

the Forager



January 2008

Newsletter of the Tidewater Beekeepers Association
www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net

Vol.5 No.1

**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:

I'm sorry that I was unable to attend the Christmas Dinner meeting but the report I got said that everyone had a good time. The wife and I both were under the weather. So, for all of you that I did not get to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, let me do it now even though it is late. Please stay well and safe in 2008.

It is the time of year to make sure that your bees have ample food supply. With the cold temperatures, do not go into your hives to do any sightseeing. Work on your woodenware and have the honey supers ready for the spring.

It is time to plan for our Founder's day banquet in February. We had a great time last year and thanks to Bob and Judy Ferguson, we enjoyed the surprise visit of State Senator Blevins. So plan to prepare your favorite family dish and share it with your fellow beekeepers.

See you at the next club meeting on January 14, 2008.

Respectfully,

Joe Taylor



Next Meeting: Monday, January 14, 2008
at 7:00pm

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

Program: Making Beeswax Soap

Speaker: Rose Nichols

TIDEWATER BEEKEEPER "YARD NOTES"

For



January

Periods of mild weather have allowed the bees to make cleansing flights and collect pollen, but they are also consuming their winter stores at a faster rate than if they were in a normal winter cluster. Check your hives by lifting them; do not open them up in cold weather. A quick heft from the back is all that is needed to make sure that the hives are well stocked; it should feel as if they are full of lead. Supplement light hives with a 2:1 sugar syrup when the weather is mild (one cup of water to one pound of sugar).

Another side effect of the warm weather is earlier brood production. Purchase and assemble honey supers so that large populations in early spring can take advantage of the first nectar flow. Large populations also mean earlier swarming behavior, so research swarm management techniques such as making splits and setting out bait hives.





TBA Proposals

TBA is considering two proposals:

1. TBA Honorary Life Memberships, which would recognize those individuals who have given of their time to the club over the years.
2. The purchase of a club honey extractor for use by members.

Please contact any of the committee members with your suggestions or concerns. These proposals will be voted on and if you do not share your thoughts, they cannot be considered. Committee members are:

Honorary Life Membership:

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

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

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

Sonny Tilley, 484-3010

Club Extractor:

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

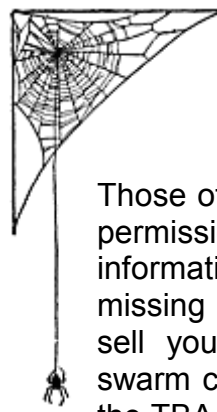
Nelson Woodhouse, nwoodhouse@cox.net or 512-6350

The committees will collect input and submit proposals to the membership for discussion and a vote.



Founders Day

Our annual Founder's Day dinner is coming up in February and no plans have been made to date. The Founder's Day dinner is a potluck meal in lieu of the monthly membership meeting. It is open to TBA members, their spouse or guest and family members. Last year's Founder's Day dinner was held on a Saturday at Towne Bank's Towne Hall in Great Bridge from 4:00 to 7:00pm. Please come to the January membership meeting prepared to discuss and vote on a location for the dinner. Volunteers are needed to coordinate the banquet and help with the cleanup afterwards



From the Webmaster

Those of you who have not given your permission to publish your contact information on the TBA website are missing out on a great opportunity to sell your hive products and receive swarm calls this spring. Please check the TBA website at:

www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net/local_beekeepers.html

If your contact information is not listed and you would like it to be, please contact the webmaster at:

webmaster@tidewaterbeekeepers.net and authorize which information you would like published such as phone, e-mail and website address as well as products and services offered. For those of you without Internet access who would like to be listed, please call Pam Fisher at 757-545-5076.

The Gift of Bees



Heifer International has acknowledged TBA's gift of two hives complete with bees and beekeeping classes as our holiday charitable donation. Honeybees from Heifer International help struggling families worldwide earn income through the sale of honey, beeswax and pollen.

For more information, visit the Heifer International web site at: <http://www.heifer.org/>

Hive for Sale

TBA member, Dr. Joel Faircloth, is relocating to Memphis, TN. He has one strong hive in excellent condition for sale that was requeened in August. The hive contains one medium and one deep super with all frames and healthy bees, inner cover, telescoping top, and IPM Bottom Board for \$160, or \$180 with 2 extra honey supers and frames. Call 757-653-7663 or email questions to:

christinefaircloth@yahoo.com. Be discrete in the email subject line so that your message does not get deleted. Make honey in the spring!!!

VSBA Spring Meeting

The Virginia State Beekeepers Association will hold their next meeting on April 11-12, 2008, in Loudoun, VA.



