WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA September 2025 NEWSLETTER

www.wcaba.org

2025 Club Officers:

PRESIDENT: Shannon Montez
president@wcaba.org

VICE PRESIDENT: Sean O'Neil
vicepresident@wcaba.org

MEMBERSHIP: Judee Brinley
membership@wcaba.org

PROGRAM: Nan Helmke
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:
(vacent)

WEB ADMINISTRATOR: Sean O'Neil
webmaster@wcaba.org

DIRECTOR AT LARGE: Ken Browning

DIRECTOR AT LARGE: Ann Bierschenk

DIFFERENT LOCATION*FOR SEPT 23rd

MEETING: BiG @ 905 N Church Street, Georgetown

PROGRAM:

Honey Judging – Honey for display at the State Fair of Texas
Honey Tasting – Tasters Choice Competition
Guest Speaker – Dodie Stillman



September is National Honey Month, and the club has for many years held the Honey Judging of 2# jars going to the Honey Booth at the Texas State Fair. And just for the fun of it everyone brings a sample of the honey they have extracted so we can all taste. To add interest, we have allowed everyone to indicate their preference and vote for the one they thought was best tasting. We dubbed it the Tasters Choice Contest and awarded a ribbon for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place (blue, red, & white, respectively), which allows someone 'bragging rights" for the whole year. *(see page 2 for more info)*

Dodie Stillman: Learning to Appreciate Honey

A high level overview of training in the *sensory analysis of honey*. Dodie will share some of the things she learned, and then have 2 hands on tasting exercises, so everyone understands about taste, flavor, and texture. Finally, everyone can take their new knowledge and use it while tasting and describe the honey entries in the evenings Taster's Choice Contest! ***Don't miss it!***



Dodie Stillman

Bio: Dodie Stillman is a member of the Williamson County Area Beekeepers Association (WCABA), Past President of the Texas Beekeepers Association (TBA). She is a Master Beekeeper in the Texas Master Beekeepers Program. In 2017, she served as the TBA Honey Show Secretary, a show that saw a dramatic increase in Honey Show events and exhibitors.

We would certainly enjoy your presence at the next meeting on September 23rd (***forth*** 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!
*BiG in Georgetown, Amazing Grace Building at 905 Church Street-Georgetown 78626
Topic: WCABA Member Meeting
Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime
Click this Link to Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82475068933?pwd=aHRiRjc3bS9kYXJGS2g5THVpOEx2UT09
Meeting ID: 839 7875 8570. Passcode: 986569One tap mobile
+13462487799,,83978758570#,,,,*986569# US (Houston)
+12532050468,,83978758570#,,,,*986569# US

Honey Judging and Tasting at September Meeting

Everyone is welcome to join in the festivities to celebrate National Honey Month at our September meeting. We will have a big honey tasting and also honey judging for honey going to the State Fair of Texas.

The club's extracting equipment has been very busy this year and reports are that good honey has been extracted, so if you have extracted honey this year you are encouraged to bring a baby food size container of your best to see how it stacks up against the other club members participating in the "Tasters Choice" competition. It's all for fun and you might be a winner.

Honey going to the State Fair for display in the Texas Beekeepers Association Honey Booth needs to be in a 2-pound container with appropriate cap and can contain your label already affixed.

