Masker and Pamela Yeamans at the 3rd Annual Tour de Hives.

The 2016 Tour de Hives is sponsored by:
Travis County Beekeepers and Bee Friendly Austin.

This event is a yearly fundraiser with proceeds donated to nonprofit(s) dedicated to helping bees, beekeeper and public education, and bee research.

Please make checks or donations to:
Travis County Beekeepers Association



4th Annual Tour de Hives - Public Event:
Saturday, August 20th
from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

A day full of speakers in the Auditorium, Vendors with products in the Green Room, an observation hive with a live colony, Honey Queens & Princesses, Learn about REAL Texas Honey, Honey Tasting, Silent Auction, & Raffle Prizes - something will be happening all day, check the schedule on the tour website.

There will also be lots of bee yards to tour from Dripping Springs to Georgetown and more!

Admission to the event is **\$5** per group of up to 5 people and **\$1** for any extras traveling in same group! (1 tour map per group) - Buy tickets and sign waivers online or in person, on day of event, at Zilker Botanical Gardens. <http://www.TourdeHives.org>

Beekeeping Educational Seminar:
Sunday, August 21st
from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

\$40 Early Registration by August 15th or **\$50** at the door. Classes for those interested in becoming a backyard beekeeper. How to get started, What to buy and where, Setting up the bee yard, Getting & Installing Your Bees, Bee Friendly Plants, Bee Nutrition & Feeding, Honey Extraction, Products of the Hive, and more! Schedules & Speakers will be posted on the event website! (We are also planning to offer a catered lunch from Rudy's BBQ as an add on item, if desired for **\$10** for the Early Birds - must PRE-PAY) <http://www.TourdeHives.org>

Travis County Beekeepers Association (TCBA) was founded in 2014 and exists to promote common interest and general welfare of beekeeping, to protect honey bees, to educate beekeepers, encourage good bee management practices, and to encourage good relations between beekeepers and the public. Travis County Beekeepers Association is a non-profit organization serving the beekeeping community in the greater Austin and Travis County areas. Travis County Beekeepers Association is a member of the Texas Beekeepers Association and the Austin Area Garden Council.

Tanya Phillips, Beekeeper
www.BeeFriendlyAustin.com
512-560-3732
tanya333@me.com



John Swan and a hive visitor checking out a top bar hive at last year's Tour de Hives.



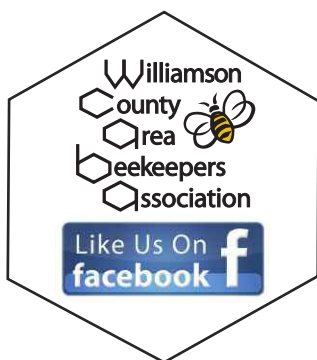
Honey Fruit Salad

Ingredients:

2 large bananas, sliced
1 pound of strawberries, tops removed and sliced
½ pound of fresh blueberries
2 tablespoons of honey
1 lime juiced
Slivered almonds as desired

Instructions:

1. Combine fruit in a bowl.
2. Drizzle honey and lime juice.
3. Stir to coat all the fruit.
4. Sprinkle with slivered almonds and enjoy. Yum!



Recipe courtesy of Beth Hackenberg, American Beekeeping Federation Auxiliary President.
Photo from Modcloth Blog.



WCABA MEETING MINUTES

June 23, 2016

1. **Opening the Meeting:** President Chris Doggett opened the meeting.
2. **Beekeeping 101:** Laura Colburn discussed "Your Hive in the Summer".
3. **Beekeeping 201:** Chris Doggett led the discussion on "Honey Bee Nutrition".
4. **Announcements:**
 - The Texas Beekeepers Association's Summer Clinic was a great success. There were more attendees than last year and expectations are there will be even more next year. The Montgomery County Beekeepers Association members did an excellent job of organizing the Clinic and their hard work is definitely appreciated by all who attended.
 - There will be a Honey Extracting Workshop at the Bost Farm, 4355 C.R. 110, Georgetown, on Saturday, June 25th from 10:00 until 2:00 pm. The club has 2 extractors and all the necessary equipment to extract honey for our members' use. See "Bost Farm Map" on the club website.
 - Important: To schedule borrowing the club's extractors, contact Mary Bost at 512-863-3656 to schedule the 3 days you wish to use an extractor.
 - WCABA member Gary Bible is taking orders for Minnesota Hygienic Queens through 07/15. They will cost \$25 to \$27 each. You can contact Gary at 512-548-6194 to order. The bees are bred to have a high degree of hygienic behavior known to be effective against diseases and varroa mites.
 - For new beekeepers, the Texas Beekeepers Association offers free one-year memberships. Contact Shirley Doggett for the form you will need to fill out.
5. **Guest Speaker:** Mary Reed from the Texas Apiary Inspection Service spoke on "IPM (Integrated Pest Management) – the Varroa Mite".
6. **Meeting Attendance:** 77 present
7. **Meeting Adjourned:** President Chris Doggett adjourned the meeting.
8. **Date for Next Meeting:** Our next meeting will be on July 28, 2016.