Honey & Coughs

A teaspoon of honey before bed seems to calm children's coughs and help them sleep better, according to a new study that relied on parents' reports of their children's symptoms. The study found that a small dose of buckwheat honey given before bedtime provided better relief of nighttime cough and sleep difficulty in children than no treatment or dextromethorphan (DM), a cough suppressant found in many over-the-counter cold medications. Honey may work by coating and soothing an irritated throat, the study authors said. "Many families are going to relate to these findings and say that grandma was right," said lead author Dr. Ian Paul of Pennsylvania State University's College of Medicine. The research appears in December's Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine. Federal health advisers have recently warned that over-the-counter cough and cold medicines shouldn't be used in children younger than six years old, and manufacturers are taking some products off the market. Three pediatricians who read the study said they would tell parents seeking alternative remedies to try honey for children over 12 months old. In the partially double-blinded study, the parents were asked about their children's sleep and cough symptoms, once before the bedtime treatment and once after. The parents rated honey as significantly better than DM or no treatment for symptomatic relief of their child's nighttime cough and sleep difficulty. All of the children got better, but honey consistently scored best in parents' rating of their children's cough symptoms.

Worldwide Honey Shortage



World honey crops have been seriously affected in 2007, resulting in a worldwide shortage that is driving up the price of raw honey. The honey shortage can be attributed to two primary factors: extremely poor crops across major producing regions including North and South America, Eastern Europe and Australia and a significant increase in consumer demand in developing economies including China and India. UK Honey Association Chairman Thomas Heck said "An unfortunate combination of a long, dry summer in Eastern Europe, prolonged drought in Australia, and the phenomenon of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) in the USA has resulted in an extremely difficult year for honey crops, some reduced by as much as 75 per cent.

This comes at a time when developing countries such as China and India are eating more honey than ever before, leaving less for export to cover the shortfalls from other regions."

Mexico's honey production began dropping after the introduction of the African bee, a species that is much more defensive than the European honeybee. A dry spell followed by a cold summer led to a 50 per cent fall in the amount of honey produced in Argentina, which is the biggest exporter of the product to the UK. Canadian beekeepers' 2007 honey crop is over 40 per cent smaller than the record production in 2006 and about 27 per cent below the five-year average, according to preliminary counts from Statistics Canada.



Bees Welcome



A bee-friendly farmer in the Windsor/Zuni area is looking for a beekeeper interested in putting beehives on several farm sites. Pollination services are not required; he just wants to help the bees with plenty of forage including cotton. Please contact Cecil Byrum at crbyrumfarms@hotmail.com for more information.

Beeswax for Oil Spills

From For All Humankind With NASA



How do you clean up an oil spill? With balls of beeswax, what else?! These aren't your usual balls of beeswax, however. These contain microorganisms (little critters that can only be seen under a microscope) that "eat" oil.

Petrol Rem, Inc. of Pittsburgh, Penn. invented the idea. NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Marshall Space Flight Center helped to design the tiny beeswax balls (microcapsules).

The beeswax microcapsules are designed so that water cannot get in, but oil can. When the oil seeps through the shell, the microorganisms inside release enzymes that digest the oil. When the balls get full of digested oil, they explode. They release enzymes, carbon dioxide and water, all environmentally safe. This mixture is even good fish food!

VSBA Fall Meeting Review

Resistance to Pests and Diseases in the Hive

By Paul Kist

On Nov. 3, 2007, 167 beekeepers gathered to hear eight experts give advice and the latest research information from five universities. This group set a new record for attendance at a state meeting. Each speaker gave 40 to 60 minutes of data the essence of which, if it were distilled down on a ratio like nectar to honey, could be stated in three sentences. One, a very healthy hive can fight off most problems while still producing a good honey surplus. Two, therefore, beekeepers need to keep their hives at tip top strength by using every proven strategy they can learn. Three, we must find the most effective ways to manage breeding, to control pests and diseases, and to fight our way through all the many variables that come along during every yearly cycle. No one said it was easy, though many said it was rewarding.

The first speaker, Maryann Frazier from Penn State, noted that, in general, all pollinators are in decline along with the wild plants that depend upon pollination by those pollinators. And specifically, registered honeybee hives in Pennsylvania fell 63% to under 30,000 in 2007 from over 80,000 in 1982. Additionally, most feral hives have nearly vanished. There have been at least four other times that severe hive deaths have occurred: 1857, 1896, 1915, and 1930. The current research undertaken by a task force on Colony Collapse Disorder from five universities (PA, FL, NC, DE, MT, and USDA) has eliminated tracheal mites, corn syrup, queen sources, cell phones and outer space aliens as causes of hive deaths. Still under study are poor nutrition, stress from moving, and chemical stressors which include herbicides, fungicides, and insecticides. All three of these were found in pollen samples being fed to larvae, this may be resulting in poor memory or inadequate brain functioning leading to bees not being able to find their way home. Over 100 hives from 10 states were tested for over 100 poisons. A HELPFUL suggestion given: pressure wash hives and plastic frames and get rid of old comb, which is a sponge for disease and chemicals.