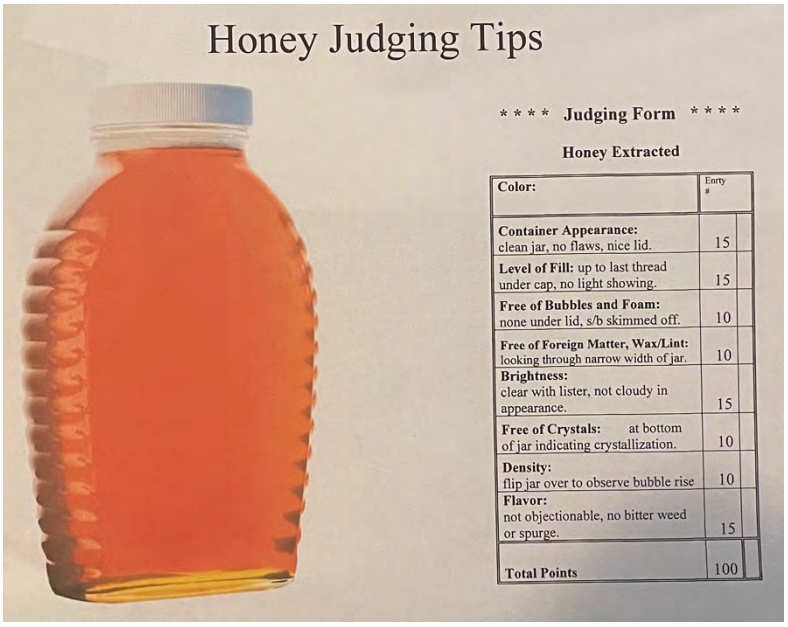
I encourage you to bring your honey and help make this a fun and memorable event.

Thx. Jimmie Oakley – Event Coordinator

HONEY JUDGING

Honey judging is of extracted honey only and it is a judgement of the beekeeper's product presentation. The jar of honey is judged on a set of requirements totaling to a 100 point. For each infraction points are deducted from the total. Attention is paid to container appearance, level of fill in the jar, absence of any foreign matter as well as bubbles and crystals. Finally the brightness of the honey, the density and lastly the flavor of the honey.

Judged honey with a combined total of 90 or above is worthy of a blue ribbon. All judged honey is sent to be displayed at the State Fair of Texas for the 3 weeks of the fair and then donated to a Children's Home in Cleburne.



THE TASTER'S CHOICE







SUBMIT TASTE VOTE

Judging in tasters Choice is subjective base on the preference of those doing the tasting. Each participant gets three votes to give to the one's they think best with the top three vote getters receiving the blue, red, and white ribbon respectively. Bragging rights for the year are on the line. Come join the fun. *Jimmie*

Help Wanted...

…a note from your President



Shannon Montez - President

This year has been a year of milestones. All four of my kiddos graduated and either moved onto big people jobs or are starting the next part of their education. It's been a tumultuous year; all good changes. The same can be said with our club and changes. We found out earlier this year that the Bost farm had been sold and we'd soon have to look for a new home for both our equipment and a place to host for our springtime Nuc and queen delivery. While we knew when Mary Boss passed away that we would eventually have to find a new home for our equipment, that day has been delayed by a few months. Fortunately, the deadline to find a new home for our extracting equipment has been extended till December. We are searching for an adequate place to store our extracting equipment. As you're aware, our club doesn't exist without volunteers, and with that, we are in need of a volunteer to host our extracting equipment. If you live in the Georgetown area and would be willing to store our extracting equipment, please speak with Jimmie or one of your board members.

Many of you are very familiar with Gary Bible. Gary managed our Nuc and queen program and unfortunately his time managing this program came to an end this year. Gary was very patient with all the questions and his quick wit will be missed this year. If you want to get involved and get to know many of our members, this is a great opportunity. This is an area that we will need someone to step in.

Although it's only September, I've already started seeing Christmas decorations at Goodwill. While it's a little too early to think about Christmas, it's a good time to consider getting involved with the board. We've been so blessed with our board members and elections for our board will be in November. If you're interested in getting involved with our club, please reach out to one of our board members at our next meeting.

Shannon

* MEETING LOCATION:



*Because of a conflict with scheduling the Georgetown Public Library has usurped our 2nd floor meeting rooms and the September meeting of WCABA will be held at Brookwood (BiG) in Georgetown at 905 N Church Street. This is 1.1 miles north on Austin Ave, north of the San Gabriel River where Williams Drives dead ends into Austin Avenue. The BiG campus complex is across from Republic Square (Starbucks & Dollar Tree). The meeting will be held in the Amazing Grace Building east of the greenhouse. There is a statue of Grace Klitz in front. Parking is available between the Café / Store and the greenhouse. There is additional parking across N. Myrtle Street.

