

the Forager



November 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,

Can you believe that it is November already? Where has this year gone? I have noticed that my pecans are opening on the trees. I also noticed that I had a lot of scuppernong grapes that we didn't use. I thought "what a waste". Upon a closer observation, I saw that among the hornets, wasps and yellow jackets, my honeybees were gorging themselves on the sweet grapes. Will the grapes save me some sugar syrup?

I have been spending some time looking at beekeeping supply catalogues. It is the time of year to plan for what supplies that you will need to replace for next year.

At the last meeting there was a sign-up sheet going around for our Christmas dinner at Old Country Buffet Greenbrier the second Tuesday of December. If you didn't get your name on the list, make sure that you sign up this month.

See you at the November meeting.

Respectfully,



Joe Taylor

Next Meeting: Monday, November 12, 2007 at 7:00pm

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

Program: 'Silence of the Bees' a PBS Nature film

TIDEWATER BEEKEEPER "YARD NOTES"

For



November

Your hives should be heavy with stores, at least 40 to 60 lbs. If not, continue to feed any light hives with sugar syrup. For fall and winter feeding, an easy rule of thumb for small batches of syrup is 1 cup of water for 1 pound of sugar. Remember, if there's too much water, the bees will have to work hard to evaporate it to the proper consistency. That's why we make it thick at this time of the year.

Moisture, not cold, is the leading cause of problems in the winter hive. Do not allow moisture to condense on the hive top and drip onto the cluster of bees below. Be sure to leave the screened bottom board open to improve ventilation; a hive stand works nicely as a skirt to block winds from blowing into the hive bottom. Allow for moist air to escape at the top of the hive by propping up the telescoping top, but anchor the top with a brick or other heavy object to keep it in place during winter storms. A mouse guard or entrance reducer is also recommended. If you do not have a subscription to one of the bee magazines, consider subscribing. Use the winter off-season to read and be ready to implement your new knowledge in the spring.

Order, assemble and paint any woodenware you will require for the 2008 season. In just a few short months you will be busy with a new beekeeping year!



TBA Life Memberships

The subject of Honorary Life Memberships was introduced at the October TBA membership meeting. Life Membership would be a way of recognizing those individuals who have given of their time to the club over the years. A committee was formed to suggest criteria and a process for awarding the honor. Committee members are:

Judy Ferguson, mulemad@earthlink.net or 547-2338

Pam Fisher, bgrrl@cox.net or 620-0945

Sonny Tilley, 484-3010

The committee would appreciate any input from members on this subject. Suggestions will be compiled and reported back to the membership for discussion and a vote.



Holiday Social

Steve Black has arranged our annual Holiday Social, which will be in lieu of the December monthly meeting on Tuesday, December 11th. The Holiday Social is open to beekeepers, their families and guests. We will meet at the Greenbrier Old Country Buffet from 5:30 to 9:00pm in a separate banquet room. 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. The Holiday Social will include a gift exchange in lieu of the raffle. Those persons who bring a **wrapped** 'bee-themed' gift valued at under \$15 may participate in the exchange. We will begin by drawing a ticket and that person will have his choice of any of the wrapped gifts. The holder of the second ticket will also have his choice of any of the wrapped gifts or the opened gift that the first person chose. This continues until the last person chooses either the last wrapped gift or any one of the previous opened gifts. The exchange is always a lot of fun and it is the one time you do want to be last!



Beekeeping Greeting Cards

Beekeeping-themed greeting cards are now available from Art of the Bee, a small business created with the goal of providing beekeepers with something they have long gone without: products featuring artwork that embodies the spirit of beekeeping and the enthusiasm of those who practice it. In addition to holiday greeting cards, they also offer art prints of the designs in their online store, as well as the original paintings. Visit them at:

<http://www.mistique.com/artofthebee/index.html>



National Beekeeping Conference

All National Bee and Honey Groups Together

In the Same Place -- At the Same Time



The 2008 National Beekeeping Conference is set for Jan. 8-12 at the Doubletree Hotel in Sacramento, Calif. In addition to the joint conventions of American Beekeeping Federation and American Honey Producers Association, the Conference will host the meetings of American Bee Research Conference, American Association of Professional Apiculturists, Apiary Inspectors of America, and National Honey Packers and Dealers Association. More information is available at:

<http://www.americanhoneyproducers.org/08Conv.pdf>



October Meeting Minutes

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

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

Club Observation Hive

Many thanks go to Steve Black who has donated an observation hive to TBA. The observation hive holds one deep (9-1/8 inch) frame. It is in the process of being refurbished and will soon be available from the club property manager, Judy Ferguson, for those members who wish to check it out for a beekeeping exhibit.

Give the Gift of Bees



Trying to find the perfect gift for the person who has everything? Consider giving a gift of honeybees in their name to a needy family through Heifer International. From India to the Dominican Republic, bees from Heifer International help struggling families earn income through the sale of honey, beeswax and pollen.

Placed strategically, beehives can as much as double some fruit and vegetable yields. In this way, a beehive can be a boon to a whole village, not just the family receiving it. Your gift provides a family with a package of bees, the box and hive, and training in beekeeping for \$30. For more information, visit the Heifer International web site at:

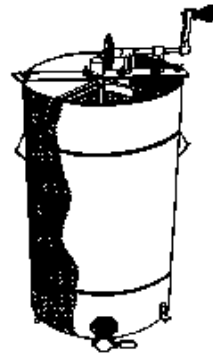
<http://www.heifer.org/>



TBA Hospitality Help Needed

Denise Bedford announced at the October monthly meeting that she must resign her Hospitality position due to other commitments. A heartfelt club THANK YOU goes out to Denise for the wonderful job she has done with refreshments; we have all enjoyed the delicious homemade treats she provided monthly.

