



July, 2020

Fort Bend Buzz

the monthly newsletter of the Fort Bend Beekeepers Association

fostering safe, responsible, successful beekeeping

The Fort Bend Beekeepers Association usually meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm in Fort Bend County's "Bud" O'Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Rd., Rosenberg, Texas. (We are called to order at 7:30 after 30 minutes of social time.)

In the midst of the continuing COVID-19 public health emergency, the Community Center remains closed. There was no May or June meeting and our regular July 14 meeting has been cancelled as well. For details of our planned Zoom online meeting, see the announcement below. Hopefully our meeting can return to normal soon.

July meeting is online

Because of the COVID-19 threat our June meeting was held online. We'll be "virtual" again this month, including a program on varroa:

Tuesday, July 14 at 7:30 pm

login: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2436305183?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2436305183?pwd=UzJTNmpLVUE4WjYrUDZvd0VFdXJXUT09)
pwd=UzJTNmpLVUE4WjYrUDZvd0VFdXJXUT09

Meeting ID: 243 630 5183

Password: 690069

To connect by telephone (audio only), call 346 248-7799, Meeting ID: 2436305183.

An email with clickable instructions will go out ahead of the meeting.

Last month we also offered an alternative to our meeting "social time" and had 24 beekeepers log in to our "beescussion" on the day after our June meeting. Our next "beescussion" will again be on the day after our meeting, Wednesday July 15, at 7:30 pm. You will be receiving an email invite.

Ask a dozen beekeepers...

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

Q: I'm going to need your help again with requeening a hot hive!

A: A report on the successful requeening of two hot hives may guide others on how to proceed with this important beekeeping task. Both requeenings (if that is even a word) were successful. Our first

requeening a year or two ago took only a couple of minutes, including time to suit up and light the smoker. This week it was far different than last time. It was not two minutes, but two days of combat.

It seems common for bees that are out in the country to need requeening when (not if) they get hot. Feral country bees have survived by defending themselves from predators and other bees intent on robbing their stores. Requeening hot hives is sometimes no big deal or it may be a determined battle of wills.

It is hard to understand why once docile colonies become vicious. Perhaps it is simple arithmetic: Only a small portion of a hive's population are guard bees, but a tiny fraction of a bazillion bees is a lot of angry stingers intent on protecting their home. And once they get riled up, they have waves of reinforcements to repel the intruder. "Genetics" are often blamed but it has been observed many times that a requeened hot hive often becomes gentle in just a few days. The queen's pheromones regulate the colony and the new matriarch seems to settle things quite a bit just by virtue of her calming presence. You don't have to wait weeks for the individual monsters to die.

A few years ago your bad bees were about 100 yards from the driveway. Nonetheless, I was met by angry bumps as soon as I arrived. We suited up inside and got the smoker going in the garage. (Smoke sometimes makes finding a

queen more difficult because it disrupts hive activity, but it is necessary in this situation). We gave them a few puffs at the entrance and under the cover, but it seemed to really just get them riled up. Before opening the hive we had a short discussion about the queen's most likely location and our plan to find her. We set aside the two supers on an inverted top cover. It is most likely that the queen would be near the brood nest and it is a good idea to keep at least a few of the bees out of the fray. We studied the brood nest frames and decided to pull one from the middle with the most angry faces looking back at us. I watched carefully as you raised the selected frame. It had only emerged a few inches when I spotted our quarry, squished her and dropped her carcass back into the hive. The hive was back in a stack in only a few seconds, mission accomplished. The colony was successfully requeened and in a couple of days they had settled down.

We were probably a little over confident this week. The hive was much closer to the driveway and again the bees greeted me with head bumps as soon as I arrived. The hive had about as many bees as you ever get in one stack of boxes. The hive was a single deep and four medium supers that had been robbed the week before. A fume board and Bee Quick made the honey harvest relatively easy for you. We suited up and started out like we did before, setting the supers aside without removing the cover, leaving at

least some of the bees trapped away inside. The brood nest was in two of the medium supers and we carefully examined twenty frames and the inside walls without finding the queen. The bees were reacting violently so we decided to split the hive so there would be fewer bees to deal with at a time. Each split got a super with brood. One got the deep box and the other got two supers. (The bees were well on their way to refilling the frames with water-clear country cotton nectar.) Each split was carefully examined twice without finding the queen. (There were plenty of eggs, so it was reasonable to expect to find her somewhere!) At that point it was time to retreat to try again the next day.

