

NEXT MEETING:
June 22, 2017 7:00PM
First United Methodist
Georgetown

Beekeeping 101 - Laura Colburn
"The Basics of Merging and
Splitting Hives"

Beekeeping 201 - Chris Doggett
"Honeybees -
The Superorganism"

Program -

Alex Payne of Texas A&M will
be sharing research concerning the
deformed wing virus (DWV) and
other honeybee viruses.

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What to Expect Season to Season

by: Laura Colburn

As we head into another year and look forward to either starting and splitting hives in spring or simply watching hives grow and produce, January is a good time to think about the biology of the hive and what to expect through the year.

Winter

Beginning in January, with ups and downs of temperatures, the workers are taking cleansing flights and searching for what little pollen they can find on warmer days. I saw a bit of white pollen going in the entrance recently when the temperature reached almost 80 degrees. When Mountain Cedar blooms, they'll collect that too. It doesn't have as much protein as spring and summer pollens, but they'll take what they can use. That red pollen is good for your allergies. On cold days, like the first weekend of January was, with temperatures down into the teens, all the bees form a tight cluster and vibrate to keep warm. During this time, when the temperatures are erratic and the days are short, most queens are laying few eggs, so early January is a good time to treat for Varroa, because they are phoretic (living on adult bees) rather than protected in brood cells.

In February and March, egg laying begins to increase and early season plants begin to produce pollen. However, this is also the time when hives are at their greatest risk of starvation. Their winter stores are beginning to dwindle but as the temperatures become warmer, but there isn't much pollen and nectar yet. Check your hives stores and make sure they have sufficient honey and pollen left and if not, feed sugar syrup and pollen patties, but only as much as they can consume in a week. Pollen patties can become breeding grounds for hive beetles.

Spring

In April and May, egg laying significantly increases and many forage sources are in full bloom: Bluebonnets, Agarita, Texas Persimmon, a variety of sages, Red Buds, and fruit trees, just to name a few. The bees have probably moved up from the bottom box into the top. Mid-April to early-May is a good time to reverse the boxes and cull old comb. You may need to continue feeding a 1:1 syrup to stimulate wax-building, especially if you have several frames of foundation, but stop feeding when you see nectar being stored. You don't want sugar syrup in your honey stores. This is a tricky balancing act. You want to feed to help them build wax in the hive body and honey supers, but you don't want to feed so much that they store it.

Late spring into early summer is also when you should start or split hives. You want to give these new hives time to build up and be able to catch the summer nectar flow.



*pictures provided by Laura Colburn

Summer

June says goodbye to cool temperatures and hello to lots of blooms: trees, shrubs, wildflowers, gardens are all bursting with pollen and nectar. Be sure to have honey supers on before this starts so you can catch all that wonderful nectar. June is also a crucial time to watch for swarming behavior. Plenty of space and management of brood frames are both essential. Or you can let the swarm cells begin and make a split. This will give you a new hive and allow you to keep your mated queen. Remember it takes only 16 days for a queen cell to go from egg to emergence, so if you don't want to lose your mated queen in a swarm, check your hive about every 10 days. Once swarm cells have been started, it's very difficult to stop the hive's impulse to swarm.



July begins the wind-down of the nectar flow and brings us to the beginning of our second annual dearth when the weather is hot and dry and not as much forage is available. Honey frames that are capped can be harvested, but be sure to leave enough for your bees. You may see bearding on your hives on very hot days, when the bees crawl out to the landing board and front of the hive to fan air into the hive. This is another crucial time for Varroa monitoring. It may not seem like it, but to the bees fall is just around the corner and egg laying levels off but Varroa breeding continues.

Mid-September another nectar flow often occurs with fall wildflowers such as goldenrod. Many of the fall blooming plants provide a stronger, darker, and somewhat pungent nectar. If you want to keep your honey light and sweet, harvest before the fall flow.

Fall

October may be your last opportunity to count and treat for Varroa. Don't miss this opportunity because a hive infested in fall will probably not survive the winter. During this time, if your hives don't have sufficient stores, switch to a 2:1 syrup.

