

Williamson County Area Beekeepers Association

NEXT MEETING:
TUESDAY January 28th
7:00-9:00 Program
Georgetown Public Library

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Lisa Hoekstra

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ginny@options2sell.com



Queen and Eggs - Photo by Kim Townsend

January Program:

Jim Colbert

Ashley Ralph

Beekeeping 101

Hive Management

Ashley is the President of Texas Beekeepers Association

Meeting Dates:

Tuesday January 28th
Tuesday February 25th
Tuesday March 24th

**Meetings are held on the 4th
Tuesday of each month in the
Georgetown Public Library
408 W 8th Street,
Georgetown TX 78626
from 7pm to 9pm.**

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Ed Wolfe – Robert Bost Beekeeping Scholarship

The Williamson County Area Beekeepers Association has a youth program honoring two long-time beekeepers and WCABA members, Ed Wolfe and Robert Bost, who both actively promoted learning about bees and beekeeping in Williamson County.

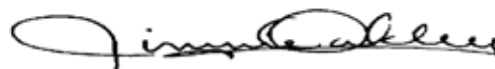
A scholarship is given annually to furthering the apiculture sciences with emphasis on sustainable beekeeping. This award is presented to school age students (12-18yrs) living in the area served by WCABA. The award consists of a beehive with bees and equipment necessary to complete the year-long plus project.

Following a course curriculum, the recipient will be expected to meet regularly according to a set schedule to work the bees, and (1) keep records of activities with dates, pictures, and other pertinent data; (2) participate in the Hill Country Fair Honey Booth promotion in support of the future scholarships; (3) give an interim progress report to the Williamson County Area beekeepers at the November meeting; (4) attend the WCABA meeting in July the following year to give a concluding report and receive appropriate recognition. He/She also will be encouraged to attend the monthly meeting and will be entitled to use the club's honey extraction equipment. Optionally, recipients can enter honey in the WCABA Tasters Choice competition, send honey to the Texas State Fair and enter in the Texas Beekeepers Honey and Wax contest at the state convention.

A mentor will be made available to instruct and assist the recipient in sustainable beekeeping techniques and good beekeeping practices. Parents are encouraged to join WCABA in support and encouragement of the recipient and the program.

Applications must be **mailed** to the Awards Committee, by **February 15th** and you **must attend** the **February WCABA meeting** on the **fourth Tuesday** for a program overview and an informal interview of the applicant. The winners will be notified and asked to **attend** the WCABA meeting on the **fourth Tuesday of March** for the scholarship presentation.

Sincerely,



Scholarship Committee
425 Sapphire Lane
Jarrell, Texas 76537

Applications for the Ed Wolfe-Robert Bost Memorial Scholarship Needed

The deadline is fast approaching for submission of applications by those interested in the Ed Wolfe-Robert Bost Memorial Scholarship (WCABA Youth Scholarship Program).

If you know of a school age boy or girl who is interested in learning about bees and beekeeping, please encourage him/her to submit an application before the **February 15th deadline**.

This is an essay contest administered by the WCABA Scholarship Committee. Scholarships are presented annually to contest winners and are intended to promote and encourage area youth to become knowledgeable and interested in honeybees, honey production and sustainable beekeeping.

Interested parties may contact Jimmie Oakley, Scholarship Chair at: jimmie.oakley@gmail.com to get a current application or go online at wcaba.org and check out Opportunities – Scholarship. Apply Today !!!



Scholarships Awarded



Beekeeping Equipment Assembled



Bees Installed into Beehives



Wearing Protective Gear to Work the Bees



Receiving Mentor Instructions



Working (Smoking) the Bees



Building Up Strong Colonies...



...that Makes Lots of Honey

WCABA Bee and Queen Procurement Program 2020

Since the announcement of the Club's Bee and Queen Order Program in the December Newsletter order activity has not been as brisk as it has in past years, so I will repeat some of the important information. The club had over twice as many orders last year (23) as at present (only 10).

