

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA JUNE 2004 NEWSLETTER

DATE: Tuesday, June 22, 2004
TIME: 7:00-Basic Beekeepers; 8:00-General Meeting/Program
PLACE: 205 Main Street, Community Center in Round Rock
PROGRAM: Swarm Retrieval, slide presentation by John Howe
HOSTS: **Taysha Howe, Britton Schlinke**

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The Field Day activities and picnic lunch were enjoyed in the lovely, cool shade of the large oak trees and patio at the home of Skip and Gayle Shaw last month. Several guests were present and they and the newer beekeepers asked a number of good questions regarding the various presentations. The turnout was not as good as hoped for but the food was delicious and the talk about bees and fellowship among those gathered provided for an enjoyable mealtime.



The afternoon program consisted of talks and demonstrations presented by club members for the benefit of scholarship recipients, newcomers, and visitors wanting to know more about beekeeping. The extracting demonstration presented by Jimmie Oakley took more imagination than usual because there was not any sealed honey at the Shaw's that could be extracted. Mark Jones of BeeCare.Com demonstrated the use of his screened bottom board system in his very informative presentation on the different kinds of mites and their control. Frank Hunt was in the treetops as he showed us how to reach the swarms that are too high to retrieve unless you have his "extension-extension" hook and bucket



invention. Thanks, Frank, for helping us raise our sights. G.C.Walker was kind enough to bring a couple of his special girls to the Field Day. Everyone gathered around the queen mating nucs as we looked to see if we could find the queen before G.C. did. Jimmie Oakley finished the program in the Shaw's bee yard, opening a nuc and giving everyone a closer look at queen cells as he talked about swarming and it's prevention. As the activities drew to a close, it appeared that everyone had enjoyed a good time. A special thank you to the Shaws for hosting our field day and to all those who took part in the presentations or helped with the meal. We could not have done it without you.

John Howe has built his bee operation from a few boxes of bees to a large sideliner business, with most of the bees coming from retrieving swarms. He has captured them not only from the usual clump hanging from a tree limb but from many unusual places which posed a challenge to retrieve the hive in such a way that it would continue making honey in its new home in his bee yard. He and Taysha have taken pictures of these operations and he will show his slides and discuss them as he projects the pictures on the screen Tuesday evening. Whether you want to be involved in retrieving swarms or not, you will enjoy seeing what he has done.

Jimmie Oakley will lead the discussion in Basic Beekeepers on what to do to prevent your hives from swarming. This is important as the old queen takes about half the field bees with her when she swarms, leaving a young virgin queen to hopefully be mated and return to begin laying eggs; however, this interruption to making more young bees and the hive having a much smaller number of worker bees mean less honey for the beekeeper to harvest. Also, sometimes the virgin queen is caught in mid-air by a predator and the hive is then left queenless.

Bill and Julie Hein, assisted by Nathanael and Emmanuel Hein and Joel Jorden, will present a very interesting program at the Georgetown Library Thursday, June 17, from 1:00 – 2:00. It will be set up in different areas of the library in order for people to go from one venue to another as their interest dictates. The areas of information will include clothing, tools and equipment used in beekeeping; setting up a bee hive; extracting honey from the comb with samples to taste; an observation hive; health benefits from eating local honey; and the opportunity of meeting junior beekeepers as well as perusing books on beekeeping available in the Georgetown Library. This would be well worth your time to go by the library, and if you have a friend or know of a youngster interested in beekeeping, what an opportunity to learn about beekeeping!

A former member of WCABA, Jolly Harkins of Georgetown, called me recently to say he had several used hives with frames which had been sitting idle and he hoped someone would like to give them a good home. He says he has 6 deep supers with frames, 2 medium supers/frames, 3 little supers/frames and 30 or more miscellaneous frames. If you are interested in these items, Jolly's phone number (and he really is a jolly fellow) is 512/863-4060. His e-mail address is Harkinsjjh@wmconnect.com.

We welcome new WCABA members Wade and Katharine Wheatley of Liberty Hill, Ted and Katerina Costuros of Manchaca, and Gerald (Jerry) and Chris Powell of Georgetown, and Andreas Kotziapashis of Austin. There have also been several other inquiries from people interested in coming to our meetings, and we welcome all those who are interested in learning about the fascinating world of beekeeping. Guests who attended the Field Day were Dean and Kim Jones, Olivia and Tres; Anne Marie Dayton; Jerry and Chris Powell (who mailed in their membership dues); and Robyn Keragy.

If you paid your membership dues by check but the check hasn't cleared, please be patient. Our membership chairperson had to miss the last two meetings plus our treasurer was on a tour followed by surgery when he returned. Checks should clear the bank after our next meeting.

Donations for door prizes at the last meeting were candles – Jacque McBride; laser stickers and four mini loaves of Honey Apple bread – Kay Oakley; and two dozen eggs – Skip Shaw. Lucky winners

were Robert Bost, Frank Hunt, Dean Jones, Olivia Jones, Lanie Robbins, Shirley Kinningham, Chris Powell, and Mac Arnett.

The American Beekeeping Federation Newsletter came in today's mail. On page 5, the winning 4-H essay on swarming was printed, a listing of the winners (including Honorable Mention, Meghan Cantlon, Texas) was given, and the topic for 2005 was announced. "Use of Honey Bees and Honey in Symbolism" will be the essay topic. We are pleased that Meghan and Joel Jordan entered the contest and won the top two honors in Texas this year. We hope there will be other youngsters who would like to compete next year. If so, they and their parents should read this article. It will be on the registration table at the meeting.

What a dilemma! So much good, interesting information in several articles; I'd like to summarize several of the most interesting points, but which article? Finally, I chose the one on ventilation because we are entering the hottest part of the year and some of these ideas may help you. James E. Tew's article in the June 2004 issue of Bee Culture is entitled "Summer Hive Ventilation: When, Why, and How Much".

"Bees need air, too," states Tew, for respiration, heat, cold, moisture accumulation and pheromone dispersal. If allowed to gather water, a beehive can withstand a lot of heat. Bees "air condition" their hives and seem to have their own thermostat. Factors that affect their natural thermostats are where the hive is located (in the shade of trees or buildings or other protective covering), if they have a source for water to cool the hive, and the population (crowding) of the hive.

Other procedures which will aid the ventilation of the hive are staggering the supers so as to leave about 1/2 inch opening to provide upper ventilation; propping up the outer cover about 1/4 to 1/2 inch for top ventilation; some beekeepers bore holes in the brood boxes for ventilation but the author doesn't care much for this technique; and never completely close the hive with grass or a board.

If you see bees matted on the front and sides of the hive, that is an indication that the temperature cannot be dropped enough by fanning and water collecting, so the unneeded adult bees leave the interior of the hive. These hot, unemployed bees can be quite testy so the author tends to "give them all the consideration I can when opening a hive in this condition."

I found the following recipe in a Taste of Home magazine. Sounds good.

Honey-Lime Grilled Chicken

1/2 cup honey

1/3 cup soy sauce

1/4 cup lime juice

4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves

In a resealable plastic bag or shallow glass container, combine the honey, soy sauce and lime juice; mix well. Add chicken and turn to coat. Seal or cover and refrigerate for 30-45 minutes. Drain and discard marinade. Grill chicken, uncovered, over medium heat for 6-7 minutes on each side or until juices run clear. Yield: 4 servings.

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