WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

www.wcaba.org

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4th TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2026 @ 7PM
Georgetown Library - Friends Room (2nd Floor)

PROGRAM:

Beekeeping 101 [7:00 PM - Class Room]

Speaker: **Sean O'Neil-Texas Master Beekeeper Program**



Sean O''Neil

Utilizing Dr. Garett Slater's *Texas Master Beekeeper Program* curriculum, Sean will go through the basics of beekeeping found in the 10 modules course during our monthly meetings, so that by the end of the year you've learned everything you need to pass the *Apprentice* certification exam. Even if you're in year two or three, it's a solid opportunity to shore up your fundamentals and fill in any gaps. Come see, join us! (handout available)

Beekeeping 201 Speaker: **Charlie Agar** [8:00PM – Friends Room]

The Business of Bees –"You'll make literally HUNDREDS"



Charlie Agar

Charlie Bee Company was born out of a deep love for honeybees. Founder Charlie Agar discovered beekeeping in 2013 through an introductory course—similar to the one now offered at Charlie Bee. What started as a hobby quickly grew into a full-scale operation. Today, Charlie manages hundreds of honey bee colonies across Central Texas, helping land owners qualify for Ag valuation, producing honey, and performing humane live bee removals. Charlie and his team safely relocate wild colonies to the Charlie Bee homestead, where they are nurtured and reintegrated into managed apiaries.



Don't forget the Austin PBS (KLRU-TV) produced series, Charlie BEE Company

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We would certainly enjoy your presence at the next meeting on January 27th (***fourth*** Tuesday), but if you can't, then tune in to broadcast virtually via "Zoom". If you are planning to join from an iPhone or iPad, be sure to download this application first: https://apps.apple.com/us/app/zoom-cloud-meetings/id546505307

We look forward to seeing you there Tuesday night @ 7PM!
GT Library - Friends Room– 402 W 8th Street Georgetown 78626
Topic: **WCABA Member Meeting (and Beekeeping 201)**
Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime
Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82475068933?pwd=aHRiRjc3bS9kYXJGS2g5THVpOEx2UT09
Meeting ID: 824 7506 8933. Passcode: 909659

Beekeeping 101

…a note from your President



Sean O'Neil - President

Unless my weather report was way off, the cold has probably set in by now, and everyone, bees included, is hunkered down for our belated winter. Don't worry, bees up north deal with far worse. Our southern belles will pull through just fine, and the bluebonnets will be here before we know it.

As we look forward to the new year of beekeeping, I'm excited to see where our tiny but busy club is heading. We've got our usual bee run planned and Dusty is making a valiant effort keeping up with the orders. Dodie has scheduled our full 201 speaker lineup for the year, featuring some really great speakers. And don't worry—the mixer and honey tastings are happening again too.

A Note on 101

After many years of guiding newbees like myself, **Phil Ainslie** has hung up his 101 hat. Phil was my first real-life beekeeper contact after COVID had me learning everything from YouTube. When I joined the club, we were just crawling out of our Zoom meetings, and Phil's talks helped me actually understand what I was doing out at my hives. I'm grateful for the foundation he gave so many of us.

I'll be taking over the 101 program this year, and as usual for me: I'm going to try something new. I'll be following **Dr. Garett Slater's** *Texas Master Beekeeper Program* curriculum so that by the end of the year you've learned everything you need to pass the *Apprentice* certification exam. We'll work through the 10 modules during our monthly meetings, with testing available in the spring. The Apprentice level only requires one year of beekeeping experience, so if you're just starting out, this is a great way to structure your learning, and you get a cool certificate and badge out of it. Even if you're in year two or three, it's a solid opportunity to shore up your fundamentals and fill in any gaps.

Looking forward to seeing y'all at the meeting!

Sean

TEXAS MASTER BEEKEEPER

Advanced Level -TMBP

Why is it so Difficult to Breed Better Bees

Article from the Honey Bee Suite at honeybeesuite.com
Contributed by Phil Ainslie.

Those new to beekeeping frequently ask why we don't just breed better bees. This is a logical question because breeding has long been the answer to many agricultural problems. When I say "breeding," I don't mean modern gene-insertion techniques that allow us to raise glow-in-the-dark cats, but the old-fashioned kind of breeding where you cross hand-selected individuals in order to amplify their best traits.

This article first appeared in ***American Bee Journal***, Volume 158 No 8, August 2018 and was reprinted in ***An Beachaire***, The Irish Beekeeper. Vol. 73 No. 11, November 2018. It was first published on ***Honey Bee Suite*** November 16, 2018.

This traditional method has yielded bigger, fatter, disease-resistant, and higher-yielding plants and animals that are the backbone of modern agriculture. Over the years, it gave us more milk, bigger cherries, sweeter apples, blight-resistant tomatoes, pink daffodils, and hairless dogs.

Of course, what you do on purpose, you can also do by accident. Inadvertently, we've created a host of undesirable organisms using similar techniques. Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and similar pathogens arose because we killed off most, but not all, of the individuals. Those that survived were the strongest, best adapted, and most able to persist in spite of antibiotics. We selected for the strongest ones by eliminating the weaker ones—the same selection principle operating in reverse. Closer to home, we've bred varroa mites that are resistant to nearly everything.

