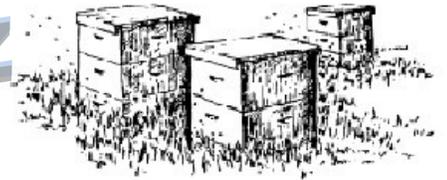




Fort Bend Buzz

newsletter of the
Fort Bend Beekeepers Association

fostering safe, responsible, successful beekeeping



August, 2019

The August 13, 2019 meeting of the Fort Bend Beekeepers Association will be held at 7:00 pm in Fort Bend County's "Bud" O'Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Rd., Rosenberg, Texas. Visitors (and new members) are always welcome. Membership dues are \$5.00 for the calendar year.

The Association provides coffee and lemonade for meeting refreshments if someone will volunteer to make it and clean up afterwards. It is important that we leave the Community Center the way we found it! Please lend a hand in straightening up the tables and chairs and cleaning up the refreshment area. We will be called to order at 7:30 after 30 minutes of social time. Don't forget about the *letgo* table in the back of the room. You may find just what you need or you can seize the opportunity to get rid of stuff (beekeeping treasures) that needs a new home.

Ask a dozen beekeepers...

Here is this month's Q (from one of our members) and an A:

Q: I'm a new beekeeper and thought I was doing pretty good. I even caught a swarm and was able to get them to stay! Then I noticed a real slowdown in my first hive. I checked it a few days later and found slime and maggots along with the unforgettable putrid smell of a small hive beetle infestation. There were hardly any bees left. What went wrong? Do I need to destroy my boxes and frames?

An A: It's SLIME TIME in southeast Texas. Small hive beetle numbers are at their peak and pressure on hives is intense. There are lots of techniques and products that are intended to control beetles and we would love to see our hives free of these pests. Unfortunately, that is unlikely to happen since nothing is 100% effective against small hive beetles. It is best to do all that we can do to have strong healthy hives and take whatever measures we can to control these awful pests. (Don't pass up on the opportunity to squish them as you inspect your hives.)

As awful as it seems, slimed out hives can be salvaged. A strong water spray or careful pressure washing can get the boxes ready for reuse. The frames and foundation can be washed too and much of it salvaged. Be very thorough and

leave none of the slime behind. It is a good idea to carefully do a permethrin ground drench around the slimed-out hive location. Hive beetles pupate in the soil and the permethrin will kill any emerging beetle adults.

Honey bees recognize small hive beetles as an enemy and aggressively chase them into crevices where they hide. If there are too many beetles or too few bees, a beetle female will lay clusters of 10 to 30 eggs. (In her lifetime, she can lay as many as 2,000 eggs.) The eggs hatch in 2 - 4 days and at that point there is little that the bees can do to stop the onslaught.

One scenario seems to play out often. If a colony swarms, there are suddenly far fewer bees to defend against hive beetles. While they may be able to hold their own at first, colony numbers drop as the new queen emerges, mates and begins to lay. It is not uncommon for the new queen to not return from her mating flight, leaving the colony queenless and dwindling, an easy target for small hive beetles.

It is very important that you determine where a swarm in your backyard came from and then carefully follow its transition back to a fully functioning hive. Be prepared to requeen if necessary or "unswarm" the hive by combining the queen-right swarm with the queenless colony.

Introducing...



During social time at our July meeting, members voted on a winner for our logo design contest. Danessa Yaschuk submitted the winning entry shown above. She will receive a free FBBA t-shirt with her logo design.

A key feature of our new logo is "Est. 1978", more than 40 years ago! The actual beginnings of our association are hard to determine, but we do have rosters that date back to 1978. The June 26, 1978 list has 49 members including 21 "charter members". Our early lists include the fathers of two of our current members, Clarence Theilemann and Tony Moleno.

The Texas Beekeepers Association dates back to 1901 and now has 39 affiliated local associations. Our club is certainly one of those with the longest continuing existence.