TBA is looking for another cheerful smiling person to supply refreshments for monthly meetings. The time commitment is minimal - approximately 20 minutes of shopping prior to arriving 15 minutes early for the 7 p.m. meeting. No need to provide home baked goods; there are plenty of ready-made items at the store. Although if you choose to bake, the members will appreciate you for it! Simply purchase a variety of sodas, ice, coffee, cream, sugar, and occasionally paper products with club-provided finances. Denise stated, "This is a very rewarding position, a great way to serve the club, and the best way to meet the most experienced beekeepers in Tidewater". If you are interested in volunteering for this position, please contact TBA President, Joe Taylor, at 757-255-4097 or doodlebug2@juno.com.



Club Extractor

A proposal was made at the October TBA membership meeting to purchase a club honey extractor for use by members. While met with much enthusiasm by most members, a few concerns were voiced. A committee has been formed to look into the cost of

various extractors. They will address the logistics of storing and monitoring its use, as well as the maintenance and cleaning of the extractor and any possible repairs necessary. A suggestion to require a deposit prior to use was posed and will be considered by the committee. TBA members are encouraged to contact the following club members with comments:

Kerry Bass, kjbass@cox.net or 421-3269

Art Halstead, artthebeekpr@yahoo.com or 488-7617

Paul Kist, paulkist@juno.com or 672-8865

Joe Taylor, doodlebug2@juno.com or 255-4097

Nelson Woodhouse, nwoodhouse@cox.net or 512-6350

The committee will collect input and report back to the membership for discussion and a vote.

TBA Cookbook



Nina Calvano made a plea at the October membership meeting for TBA cookbook submissions. Please send Nina your favorite honey recipes, bee trivia and especially some original artwork (by adults & children). If you have items to submit, you can e-mail them to Nina at philandnina@verizon.net. If you wish to mail your entries, you may access her mailing address on the club roster at: <http://www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net/members/roster.html> or call her at 757-482-0851. Cookbook entries will also be collected at TBA meetings.



Hive Management Issues

TBA member, Ken Carmody, was our speaker for the October membership meeting. Ken shared with us the lessons he learned from keeping bees in 2007:

- Outyards are important as each one may have different forage capacity. If the forage isn't there, neither is the honey. All of your hives in one area is risky, you either make honey or you don't.
- Be prepared for more hives than you anticipate – have equipment on hand for swarms.
- Equalize your colonies for strength and get higher production while reducing swarms.
- Sometimes it is not the queens. You do everything right but still have a poor honey crop – it's the forage or the weather. Suburbs are rich in forage.
- Every action has a reaction:

- A. Get rid of old black comb; it harbors disease.
- B. Inspect-disrupt the hive less.
- C. Smoke as needed – varies according to time of year and inspections.
- D. Feed when needed.



- Keep all equipment clean from disease. Use caution with used equipment and burned diseased equipment. The cost of destroying infected equipment is not worth the risk to the entire beeyard.
- Spend some money, make more honey. Get good queens! The price of one queen is equal to proceeds from one quart of honey. Combine orders with other club members for best pricing and shipping terms.
- Bee a good neighbor. Place hives with care. Do not place hives in public view or where flight patterns impede public right-of ways. Give a gift of honey to sweeten public relations with neighbors.
- Fall is here, start thinking about spring needs.

Thanks, Ken, for explaining your beekeeping practices and their results with all of us.



Farm Days & Harvest Fair

October 18 – 20, 2007
Virginia Beach Farmers Market
By Carol Watkins

Floyd and I spent the first two days talking to about 800 children. Most of them were first graders. And with only 15 minutes of sharing time with each group, we could only hope they went home with at least one important fact about honeybees.

The children seemed to enjoy all the projects that were planned for them. Their day ended with a nice lunch, a bag full of goodies to take home with them, and hopefully an experience that many of them will never forget. Both Thursday and Friday, we were treated to a free lunch prepared at the Farmer's Market restaurant.

Saturday was a full day for Floyd, Lisa Wiggins and me. The three of us spent from 10-4 talking with many, many people. By 1:30 p.m., we were informed that there had been approximately 10,000 visitors just that day for the Harvest Fair. Lisa was able to sell some honey. I was "pushing" honey candy and honey sticks as well as "Bee Movie" fruit bites. Many thanks to Lisa for helping Floyd and me keep our sanity during the mad rushes throughout the day.

We would like to thank David Arris and Frank, Manager at Lynnhaven CiCis, for providing us pizza (all we could eat on Saturday) during the day. They even made a special delivery at our booth with extra pizza to take home.

We had a great time during the three days at the Farmer's Market but hope that we can see some new faces to help us out next year.

On behalf of the Harvest Fair Committee Volunteers, we would like to thank TBA member Earl Royer for running off the 1200 coloring books, cutting them in half and putting them together. Not only did he save the club quite a bit of money, but he also saved Floyd and me a lot of time by not having to put the coloring books together ourselves. Plus, Pam Fisher and I were able to come up with 1200 honey sticks left over from the past couple of years. Therefore, the club did not have to pay any out-of-pocket money for any of these items for the Farm Days or the Harvest Fair.