Why don't we breed better bees?

So why don't we just breed better bees? The answer is simple: we already have. Breeders have managed all kinds of marvels with honey bees. They have built bees that are gentle, bees that overwinter well, bees with increased honey production, and even bees that cope with varroa mites. Breeding isn't the problem.

The problem with honey bees occurs after the queens leave the breeder. The traits bred into honey bee queens in carefully-controlled breeding programs soon disappear when the daughters of these queens are allowed to mate with open stock. Within a generation or two, the descendants of these super bees are right back to square one. The question is, "Why does this keep happening?"

The roadblocks to maintaining better bee stocks

There are three main roadblocks to maintaining well-bred populations—haplodiploidy, polyandry, and panmixia—plus a few other minor complications. And while those words may sound intimidating, don't worry. Just fasten your seat belt, and you'll be an expert on all three in no time. Get ready to impress your friends at the next dinner party.

Haplodiploidy

Like all other members of the order Hymenoptera—including ants, wasps, and sawflies—honey bees are haplodiploid. Haplodiploidy means that some individuals are diploid, having two sets of chromosomes, while others are haploid, having only one set of chromosomes. If your knowledge of genetics is limited, suffice it to say that haplodiploidy doesn't operate like the simple Mendelian genetics you learned in high school. I, for one, thought I was a genetic genius after I had the dominant/recessive pea grid worked out, but things in real life are not that simple.

Haplodiploidy makes breeding better bees more challenging, and it has some surprising consequences. In honey bees, drones are produced from unfertilized eggs, which means each drone has only one set of chromosomes, while females—both workers and queens—have two sets. In most animals other than Hymenopterans, all individuals have two complete sets of chromosomes. Also, haplodiploidy results in inexplicable axioms, such as a drone has a grandfather but no father and can have grandsons but no sons.

But it gets even weirder. What they don't teach you in Beekeeping 101 is that some fertilized eggs become diploid drones—that is, drones with two sets of chromosomes. This happens because the thing that actually determines sex is *not* the presence or absence of fertilization but the presence or absence of heterozygous alleles at the sex locus. Don't click off yet—you can do this.

A piece of chocolate cake

Many recipes lead to chocolate cake. Like recipes, alleles are alternative sets of instructions.

You see, instead of having an entire chromosome that determines sex, like the X and Y chromosomes in humans, bees have one gene on one chromosome that determines sex. Specific places on chromosomes are called loci (the singular is locus), so the "sex locus" is just the place (think address) on the chromosome where the sex gene is found.

The European honey bee has about 18 different alleles of the sex gene. An allele is just a variation of a gene. All sex alleles do basically the same thing, but the genetic coding is a little different in each one. You can compare it to having 18 different recipes for chocolate cake—the end products are similar but the instructions for getting there vary.

So different bees are running around with different alleles (or instructions) for the sex gene. If an egg is not fertilized, there is only one set of instructions and the bee becomes a drone. If an egg is fertilized and has two *different* sets of instructions, the bee becomes a female. But—and here's the kicker—if the egg is fertilized but receives two identical sets of instructions (two identical sex alleles) the bee becomes not a female but a diploid drone. Think of it like this: one set of instructions printed twice is not the same as two different sets of instructions.

The fate of diploid drones

These diploid drones do not survive. In colonies of social insects such as honey bees, the workers eat or destroy the diploid drones soon after the eggs hatch. Because they are destroyed early, having many diploid drones in a colony results in "shot brood" or "scattered brood"—brood combs that have lots of empties or brood of many different ages interspersed. In some solitary bees, the diploid male may die in the cell, or may emerge and mature but be sterile.

The table below shows what would happen when a honey bee queen (with two different alleles of the same gene) mates with five different drones, each with one allele. In this case, two of the drones have the B allele and the rest have different alleles.

Wherever you have homozygous alleles for the sex gene (two of the same alleles), you get a diploid drone. This table shows an extreme example because it has a small number of alleles and a small number of matings, but it illustrates how homozygous alleles happen. In this example, one queen with two different alleles for the sex gene mates with a series of five drones, resulting in only 70% viability of the fertilized offspring.

For the average beekeeper, this property doesn't make much difference. Since honey bees have about 18 alleles for the sex gene, and a queen may mate twelve or more times, there is little likelihood of diploid males. But for bee breeders who are trying to control the gene pool of both the queens and the drones, diploid drones can become a real concern. Inbreeding *decreases* the number of alleles in a population and thereby *increases* the occurrence of diploid drones. Large numbers of diploid drones weaken a colony because the nurse bees waste resources trying to raise these bees only to kill them later.