The Williamson County Area Beekeepers Association will again give members the opportunity to purchase bees and queens through the Bee & Queen Procurement Program. The club has offered this service to members for the past decade. Much has changed in beekeeping in that time including the price for bees and queens. This year we have held the price for 5-frame nucs firm at \$150.00 and for queens (marked & clipped) at a slight increase to only \$35.00.

The 5-frame nucs will come from Merrimack Valley Apiary's winter location in Louisiana and are advertised to consist of a "laying" queen that has already been accepted by the hive, 3 inner frames containing brood in all stages, 2 outer frames containing honey, pollen and adhering bees, delivered in a sturdy wooden nuc box with full entrance and a top feeding port.

The queen bees will come from B Weaver Apiaries in Navasota, Texas in wooden cages and are advertised as bred from a hybrid of bees chosen for their mite resistance, high honey production, and healthy population. These queens will be marked (blue) and clipped for ease of finding and help in swarm control.

Orders will be taken from club members at the club meetings and by mail through the end of February, or as long as supplies last. Each order must be on the official order form (see in this Newsletter), be filled out completely and be accompanied by the appropriate remittance to be accepted. All orders will be acknowledged by a confirmation e-mail and added to the Order Matrix by the Program Coordinator. Because of the need to track and match all orders with remittance and delivery of product, there will be no individual transfer of ownership of the nucs or queens. Cancelled orders will be handled by the coordinator with refunds and resale of the product to members on the wait list. Please give attention to your bee and queen needs and take advantage of this opportunity.

Thx. Jimmie Oakley – Bee Procurement Coordinator



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION



Dues: **\$20.00** per year - individual or **\$25.00** - family membership

New Member / Renewing Member

(circle one)

Date: _____

Name: _____ Amount: \$ _____

Cash or Check # _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: () _____ e-mail: _____

(please print)

To save postage cost may we send your Newsletter via e-mail? Yes[] No[]

Instructions: print , fill out, and bring to club meeting , or mail with check to Membership

Mrs. Shirley Doggett - 400 C. R. 440 - Thrall, TX 76578 - Ph.512/924-5051

W.C.A.B.A. Club 5-Frame Nuc & Queen Order Form - 2020

Name _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail: _____

I want to order: ***Are you a current member? [] Yes!*** please print

No. _____ **5 Frame Nuc** (Based on group order of 100 nucs) **\$150.00/ Nuc.**

Nuc with three frames brood, mated queen, "NOT" marked or clipped.

No. _____ **Honey Bee Queen** (Based on group order of 100) **\$35.00/ Queen**

BeeWeaver marked & clipped Queen from mite tolerant and virus resistant stock.

How will you pay? CASH or Check # _____

TOTAL \$ AMT

Mail remittance to: _____ Check Preferred

OF ORDER

WCABA Order/ Jimmie Oakley - 425 Sapphire Lane, Jarrell, TX 76537

Nuc order deadline: Must be postmarked by February 28, 2018, or while supplies last.

Limit 10 nucs per family. No individual resale or ownership transfer permitted on nucs once ordered.

All secondary transactions and scheduling must come through the club for tracking & delivery.

Special Instructions:

February Newsletter

from S S Brantley, Life Member Texas Beekeepers Association

The new year is already in bloom. I am seeing henbit, dandelions, wild onions and little blue daisies showing in lawns around town. Crimson clover is already growing in fields and roadside, though it will not bloom for several more weeks. Elm trees are blooming and Chinese Magnolias have large blossoms soon to open. Unfortunately, some of this will probably be frozen as our last freeze date is not usually until early-to-mid March.

During February, days will be getting longer and warmer. Hive inspections can be made now to determine colony conditions. You should see five-to-six frames of brood in most of your hives. In more productive hives, you may even see eight-to-ten frames of brood. It is too early to consider splitting the hive unless you already have a mated queen to put in the split. It is too early for drones to fly to mate with any virgin queen that may have hatched.