November and December brings us back to a mix of cool and warm temperatures. Egg laying drastically reduces and the bees emerging now must live through the winter. It's essential the hive have enough pollen and honey to feed these winter bees. On cold days, the bees cluster tightly together. There are things you can observe during the winter months: stores in frames above the cluster; comings and goings on warmer days; the location of the cluster by pressing your ear to the hive body on cold days; condensation build up on inner cover. But leave the cluster alone during the winter. They put a lot of energy into forming it and keeping the cluster warm.

Watch your bees throughout the year to observe the changes in their habits from season to season. Plan and plant to help support them, paying extra attention to plants that produce pollen and/or nectar during hot, dry months. While you may not be able to provide all their foraging needs, the more they have closer to the hive, the longer the foragers will live because of reduced wear and tear that comes with long flights.



A Message From Our President

What a great time to be a beekeeper in central Texas! The honey flow is coming to an end and hives have beautiful frames of new honey. We may have a little longer before the honey flow is over, so watch your hives and when a super is 70% to 80% full, add another super. One of the perks of being a WCABA member is that you can borrow our extracting equipment. It is stored at the Bost farm and requires a reservation, but don't forget that it is there.

The bees are working and just watching them is a joy. For some reason, it even seems like they are always in a good mood this time of year. There is the hint of summer in the air, but we still haven't seen that oppressive heat that is sure to come. Yes, all is right in the bee yard.

But don't be deceived, there is still potential danger. As summer gets started and the population of your hives decreases, a varroa mite infestation can wreak havoc with your hives. Do a mite count and stay on top of treatment. Also, watch for small hive beetles. A few are ok and a strong hive can keep them under control, but a large infestation can be a problem. A simple beetle trap will take care of them and if you don't have any, they are usually available for sale at our monthly meetings.

All in all, this is the time of year that we all think about when we think about the joys of beekeeping.



WCABA President Jim Colbert



WCABA extracting equipment

Welcome to our new members -

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Barry Bowden | Florence |
| Robert Burns | Georgetown |
| Justin Cotton | Round Rock |
| Lori Irvin | Georgetown |
| Grant Kessler | Granger |
| Craig Norton | Taylor |
| Kevin Oxner | Georgetown |
| Christina Swain | Lampasas |
| Troy Terrebonne | Pflugerville |

Important Notice from Mary Bost:

It's fast approaching time for beekeepers to anticipate extracting honey. WCABA has two sets of extracting equipment that are available to our club members to use. They are kept at the Bost Farm (4355 CR 110, Georgetown) and are loaned for 3-day periods to whoever requests them first. There is no charge but a donation of a jar of honey is appreciated. These donations of honey are then sold at a fair and the money is used for future scholarships.

To set a date to pick up an extractor, call **Mary Bost** at **512/863-3656** or email her at **bostbees@gmail.com**. It would be wise to have a second date in mind in case your first choice is already spoken for.

Did you know??

Royal or Not? It's In the Food

By Laura Colburn

Researchers at the University of Illinois have been examining the food fed to larvae and discovered it's not what a queen larva is fed that makes her develop, but what she's not fed. They discovered that a phytochemical, called p-coumaric acid, found in bee bread and honey suppresses the development of a female honey bee's reproductive organs. All larvae are fed royal jelly for the first few days, but after day 3, worker larvae are switched from royal jelly to a mix of bee bread and honey while larvae intended to become queens are kept on the protein-rich glandular secretion of nurse bees we call royal jelly.

You can read a little more about this discovery at Bee Culture Magazine:
<http://www.beeculture.com/catch-the-buzz-it-takes-more-than-royal-jelly-to-make-a-queen/>



PHOTO BY M. HERRING



Texas Beekeepers Association Summer Clinic

WCABA Vice President Laura Colburn offered this reflection:

The 2017 TBA summer clinic at UT Arlington was a great opportunity for beekeepers of all experience levels to learn and share knowledge. Randy Oliver, Dr Rangel, Liz Walsh, Lance Wilson, Steve Butler, Chris Doggett, Mark Dykes, and myself were just a few of the speakers there. I also saw, either in attendance or volunteering, ET Ash, Jimmie Oakley, Randy Oakley and others of his family, Shirley Doggett, John and Helen Hibbard, Kay Freund, and Barbi Benjamin. There were sessions on products from the hive, queen rearing, and hive nutrition, among many others.