Drones	Queen #1 Allele A	Queen #2 Allele B
Drone #1 Allele A	AA	BA
Drone #2 Allele B	AB	BB
Drone #3 Allele C	AC	BC
Drone #4 Allele B	AB	BB
Drone #5 Allele D	AD	BD

Polyandry

Honey bees are also polyandrous. Polyandry means "many men" and refers to the fact that a queen bee mates many times. Having many mates is not unusual by itself, but a queen bee stores all the sperm in her body for the rest of her egg-laying life. So when she lays her eggs, the eggs are fertilized by an assortment of males. Each of these different couplings represents a different sub-family in the brood nest.

Workers within any single sub-family have the same mother and father and are called "super sisters" because they share about 75% of their genes.[1] Workers belonging to different sub-families have the same mother but different fathers. They are known as half-sisters and share about 25% of their genes. When people ask, "Why

are my bees all different colors?" that's often the answer: they represent different sub-families in the same nest. It's most apparent if a queen mates with both Italian (yellow) and Carniolan (black) drones.

But color is not the only difference. Because subfamilies are the offspring of different drones, they will vary in many ways such as overwintering ability, disease resistance, temperament, or foraging strength. Even more important, subfamilies tend to stabilize a colony. If the queen had a bad mating—or even two—the offspring of the bad mating are only a small proportion of the entire colony, meaning the colony can survive even though some individuals do not.

Panmixia

In addition to haplodiploidy and polyandry, honey bees are famous for a trait called panmixia. Panmixia refers to totally random mating, resulting in a thorough mixing of genes throughout a population.[2] Drone congregation areas—locations where, just as the name implies, large numbers of drones collect and hang out until a virgin queen flies by—were designed with panmixia in mind. They assure excellent mixing of genes because drones from large geographical areas meet and compete for the right to mate.

While polyandry by itself assures multiple matings, panmixia assures the mates are not all boys from the local 'hood. Instead, the bees in a drone congregation area represent a diverse population. Panmixia has a stabilizing influence on a population, providing a check against genetic drift and inbreeding depression, a fancy term that indicates a reduction in fitness due to sharing too many of the same genes. It provides a buffer against genetic tragedy unless, of course, you are a breeder trying to select for certain traits—then it's more like an albatross.

Additional genetic problems for bee breeders

Other genetic problems affect our ability to develop and maintain improved beekeeping stock. The first, restricted gene flow from outside North America, is due in part to the Honey Bee Act of 1922. The second is inherent in the way social insects respond to danger.

Restricted gene flow from outside North America

Honey bees in North America have had a restricted gene pool for a long time. This is partly due to the Honey Bee Act of 1922 which prohibited the importation of honey bees into the United States. The idea was to prevent honey bee disease organisms, specifically tracheal mites, from entering the country. But the unintended consequence was to cut off the flow of genes from the honey bee's native lands.

Although I hear this argument from time to time, I personally don't give it much credence. After all, there were no restrictions during the 300 years from the early 1600s to 1922. In addition, honey bees proliferated across the continent in those years, having plenty of opportunity for natural genetic variation that occurs in any large population. Even so, in recent years genetic materials via drone sperm have been imported into the US in order to supplement the gene pool.

Limited genes for detoxification

On a different front, recent research has shown us that the honey bee genome is extremely limited in the number of genes that allow for detoxification, a trait common among social insects.[3] Scientists speculate that instead of evolving quickly to protect itself from environmental contaminants, the honey bee traditionally used other mechanisms of defense. Traits such as hygienic behavior, propolis collection, and sacrifice of the individual for the good of the colony are tools used to protect a colony from such danger.

However well this worked in the natural world, it is problematic in an environment filled with man-made hazards including insecticides. While other invertebrates including mosquitoes, cockroaches, and even varroa mites can develop resistance during the evening news, the honey bee is more genetically stable and less able to respond quickly to environmental toxins. This characteristic has been called "ecological naïveté."[2] It appears that nature prepared the honey bee for a world that was simpler and more innocent than the complex one in which it now resides. As a consequence, it takes longer—perhaps too long—to develop natural resistance.

A lesson from conservation biology

Island biogeography is the study of how species form and why they go extinct. Both speciation and extinction happen faster on islands because there is a restricted flow of genes into a protected area. The mantra of island

biogeography is simple, "Isolation plus time equals divergence."[2] In other words, to change a population you must isolate it and keep it separate over time.

Breeding for a specific trait is not the same as speciation, but it works in much the same way. In order to breed for a specific trait, you must restrict the flow of genes into your breeding population over a number of generations. This increases the probability of the desired gene showing up in any single individual. Unfortunately, it also increases the incidence of unwanted genes—something breeders must prepare for.

Although it would be helpful to own an island or remote tract of land for bee breeding purposes, an "island" can be formed from other types of isolation. A freeway, a mountain range, a lake, a city, or a dearth of floral resources are all things that can restrict the flow of genes into an area. A famous example is Central Park in New York City. From the sky, you see a huge green park surrounded by immense buildings and endless pavement. Central Park would not be an island to honey bees because they can fly great distances, but it is an island to certain native bees with foraging ranges of several hundred yards at most.