July Meeting Notes

Our head count at the meeting was 47 and we got 47 names on the sign-in sheets. Bingo! Don't overlook registering at our meetings since the sign-in sheets are an important record of our use of county facilities.

During social time this month, five entries for our FBBA Logo Contest were on display. Members viewed and voted for their choice from five entries. The votes were tallied by Patty Griffin. The winning entry was submitted by Danessa Yaschuk.

At 7:30, President Jack Richardson opened the meeting with an invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. There were four first time attendees who introduced themselves. Jack encouraged them to get involved and take opportunities to learn more about honey bees and beekeeping.

Vice President Danessa Yaschuk attended the TBA Summer Clinic in Conroe. She reported that there were 605 in attendance and that the event was well organized (with a good lunch). She encouraged everyone to attend at least once.

Danessa provided information about the upcoming Honey Expo on July 20th at the Brazoria County Fairgrounds. There were over 1,000 in attendance at last year's event. Danessa also reminded members of the FBBA hive decorating and photo contest to be held at the September meeting. Last year, there were seven hives and 22 photos entered.

Last month, Michael McLean suffered a horrible accident when his truck ran over his leg and foot. Jack reports that Michael is recovering and hopes to be mobile soon. In the meantime, Michael needs help with his bees as he recovers; get with Jack if you can help out.

Secretary-Treasurer Lynne Jones would like to index the Ask a Dozen Beekeeper topics and meeting notes for the newsletters posted on the FBBA website. Contact her if you would like to help.

An interesting presentation on

straining honey was given by Gene DeBons. The technique recommended in 1940 edition of The ABC and XYZ of Bee Culture is to filter the honey through cheesecloth, but to allow the cheesecloth to hang all the way down to the surface of the honey in the bucket it is transferred to. This allows the honey to go through the cloth and into the bucket without adding additional air. Honey dripping from a strainer to the surface introduces small air bubbles that cloud the honey.

Next, Danessa went over the beekeeping tasks for July and August:

Honey extraction should be in full swing. After extracting, put wet supers back on the hives or far away from the hives for the bees to clean any remaining honey. Store empty frames properly!

Ensure bees have a consistent supply of water that they need to keep the hives cool. Consider shading hives from direct full sun. Provide hive ventilation with screened inner covers or prop the cover open a bit.

Melt wax cappings from your extracting. You should freeze cappings for melting at a later date since that will destroy any wax moth eggs or larvae present. The bees will clean wet cappings before processing the wax, but don't attract wax moths by leaving them out for more than three days.

In August, forage is sparse and colonies can be ill tempered during the nectar dearth. Always use smoke when opening hives and be careful to not induce robbing. Check hives to be sure bees have at least two full frames of honey in the brood box. Bees can starve in August. If needed, start feeding sugar syrup.

August is the time to treat for varroa since you need strong hives to go through the winter. Varroa mite indication can be from using sticky boards, a powdered sugar roll, or checking drone larvae. For an accurate count, use an alcohol wash - if the varroa count is 5 per 100 bees, treat immediately.

Harrison Rogers gave a presentation on Honey Bees and Varroa Development. Varroa reproduce while feeding on pupae in capped brood cells. The female mite's first egg produces a male and subsequent eggs develop into females that mate with the male.

The life span of summer worker bees can be divided into three periods that are each about 21 days long: egg to emergence, house bee, and forager bee. Drones emerge after 24 days - three days longer than workers. They are preferred by varroa mites since more mites can mature in the extra time. There are various options to control varroa; if you use chemical treatments, always follow the label and alternate the type of chemical used to avoid building resistance.

After drawing for donated door prizes, the meeting was adjourned.

Treasurer's Report

Our July treasury balance was \$3,951.87. Since our last report we collected \$35 in dues and \$40 for extractor use. The expenses were \$50 annual TBA membership and the \$6.35 monthly Squarespace (website) fee. The resulting balance is \$3,970.52 (\$3,920.52 in our checking account plus \$50 in cash to make change).

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AGRI LIFE
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