

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA MAY, 2010 NEWSLETTER

WWW.WCABA.ORG

(for meeting directions, see website)

DATE: Tuesday, May 25, 2010
TIME: 7:00 P.M.—Beekeeping 101; 8:00--Program
PLACE: First United Methodist Church Georgetown (basement)
PROGRAM: Fighting Hive Pest without Harsh Chemicals – Randy Oakley
HOSTS: Susan & John Philpott, Brian & Angela Cox, Frank & Barbara Hunt

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* * * * * NOTICE * * * * *

We need three members each meeting to sign up to bring snacks (cookies, etc.) for the enjoyment of everyone during our break between programs. If you can bring something for refreshments (not the beverages), please see Janet Church. We need 2 more hosts for June, 1 more in July, 2 more in August, September is good, 2 more in October and 3 for November. All members need to put change in the snack “kitty” to pay for coffee, juice, and paper ware needed. Please remember to return your books and tapes to the WCABA Library.

This has been a busy month for a large number of our members: getting their package of bees hived and off to a good start, feeding them, checking to be sure the queen has been released and started laying eggs, or for some, getting a new queen introduced to an established hive or making splits. The wildflowers have put on a beautiful show this Spring and we hope all the bees have taken full advantage of their nectar. If you still need a new queen, there may be a few extra queens that were ordered—check with Gary Bible—or refer to the notice sent by email that Clint Walker has a few queens above what he needs and is willing to sell to our WCABA members.

This month we will be talking about an effective way to control Varroa mites without the use of harsh chemicals. It is not easy to deal with mites and beetles in your hive, but it is part of present day beekeeping and Randy Oakley will demonstrate how he is keeping the pest at bay in his operation. Learn when and how to build and use simple tools to fight a challenging problem...without the chemicals.

Swarming season has begun! We are getting calls every day, and have been giving the callers 3 or 4 names in their area to call. It's necessary that anyone going to retrieve a swarm has directions to the swarm location and an idea of what preparations need to be made in order to capture the swarm. There have been a number of calls about bees nesting in structures. So far, I have only 2 names to suggest, so if you want to try to remove bees from houses or other structures, let me know. If you would like your name to be on the swarm

list, be sure to contact Mary Bost at the meeting so she will have your phone number(s) and areas that you will work.

Our WCABA Honey Queen, Rebekah Jones, has been busy doing what honey queens are expected to do: represent our association and further the cause of beekeeping and the honey industry through talks and other presentations. She is in the process of having a fill color recipe card printed, complete with information and recipes, made to hand out. Many of you have been helping with this effort by donating the \$5.00 rebate on the returned package cages to the Honey Queen fund.

If you have not yet returned the cage your package of bees came in, please do so at this next meeting along with the donation card so we can notify Walker Honey Company for a pickup. Thank you.

We are proud of our young beekeepers: Nathan Exley has been doing a great job leading the Beekeeping 101 program; Rebekah Jones as Honey Queen, (school presentation), Paul Exley (see his note, also) and the young people who assist with registration, stacking chairs after the program is over, and on a personal note, helping me each time with taking my materials to my car. Good citizens already!!!

Paul Exley '09 scholarship winner, writes,

Dear WCABA, Thank you for sponsoring the 2010 4-H essay contest on bees. I received 3rd Place in this contest for my essay, and the prize of \$50 dollars. Thank you for sponsoring the contest and reward.

Paul Exley

We welcome the following new members to WCABA: Rhonda Aleman and Family, Hutto; Rick Braly, Thrall; Madelyn Bryant, Austin; Kevin and Lynn Morgason, Lexington; and Larry Meese, Thrall. We trust they will find our meetings interesting and informative, and will enjoy the fellowship with fellow beekeepers.

We are also happy that Doug Branch, Austin; Deryn Davidson, Austin; Wayne and Suzanne Erickson, Hutto; James and Elizabeth Exley and Family, Georgetown, and Steve Poldrack, Round Rock have renewed their membership.

Door prizes in March were donated by Jennifer Youngblood, the Jack Youngbloods, Wayne Baker, Christophe Vain, Shirley Doggett, Tyler Rutherford, Sara Reeves, Wilbur Brinkmeyer, Shirley Acevedo, Chat Lerma, Ana Lerma, Cory and Colter Chase, and Gary Bible. In April, door prizes were donated by the Youngblood family and Kristin Cothorn.