Those beekeepers who are successful at raising varroa-resistant bees have generally spent many years in an area that is somewhat protected from genetic contamination. These two factors, time and separation, mean they've had a lot of influence on the bee populations in their local area. In other words, they have been able to flood their area with "good" genes, so there is a higher probability that their queens will mate with drones who also have varroa-resistant traits. In essence, they shift the gene pool within their "island."

Beekeeping in the real world

A key to fixing a recessive trait in a local environment is drone saturation.

At the beginning of this article, I said that breeding wasn't the problem. Now, thinking about the traits I just mentioned, let's go back and look at the trouble. In the real world, a carefully bred and inseminated queen will work as advertised. Say you buy a queen bred and mated for hygienic behavior. Her offspring will most likely show the desired trait and the varroa mites will be dispatched. But at some point, the colony swarms, and your queen disappears into the wilds.

If you do not intervene, one of her daughters will become the new queen. She carries the desired trait from both her mother and father, but when she mates, she mates with the local stock of drones. Perhaps some of those drones have the hygienic gene, especially if some other local beekeepers bought bees from the same breeder. But most drones have no such trait. So whether your colony shows resistance or not is a numbers game.

Nearly all varroa-resistant genes are recessive,[4] so if your new queen mates 16 times, and only one or two of those matings are with a drone with varroa-resistant genes, you will have at most, just two subfamilies in your colony exhibiting the trait. Assuming all subfamilies are represented equally, that would be about 1/8 of the bees or 12.5%—perhaps too low to do much good. The more varroa-resistant drones in the area, the better chance you have of seeing some resistance.

Bees by the numbers: one good queen is easily overwhelmed

But imagine for a moment that the local bee club in your town just purchased 250 packages from a producer in the south. Assume for a moment that they all survived. You would then have, theoretically at least, 250 queens each laying 1,000 eggs per day for the months of April, May, and June. If you assume 15% of those bees are drones, then you have (250 x 1000 x 90) x 15% or 3,375,000 drones in your area during that three-month period. And those are just the drones from the new packages, not those from established and feral colonies. Worse, each and every one of them is eager to mate with the offspring of your expensive hygienic queen.

Sure, these are ballpark numbers, but the message is clear. If you bring a varroa-resistant queen into an area where there are lots of bees, but little varroa resistance, the trait will soon disappear.

In summary, a persistent beekeeper with a lot of colonies can significantly shift the gene pool in his favor. But if an area is constantly bombarded with random bees from other places, it is extremely difficult to develop a resistant line. It will require time, effort, and significant planning.

I'm not saying we shouldn't try to breed better bees. But we need to understand why it's a long row to hoe, why it may be difficult to imitate the success of others, and why the resistant traits are hard to maintain. Because of the unique biology of honey bees, it can take a long time to see substantial change.

Rusty

Article from the Honey Bee Suite

Phil

Practical Experiences in the Bee Yard


Stanford Brantley

Greetings to all ArkLaTex beekeepers who find the workings of a bee hive intriguing enough to pursue more knowledge of this wonderful insect. Our goal is to manage our hives such that the bees can produce enough honey for us to extract. King Tut was so fond of honey that he had a quantity buried in his tomb so he could enjoy eating it in his afterlife.

JANUARY and FEBRUARY are our most **wintery** months. Bees are clustered on the cold days but will fly on warmer days. Most of our outside activities in the beeyard focus on ensuring each hive has adequate food to survive the winter. Inside the house and shop, we are planning and preparing for the coming 2026 season. You should have already selected the supplier for the queens, nucs, hives or packages you need to purchase. Orders should be placed as soon as the supplier will take them. Packages seem to be quoted a few dollars more than nucs. Prices I have seen are around $180 for packages and $200 for a five-frame established nuc.

January through March is a critical time to help the bees begin to build up for the coming season. Stored food is needed to keep the colony from starving before spring forage becomes available. The queen should be ready to produce more brood as the weather warms in March and April. As the eggs hatch and become larvae, the nurse bees will feed each larva about 1300 times a day (according to Beekeeping For Dummies). If the stored food is depleted, the adult bees may begin to consume (cannibalize) the larvae they have been feeding.

Your job is to check the hives for stored food and feed if needed. It is easy to estimate whether the hive has stored food by feeling the weight of the hive. If the hive feels light, you can do a quick inspection inside to verify how much stores are available. Make sure the hive is not stuck to the hive stand then attempt to life the rear of the hive with two fingers. If you have difficulty lifting the hive, there should be enough stores inside. If the hive feels light and lifts easily, you will need to feed the bees.

On cold days the bees will be in cluster to maintain their warmth. Sugar water you feed them will also be cold. It is best to feed a dry food placed above the cluster. The bees will not travel far to eat the food so it should be placed as close to the cluster as possible. Examples of winter dry food include fondant, sugar brick, raw white sugar placed on a piece of paper, winter patties, or commercial dry feed. You will probably need to add a shim above the inner cover to give enough space underneath the outer cover to place the food. Some bee equipment suppliers sell a feeding shim under names such as Feeder Shim or Frame Rim Spacer. It is essentially a very shallow super, generally 1 ¾ to three inches high. You can make one by cutting a two inch slice off an old hive body or super. You can also build one using a 1x2 board.

