

the Forager



October 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



Good day to all beekeepers,

It is Thursday Sept 20th and I am preparing for a two-day bass tournament on Lake Gaston. I hope the cooler weather will help the fishing.

I just read the article in the Virginian Pilot about the hive of wild bees found in an old cedar tree at a Bed and Breakfast on the Eastern Shore. The tree was removed but the bees were saved. It was a very interesting article.

I went down to Steve Black's home one day this week to help him with his bees and they were bringing in Goldenrod. I came home and checked my bees and they also were working Goldenrod. It was a pretty color on their legs.

I want to thank Floyd and Bob for the wonderful program last month. To me that is what a club is all about, sharing one's knowledge with other club members. That is why I like Tidewater Beekeepers; I'm always learning something new.

Respectfully yours,



Joe Taylor

Next Meeting: Monday, October 8, 2007 at 7:00pm

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

Program: Top 10 Hive Management Issues

Speaker: Ken Carmody

TIDEWATER BEEKEEPER "YARD NOTES"

For



October

Your hives should be almost ready for winter. Confirm that each colony has sufficient winter stores of approximately 40 to 60 lbs. of honey. You can estimate honey reserves by lifting a back edge of the hive – it should feel as if it's full of lead. If not, feed sugar syrup in a 2:1 ratio (5 lbs. sugar to 5 cups water) until each colony is heavy with stores.

Ventilation is paramount during cool weather as dripping condensation inside the hive can wet and kill bees. Make sure that the telescoping outer cover is propped open slightly to allow moisture vapor to escape the colony. Leave screened bottom boards open for winter.

Install an entrance reducer or mouse guard on the hive entrance after checking that you have not trapped any mice inside. The reducer cleat should be placed with the entrance up rather than down to prevent blockage by dead bees or debris during the winter.

Watch for signs of Nosema disease such as bees defecating on the hive front and entrance. A severe infection can kill a colony in late winter or early spring so treat with Fumigilin-B per manufacturer's instructions if indicated.

Order package bees and equipment now to avoid being disappointed by sold-out suppliers in the spring.



First Landing Fall Festival



First Landing State Park has requested a honeybee exhibit with an observation hive for their fall festival on Saturday, October 20th. Area families are encouraged to come out and enjoy natural surroundings, interpretive sessions, pumpkin face painting, kids' crafts and special exhibits. There will be other activities such as demonstrations of Native American life, hikes, as well as a bon fire in the evening. Festival hours are 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Please contact Pam Fisher at 757-545-5076 or bgrrl@cox.net for more information if you would like to volunteer.

VSBA Fall Meeting

Resistance to Pests and Diseases in the Hive

The Virginia State Beekeepers Association will hold their next meeting on November 3, 2007, at Blue Ridge Community College in Weyers Cave, Virginia, near Staunton, VA. More information is available at: <http://www.virginiabeekeepers.org/>

Basics from TBA's Experts



Floyd Watkins was the first speaker at the September membership meeting and the topic he covered was *Preparing Your Hives for Winter*. Floyd spoke about how important it is to ensure adequate honey stores by feeding any light colonies. He discussed the different types of feeders, pointing out that external feeders induce robbing at this time of year so internal feeders function better. Only cane sugar was recommended for feeding in syrup since beet sugar particulates out of suspension and hardens in the bottom of feeders. Combining colonies, adequate ventilation, installing mouse guards and avoiding winter wrapping were all covered in Floyd's informative presentation.

Next up was Bob Schwartz with a talk on *Finding the Phantom Queen*. Bob demonstrated a foolproof set-up consisting of an empty super below a queen excluder upon which one may place a colony of bees with an elusive queen. By using a fume board to drive the bees into the empty super through the queen excluder, the queen is trapped above the excluder and easy to see. Another tip Bob shared is to reduce the number of bees through which one must look to find the queen: Bob suggested moving the entire colony at least 10 feet from its original location. Then place an empty box in the colony's original position for returning bees and look through only those bees that remain in the moved hive.

Thank you, Floyd & Bob, for sharing your knowledge with the rest of the club!



Holiday Social

Steve Black has arranged our annual Holiday Social, which will be held in lieu of

the December monthly meeting on Tuesday, December 11th. The location is the Greenbrier Old Country Buffet from 5:30 to 9:00pm. The restaurant is located at 1412 Greenbrier Parkway, Chesapeake, VA 23320. The buffet runs approximately \$11.00 per person, no alcohol available. Checks and tips will be handled individually. Please RSVP to Steve at 757-255-4176 or sblack@exis.net to ensure adequate space.