Research Pearls

Compiled by Phil Ainslie

Honeybees risk colony collapse from longer, warmer fall seasons.



Phil Ainslie - Secretary

New research indicates that the famous work ethic of honeybees might spell disaster for these busy crop pollinators as the climate warms. Flying shortens the lives of bees, and worker honey bees will fly to find flowers whenever the weather is right, regardless of how much honey is already in the hive. Using climate and bee population model, researchers found that increasingly long autumns with good flying weather for bees raises the likelihood of colony collapse in the spring. The study focused on the Pacific Northwest but holds implications for hives across the U.S. The researchers also modeled a promising mitigation: putting colonies into indoor cold storage, so honeybees cluster in their hive before too many workers wear out.

Pesticide impacts on bees are more complex than expected

New study shows effects 'akin to aging and cancer'

Researchers at Queen Mary University of London have discovered that the neonicotinoid pesticide clothianidin disrupts different parts of bumblebee bodies in strikingly different ways. The researchers' new study shows that pesticide impacts are far from uniform, affecting the brain, legs, and kidney-like tissues in various ways that undermine each tissue's essential functions.

The researchers emphasize that these changes, akin to patterns seen in ageing and cancer, indicate a profound threat to bee health, damaging every tissue.

"We apply pesticides without fully understanding their effects on beneficial insect pollinators," said lead author Dr Alicja Witwicka. "Our findings show that every tissue is compromised in ways that undermine its vital role, which is why the effects are so devastating and widespread. This research is a call to action to rethink how we assess, regulate, and apply pesticides to protect pollinators and the ecosystems that depend on them."

This study emphasizes the urgent need to reevaluate pesticide safety measures to prevent further damage to natural pollinators, which are essential for producing the many fruits and nuts we eat and for maintaining biodiversity. People and governments worldwide are increasingly worried about biodiversity loss and have set strong goals to reverse declines and restore ecosystem health.

Phil

Practical Experiences in the Bee Yard



Stanford Brantley - Jefferson TX

Hot and dry weather is the usual for SEPTEMBER but it is still an important month in the beekeeping calendar. Now is the time for those who extract once a year to do their thing. Extracting in September allows you to get a mixture of Spring and Summer honey. Honey extracted in September is not usually a light amber product but will be a darker honey containing more anti-oxidants.

Mid-to-late September, we expect to see the Goldenrod bloom. Goldenrod is a good opportunity for bees to build up stores for the winter. However, the smell and taste of Goldenrod honey is not pleasing to most beekeepers. By extracting in early September, you can avoid having your honey tainted by the Goldenrod bloom. After extracting, return the supers to the hive and allow the bees to store the Goldenrod nectar for their winter food.

The hot dry weather should allow honey to flow freely from the uncapped cells. I also place a 150 watt light bulb underneath my 12-frame extractor to help warm the bottom of the unit. I feel this allows the extracted honey to drain more rapidly from the extractor spigot.

This extractor's stand is high enough to put a 5-gallon bucket with a double sieve screen under the spigot. The double sieve catches the bee parts, wax, and any small debris that might be in the honey. Sometimes I would have to remove the screen and wash the collected wax particles from the screen after straining twenty-four frames. To solve this problem, I purchased a ten inch screen with a handle and a fine filter screen. It looks a bit like the screen used to straining water from spaghetti after cooking. I place this screen under the spigot first and catch much of the larger debris before it gets trapped in the bucket-top screens. It is much easier to wash than having to disassemble the bucket top screens. It allows me to extract several loads of frames before having to pull and wash the bucket-top screens.

Watch the colony strength at the landing board. If you don't see a strong bee presence guarding the hive opening, add an entrance reducer to help prevent robbing. Use the smallest entrance on your reducer.