You can open the hive and do quick inspections of the brood nest when the temperature reaches 60 degrees or above. Be aware the queen is not heavy with eggs at this time of the year. She could easily get excited and fly off into the wide world if you pull the frame she is on. If she flies, place the frame back into the brood nest. Slide the inner cover back about a quarter of the way and leave it open for about thirty minutes. Leave the area and give her a chance to return. The queen will often return and go into the hive. After a half hour or so, move the inner and outer covers into proper positon. Do not open the hive to see if the queen returned. Check the hive after a couple of days to see if she is inside. Most of the time, you will find the queen in the hive.

Stay active and keep learning. Attending a school for beekeeping is a great way to increase your knowledge. Find a local club and become active. Read major beekeeping publications. Some offer digital subscriptions for a few dollars annually. Take advantage of the many YouTube videos on beekeeping. I recommend the videos from major education outlets, those with address ending in .EDU.

Stanford

Texas Makes a Good Showing at ABF Conference

submitted by Dodie Stillman

The American Beekeeping Federation Convention this year was in Mobile, Alabama January 6-10. It was a whirl wind experience of honey and honey bee education. There was something for everyone, from educational presentation to research presentations to hands on workshops to Kids & Bees and the North American Honey Bar for honey tasting. Of course there were vendors, everything you need, and even things maybe you didn't need!



Kids and Bees at ABF

The North American Honey Bar was a huge success!! Everyone was gathered around the tables where all 50 states were represented. Texas had a wonderful showing with 5 unique honeys to taste, including my favorite Texas honey, Huajillo. I found a new favorite, if you get the chance to taste Kiawe Honey from Hawaii, don't miss out!!



NEW ! North American Honey BAR



Texas Honey on Display



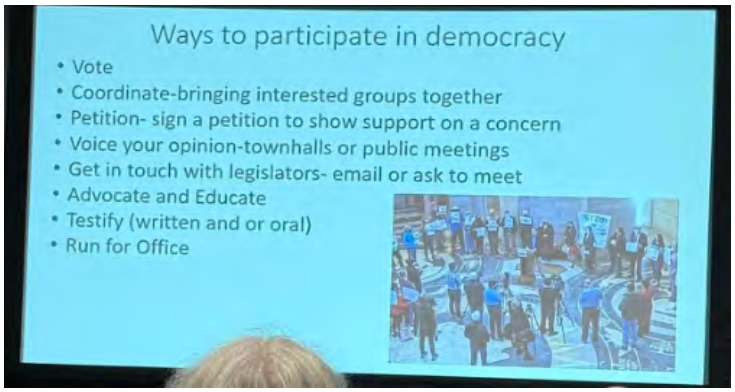
A Texas favorite - Huajillo Honey

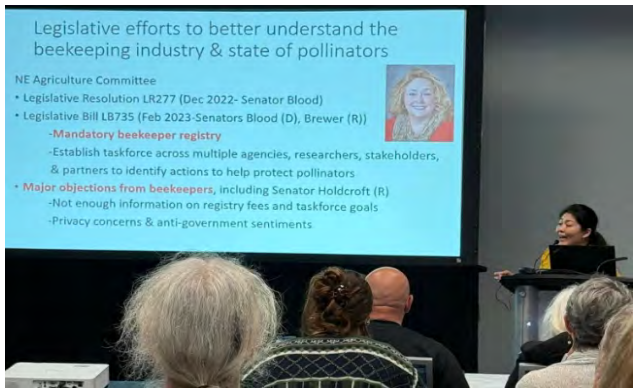
One of the best workshops at the American Beekeeping Federation Convention was **Dr. Judy Wu-Smart** talking with us about how to advocate for honey bees! I have to thank the OneHive Foundation for providing grant money for Dr Wu-Smart to give the workshop and for a majority of us (including me) to receive financial help to attend the convention and this excellent workshop.

Big take a way from Dr. Wu-Smart were to figure out if your issue should be addressed at the city, state, or federal level. Next, figure out how to flip your ask into a benefit, figure out how to bring in other allies, and how to bring out the financial implications involved. Know the legislature you are talking with, and work on the long term relationship. Have an elevator pitch and make a leave behind and remember the thank you email!!



