

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA DECEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

www.wcaba.org

NO CLUB MEETING IN DECEMBER !!!

2023 Picture of the Year!

Since there is no scheduled meeting in December, as Editor I have started a tradition of using the open cover page in the WCABA Newsletter to feature my picture(s) of the year.

This year I have chosen to select four pictures that represent the fulfillment of a stated goal of the club to support organizations that promote beekeeping.

In January Shannon Montez, club president, indicated that we have been fortunate in our finances, and we would like to give back by supporting organizations that educate/promote beekeeping and the marketing of honey.

The Board approved a list of recipients and total amount to be expended. These pictures represent some of those organizations. Congratulations to the recipients.

2023 Club Officers:

PRESIDENT: Shannon Montez
president@wcaba.org

VICE PRESIDENT:
Gillian Mattinson
vicepresident@wcaba.org

MEMBERSHIP: Shirley Doggett
membership@wcaba.org

PROGRAM: Linda Russell
program@wcaba.org

NEWSLETTER: Jimmie Oakley
newsletter@wcaba.org

SECRETARY: Phil Ainslie
secretary@wcaba.org

TREASURER: Barbi Rose
treasurer@wcaba.org

HISTORIAN: Matt Ludlum
historian@wcaba.org

PAST PRESIDENT: Phil Ainslie
pastpresident@wcaba.org

LIBRARIAN: Chris Huck
librarian@wcaba.org

SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR:
Jimmie Oakley
scholarship@wcaba.org

QUEEN CHAIR:
(vacant)

WEB ADMINISTRATOR:
Rachel Glass
webmaster@wcaba.org

DIRECTOR AT LARGE:
Melissa Henry

DIRECTOR AT LARGE:
Gary Bible



Jan - Texas Honey Bee Education Assoc. \$2,000



Mar - Georgetown Public Library \$500
Sally Miculek & Ann Evans



May - Brookwood in Georgetown (BiG) \$2,000
Luke Ellis



Jul - Nevin Weaver Endowment (TAMU)
\$2,000. Dr. Juliana Rangel

The Editor

...a note from the Program Chair

Linda Russell



Linda Russell - Program Chair

I would like to give a BIG thank you to Phil Ainslie for leading Beekeeping 101 in 2023. Phil drives about 100 miles round trip to faithfully serve our Club Members in learning the foundations of beekeeping. We look forward to Phil teaching this series again in 2024!

Randy Oakley shared his beekeeping wisdom and experience as our primary speaker for Beekeeping 201. The room was always packed. Randy doesn't know it yet, but I'll be asking him to present to 201 some more!

We will also be bringing in speakers from outside our area. As a sneak peak, our first speaker is from Texas Bee Supply - Dayton, who will take 201 on a deep dive of honey bee anatomy and how it affects what bees do.

In closing, thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Program Chair for another year.

Merry Christmas Friends!

Linda



Phil Ainslie - WCABA Secretary



Randy - Oakley Family Apiaries

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED?

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. A mentor will be made available to instruct and assist the recipient in sustainable beekeeping techniques and good beekeeping practices.

Applications can be obtained on-line at: wcaba.org. (click)Youth Education, (click)Scholarship Application (4-pages). Application must be **mailed** to the Awards Committee, by **February 15th** for consideration. Jimmie Oakley Scholarship Pgm. Chair

Spotlight on (HONEY) Crystallization:

Contributed by Phil Ainslie

Sadly, crystallized honey is often mistaken for honey that has “gone bad.” Instead, the sugars in the honey have simply arranged themselves into crystals, a completely normal process. It’s delicious!

Crystallized honey is a natural product with a poor reputation. Unfortunately, crystallized honey has a lackluster reputation, especially in North America. Many think crystallized honey is damaged, “off,” or inferior. In truth, it’s just in a different shape. As for the bees, they pay no attention to whether the honey is solid or not. Honey has been crystallizing for as long as honey bees have been storing it—a very long time indeed. You can [feed crystallized honey](#) to your bees in the comb or not, and they will scarf it down as usual.

Some honey forms crystals, and some do not. Honey crystallizes because it contains lots of glucose. Gradually, it separates from the liquid portion of the honey and forms crystals. On the other hand, fructose interferes with quick crystallization. So, the rate at which honey crystallizes depends mostly on the ratio of glucose to fructose. Honey with lots of glucose crystallizes quickly. Honey with lots of fructose crystallizes slowly. Other factors can also affect crystallization speed, such as temperature, [moisture content](#), and the number of impurities in the honey

Crystals Be Gone

High-fructose corn syrup is popular in processed foods because, among other things, fructose inhibits the formation of sugar crystals. This results in a shelf-stable product with a smooth texture.