Examine the hives several times in September. Lift the back of the hive to check hive weight. If the hive is light, do a quick inspection to determine if there is a good supply of honey stored in and across the top of the frame. I can tell you from my experiences that the queen will have no incentive to lay eggs if there is no food to feed the developing larvae. If there is not a good super of honey in the hive, feed sugar water until the Goldenrod bloom starts. Check the hive a couple more times to make sure they are storing nectar from the fall bloom.

Preventing robbing is the most important action I believe you should take when working your bees from now through December. When you open a hive, it only takes a few minutes for a bee passing by to smell honey. She will tell her own hive about it, and they will come to your hive looking for food. In the few minutes it takes to complete your inspection, you will have robber bees around, on and inside your open hive. Make your inspections quick and try to not keep the hive open for long periods. It can also help if you have cloth, tray or something else to cover the open part of the hive as much as possible. Your goal is to prevent passing bees from getting a taste of honey that is not theirs.

September is also a good time to do a mite check. You will have enough time to finish a treatment plan before the weather starts to cool in November. Collect your 300 bee sample from the center of the brood nest. Select frames with open brood to collect the most bees infested with varroa mites. Use either the alcohol wash or powdered sugar method to get a mite count. Acceptable limits are three mites per hundred bees. That is nine mites for your three hundred bee sample. If your mite count is less than nine, feel great about it. If it is high, choose and implement a treatment based on current weather and hive condition. Remember that oxalic acid treatment is most effect when there is little brood in the hive.

Stanford

A Day with My Favorite Beekeeper – David Burns

by Judee Brinley

One of the best parts of beekeeping is that there's always something new to learn. Just when I think I've got something figured out, the bees remind me that I don't. That's why I was so excited to meet someone who has been learning and teaching about bees for over 20 years: David Burns.



Judee Brinley and David Burns at TBA Summer Clinic

If you've ever searched YouTube for anything bee-related (and I mean anything), chances are you've run across David. He has made thousands of videos covering every beekeeping topic imaginable. He's curious about the *science of bees* and is always running his own "small-scale research projects." For example, he once marked foragers at a water source and then tracked them inside the hive to see how they used the water. Another time, he applied red wax to frames just to find out if the bees would move it elsewhere. (Spoiler alert: bees are always full of surprises!)

What I love about David is that, along with being an endless source of knowledge, he's kind, funny, and super encouraging. He has a gift for breaking things down so even new beekeepers can feel confident. He is an EAS Master Beekeeper (Eastern Apicultural Society). This is a certification that reflects in-depth knowledge and expertise in beekeeping. That achievement is truly inspiring. I am currently in the Texas A&M Master Beekeeping program and seeing David's example makes me want to pursue the EAS certification one day as well.



David Burns with Judee & Dusty Brinley in Fairmount, IL

This summer, David was the main speaker at the Texas Beekeepers Association Summer Clinic in Abilene, and I made sure I was there to hear him in person. He did not disappoint! I even got to meet him and snap a picture. Little did I know that was just the beginning.

A few weeks later, I was listening to one of his videos on my way to work when he mentioned offering a chance to spend a day working bees with him at his home in Illinois. Naturally, I emailed right away. Then I waited…and waited. Finally, about three weeks later, I got the email: I had been chosen!

So, on August 18th, my husband Dusty and I hopped on a plane to Illinois. (Confession: I didn't let Dusty bring his bee suit—I wanted all of David's time and attention!).

At first, it was a little awkward because I had never been in front of a camera, but once we got going, it felt just like a conversation.

And wow, did I learn a lot. Right off the bat, David showed me how to use my hive tool more effectively. Then he pointed out that I don't use enough smoke and that I tend to pull frames up too quickly. (Guilty as charged!) But he didn't just correct me—he encouraged me and asked thoughtful questions that made me a better beekeeper.