Kiawe Honey from Hawaii





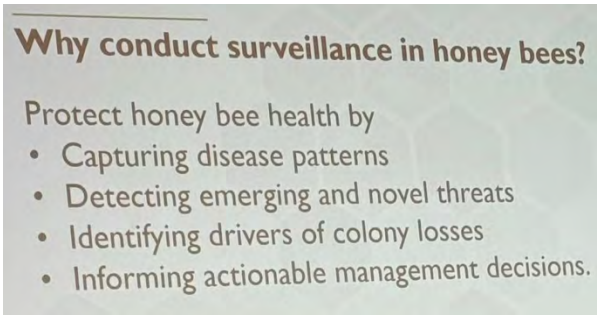
Dr Judy We-Smart presents workshop on honey bee advocacy

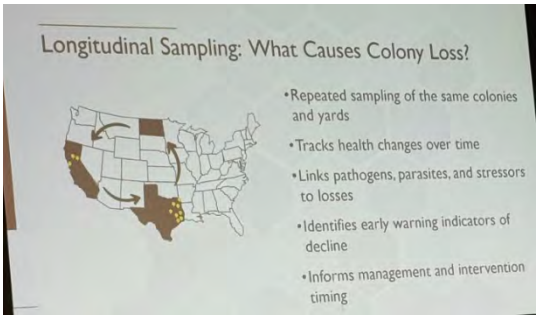
Texans at ABF Conference (con't)

Of course I want to support our Texas folks, **Dr. Garett Slater** was there to chat about Breeding Queens, and proactive testing/monitoring bees to find trends. He and a couple of others talk about how we might start monitoring honey bees to recognize trends to be more proactive instead of always coming in after the bees have died. They are still figuring out what to measure, when, how often… it will be exciting to see what happens here.

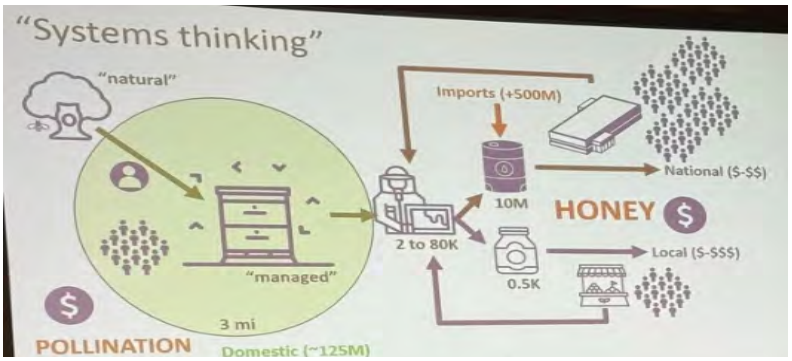


Dr. Garett Slater



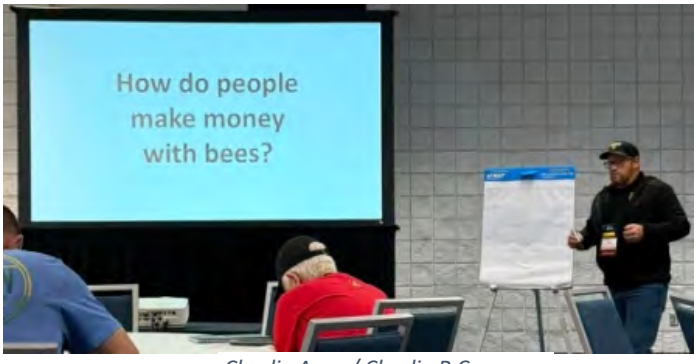






...monitoring... recognizing trends... being proactive...

New this year we got to listen in to **Charlie "Bee" Agar** (SeguinTX) talk about Making Money without Migrating. Figure out what you like and do more of that, get help with the business things that don't bring you joy! Texas is lucky to have the options to use bees as livestock and get an Ag Valuation on your property if you have between 5 and 20 acres. This has opened up a whole new revenue stream for beekeepers to manage bees for a tax break for the property owner. Charlie walked through several other options for making money, from education and experiences to selling bees, queens and equipment, to Agritourism!



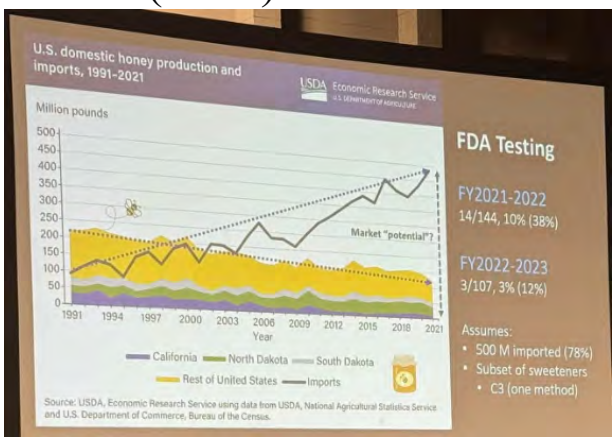
Charlie Agar / Charlie B Company



The next presentation was the **Honey Testing Project.** We have to get a database of all the REAL Honeys in the US so we can tell what is real and what is adulterated. What it looks like, the signature, the floral sources, and the time of year. What is available in Texas, vs what's in California, vs what's in Virginia!