The topic of the day seemed to be the importance of controlling Varroa. Randy Oliver, the keynote speaker and author of Scientific Beekeeping, shared many strategies for dealing with Varroa and that ignoring the problem is not a strategy. He said hobby beekeepers were the worst at sampling and taking action, something I've noticed over the past couple of years when speaking with area beekeepers. He said "if we take care of nutrition and Varroa control, most problems go away." This is because Varroa weaken hives so much they become susceptible to a wide range of problems. Mark Dykes, the Chief Texas Apiary Inspector, added to that by encouraging beekeepers to be proactive rather than reactive and offering suggestions for cultural and mechanical controls. I joined the Varroa discussion with a session on research and methods for using Oxalic Acid to control Varroa.



The many beekeeping schools offered around Texas throughout the year is one of the best ways to increase knowledge and skills of beekeeping and to improve our personal practices. Next time one comes to the schedule, I encourage you to sign up.

Laura Colburn
WCABA Vice President



All photos provided by Jimmie Oakley



WCABA Members a Big Part of the Summer Clinic

submitted by Jimmie Oakley - WCABA Scholarship/Queen Chair

The Texas Beekeepers Association (TBA) held their Summer Clinic at the E. H. Hereford University Center at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) on Saturday, June 10, 2017, and the Williamson County Area Beekeepers (WCABA) had a lot to do with it.

Chris Doggett, past president of WCABA, is the TBA Publication Director and served as the MC for the event, as well as taught the basic beekeeping classes. His wife, Shirley, serves as membership chair for both WCABA and TBA, and was responsible for the registration for this event that was attended by an estimated 600+ beekeepers. Also seen at the registration table was WCABA Program Chair John Hibbard and wife Helen, and Barbi Benjamin, the WCABA Librarian.



The event Keynote Speaker was Randy Oliver, from Grass Valley, California, host of ScientificBeekeeping.com. He spoke on the present condition of beekeeping in the United States and encouraged a change in thinking to embrace current realities that didn't exist in times past, calling for a shift from doing things the way it had always been done before to making the hard choices necessary to reverse the losses being suffered by beekeepers today.

Also on the program was Dr. Deborah Delaney from the University of Delaware, Department of Entomology, speaking on Honey Marketing and Bee Nutrition.



Dr. Juliana Rangel from the Texas A&M spoke on Queen Rearing, and WCABA's-VP, Laura Colbert, presented on the use of Oxalic Acid in Varroa mite control.



In addition to the myriad of beekeeping subjects to listen to and glean from, there was an excellent Trade Show set up on the lower level of the University Center for the benefit of the beekeeping attendees. Many of the vendors we recognized, Mann Lake, R Weaver, B Weaver/Bee Goods, but there were a few new and interesting ones to visit, such as SteelBee Extracting Equipment, DefyAnt hive stands, and Hive Butler, to name a few. It was an interesting venue.

There was good food as everyone registered was entitled to a noon meal in the cafeteria of fish and chicken tacos with all the trimmings, yum!

As the afternoon drew to a close and everyone had gathered again in the main meeting hall and heard from Randy Oliver one more time, the Master of Ceremonies, Chris Doggett, conducted the door prize drawing that everyone was waiting for. With assistance of the Honey Queens present the grand prize of a Dadant electric extractor went to Janeil Mitchell from Heath, Texas.



Thanks to all our WCABA members that attended, taught, and/or volunteered to make this event successful.



All photos provided by Jimmie Oakley



A Few Scenes of the TBA Summer Clinic Trade Show...



R. Weaver Apiaries - Navasota, Tx



Mann Lake - Marshall, Tx



The Hive Butler - Indiana



DefyAnt Hive Stands



SteelBees Equipment - Houston, Tx



Texas Beekeepers Association

All photos provided by Jimmie Oakley



It is with deepest sympathy that we learned of the passing of Gayle Atkins, wife of Don Atkins of Bertram, TX.

They had been involved in beekeeping and honey production for many years.

Services for Mrs. Atkins were held on June 17th at the First Baptist Church in Bertram.

Don't forget that WCABA has a great selection of beekeeping books available for club members. The library is open at every club meeting with books ranging from basic beekeeping, beekeeping history, and cooking with honey. Check it out in June for the latest publications.