The second speaker, Wyatt Mangum from the University of Mary Washington, presented more data on his top bar hives in North

Synthetic Brood Pheromone



Pherotech International, Inc. has developed SuperBoost, a synthetic brood pheromone, in collaboration with Dr. Tanya Pankiw of Texas A&M and funding from the Almond Board of California. SuperBoost mimics the pheromone given off by developing brood within the colony, which triggers foraging behavior in an attempt to feed the perceived increase in larvae. The entire hive, including bees normally too young to forage, begin collecting both nectar and pollen at intensified rates. According to the manufacturer, the number of nectar and pollen foragers increases by up to 150% with the use of SuperBoost, thereby boosting the pollination capacity of each hive. The incoming food is shared with the queen as well, which increases her rate of egg laying and stimulates a population build-up, yet the manufacturer claims that it also inhibits swarming. Field trials are underway now with the California almond crop and Mann Lake plans to offer SuperBoost for sale. More information is available at the Pherotech website:

<http://pherotech.xplorex.com/sites/pherotech/files/superboostgrowers.pdf>



Carolina, which he has let go untreated for over five years. He is now attempting to breed new bees from the few hives that have survived this total neglect. He also talked about beekeeping that he studied during his travels into remote areas of India.

The third speaker, Keith Tignor from VDACS, addressed the current state of Virginia beekeeping. Because Virginia has had four years of summer drought there may be a need to feed for winter survival. States farther south have had even dryer conditions, which may reduce the number of package bees available in spring 2008, place orders early. Whatever else you do, TREAT for pests. One Virginia beekeeper was paid \$150.00 per hive for pollinating pumpkins this year. There are a few Virginia beekeepers now selling queens and nucs.

The fourth speaker, Mike Embrey from Maryland University, spoke about *Nosema cerana*, which has been working its way around the world. It is established in the USA and only a DNA test can tell *Nosema apis* from *Nosema cerana*. It is suggested to raise the hive 14 to 18 inches off the ground and put it in full sun while feeding Fumagillin in syrup to suppress the nosema. Bees ingest the nosema spores from food and water and dysentery results. Embrey said to treat nosema in the fall and AFB in the spring with 30 days or more of plain syrup between treatments. The two medicines conflict with one another so don't treat for both at the same time. Also, Embrey showed slides about beekeeping in several countries where he acts as a consultant.

The fifth speaker, Richard Fell from Virginia Tech, spoke about the new Virginia Master Beekeeping Program, which is on track to start in January 2008. A master craftsman beekeeper from North Carolina has been hired to set the program up and get the information out to Virginia beekeepers. This program is geared toward having a strong public advocacy of bee pollination and honey production by the new Virginia master beekeepers. Therefore, documentation of being involved in public educational programs is part of moving through the various levels and gaining a master's certification. Of course, the beekeeper is also

expected to pass practical and written beekeeping tests as part of the program.

Fell said that hives of honeybees in Virginia declined 56% to 35,000 in 2007, from about 80,000 in 1985. And feral hives nearly disappeared. 31% of Virginia hives died last winter. KEY IDEA: Fall varroa mite control is only fully effective if started in mid August. This allows the brood for your winter bees to develop their full winter physiology, which includes fat deposits, so that they can survive the winter. In other research at Virginia Tech, Fell reported that varroa mites feeding on drones shorten their life by up to 60%; that a well mated queen may retain five million sperm; that about 10% of honey samples sent in to him contain spores of AFB, EFB, or clostridium (lockjaw); that the sperm of drones treated with Coumaphos (Check-Mite™) have up to 50% die off after five or six weeks. This was found to be true of sperm within mated queens as well, thus changing queens at shorter intervals has now become a necessity.

Miscellaneous information:

1. 98% of genes are shared by USA bees, which makes them susceptible to an epidemic type disease due to so much inbreeding.
2. A simple test for hygienic bees is to place a tissue over the frames and time its removal, whichever hive removes it the fastest is your most hygienic hive and so on.
3. Virginia has now joined the research group MAAREC, (Mid-Atlantic Apiculture Research and Extension Consortium <http://maarec.cas.psu.edu>) which was formed in 1998 and now includes DE, MD, NJ, PA, WVA, VA, and the USDA.
4. NASA has formed a climate change tracking method using nectar flow as a basis. They want beekeepers to report peak honey flows which are plotted and can be studied for climate change at <http://honeybeenet.gsfc.nasa.gov/>
5. If you got this far contact Paul Kist with questions or complaints on this report.

