

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA MAY, 2007 NEWSLETTER WWW.WCABA.ORG

DATE: Tuesday, May 22, 2007
TIME: 7:00 P.M.-Beekeeping 101; 7:45-Break; 8:00-Gen. Mtg/Program
PLACE: Allen Baca Senior Ctr, 301 W. Bagdad, Bldg. 2 Rm. 2 , Round Rock
PROGRAM: SWAP MEET * SWAP MEET * SWAP MEET * SWAP MEET
HOSTS: **Harold Kind and Kay Oakley**

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I hope you are enjoying the beautiful wildflowers that are so prolific following the Spring rains. I walked out to where a patch of Indian Blankets is blooming in my yard today and the bees were going from one flower to the next, as “busy as bees”. Thanks to Christi Stormberg and her presentation on native Texas wildflowers last month we may all recognize more of them now.

I also hope all who started new colonies of bees are pleased with the progress they are making, covering the mid-frames with brood and bringing in lots of pollen and nectar to feed their young bees. We hope to hear some good reports from the many who picked up packages on April 21st. See page 3 for pictures Christi Stormberg & Pres. Juanita Duel

Well, in case you didn't understand what the program was going to be this time, we are going to have our first ever “Swap Meet”. Since there are many new members, and a lot of members that have been around a while, we decided to make it interesting this time by encouraging everyone to bring something, or bring some things, that are interesting, or things that you may be interested in swapping, or trading, or selling to someone else that is interested. Things like an extra hive tools that you may want to swap for an entrance feeder. Extra plastic (or wood) frames that you may want to swap for burlap smoker fuel, or a hive cover. How about a book that you have two of, or an old version of that is not being used. Share the knowledge. If everyone brings one item to swap and finds someone to swap with, then both go home happy. We all like happy meetings, right? Now does everything have to be bee related? I don't think so. Bring it and let's see. Come, bring something, bring someone, and participate. We'll have fun.

We will also use part of our time to answer questions about challenges or difficulties we may be having with our bees, with finding the queen, with requeening a hive, or keeping new queens from being superseded. Bring your questions; let's see if we can get you some answers.



We are already receiving swarm calls, and I have very few names to offer. If you are interested in capturing swarms this season, please be sure to sign the swarm list at the meeting Tuesday night or send me an e-mail giving your phone number(s) and indicating the areas you would be able to serve.

We were happy to receive two more membership renewals this month: Joel Jorden, who was a former scholarship recipient and a 2007 high school graduate, and Mike Mcpherren, a long-time member who hasn't been able to attend meetings due to his army connected service. Mike is now in Germany where he is training soldiers before they go off to war regarding the Army Battle Command Systems, making it much safer for the soldiers. He hopes, however, to be home in June.

Door prizes last month were donated by Jeann Schmidt, Harold Kind, and Mary Bost. The lucky winners were Janice Hartley, Evan Tuuk, and Kay Oakley.

A reminder: if you need a good spot to place your bees, you can call Mrs. Vera Smith in Round Rock (512/255-2600) or Will Mason near Jonah (512/930-1902). Both have good rural acreage where your bees could forage for nectar.

Fire ants have been a pestilence that has affected nearly everyone in the nation. Not only are humans vulnerable to the insect's stinging attacks, it also destroys crops, damages farm and electrical equipment and hastens soil erosion. And fire ants have wreaked havoc with hives of honey bees, invading in such numbers that they can kill out the hive and rob the honey.

But researches have now pinpointed a "naturally occurring virus that kills fire ants", according to an article written by Betsy Blaney, an AP agriculture writer. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is now seeking partners to develop the virus into a pesticide to control the fire ants.

It's interesting how many people—ordinary citizens, not just beekeepers—are becoming concerned about the plight of the "disappearing honey bees", designated as Colony Collapse Disorder. I have been selling honey at a couple Farmers Markets this month, and a frequent question is, "Is it true?" And I hear them quote what they have read in the newspapers or heard on TV. "Even before this disorder struck, America's honeybees were in trouble," according to an article published by the Associated Press on May 2, 2007. "Their numbers were steadily shrinking, because their genes do not equip them to fight poisons and disease very well, and because their gregarious nature exposes them to ailments that afflict thousands of their close cousins."

Experts from Brazil and Europe have joined USDA researchers in studying the problem, and in recent weeks Kevin Hackett, national program leader for the USDA's bee and pollination program, has briefed the Vice President on the problem and Congress has held hearings on the matter. "This crisis threatens to wipe out production of crops dependent on bees for pollination," according to Agriculture Secretary Mike Johnson. In fact, about one-third of the human diet comes from insect-pollinated plants, and the honeybee is responsible for 80% of that pollination, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

We may have only one hive, or a dozen or more, certainly not as big as commercial beekeepers, but our bees are important, not only for the honey they produce for our use but also for improving our nut and fruit tree crops, our vegetable gardens, and the beauty that surrounds us in flowers and shrubs. Let's

be the best beekeepers we know how to be, and let's be ready to learn and increase our knowledge as much as possible.

Another cookie recipe in the ABF newsletter for March/April 2007—this time the Second Place winner—sounds so good I look forward to making a batch myself.

ROCKY ROAD BARS

1/3 cup Honey
2 Tbsp. butter
4 cups mini marshmallows

6 cups Honey Bunches of Oats
1 cup nuts (suggested: Honey roasted peanuts)
1 cup chocolate chips

Microwave honey and butter in a large bowl for one minute on high. Add marshmallows, toss to coat. Microwave 1 ½ minutes. Add remaining ingredients. Press into greased 13 x 9 inch pan. Cool, cut and serve.

Below are some pictures of our scholarship recipients and their prosperous new beehives.

Noah Hartley



Michael Tutor



Matthew Kohn



Michael Holman



Emily Tuuk



Evan Tuuk

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Queens

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