Editor's Note -

Just a note to introduce myself as the new editor of the WCABA monthly newsletter. My family and I have been members since 2013 when my daughter, Callie, entered the 4H state beekeeping essay competition and won! That led to an introduction to Jimmie Oakley and WCABA. Callie was honored to be a hive scholarship recipient that same year and we all became involved and enamored with the honeybee which made a natural addition to our menagerie of traditional and not so traditional farm "animals". Currently, we have three hives on our small farm and Callie assists her employer (Dr. Jon and Brenda Magid) with management of three other hives in Burnet county.

After 37 years of service in the education field (private, public, and university level teaching), I have "semi-retired" to a part time status for 2017-2018 which will hopefully give me more time to focus on the "farm" as well as the care of my elderly mother.

This newsletter is intended to reach a diverse membership ranging from complete novices to those with experience that goes beyond my last birthday (60 years :)). Everyone who contributes does so voluntarily and willingly in the hopes that what they submit will help someone else in the club. YOU need to contribute as well! Please send suggestions as to what YOU would like to read about. What questions do YOU have that I can send on to our experienced club members? Finally, please send pictures of YOUR hives or those you see as you travel. I know I'm not the only one who notices hives everywhere I go now. I will never forget the excitement my family had that first summer as we drove through western Washington state and spotted box after box after box of honeybees nestled in the apple orchards! I only wish I had been quicker with my camera to document that memory. Send me YOUR pictures so I can share with the club members. We are all curious and learning.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the club in this capacity and to pay back all the kind acts and patient answers we have received the past 4 years.



Maryalice Herring
Briggs, Texas



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

Did you know??

**honeybees have to visit 2 million flowers to make one pound of honey*

**honeybees travel 55,000 miles to produce one pound of honey*

**one bee colony can produce 60-100 pounds of honey in a year*

**an average worker bee makes 1/12th of a teaspoon of honey in its entire lifetime*

www.goldenblossomhoney.com/education_bees.php



www.panna.org



Coming Soon...You won't want to miss out on any of these great learning opportunities

WCABA monthly
meeting
July 27, 2017

Tour de
Hives
Products of the
Hive Workshop
August 18, 2017
FMI...
tourdehives.org

C e n t r a l
T e x a s
Tour de Hives
August 19, 2017

FMI...
tourdehives.org

National
Honeybee Day
August 19, 2017

State Fair of
Texas
Sept. 29-Oct. 22,
2017
Come visit the Texas
Honey Booth.
Volunteer!!



W.C.A.B.A. MEETING MINUTES – May 25, 2017

1. Opening the Meeting: President Jim Colbert opened the meeting.
2. President's Announcements:
 - The Texas Beekeepers Association Summer Clinic will be held at UT Arlington, E.H. Hereford University Center, on June 10th. Go to the TBA website for more information.
 - Vendors will now be set up in the hallway to avoid interruptions to our speakers and so members will be able to hear everything said by our guest speakers. Please don't forget to visit with our vendors who have come to the meetings to serve your beekeeping needs.
 - The W.C.A.B.A. needs an editor for our monthly newsletter. It should take a few hours each month to create the newsletter. Jim asked anyone interested to let him know during the meeting.
 - Ambassador Program – available to both young men and young women between the ages of 13-17. Applicants should have at least one year of beekeeping experience. Applicants will need to write a 1-page essay on beekeeping and why they would like to represent W.C.A.B.A. The applications may be sent to Laura Colburn at lcolburn0617@gmail.com or Jim Colbert at colbertj@hotmail.com.
 - Jim Colburn and others are working on plans to have hand-on workshops for members. There will be a minimal fee of \$10 to attend the workshops.
3. Beekeeping 101 – “What to Expect in the Hive, Late Spring and Early Summer” was discussed by Michael Wheeler.
4. Beekeeping 201 – “How to Make Mead” led by Chuck Reyburn.
5. Members Present: 86
6. Program: Jim Colburn introduced the evening's speaker, Tanya Phillips, for her discussion, “How to Make Money as a Hobbyist”. Tanya showed her amazing progression from beekeeping hobbyist to serious honey and beekeeping professional.

Our next meeting will be on June 22, 2017.

Ginny Stubblefield
Secretary, W.C.A.B.A.



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