- Ginny Stubblefield, Secretary, WCABA

Swarming Season

if you (or a friend/neighbor) have a swarm

Contact Jim Colbert
512-863-7183

who has replaced Mary Bost with this responsibility

Swarm List

If a member would like to be on the list to collect swarms, contact Jim to be sure he has your name, phone number, and the areas you would be able to serve. If you are willing to retrieve swarms that have nested in places difficult to reach (called "cut-outs"), be sure to let Jim know that.



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: () _____ e-mail: _____

(please print)

To save postage cost, may we send your Newsletter via e-mail? Yes[] No[]

Instructions: print, fill out, and bring to club meeting, or mail with check to Membership:
Mrs. Shirley Doggett - 400 C. R. 440 - Thrall, TX 76578



Photo by: Laura Colburn.

Program Speaker: Les Crowder on Keeping Honeybees Healthy

Les Crowder has been a beekeeper for over forty years. He began beekeeping as a teenager by helping his grandfather catch a swarm from a neighborhood tree. His fascination and love for honeybees has been with him ever since.

He worked on a 4,000 hive operation for a couple of years, and experimented with different types and styles of hives of his own on his off time. Making hives from willow, adobe and plastic barrels, he searched for the ideal hive design that would enable him to make his hives at home at a low cost, while also providing him with ease and comfort when working the bees. Over time, he developed his own design of topbar hive. Interestingly, he discovered that the angles forming the bottom of a hexagon were ideal to house hives. This structure allowed the bees to hang combs that would not be too heavy to remove, had little or no side attachment and were easy to build.

He spent five years as the New Mexico Department of Agriculture Honeybee Inspector and five years as the President of the NM Beekeepers Association. He has been teaching beekeeping classes since 1983. In 2009, he received the best instructor award at the NM Organic Farming conference. He is well-beloved by students and colleagues alike for his love of bees and nature, his gentle teaching methods, and his generous spirit.

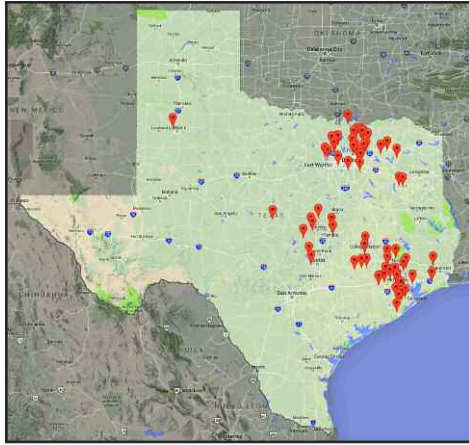
Les has been keeping bees without antibiotics, miticides or other chemical inputs for over fifteen years. When the Varroa mite first appeared in New Mexico he lost many bees in his experiments to fight the mite with management techniques. Combining genetics from Russian mite resistant bees, and catching feral bees that showed resistant genetics helped him to build his hive stock back to its original size. He hasn't had any trouble with mites since. Although he occasionally sees mites in his hives, he considers them nothing to worry about.

Les has been successful in routing out disease by re-queening hives that show weakness to diseases such as chalkbrood, European foul brood and other parasites. He looks for biological solutions to beekeeping problems rather than chemical solutions. One example is that he regularly rotates old dark combs out of the brood nest, thus preventing the sort of environment in which disease can thrive.

His friend Heather Harrell collaborated with him to write the book, Top-Bar Beekeeping, published by Chelsea Green in 2012 that has become the preferred text on topbar beekeeping in many parts of the world and is now being translated into Spanish.

Working with Les is an experience in learning to love and respect honeybees. Students come away from his classes with a strong ethical commitment to being caretakers of these amazing insects.

Support TBAs "Real Texas Honey" Program



Are you on the Honey Locator Map? Register today so consumers can find you and your Real Texas Honey!

With over 70% of the honey in the U.S. being imported, it has become increasingly important for us to support our local honey producers. Consumers are faced with a growing food fraud problem when they grab a bottle of honey off the grocery store shelf, as honey has become the 3rd most common food item to be mislabeled. Some honey that is labeled "local" or "Texas honey" has been found to be falsely labeled and is actually imported from China. This imported honey may be contaminated with heavy

metals and antibiotics, "ultra-purified" (with all its beneficial ingredients filtered out, including pollen), or it may even be fake (a blend of honey and other sweeteners like cheap corn syrup and artificial sweeteners). In Texas, we consume ~15m lbs. of honey per year, yet we only produce ~8m lbs. This high demand for honey is a golden opportunity for beekeepers and consumers to form a partnership to support real local honey, stop food fraud and imports of inferior products, and create quality standards so consumers can know what product they are getting by being able to trust its labeling and its source. "You get what you pay for" with honey, so spring for REAL local honey, support your neighborhood beekeeper, and take advantage of the myriad of health benefits local honey has to offer!

TBA has launched a "Real Texas Honey" program with the goal of connecting consumers with real local beekeepers. Make sure to visit the website and register. The more participants, the better the program works! Visit RealTexasHoney.com for more information.

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