Texans at ABF Conference (con't)





Honey Testing Project: protecting the integrity of our product

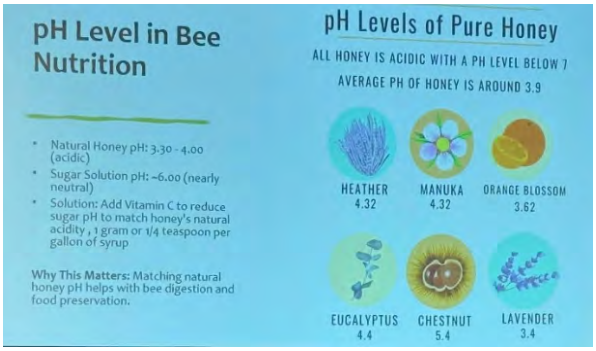
They need honey samples, look for sample collection requests through ABF or our Texas Apiary Inspectors, maybe Dr. Slater and his team too! If you want to donate to this effort, **www.ksu.edu/honey**

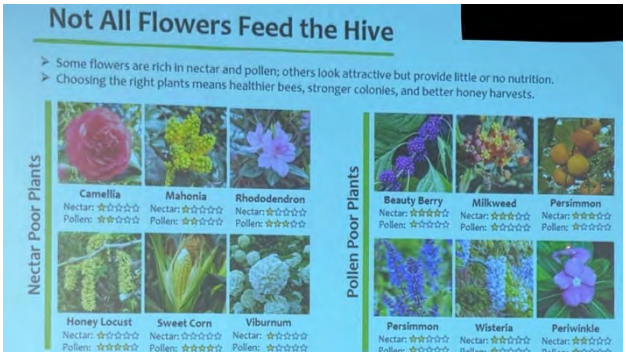
One of my favorite honey bee researchers is **Randy Oliver**! He helped me get over my hesitation to use an alcohol wash by reminding me that a good laying queen would replace those 300 bees in a couple of hours.

Today the wisdom is; there are no robber bees, those are just opportunistic foragers! Good new, Randy has hired someone to help him clean up his website, so look for easier navigation coming soon to https://scientificbeekeeping.com/



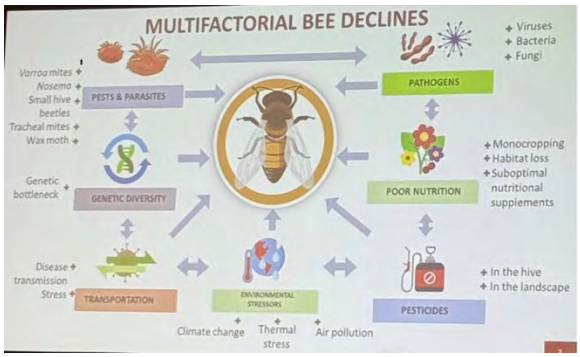
Had to go to the American Beekeeping Federation Convention to catch **Sammy Ramazani** plant presentation, so we got plant info from all over! The honey is the wage the bees get for their pollination service, the beekeepers are the tax man getting their cut!





Plant Nutrition - Not all Flowers are the same

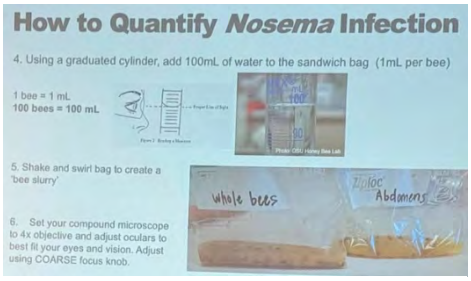
I have known that honey bees have 10 amino acids they need to survive, but environmental stressors disrupt the AA available in plants. In the next presentation the study looked at heat and drought on sunflowers and honey bees. While in drought, plants die much sooner, but a sudden heat stressor is just as dangerous. Stress makes plants bloom out fast then die, instead of a longer steady blooming season. Also, when the honey bees are heat stressed they need more pollen to survive. A suggestion was to do a little pollen collecting in early spring, store it in the freezer, maybe grind it and mix with sugar syrup and feed back to them in the hot summer months.



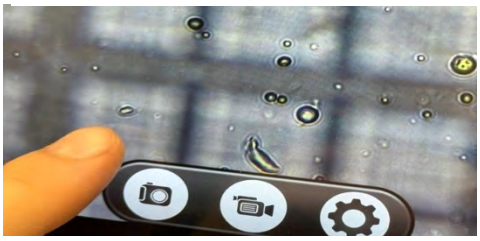
Bee Decline and Relation to Nutritional Challanges

Texans at ABF Conference (con't)

A greatly appreciated hands on class presented by the ABF keynote speaker, **Priya Chakrabarti Basuted** was on "Examining the honey bee abdomens: Nosema and nutrition". Each table got to remove the abdomens from 50 honey bees, mash them up in a zip loc bag with a little water and look at the resulting liquid under a microscope. Nosema looks like little tic-tacs. And you can see honey bee fat bodies with your naked eye.