When I first started beekeeping, I planned on having a local mentor, but mine moved away. Most of my learning has come from WCABA, The Bee Supply classes, and—you guessed it—YouTube. That's why it felt like such a blessing to have this day of one-on-one instruction with David.



Judee learning the basics of using the hive tool. Wow, who'd of thought it?

I came home excited and already putting my new skills to work in my own hives. If you haven't watched David Burns on YouTube yet, I highly recommend him, you'll learn something new every time. Even better, David will be speaking at the TBA Annual Convention in Waco this November. I'll be there front and center. Hope to see you there too!

For me, this experience was more than just a fun day in the bee yard—it was a reminder that great teachers inspire us to aim higher. Thanks to David, I don't just want to *be* a beekeeper, I want to keep learning, growing, and one day join the ranks of EAS Master Beekeepers myself. *Judee*



*Long Lane Honey Bee Farms is a family business run by Master Beekeeper **David Burns** and his wife Sheri, based in Fairmont, Illinois, focused on beekeeping education and resources through their website Honeybeesonline.com. While the farm is no longer open to the public, it offers online courses, a YouTube channel, beekeeping mentorship, and sells beekeeping supplies through its website.*



Judee observing a frame with David in a whole new light



Scholarship Recipients Inspect Hives and take Mite Count

by Jimmie Oakley – Scholarship Chair

The 2025 WCABA Wolf-Bost Scholarship Recipients took steps to prepare their hives for the fall and winter season by performing and after treatment hive inspection and mite count in late September. After inspecting their hives earlier and treating with ApiGuard (thymol gel) mid-July to mid-August (four weeks) the program called for an after-treatment assessment to judge the effectiveness of application. Anna French and Liam Bierschenk took notes and participated in the process to inventory and take a mite sample for ~300 bees (1/2 cup). This is done because it is important for sustainable beekeeping to know your mite count and act (take steps) accordingly.

With Randy Oakley performing the hive manipulation and frame reading, and the recipients scribing the inspection notes the group quickly got down to the point of pulling (shaking) the sample, processing the bees, and taking the reading. The mite count for each hive was in acceptable norms and the inspection revealed a queenright colony with plenty of stores (almost a full super of honey). Closing the hives back up, the recipients and mentor adjourned back to the honey house to review their activities and evaluate what they had learned. Good strong hives, well previsioned, ready for winter.



Jimmie



Liam, Anna, and Randy Inventory the hives



Randy shakes frame of bees for testing



Looking for the Queen in the test sample



Randy scoops out 1/4 cup (~300) bees for alcohol wash testing



Liam swirls bees in alcohol for one minute to separate the dislodged mites from the bees



Anna can see the mites in the bottom of the container

More pictures from Mite Testing.



Anna says, look I did it. Ezee Pezee!



Randy separates test sample of bees from alcohol wash solution



Randy pours alcohol with mites through nylon to strain out the mites from the wash



Liam and Anna count the number of mites from the ~300 bees in the test sample



Randy continues to inventory resources (brood, honey, pollen) in the hives



Inventory complete, resources recorded, Randy closes the hives up



Bee yard (lab) work done the group returns to the honey house to compare notes and review (lecture)

Membership Report: Judee Brinley

September 2025



New Members

Renewing Members

John "Jake' Norman Florence

Note: August meeting attendance 49 Adults. (36 Signed in, 13 using QR Code)

***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

Established Hives for Sale

I have five (5) established hives for sale. Lot price $1200 for all five (5).

Two (2) hives, each with two (2) brood boxes and one (1) honey super (individual price

$250 each)

Two (2) hives, each with two (2) brood boxes and two (2) honey supers (individual price $300 each)

One (1) hive with two (2) brood boxes, one (1) large (brood box size) super and one (1) standard honey super (individual price $350)

All hives have screened bottom boards and telescoping covers. All five (5) had new queens introduced in April 2025. These are robust hives. I harvested seven (7) gallons of honey from one (1) hive in 2025. These hives are for the experienced beekeeper.