You should check all hives for food stores. It is not too early to begin feeding a purchased liquid feed or your own 2-to-1 sugar solution. Small pieces of pollen patty may be placed on the top bars or inner cover. Allow the bees to consume most of the patty before adding a new piece. Decisions need to be made about how you feed sugar syrup – inside the hive using an in-line feeder (takes the place of one or two frames) or the plastic bag method or outside the hive using an entrance feeder (such as the Boardman) or feeding with an open feeder (2-5 gallon bucket where not only your bees but also all of the neighborhood bees can come to feed). If you chose the open feeding method, do not place your open feeder in an area with a lot of pedestrian traffic. Also, put the open feeder in a different part of the yard and some distance away from your hives to keep the robbing instinct at a low level. I do not like to feed my neighbor's bees so I will use an inside feeding method. Putting several quart jars on Boardman feeders and placing them inside the hive on the inner cover works well as long as you surround them with a bee-tight hive body and replace the outer cover.

Woodenware maintenance should continue. Repair and paint your used equipment so it will be ready for that first unexpected swarm. You could dedicate a couple of your worst hive bodies to become swarm traps. A good swarm trap should be tight (duct tape any holes or cracks), smell good to bees and be hung in a shady location. A frame of drawn comb or even a used frame with a couple inches of comb hanging from the top bar will help the swarm get started. If you don't have enough drawn frames to fill the box, you may fill the rest of the hive body with frames that have no foundation. Bees will often build perfect pancakes of wax inside each frame. Bees that do cooperate and draw neat frames for you make it much easier to move the swarm into a new hive.

Hives with only two frames of brood can be augmented with frames of capped brood from other hives. Remove one or two frames of capped brood from another hive, making sure the bees are still on the frames. Place them in the weak hive that only has a couple frames of brood. I always try to have a frame of empty drawn comb next to the queen and her two frames of brood. The bees on the frames you removed from the other hive will be mostly nurse bees and will not fight or leave the hive. You need the nurse bees to keep the brood warm so they will hatch. Any forager bees that were on those frames will most likely leave the new hive and return to their original hive.

During February, any plastic foundation in a hive that has not been properly drawn should be removed and given a new coating of liquid wax. Melt your old wax cappings in a crock pot and apply with a small brush or roller to bare areas on the plastic foundation. I have found that bees often will not attach new wax to bare areas of plastic foundation but would rather "pancake" any new comb from the bottom of the existing comb. This just makes a mess and gives the queen a place to hide so you have a really hard time finding her. Coating the bare areas with melted cappings usually encourages the bees to begin properly drawing out that spot.

Interesting Article on Varroa

from Phil Ainslie

Opposing views of mite management: data vs date

I have always believed in data-based bee management: Gather whatever information you can find and then make decisions based on what you learned. For varroa mites, this means taking samples, counting mites, and deciding on a strategy.

Perhaps this is an old-fashioned idea, dating back ten years when some mite counts actually came out low—low enough not to treat. Granted, that seldom happens anymore, but I still believe in knowing where you stand before you start tossing chemicals into your hives.

New beekeeper reluctance

On the other side of the coin, my friend and master beekeeper Janet Wilson has come up with some compelling arguments for schedule-based rather than data-based treatment. She posits that new beekeepers are often so overwhelmed by uncertainty and inexperience that the thought of sampling bees is off-putting in the extreme. Janet writes:

“We have in our club found that most new beekeepers are not comfortable doing regular mite counts. Very often they reach out for help as winter approaches and share that they did not really know how to do one so they just put it off. I think that first year or two you are just getting used to opening that bustling, growing colony of stinging insects and the idea of doing a capture and count is overwhelming. And most refuse to do alcohol washes as they are understandably reluctant to kill any bees at all.”

I concede that her statement is true. I’ve heard of many newish beekeepers being so intimidated by the sampling process that they procrastinate a day or two—and then 60 or 90—until it is way too late. Only when the colony dies, do they realize they should have done something long ago.