I took a Benadryl and headed home still in my bee jacket. I'd been stung each time my veil touched my face along with numerous attacks through by jeans and up my pants legs!?!

You fared better in your bee suit, heavy boots and new leather gloves. I was not so lucky with just a bee jacket and gloves. The next morning I had bib overalls over my jeans, leather boots with rubber bands around my pants legs, leather gloves and a freshly washed (unstung) bee jacket.

We thought the queen was most likely in the split at the original hive's location. Opening their cover for a puff of smoke seemed to start WWII all over again so we retreated to the other split. It was far more docile (often the case when they are queenright), but it seemed that many of the bees had returned to their old hive a 100 yards away. Frame by frame, no queen. Not on the sides anywhere either.

It was the same story at the other split (except for the docile part), so we brushed all of the bees out of the deep box (pretty much just drawn comb) then set it on the bottom board with queen excluders above and below. The restacked hive got a fume board (with Bee Quick) on

top. As we were cooling off, the bees got "sieved" from above and below into the hive body. When we returned to battle, all we saw were drones and a few workers on the top excluder. But five or six of the workers were in a tiny cluster. On closer examination WE FOUND HER! She was actually stuck trying to squeeze through the grid. She was a little small, but not small enough to escape into the deep. After pulling her out of the excluder, she made two attempts to fly away, landing in the grass nearby. We managed to find her both times and after the second escape she got pinched and dropped down into the hive so everyone inside would know of her demise. They got a new mated queen the next afternoon and settled down in just a few days.

June Meeting Notes

Our June 9 meeting was a virtual one using Zoom with 32 joining in. President Craig Rench opened the online meeting at 7:30 pm and welcomed those who had logged in.

We know that not being able to meet in person has made things difficult for our newer beekeepers. VP Danessa Yaschuk announced that we are going to host our first "beescussion" using Zoom tomorrow (June 10) at 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm. If you have a question about bees or just want to chit-chat about beekeeping, plan to join us again online. You will be receiving an email invite with a link.

If you see a Sad Bee on your newsletter address label, it means you have not yet paid your 2020 dues. You can let us know if you want to remain on the roster with an email to info@fortbendbeekeepers.org.

Danessa then introduced our guest speakers, James and Chari Elam, past leaders in the Montgomery County Beekeepers Association and the Texas Beekeepers Association as well as members of the American Beekeeping Federation. Their presentation included a short video of a hive inspection then a careful review of why and how to do hive

inspections.

Winners of door prizes donated by Bee Man Dan Jones were Keith Mattheessen (a pocket hive tool) and Trevor Gartin (miniature smoker key chain).

Twenty beekeepers logged in to our "beescussion" on June 10. We had great questions and (of course) lots of answers, even sharing photos!

Good Luck Pecos Jack again

The smell checker failed to catch that Jack Richardson's last name was misspelled last month. If you missed it, Jack has moved to Jefferson, Texas. He has some new wooden ware in storage in Sugar Land and plans to offer it for sale.

Treasurer's Report

Our June treasury balance was \$3,970.06. Since then we collected \$150.00 in donations and \$85.00 in dues (including \$20.00 prepaid 2021 dues). Expenses last month totalled \$580.74. They included: \$25.10 return shipping for warranty repair of our PA system, \$159.80 for a Zoom annual subscription, \$105.53 for SurveyMonkey service, \$50.00 for club dues to the Texas Beekeepers Association, \$233.82 annual website cost and \$6.49 monthly email cost. The resulting balance is \$3,624.32 (\$3,574.32 in our checking account plus \$50.00 in cash to make change).

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

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