

the Forager



August 2007

Newsletter of the Tidewater Beekeepers Association

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www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net

**President: Joe Taylor, Vice President: Bob Montcalm, Treasurer: Judy Ferguson, Recording Secretary: Carol Watkins
Newsletter Editor: Pam Fisher Deadline for the newsletter is the 25th of each month**

A Message from our President, Joe Taylor



Hello Fellow Beekeepers,

It is dry and hot as I write this. I just returned from Marco Island, Florida this morning around 1:00 AM. I went down to see if I could find some "killer bees". I didn't find any, but I did find a lot of bright sun, nice Gulf Coast breezes, daily thunder showers and a very nice air boat ride through the everglades.

I didn't find a beekeeper on my trip as Steve Black found in South Carolina last month. I did read a newspaper article about honeybee swarms in that area of Florida. Some homeowners were spraying to kill the bees because the average cost to remove a swarm is about \$600.00. The article also tried to explain to the residents that if they killed the bees, they would still have to put up with ants, cockroaches etc. trying to get to the honey left behind. The author was trying to let everyone know that the \$600.00 might be the best route to take.

I hope everyone has had a bountiful honey harvest. Come to the August meeting so that we can all brag about our honey crops. Hope to see **YOU** there!!

Joe Taylor



Next Meeting: Monday, August 13, 2007 at 7:00pm

Location: Agricultural Extension Trailer on Holt Drive in the Chesapeake Municipal Center

Program: Preparing State Fair Entries

Speaker: Bob Gibson, Superintendent, Open Honey Competition, State Fair of Virginia

TIDEWATER BEEKEEPER "YARD NOTES"

For



August

The drought has dried up most of the forage, but there are still a few nectar and pollen sources such as vitex, gardens, and even crepe myrtles. However, the bees sense that the primary nectar flow is over so you should begin to see less brood production and slightly more defensive behavior during hive inspections.

If you are fortunate enough to live in an area with cotton fields, they should be in bloom now. Otherwise, August is a good time to remove any surplus honey that is on the hive.

Check your hives for mites and treat if you have high levels of infestation; if you don't find mites – don't treat. Remember to remove all honey for human consumption before applying any pesticide or chemical treatment and apply only in strict accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

When pulling honey or returning wet supers to the bees, keep an eye out for robbing activity and install entrance reducers as needed.

If your bees are from swarms or the queen is over two years old, consider requeening in the fall so that the new queen is ready for spring work.



July Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the July membership meeting are available to TBA members on our website at:

http://www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net/members/meeting_minutes.html



Beekeepers' Association Meetings

Aug. 6-8 EAS 2007 Short Course
Aug. 8-10 EAS 2007 Conference
University of Delaware, Newark,
Delaware

<http://www.easternapiculture.org/programs/2007/>

Aug. 9-14 Apimondia 2007
Melbourne, Australia

<http://www.apimondia2007.com>

Nov. 3 VBSA Fall Meeting
Blue Ridge Community College
Weyers Cave, Virginia

<http://www.virginiabeekeepers.org/>

TBA Website Roster



Several club members have requested that the TBA roster be published in the password-protected 'members' section of the TBA website. Since member contact information is private, each member will have to authorize what, if any, contact information they want published to others. A sign-up sheet will be circulated at the next TBA meeting where members may fill out any contact information they wish to circulate. If you cannot attend a meeting, please e-mail Pam Fisher at webmaster@tidewaterbeekeepers.net and indicate what information (phone, e-mail, street address) you want published. Only those members that give their permission will be included in the website roster.

Beekeeper Chat

TBA member Heidi Pocklington has invited other club members to join her in a Yahoo Group of Backyard Beekeepers. This is a forum where one may pose questions that other group members answer. The web address is:

http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/Backyard_Beekeeping/



STATE FAIR
OF VIRGINIA

This month's membership meeting will feature a program on preparing state fair honey and beeswax entries. Come pick up some tips and get ready to take home bragging rights for the best honey in the state. Deadline for entry forms in the open honey competition is September 7th. Please note that on-line entries are charged \$0.20 per class. Mail-in entries must be accompanied by a surcharge of a \$5.00 check or money order per exhibitor. Faxed entries will not be accepted this year. Winners take home a ribbon and prize money from 1st (\$15.00) to 6th (\$4.00).

Classes include:

- Light extracted honey
- Light amber extracted honey
- Amber extracted honey
- Dark extracted honey
- Frame of honey for extracting
- Light or light amber cut-comb honey
- Amber or dark cut-comb honey
- Light or light amber chunk honey
- Amber or dark chunk honey
- Comb honey - round section or cassette
- Creamed honey
- Beeswax mold
- Beeswax candles
- Fancy beeswax mold
- Observation hive
- Gadgets



More information as well as the competition handbook and entry form can be found at the State Fair web site:

<http://www.statefair.com/competitions.asp>

New this year on the website are color photos of the different honey colors to help exhibitors enter the proper class.

In the past the club has had a volunteer to take the honey up to the judging in Richmond and another to pick up the entries when the fair closes. If you are planning on entering the competition, please consider volunteering for one of these tasks.