At the March meeting, door prizes were won by Sara Reeves, Cindy Derrick, Nial Chase, Shirley Acevedo, Christopher Youngblood, Matthew Franklin, Lisa Schroder, Kayla Aleman, Monica Acevedo, Josiah Youngblood, Randy Oakley, Daniel Eacrett, Luke Schroder, Jack Youngblood, Chuck Sparks, Mary Bost and Greg Simmon. In April, the winners were Wally Red, Janet Stuart, and Wayne Zieschang.

Did you see the article in the May 9 Austin American Statesman about farmers in Kenya having found out that “bee fences” are being promoted as a way to save farmers’ crops. “A single hungry elephant can wipe out a family’s crops overnight” and primitive methods previously used—flaming sticks and beating on pots and pans—often doesn’t frighten off a determined elephant and sometimes the result is the farmer or

the elephant is killed. “The discovery that elephants emit low-frequency alarm calls around bees could help lessen such conflicts,” the article states.

“Bee fences” can be made by “stringing up hives on poles about 10 yards apart. A strong wire connecting the poles would cause them to swing when an elephant walks into it, disturbing the bees. The swarm bothers elephants so much that they flee, emitting low rumblings inaudible to the human ear that warn other elephants”, states the columnist, Katharine Houreid. One more way bees benefit mankind.

The May 2010 issue of *The American Bee Journal* has a Texas flavor this time: An article written by Blake Shook of Blue Ridge, Texas (who several of our members know) and an article on bee swarming by Larry Connor who refers to Horatio and Shirley Acevedo of Princeton, Texas (Shirley is the Texas Honey Queen chair and she visited our club last month with Allison Adams, the Texas Honey Queen). I shall excerpt a few of Connor’s statements about bee swarming. You would enjoy reading both these articles.

Swarm removal may sound easy but, in reality, it can be much more complicated. You may need a ladder to reach the swarm. Or the swarm may have already flown to a more permanent location by the time you arrive at the original site. Or the swarm is too small to be worth the fuel it takes to drive there. (Sometimes, the caller thinks they are honey bees when in reality they are yellow jackets or other species of flying insects. Editor’s note.)

Swarms carry honey in the stomachs of the bees, which is digested and used to produce beeswax. A strong swarm can produce a full box of comb in a few days, more if fed sugar syrup. They usually come from vigorous hives, states Connor, and can be a real asset. However, when swarms are not captured by a beekeeper, they enter empty tree cavities, the sides of buildings and other spaces. When these are near humans they create a potential risk, especially if children play nearby or someone is allergic to bee stings.

Removing bees from trees or buildings, called “cut-outs” are hard work and beekeepers doing this type of bee removal usually charge for doing it. The Acevedos do “hundreds of swarm removals and cut-outs a year, taking the bees back to their apiary and harvesting the honey. They charge for their services, even for swarm removal (\$50 to \$200 for swarm removal, \$300 to \$800 for removal of feral colonies from buildings, depending on the distance from their home and the difficulty of removing bees)” states Connor. If a potential client does not want to pay for the swarm removal, they turn them to a young member of their bee association who will do the removal for free.

Instead of writing the usual recipe using honey, this month we’ll give you some tips for using honey from Joe Parkhill’s book, *Honey! A Sugarless Cookbook*.

Add honey, mustard and ground ginger to canned baked beans and see what a difference it makes.

Blend honey with peanut butter to create a fine glaze for baked ham. Great for sandwiches, too.

Whip canned sweet potatoes until light and fluffy. Add honey and cinnamon, spoon into a well buttered casserole and top with slices of pineapple to bake.

Add one tablespoon of honey to corn, carrots or green beans to bring out the true flavor of vegetables.

Honey-baked bananas are grand for dessert. Peel bananas, put them in a well-greased baking dish and brush with honey so that the entire banana is covered. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the bananas are tender when tried with a fork.

* * * * * CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS * * * * *

FOR SALE: 2 hives with marked queens, recently set up with drawn comb to give a fast start. Price is \$150.00, buyer to furnish own bottom board. Call 254/721-5026 or email dueldvm@embarqmail.com. (*Juanita had knee surgery recently and 4 hives are too many for her to work with at the present time.*) If you have any questions, please call her at the number given above.

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