The hives are located in Lytton Springs, approximately twenty-five (25) miles south of Austin and will require the purchaser to load them out. I will assist and seal the hives for transport.

Call Benjy (512) 923-0189 for details and to schedule a visit.



WCABA Executive Board Meeting July 17, 2025

submitted by Phil Ainslie - Secretary

Attendees: Phil Ainslie, Shannon Montez, Jimmie Oakley, Barbie Rose, Matt Ludlum, Shirley Doggett, Ken Browning, Judy Brinkley, Ann Bierschenk

- Membership report: Shirley Doggett, Judy Brinkley
  - WCABA membership is 186
  - Shirley stated she will not be running for the office of membership chair this fall.
  - Shannon proposed an appointment with Judy Brinkley for the membership chair, and the committee approved it.
- Treasure report by Barbi Rose:
  - We currently have $60,341 in the account.
  - Barbi reported that the 501(c)(3) is still being worked on.
  - The board agreed to open a club savings account when we receive the E.I.N number.
- Program report: by Shannon Montez
  - Dr. Juliana Rangel from the Department of Entomology will speak on Honey, Liquid Gold at the July meeting.
  - The August meeting will include presentations by the scholarship recipients.
- Scholarship report by Jimmie Oakley:
  - The recipients recently extracted honey. They had very productive bees.
  - The scholarship recipients will be speaking at the August meeting.
  - The graduating recipients are wrapping up their program and will take their hives home.
- Donations: The board agreed to the following:
  - $2500 to the Nevin Weaver Endowment
  - $1000 to B.I.G.
  - $750 to the Georgetown Library
  - $100 to the 4H
- Bost Farm discussion: The Bost Farm has been sold. A tentative board meeting to discuss options will be held on Monday, August 24th, at Rudy's in Georgetown, Texas.

Williamson County Area Beekeepers Association
Treasurer's Report - As of September 20, 2025

Profit and Loss

ACCOUNTS	Year to Date
Income	
Program Income - Bee Procurement (2025)	$58,620.00
Program Income - Membership Dues	$3,040.00
Program Income - Scholarship Program	$20.00
Total Income	$61,680.00
Cost of Goods Sold	
Bee Procurement Program Nucs	$48,900.00
Total Cost of Goods Sold	$48,900.00
Gross Profit	$12,780.00
Operating Expenses	
Bank Charges	$25.00
Donations and Gifts	$2,500.00
Dues	$50.00
Insurance	$1,873.00
Meeting Supplies and Refreshments	$369.72
Permits	$206.26
Speaker Fees	$200.00
Travel Expenses	$954.94
Website and Zoom	$280.51
Total Operating Expenses	$6,459.43
Net Profit	$6,320.57

Balance Sheet

ACCOUNTS	As of September 20, 2025
Assets	
Total Cash and Bank	$57,356.47
Total Assets	$57,356.47
Liabilities	
Bee Purchase Commitment	$0.00
Total Liabilities	$0.00
Assets & Liabilities	$57,356.47
Equity	
Retained Earnings - Prior Years	$51,035.90
Retained Earnings - Current Year	$6,320.57
Total Equity	$57,356.47

Bee Procurement Program - 2025

Income	
Program Income - Bee Procurement	$60,062.41
Cost of Goods Sold	
Bees	$48,900.00
Gross Profit	$11,162.41
Expenses	
Permit	$206.26
Travel Expenses	$954.94
Total Expenses	$1,161.20
Net Profit	$10,001.21

Notes (as of January 31, 2025):

Merrimack Purchase 300 Nucs $43,500.00

- Merrimack Commitment = $52,500
- Less Volume and in-person pick-up discount = $9,000
- Net Merrimack Amount = $43,500



Save the Date, Save the Money. Join TBA Today! **Tickets: $145/Members $165/Non-Members**
More Info: https://texasbeekeepers.org/annual-convention-2025/