Bee-Wear



Carol Watkins announced that members may bring a shirt to the October TBA monthly meeting to be embroidered with the TBA logo and the member's first name. The only caveat is: **THE SHIRT MUST BE YELLOW!** Please safety pin your name to your shirt so that it can be returned to you. The cost for this service is \$5.00; payable at the time you drop off the shirt. Our regular shirts may also be ordered from Carol if you do not wish to supply your own.



ABJ Subscription Discounts

Subscriptions to *American Bee Journal* purchased through TBA are substantially discounted:

Term	Club Price	Regular Price	Savings
1 Year	\$19.64	\$24.95	\$5.31
2 Years	\$37.17	\$47.20	\$10.03
3 Years	\$52.29	\$66.40	\$14.11

The *American Bee Journal* magazine is the oldest English language publication on bees - helping beekeepers for more than 100 years. ABJ includes scores of interesting and informative articles to make beekeeping more fun and profitable. Monthly crop and market information, practical information, scientific and experimental reports, industry news, and display and classified ads are included in each issue. A staff with many years of experience is available to research and answer questions. To purchase or extend an existing subscription through the club, please contact club treasurer, Judy Ferguson, at 757-547-2338 or e-mail her at mulemad@earthlink.net. Judy will have subscription forms at the October monthly meeting.



Club Picnic

Our club president, Joe Taylor, intends to host a TBA picnic before his term of office ends in May. Joe and Steve

Black are working on the details and will keep the membership informed as plans develop. The proposed gathering is in response to member requests to bring back the annual picnic. In the past we had smoker contests, honey tasting and plenty of beekeeping tales to accompany the potluck delicacies. More information will be published in the *Forager* and on the club's website as it becomes available.



Harvest Fair Volunteers Needed

The Harvest Fair is sponsored every October by the Virginia Dare Soil and Water Conservation District and the Virginia Beach Department of Agriculture at the Farmer's Market on Dam Neck Road. This 3-day event features Farm Days on the first two days and the Harvest Fair on the third day. During Farm Days, hundreds of children from different school locations along with their parents tour various educational stations where they learn about the many facets of agriculture as well as the importance of the industry to the city and region. For many children, this may be their first opportunity to experience different aspects of agriculture.

For the Harvest Fair on Saturday, thousands of people attend the Farm Days exhibits, which open to the public. Families enjoy the agricultural tents and areas, play old-fashioned games, listen to entertainers in the center circle of the Farmers Market, and may even enjoy a horse-drawn hayride. It is a well-attended event and beekeepers have a chance to sell some of their honey, candles and soaps on Saturday.

Volunteers are needed for Farm Days to present beekeeping to the school children from 9:00 am to Noon on Thursday, October 18th and Friday, October 19th. Club members are also needed to staff the TBA booth on Saturday, October 20th from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Contact Carol Watkins at 757-563-2275 or beewaspflw@aol.com if you can help. Please let Carol know if you will be bringing any honey or hive products to sell so that she can secure adequate space.



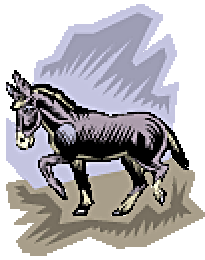
September Meeting Minutes

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

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



Heritage Arts Farm Days



A cooperative effort of the Virginia Dare Soil & Water Conservation District and the Chesapeake Agriculture Department, Heritage Arts is divided into two parts: Farm Days on Friday, November 2nd and the Heritage Arts Festival on November 3rd & 4th. During Farm Days, approximately 400 school children will visit agricultural exhibits with their teachers. The next day, the event opens to the public and the Heritage Arts Festival begins.

TBA club members are needed between 9:00 am and Noon on Friday, November 2nd to explain the agricultural significance of honeybees to visiting school children. If you can help with the exhibit, please contact Carol Watkins at 757-563-2275 or beewaspflw@aol.com.