Interfering with a natural process

The good news is that if we have honey with a propensity to crystallize, we can interfere with that process and keep the crystals small and uniform. When we do it properly, the honey will spread like butter with a smooth taste and feel. If crystals become too large, they may become distracting or unappetizing, so we use a simple trick to control their size. We call it *seeding*. Seeding yields honey that goes by various names, such as spun honey, churned honey, [whipped honey](#), or creamed honey. Sadly, these names can also lead to false impressions because the processes do not add air, cream, or anything else to the honey. Spinning and churning sound like magic movements, but the actual process is more like stirring—not nearly as glamorous as it sounds.

How we can control the crystal size

We can control the size of the crystals by adding a small amount of crystallized honey into a batch of liquid honey. Once you find a commercial brand whose texture you like, you can add some to your liquid honey. Most people find that using about 1 part crystallized honey in 10 parts liquid honey works well. However, not all honey will behave the same way.

The pre-crystallized honey acts like a template of sorts, suggesting how the crystals should be built. As new crystals are added to the old ones, they all will have roughly the same size and shape. The crystallized honey will be smooth and silky when all the crystals are small and roughly the same size.

Not all honey will behave the same.

You should note that not all honey will yield the same results. Because honey with lots of glucose crystallizes faster, it's easy to cream honey that is high in glucose. Honey that is high in fructose is much more resistant to crystallizing, so it is perfect for leaving in its liquid form.

As a general rule (with exceptions) [honey from the flowers of trees](#) and shrubs is generally higher in fructose. Honey from trees and shrubs include tupelo, cascara, maple, gallberry, avocado, acacia, and chestnut. Examples of honey that crystallize fast include alfalfa, clover, and dandelion. The record holder is probably oilseed rape (canola) that sometimes crystallizes before it can be harvested.

Mind the water content before making creamed honey.

Most cured honey has a water content of around 18%. If the water content is too high in extracted honey, it will often separate into a solid layer on the bottom and a liquid layer on the top. This liquid layer may ferment and give off a musty odor or smell like a brewery. Some people like this flavor in their honey, but others do not. If your honey has a tendency to [separate and then ferment](#), you can cream it early and prevent the separation process. However, be aware that honey with a high water content may form larger crystals. Protect your honey from attracting atmospheric moisture by keeping a lid on it.

Two basic methods for making creamed honey

Two methods are commonly used to make creamed honey. The Dyce (or heated) method is used by commercial establishments and consists of several precise steps. The honey is stirred, pasteurized, strained, cooled rapidly, seeded, stirred, and then stored in a cool environment. A [good set of directions](#) can be found at BetterBee. If you're not fond of heating honey or have just a small amount to do (even just one jar), you can use the raw (no heat) method. Most hobby beekeepers and family farmers that I know prefer the raw method.

The 2 ingredients for making raw creamed honey

- To make [raw creamed honey](#) you will need:
 - raw (unpasteurized) liquid honey
 - pre-creamed honey such as alfalfa or clover (seed honey)
 - a stirring spoon or electric mixer
 - a lidded storage jar.
- Put the liquid honey and a small amount of the pre-creamed honey in a bowl. Use at least 1 part creamed to 10 parts liquid honey. More is fine and will speed up the process.
- Stir or slowly mix the honey for about 20 minutes. You will see the mixture gradually become lighter in color.
- Pour the mix into lidded containers.
- Store in the fridge or a cold garage for one to two weeks. (50-57* is ideal temperature)

Thanks to Randy at Honey Bee Suite for this article

Practical Experiences in the Bee Yard

Once upon a time, **DECEMBER** was a “down” month in the bee world. But not anymore! Plans for the coming year need to be made to prevent that “I don’t have any more boxes to house this swarm I just picked up.

December was and still is a time to enjoy family and friends and food and fellowship with the bee club members. It is also time to work in the shop repairing all the equipment you will need in the coming year. For individuals who got bees last year and may be wondering what needs to be accomplished in the next couple of months, I have some suggestions for your consideration.



Stanford Brantley

First, Mann Lake in Marshall, Texas usually has a “March Madness” sale of items useful to beginning beekeepers. Watch their website for the date and plan to visit.

Second, Are you planning on expanding or just need new queens for your last year’s hive? Queen breeders begin booking orders for queens as early as January. You need to make a decision about where you want to order your queens and be prepared to place that order as soon as they open the order line. Check their website to find out when you can place the order. Orders are typically filled in the order received. If you wait too late you may not receive a queen until late in the season or maybe not at all.