Process and Procedure



Nosema Under the Microscope

The ABF Honey Show

Finally, I have to blow my own horn by mentioning that my honey is now "**National Award Winning**" honey!! I helped my friend, **Monica Siwiak**, haul her entries to our hotel room for the final polishing before we took everything to the turn in location. I had only 4 jars to polish, while Monica worked on her 12. The difference between a single one color harvest and an invested honey show contestant and judge! We both had gift baskets to fluff and ruffle, the theme this year was Pirate's Treasure. I had created Honeyed Spiced Rum, Captain Hook's Hot Honey, and a jar of Whipped Pirates Honey for my basket, as well as including the required 2 containers of your own honey. I topped my basket off with gold babbles and chocolate coins. I knew going in I was competing for second place behind Monica, but surprise entry by fellow Texas **Sandra Knight** made the competition for second a real race. It was awesome as we all worked together to enhance each other gift basket entries; adding gold babbles here, chocolate coins there, and even an extra wax element was added to my "pirate locker" thanks to Monica being over prepared! I'm happy to say that rubbing elbows with Monica for a couple of years now has paid off, (as well as being invited to use her honey warming box) my honey placed 3rd at the American Honey Show at the American Beekeeping Federation Convention this year in Mobile, Alabama. It was a Texas sweep for the gift baskets, and Monica took home several ribbons as well as the best in show for a beautiful artistic wax entry that I won in the auction on the last night.

Dodie



Dodie's National Award Winning honey



Dodie Stillman's 'Pirate Treasure' Gift Basket wins at ABF Conference

Membership Report: Judee Brinley

January 2026



Judee Brinley - Membership

New Members

Debra Peters	Burnet
Brian Wade	Round Rock

Renewing Members

Ken Barnes	Georgetown
Ann Bierschenk	Georgetown
Allyssa Elliot	Georgetown
Richard (RJ) Hines	Florence
James Johnson	Burnet
Gillian Mattinson	Georgetown
Deborah Michel	Elgin
Gish Mwangi	Rogers
Glenn Patterson	Burnet
Diane Shadden	Leander
Bill Soja	Liberty Hill
Gregory Willy	Round Rock

***New members**- please remember that Texas Beekeepers Association still gives one-year free membership to those people that are new to beekeeping. Let me know if you are interested in this.

Judee

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: $ _____

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:

Judee Brinley - Membership - 50100 Flintrock Drive Georgetown. TX 78626

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: WCABA

Williamson County Area Beekeepers Association

Treasurer's Report - As of January 24, 2026

Profit and Loss

ACCOUNTS	Year to Date
Income	
Program Income - Bee Procurement (2026)	$3,195.00
Program Income - Membership Dues	$100.00
Total Income	$3,295.00
Cost of Goods Sold	
Bee Procurement Program Nucs	$50,500.00
Total Cost of Goods Sold	$50,500.00
Gross Profit	($47,205.00)
Operating Expenses	
Total Operating Expenses	$0.00
Net Profit	($47,205.00)

Balance Sheet

ACCOUNTS	As of January 24, 2026
Assets	
Total Cash and Bank	$50,560.59
Total Assets	$50,560.59
Liabilities	
Bee Purchase Commitment (2026)	$40,500.00
Total Liabilities	$40,500.00
Assets & Liabilities	$10,060.59
Equity	
Retained Earnings - Prior Years	$57,265.59
Retained Earnings - Current Year	($47,205.00)
Total Equity	$10,060.59

Bee Procurement Program - 2026

Income	
Program Income - Bee Procurement	$4,910.00
Cost of Goods Sold	
Bees	$50,500.00
Gross Profit	($45,590.00)
Expenses	
Wire Charge	$25.00
Total Expenses	$25.00
Net Profit	($45,615.00)

Notes (as of January 24, 2026):

BeeWeaver Commitment 100 Queens — $4,000.00

Evergreen Purchase 300 Nucs — $46,500.00

- Evergreen Commitment = $54,000
- Less Volume and in-person pick-up discount = $7,500
- Net Amount = $46,500

WCABA Executive Board Meeting Minutes

November 13, 2025

- Attending: Jimmie Oakley, Shannon Montez, Phil Ainslie, Matt Ludlum, Gary Bible, Judee Brinley.
- The Committee approved the September minutes.
- Membership report:
    - Judee Brinley reported that 51 attended the last meeting, the total membership is 191, and 3 new members joined in October.
    - Judee reported that the new check-in procedure is working out well. Members can check in on their iPhones as well. An additional iPad for the check-in process was requested.
- Treasurer report: Tabled until the next meeting.
    - A security proposal was made. The Committee agreed that a monthly review of the bank statement should be performed. Phil Ainslie volunteered to do so.
    - The 501c3 is still being worked on, and the review was tabled until the next executive meeting.
- Program: The November meeting will include youth scholarship reports, and Randy Oakley will present on ways of wintering.
- Annual bee procurement:
    - Gary Bible will be stepping down as the procurement coordinator.
    - Dusty Brinley has agreed to take over as bee procurement coordinator.
    - Wes has been contacted regarding the intended order. The supplier's email address is thebeebarm.com.
    - Phil Ainslie will contact John Hibbard regarding drivers, the truck, and the trailer.
    - Bost Farm update: The Bost Farm will not be available after Dec. 2025. A new distribution location was discussed. Further review will be needed.
    - Queens: Bee Weaver will once again be our supplier for queens.
- Election of officers: Jimmie Oakley will set up the nominations committee.