TBA Membership Dues



If you haven't already renewed your TBA membership, please do so. We will have to drop anyone who hasn't paid by the November monthly meeting. *All memberships expire on June 30 of each year per our bylaws.* Dues are \$20.00 for an annual family membership that includes the \$10.00 Virginia State Beekeeper's Association membership and access to the 'Members' section of the TBA website. Please pay the club treasurer, Judy Ferguson, at a meeting or mail a check made payable to **TBA** to:

TBA Membership
C/O Judy Ferguson
508 Albemarle Drive
Chesapeake, VA 23322



Extract-a-Thon a Success!

By Kate Rogers

An "Extract-a-Thon" Honey Extracting Field Day was held at Frank and Denise Bedford's home on July 21st. The weather couldn't have been better. Bob and Judy Ferguson graciously donated their extractor for use during the event. Bob demonstrated the use of a cappings scratcher to scrape the cappings on frames of honey. He also explained the use of Honey Robber and a fume board to drive the bees away from supers. Several participants cheerfully cranked the extractor.

Paint strainers were used to strain the honey with Bob giving helpful suggestions as to different equipment choices and set-ups.

Thanks to everyone who made the Extract-a-Thon a success, especially the Bedfords for hosting the event and opening their home to many beekeeping enthusiasts. Denise's menu, as usual, was delicious with pork BBQ, beans, salads and desserts. Thanks also go to Bob and Judy for their patience and enthusiasm. The Extract-a-Thon was a wonderful learning experience for new beekeepers and a day of good fellowship for all participants.



CCD Research Action Plan

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics, Gale Buchanan, announced July 13th that USDA researchers have finalized an action plan for dealing with colony collapse disorder (CCD) of honeybees.

The action plan coordinates the federal strategy in response to CCD. It addresses four main components: (1) survey and data collection needs; (2) analysis of samples to determine the prevalence of various pests and pathogens, exposure to pesticides, or other unusual factors; (3) controlled experiments to carefully analyze the potential causes of CCD; and (4) developing new methods to improve the general health of bees to reduce their susceptibility to CCD and other disorders.

Four possible causes for CCD are identified in the plan: (1) new or reemerging pathogens, (2) new bee pests or parasites, (3) environmental and/or nutritional stress, or (4) pesticides. Research will focus on determining which of these factors are contributing causes of CCD, either individually or in combination.



The plan can be read at:

http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/br/ccd/ccd_actionplan.pdf



PR Pamphlet

TBA is assembling a public relations pamphlet to promote backyard beekeeping. If you have any photos of members participating in educational events, please consider sharing them with the committee for inclusion in the pamphlet. All photos will be scanned and returned in their original condition. Please e-mail digital photos to Lisa Black at jamtowngirl@hotmail.com or bring paper copies to the next meeting.



Honey Samples for VA Tech

Rick Fell and Laura Link

Departments of Entomology and Biology, Virginia Tech



Ask most beekeepers how they measure success and they will respond in terms of honey production. We typically judge a colony's value by the number of supers of honey it produces, and take pride in our management skills if our colonies have a productive year. Honey is a wonderful product with almost endless variation, depending on the nectar sources and the area where it is produced. It varies in color and taste, and in its physical properties, such as the rate of crystallization. Honey also has a protective system that makes it a very safe food and gives it an almost indefinite shelf life. Its low pH (acid nature) and high osmotic pressure (due to its high concentration of sugars and low moisture content) make it difficult for bacteria or other organisms to grow or survive in honey. It also has an "inhibine" system, that activates when the honey is diluted. The inhibine system involves the enzyme glucose oxidase (which bees add to honey) and leads to the production of gluconic acid and hydrogen peroxide. These materials increase the bactericidal potential of the honey. Given its healthful properties and value as sweetener, every beekeeper should work to insure the quality of honey they produce.

However, there are some factors that beekeepers cannot do much to control, and one of these involves the presence of certain bacterial spores in their honey. In past years concern has been raised over the presence of spores in honey from bacteria such as *Clostridium botulinum*, the bacteria that produces the botulism toxins. These spores are harmless to most humans, but could lead to infant botulism in some very young children. It is for this reason that feeding honey to infants is not recommended. Honey can also contain the spores from other bacteria, such as *Paenibacillus larvae*, the bacteria that causes AFB. Since we know little about the

microbiology of honey produced in Virginia, we decided this past spring to look at some of the honey bottled by Virginia beekeepers. Our goal is to provide our beekeepers with information on their honey, and how they can insure the quality of their products. We have completed some preliminary studies, primarily microscopic analysis of the honey samples. Most of the honey samples have been shown to contain free spores in them, and in some cases also bacteria resembling the ones mentioned above. We are in the process of moving forward in an attempt to cultivate and identify these organisms. We are also gathering data on the chemical and physical properties of honey, including moisture content and pH, hoping to find correlations between these measurements and the numbers/types of organisms in the honey.

In order to survey honey samples from around the state we need help from our beekeepers. Thus, we are asking beekeepers to donate a small bottle of honey for our analysis. To date we have received about 25 samples from different areas, but need more samples if we are to have any sort of comprehensive survey. Therefore we are asking beekeepers to give us – or send us – a small bottle (eight ounces is sufficient) of their packed honey. Samples can be sent to Rick Fell, Department of Entomology, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061. Please be sure to include your name and address and the area where the honey was produced (if different from the address area). The information will be kept confidential.

Members, let's support Rick Fell and Laura Link with this important research. Please bring your labeled honey samples to the next TBA meeting where we can ship them together in one package to VA Tech.