Third, If you plan on ordering Nucs, make sure you have available a full-sized hive and frames to house the Nuc. You will need three to five frames to finish filling the brood box when you move the Nuc into it. If you do not have the box and frames, be sure you obtain them before the Nuc arrives.

Fourth, Attend a “beginning beekeeper school”. Even if you attended a class last year, it is a good idea to go for a refresher now that you have had an exposure to the real world of raising bees.

Fifth, Visit different bee clubs in your area to decide which one provides the programs most useful to your level of knowledge and experience. Most bee club dues are not expensive so consider joining more than one club to get the best learning opportunities.

Sixth, Join the Texas Beekeepers Association to keep abreast of activities at the state level.

Seventh, The most important thing is to **BECOME ACTIVE** in the bee club of your choice.

Local beekeepers have reported honey production in our area was negatively impacted by the weather. Honey prices listed in the journals are going up so be aware of a shortage of honey and increase your asking price.

Reports indicate the TBA Convention in Temple was informative and attempted to provide information useful in real-life beekeeping. I trust you took advantage of this annual opportunity to meet with beekeepers across the state and be exposed to current information presented by nationally known speakers of our industry.

In closing, do you have friends or family that you just don’t know what to give as a gift for Christmas? Are you looking for end-of-year tax-deductible donations? Would you like to make a donation to a worthy cause as part of your Christmas spirit?

I have been donating to Heifer International for several years <https://www.heifer.org/>

A hive of bees for a third world country is \$30.

Closer to home, the Texas Honey Bee Education Association supports the work of our Texas A&M Honey Bee Lab through the Nevin Weaver Endowment fund. See the THEBA website for details about the endowment fund and information about making a donation. <https://thbea.com/nevin-weaver-endowment-fund/>

2024 Nucs & Queens Ordering Process*

submitted by Gary Bible

The Williamson County Area Beekeepers Association will again offer bees and queens to club members in 2024 through our Bee Procurement Program. The Executive Board voted to provide 5-frame nucs with a queen (not marked), and an additional order of queen bees (marked & clipped) for purchase by current club members.



Gary Bible

The **5-frame nucs** originate from Merrimack Valley Apiary's Evergreen Honey Company in Louisiana, currently managed by Wes Card. The nucs 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. The queens from Evergreen will be VSH (varroa resistant) produced in their program and should provide a hardy, productive colony that overwinters well.

The **queen bees** for individual purchase will come from Bee Weaver Apiaries in Navasota, Texas 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 (green) for ease of finding and help in swarm control.

Order Forms with current pricing are in the December Newsletter (*p.07*) and orders will be accepted immediately for the 2024 season.

Our Bee Procurement Program has been a benefit provided to the membership for over 20 years and has become a hallmark service to our club members. The program has drawn many new members to our ranks because of the attractive pricing and the assurance of obtaining bees in an ever tightening and competitive market. For this reason, the club is requesting you limit your order to 6 nucs per total family, and a limit of 4 nucs total for new members (2024) to the club.

***Orders will be taken by mail and at the club meetings through February 28th for as long as the supply last.** Each order must be on the official/club Order Form, be filled out completely, and be accompanied by the appropriate remittance (check or money order) in order to be accepted. All orders will be acknowledged by a confirmation email and added to the Queen & Nuc Order Matrix by the Procurement 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 nucs and/or queens. Cancelled orders will be handled by the coordinator with refunds and resale of the product to members on the Wait List.

Most likely the pickup/delivery process for nucs and queens in the spring will mirror what took place at the Bost Farm since April of 2020, with drive-thru pickup again. Time will tell, so be flexible in your expectations and schedule as that time approaches.

Direct your inquiries to:

Gary Bible – WCABA Bee Procurement Coordinator
512-923-0410 or email glbible@austin.rr.com

WCABA Shows Appreciation to Library Staff

On the Thursday before Christmas the Library Staff was presented with a token of honey in appreciation for taking such good care of the beekeepers this past year. Everyone present agreed that it was a sweet thing to do. Looking forward to a wonderful meeting place in 2024



...the Elf on the Shelf @ the Library (Jimmie Oakley)

W.C.A.B.A. Club 5-Frame Nuc & Queen Order Form - 2024

Name _____ | ORDER # _____

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) **\$175.00/ Nuc.**
Nuc with three frames brood, mated queen, "NOT" marked or clipped.

No. _____ **Honey Bee Queen** (Based on group order of 100) **\$40.00/ 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/ Gary Bible - 150 Sundance Trail, Liberty Hill, TX 78642

Must be Current Member - Nuc order **deadline:** Must be postmarked by February 28th or while supplies last

Limit 6 nucs per family, 4 nucs for new members . No individual resale or ownership transfer on nucs once order

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

Special Instructions:

WCABA Officer Election 2024

The Slate of Officers elected to serve WCABA for 2024
Nominations Committee: Shannon Montez, Shirley Doggett, and Jimmie Oakley.