CCD Update

A new virus, Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus (IAPV), has been identified in 83% of samples collected from honeybee colonies affected with Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) in a study by W. Ian Lipkin, director of the Center for Infection and Immunology at Columbia University. In non-CCD colonies, the virus occurred in only 5% of the samples. Several bacteria, parasites, fungi, spores and viruses were identified in the samples. Some of these microorganisms may be beneficial to the bees. However several pathogens know to be detrimental to honeybees, such as *Varroa* mites, *Nosema apis*, *Nosema ceranae*, Kashmir Bee Virus (KBV) and IAPV were also found. IAPV and *N. ceranae* were not known to previously exist in the United States. CCD may be the result of interaction among these pathogens. Researchers also found that all beekeeping operations infected with CCD in the study were also infected with KBV and *N. ceranae*.



Honey Samples Still Needed

For those of you planning on attending the VSBA meeting in Weyers Cave on November 3rd, Rick Fell of Virginia Tech will be there to collect honey samples for research. Dr. Fell still needs approximately 40 eight-ounce samples.

Rick Fell & Laura Link are 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.

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.

IAPV was first identified in Israel in 2004. While not certain, researchers suspect that IAPV was introduced to the U.S through imported Australian package bees and queens. Symptoms of the virus are shivering wings and paralysis followed by death. Dead bees are found outside the hive entrance. CCD symptoms do not include shivering wings and no bees have been found dead outside the affected hive in large numbers. Therefore, it is likely that other factors such as pesticides, nutritional deficiencies or parasites are stressing the bees in addition to IAPV. Researchers have found that while IAPV is highly predictive of CCD, the more additional pathogens found in a hive, the higher the likelihood that CCD will affect the colony.

“I hope no one goes away with the idea that we’ve actually solved the problem,” said Jeff Pettis of the United States Department of Agriculture. Pettis also stated “we’re unlikely to come up with a treatment of viruses in bees.” As in humans, there are no medications for viral infections in bees. The best defense against CCD is improved management for strong, healthy, well-fed colonies.



Thoughts From Virginia Tech: The Drought and Beekeeping

Rick Fell
Virginia Tech

In many areas of the state, this past summer has been hard on bees, primarily because of the drought conditions and a lack of forage. In the Blacksburg area we had no major spring nectar flows and very poor conditions for colony build-up. Nucs started the first part of May were still weak the middle of June, and strong colonies had stored no surplus honey. We were fortunate in late June and July in that we had nectar flows at a time when our bees normally have little forage. Good colonies produced several supers of honey.

Such surprises are always welcome and point to an important aspect of management – always keep some empty supers on strong colonies during the summer months. Extra supers with drawn comb can lead to problems with wax moths on weak hives, but strong colonies should be able to prevent wax moths from becoming a problem. One never knows when an unexpected flow may kick in and a lack of space means a loss in production.

The drought conditions have continued in many areas of the state and beekeepers need to be aware of the potential problems that may result from the lack of rain as we move toward the winter. The accompanying map shows the seriousness of the drought in different areas of the state.

Areas under severe drought may have little in the way of fall forage plants available for the bees. Nectar and pollen are needed for fall brood rearing and a lack of forage plants can limit brood production. The bees reared at this time of year play a key role in colony survival. They live an average of three to seven months, and form the basis of the population that carries the colony through the winter.

A reduction in fall brood rearing means fewer young bees going into the winter. Colonies that have higher populations of old bees suffer greater bee losses during the winter, lowering their chance of survival. As populations

decline, the winter cluster also becomes less effective at temperature regulation. Small clusters of bees utilize food less efficiently and have a more difficult time rearing brood for early spring build-up. The answer to these problems is to insure that colonies rear brood at this time of year.

If there is a lack of forage in your area, consider feeding to encourage brood rearing. Incoming nectar stimulates brood rearing, and feeding colonies with a 1:1 sugar syrup can have the same effect. It may also be beneficial to feed a pollen supplement. Winter bees need high protein reserves and the use of pollen supplements at this time of year can help with both brood rearing and the health of the adult workers.

Strong colonies with large populations of young bees are a prerequisite for winter survival. However, successful management also requires sufficient food reserves on each hive, a good wintering location, proper hive preparation, and the control of mite parasites.

U.S. Drought Monitor Virginia



Intensity:

D0 Abnormally Dry	D3 Drought - Extreme
D1 Drought - Moderate	D4 Drought - Exceptional
D2 Drought - Severe	

Released Thursday, September 13, 2007
Author: Rich Tinker, CPC/NOAA

<http://drought.unl.edu/dm>