A feasible alternative

In light of this predicament, Janet and her club have come up with a protocol to help new beekeepers through this period of initiation and uncertainty. She explains:

“Given [new beekeeper reluctance], and most particularly for those who live in areas of high bee density, we give [new beekeepers] the option of treating by the calendar. Which in our area sort of translates into “when you get them, right after honey harvest, right before winter wrap-up, and midwinter.”

To me, this sounds reasonable. It is a regimen not dictated “by the calendar” but by the event—a more sensible benchmark. The events—especially attaining bees, harvest, and winter wrap-up—will vary depending on your location. That variation, by itself, will customize the schedule for individual beekeepers in different climates and conditions.

Although I still strongly recommend data-based decisions, I can see Janet’s protocol as both viable and doable for beginners. Technically, it should control most of the mites most of the time in most locations. For a new beekeeper who is stuck, intimidated by testing, or unsure about treating, this is likely a good place to start.

Lingering reservations

My worry is that such a schedule could become a habit that forestalls learning how to diagnose mite problems until another day. But when will that day come?

All forms of animal husbandry encompass jobs we don’t like to do. Everything from cleaning the goldfish bowl to picking hooves can be delayed, often to the detriment of the animal. But learning to do all the parts is necessary to learn the craft, regardless of the animal you’re keeping.

By treating mites on a schedule without testing, the beekeeper loses heaps of information. For example, if you don’t count the mites before and after treatment, how do you know the treatment worked? Perhaps you’re living within a pocket of resistance to a drug like Apivar. You might not know that without proper counts. Or perhaps you accidentally used an expired product. You might not realize your mistake without good counts.

When testing helps the inexperienced

I see counting as being especially important for new beekeepers who are inexperienced at using drip protocols or OA vapor or even something like ApiLife-Var that requires reducing all openings to the very minimum. How do you know whether you did it right without testing?

A lack of information can be detrimental in the future as well. If a certain product shows resistance, wouldn't you like to avoid buying or using it again? If mite counts were excessively high before you treated, might you want to adjust treatment times next year?

An excellent temporary solution

All that said, I think Janet's idea might be the perfect solution for a beginner. But it should be a temporary solution, used only while the beekeeper is learning the ropes.

In truth, I don't like testing either, but I loath data darkness even more. Testing has saved my bees more than once, and I keep that in mind when I feel like stalling. Just a few years ago I used a product that is not supposed to engender resistance. The product was fresh. I followed directions. Everything seemed fine until my follow-up counts showed no change in mite load.

What happened? I still don't know, and I've used the same product occasionally since then with good results. But if I hadn't re-counted—and then retreated—I would have lost most of my colonies. In fact, I can't think of a single time when testing did more harm than good.

A special thanks to Janet for sharing her system. If you would like to read the rest of her information-packed post, you can [find it at https://www.honeybeesuite.com/using-oxalic-acid-vaporization-when-brood-is-present/#comment-224101](https://www.honeybeesuite.com/using-oxalic-acid-vaporization-when-brood-is-present/#comment-224101)

Rusty
www.honeybeesuite.com



Tasty! Photo by Kim Townsend

New Members

Elizabeth & Kenneth Moody	McDade
John Ward	Austin
Suzanne Johnson	Georgetown
Ernest & Carla Schreiber	Lake Jackson

Renewing Members

Kenneth Dennis.	Coupland
Andrea and David Ayers.	Liberty HI'll
Tony Leftwich.	Georgetown
Kevin Ueckert.	Georgetown
Jessica and Ryan Doleva.	Georgetown
David and Sherry Smith.	Georgetown
John Ward.	Austin
Paul Duncan.	Georgetown
Robert McGammon	Georgetown
Aaron & Tracy Bramwell	Cedar Park

Visit our Website at:

www.wcaba.org

or email to:

info@wcaba.org

Renewal of WCABA Memberships

Shirley Doggett will be taking renewal of memberships for 2020

\$20 for individual membership, \$25 for family membership

Use Form on previous page to save time

Texas Beekeepers Association

Summer Clinic
6/20/20 in Denton

Annual Convention
5th - 7th November in Allen