President – Shannon Montez
Vice President – Nancy Kunschik (new)
Membership Director – Shirley Doggett
Program Director – Linda Russell
Editorial Director – Jimmie Oakley
Secretary – Phil Ainslie
Treasurer – Barbi Rose
Historian – Matt Ludlum
Past President – Phil Ainslie
Director at Large – Ken Browning (new)
Director at Large – Ann Bierschenk (new)



Elected Officers will serve from January to December of 2024

WCABA Elected Officers 2024

Group picture of officers present at the election at the November Club Meeting



*front row (l to r) Shirley Doggett- Membership, Linda Russell-Programs, Shannon Montez-
President, Ann Bierschenk-Mbr@Large, Nancy Kunschik-VP. back row (l to r)
Chris Huck-Librarian, Phil Ainslie-Secretary, Jimmie Oakley-Editor, Matt Ludlum-Historian.
Not pictured Rachel Glass-WebMaster, Ken Browning Mbr@Large, Gary Bible-Procurement*

Meet Our New Officers

In January of 2024 the Officers you elected at the November meeting will assume their duties to guide the club through what we all hope to be a good year. A brief bio and picture have been provided (or updated from archive*) to help you get to know them better and recognize them at the monthly meetings. Looking forward to **2024**.

***Shannon Montez - President**



I grew up in northern Ohio in a small town. I moved to Texas years ago and settled in Leander with my husband Joe, and my 4 children. At this time, I have 8 hives. I became president of WCABA in 2021 after serving as VP for two years. I have enjoyed meeting the variety of people who continue to show an eagerness to learn and share information about being a successful beekeeper. Any day dealing with a hot hive is often easier than dealing with some of the issues I encounter at my job. Although I have been a beekeeper for several years, I still learn something new from each speaker and from members.

(new) Nancy Kunschik - Vice President



Born in and raised on a small farm outside of Yorktown, Texas. Moved to Austin in 1970 to attend Brackenridge Hospital School of Nursing. Also attended the University of Texas, graduated with a BS in Nursing and Master of Education in Vocational Counseling. Worked a variety of nursing and case management jobs. After 23 years with The Texas Association of School Boards retired in 2022. Live outside of Taylor, married to Jerry Kunschik, one daughter and two grandchildren. Started keeping bees in 2021 and enjoy “backyard” beekeeping.

***Shirley Doggett – Membership Director**



Born in Northampton, England and came to the US in 1985. I graduated from Dominican College, NY with a degree in Special Education. We moved to Texas in 1992. I managed a home for multi handicapped children in Austin before teaching special education for the Round Rock ISD. We live on 10 acres in Thrall TX. I am the Membership Director for the Texas Beekeepers Association (2014) as well as for WCABA (2013). Hobbies include reading and knitting.



***Linda Russell - Program Chair**

I am a native Texan and I have been keeping bees for 8 years with the honey going to The BiG Honey Company (Brookwood in Georgetown) - a vocational community for adults with disabilities. I work full time as a Pediatric Registered Dietitian. Married with two (grown) kids, 2 grandsons, a crazy dog and a few chickens (and bees). Served as WCABA Program Chair since 2020.



***Jimmie Oakley - Publication Director (Editor)**

Born in Oklahoma City, grew up in Dallas, started beekeeping in 1975. Worked for commercial migratory operation in North Dakota '76 – '86. In addition, we operated a family business rearing Starline Queens. Married to Kay Carr in 1964, three children (all grown now), retired from Xerox Corporation; wife from IRS. TBA Treasurer 1996-2014. Produce honey under the label: Annie's Pure Honey. Past president of WCABA, Program Chair, and WCABA Editor since 2020. Still actively keeping bees and always looking forward to a "good year".



***Phil Ainslie - Secretary**

Born in Indiana, I graduated from Purdue University School of Pharmacy. Practiced as a Clinical Pharmacist with a specialty in diabetes and diabetic Complications Management. I became interested in beekeeping in college while taking an entomology class. I actually started beekeeping as a retirement hobby before moving out to our ranch when I received a complete hive from a neighbor. I am now into my 12th year of beekeeping. I have been a mentor, treasurer, president, and secretary in WCABA. In addition, I teach Beekeeping 101, and serve as our backup webmaster (still learning). Still beekeeping and still learning.



***Barbi Rose - Treasurer**

Backyard Beekeeper since 2014, Master Beekeeper Program Apprentice, 2015

Kids are grown, they are non-beekeepers

Day job is IT Business Systems Analyst

Hobbies: Making soap, potions, and lotions, beeswax products, stained glass, sewing face masks, board games and escape rooms with friends and family

Born and blossomed in Southern IL, spent a few years in Southern CA, and made it to Texas in 1999

Current Treasurer for TBA, THBEA, and WCABA, also

Refreshments Coordinator 2016 & Librarian 2017-2019



***Matt Ludlum - Historian**

WCABA Historian, 2019-2023

Post to WCABA Facebook Page & setup and manager of Zoom meetings. (the Technical Guru).

I have been a beekeeper for 8 years now, even bought myself an extractor. I know enough to tell you that the pointy end of the bee hurts. I have a lovely wife and two small children, one of whom gazes into bottles of honey while saying 'hooneeeey'."



(new)Ann Bierschenk – Director at Large

I was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas. Attended the University of Texas at Austin and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Home Economics. Married Tom Bierschenk in August 1979. Raised 5 children who are all grown and married. Presently have 12 grandchildren. Was a stay-at-home mom and church volunteer. Took up beekeeping as a hobby. Joined WCABA about 10 years ago to learn more about bees and beekeeping.

NOT PICTURED: **Rachel Glass- Web Master**



Chris Huck – Librarian

Chris Hick is the WCABA Librarian and has managed to keep books available to members at the meeting since mid 2020 and serves on the Exec. Board. Actively keeping bees and making honey.

NOT PICTURED: **Ken Browning- Dir. at Large**



Gary Bible – Procurement Specialists

I was born in Austin a long time ago. Fled Austin traffic and now living in Liberty Hill. Started beekeeping in 2006. WCABA Club President for 2 years. Retired from Texas Dept of Transportation since 2001. Married to Linda for 55 years! Have a son (Scott) and daughter (Leslie), 5 granddaughters (drama) and 1 great grandson (more drama). Son Scott actually helped me spin honey this year!? Looking forward to starting Bee and Queen Procurement for the club for year number 4. I can talk bees 24/7, except when I'm sleeping (then I'm dreaming bees).

Membership Report: Shirley Doggett

December 2023

If you change your address, phone number, or email, please email me with the change.

We wish you a very Happy Holiday season. 🧑‍🎄🍷🧑‍🎄🍷

Here we are in the middle of December, another year nearly over. That means it's time to renew our dues for 2024. The years go by so quickly.

If you can please send your checks to me, that will save long lines at the registration table in January. The Queen Bee color for 2024 will be green so you will be given a green name tag once you have paid. If you wish to pay your dues through your bank that works fine. Please let me know you have done so.

Stay well and bee safe.

Shirley

My address is: 400 County Road 440 * Thrall TX 76578 *. (512) 924-5051



Shirley Doggett

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

The Ole Beekeeper's Christmas

by Phil Ainslie

*It was the day before Christmas, and who did appear?
All dressed in white and carrying his gear.*

*The ole beekeeper headed to the bee yard to see what was brewing.
Then he opened the hive to see what was stewing.*

*Are they well? Do they have enough honey?
Maybe they're low, and that would be crummy!*

*So, there he was, so handsome in white.
He raised the lid and gave them a fright.*

*He dropped the lid, and it made such a clatter.
The bees zoomed out to see what's the matter.*

*The creature in white is a threatening thing.
Alarm, alarm! Give that creature a sting.*

*They buzzed, dived, and warned him to leave.
Then, an opening appeared near his sleeve.*

*Then, slipping past the zipper at the veil, they zoomed.
Some stings were the order, and near his nose, they loomed.*

*Charge! Let's sting! To the death, we will go.
And sting they did. It was quite a show.*

*He ran off with a huff and a puff.
Yes, he decided that he had quite enough.*

*He should have zipped up before his hive inspection.
Alas, he went home and looked at his reflection.*

*The morning of Christmas day, he was such a site.
His nose was red and swollen, and he looked fright.*

*Then, the family arrived later that day.
They laughed and ribbed him, but that was ok.*

*Every Christmas thereafter, the story would be told.
Of the red-nosed beekeeper with the nose swollen twofold.*

Best *Holiday Wishes* and *Happy New Year* from WCABA

Wintering

You may think yourself lazy, or flawed. Yet your body is made of almost exactly the same elements as the stars. Your bone composition matches the coral in the seas and you, my friend, are ruled by the moon and the sun. Whether you like it or not. So no, you are not lazy, Nature is simply pulling you to slow, like the life, floral and fauna around you. It is not your moment to rise. It is winter, you are **wintering**. And you are right on time.

Donna Ashworth



The Editor