

the Forager



May 2008

Newsletter of the Tidewater Beekeepers Association
www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net

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**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 morning fellow beekeepers,

I say good morning because it is a beautiful day in Suffolk for a change. It's a good day for swarms. I'll have to check my hives in a little while. So far this year, I have not had a swarm. Maybe I'm getting better at hive management.

I have noticed that the tulip popular are in bloom and my clover plot is in full bloom. I hope to plant some buckwheat this weekend if the soil will dry out enough. I'll be adding additional honey supers on my hives today. What are you doing for your bees today?

There has been a change in my plans for surgery. It has been postponed and I should be able to attend the next club meeting.

Respectfully,

Joe Taylor



Next Meeting: Monday, May 12, 2008 at 7:00pm

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

Program: DVD & discussion of Requeening & Colony Division

TIDEWATER BEEKEEPER "YARD NOTES"

For



May

THE HONEY FLOW IS ON!!!

- Do NOT use medications in a colony with honey supers for human consumption in place. NO EXCEPTIONS!
- Comb honey supers should be added on top of another honey super, not over the brood chamber, to reduce the amount of pollen in the comb honey.
- It is time to add another super when the super on a colony is one-half to two-thirds filled (six to seven frames). Raise the partially filled super and place the empty super under it.
- Keep empty storage space in the supers on all colonies until the honey flow has ended.
- Remove and extract capped supers from your colonies if you need additional supers.
- Continue to check for queen cells every seven days. Remove all queen cells from the colony to reduce swarming.
- Place bait hives with at least one frame of drawn comb (no honey) in each of your beeyards to catch swarms.
- Order queens if you plan to requeen in the fall.





Master Gardener Plant Sales

Nectar & pollen plants will be available at discount prices from local Master Gardener groups at their plant sales this month. Help these volunteer organizations fund their horticultural outreach programs while saving money on locally grown trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals.

Virginia Beach Master Gardeners are having their annual *Plant Sale & Garden Day at the Market* on May 10th from 9:00am to 3:00pm at the Virginia Beach Farmers Market located at the intersection of Dam Neck & Princess Anne Roads.

Norfolk Master Gardeners will host their *Spring Plant Sale* in conjunction with the Stockley Gardens Art Festival held at Stockley Gardens Park in the Ghent section of Norfolk. Sale days are May 17th from 10:00am to 6:00pm and May 18th from Noon to 6:00pm.

Portsmouth Master Gardeners *Open House & Plant Sale* will take place May 17th from 9:00am to 2:00pm at 105 Utah Street, Portsmouth, VA 23701.



Package Bee Field Day

By Judy Ferguson

On April 6, 2008, Bob and I hosted a hiving demonstration at our house in Chesapeake. Although the weather was cool with some rain, about 10 brave people, mostly new beekeepers, attended.

Bob showed the beekeepers how to install three packages of bees into nucs and the participants had an opportunity to get involved with the installation. The DVDs on hive installation (Thanks Rick Fisher) were checked out by three participants to further reinforce what they had observed.

Bob was pleased with the turnout and participation on a day when the weather really was not cooperating. Thanks to all who braved the conditions to further their knowledge of hiving a package of bees.



Winter Losses of Honeybee Colonies



Prepared by: Dennis vanEngelsdorp, Jerry Hayes, and Jeff Pettis.

Note: This preliminary report was prepared for those stakeholders participating in the "Pollinators and Agricultural Security: An Update on Research, Conservation and Legislative Opportunities" round table called by members of the US Senate. A more detailed final report is being prepared for publication at a later date.

The Apiary Inspectors of America (AIA) commissioned a survey to estimate colony losses across the country between September 2007 and 2008. The USDA-ARS Beltsville Honey Bee Lab conducted a similar survey of beekeepers pollinating almonds in California in February 2008. In total nearly 18% of the country's estimated 2.44 million colonies were surveyed. A total loss of 35.2% of managed honeybee colonies was recorded. This represents a 3.2 point or 10% increase in total losses as compared to last year. The 327 operators surveyed in 2007-2008 lost on average 31.4% of their colonies.

Forty two percent of surveyed beekeepers reported having higher than normal losses. Those reporting abnormally high losses reported having a total loss of 43.7%, while those reporting normal losses reported a 22.9% loss. In other words, beekeepers believed that losing close to one quarter of their operation over the winter was "normal."

One of the symptoms of Colony Collapse Disorder is the complete absence of bees in dead colonies or in apiaries. The AIA survey was not able to differentiate between true cases of CCD and colonies lost due to causes that share the "absence of dead bees" symptom. However, the 36% of operations that reported having at least some of their colonies die with this symptom had a total loss of 41.3% of their colonies. This compares to the 17.5% colony loss reported by beekeepers not reporting losses with this symptomology. At least 71% of all colony deaths can be attributed non-CCD causes, underlying the need for research, not only into CCD, but into pollinator health in general.



Chesapeake Jubilee

The 2008 Chesapeake Jubilee will take place May 15th through the 18th at Chesapeake City Park in Greenbrier. The festival features live entertainment, carnival rides, fireworks and crafts. TBA will host a booth under the 4-H tent where members may sell hive products while educating the public about the importance of the honeybee. School groups will tour the exhibits on Friday morning. A sign-up sheet will be circulated at the next TBA membership meeting or you may call Pam Fisher at 757-545-5076 or e-mail her at bgrrl@cox.net if you would like to volunteer. Volunteers receive complementary parking and admission to the Jubilee.

Pollinator Week 2008

Last year, 19 states officially declared Pollinator Week June 24-30, 2007. This year, the Pollinator Partnership is asking for YOUR HELP to get 100% state participation in declaring Pollinator Week June 22-28, 2008.

Most states require that one of their citizens make the request for an official declaration of a statewide event. Please take a moment to sign and mail a letter to your governor. They've included the address for each state's Governor at <http://www.pollinator.org/Governors.htm> as well as a link to a sample letter.

Beekeepers, this is your call to action. Please let Governor Kaine hear from you regarding the importance of pollinators, including the honeybee.

Your effort will continue to make the momentum of Pollinator Week 2008 a great success!



April Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the April membership meeting will be available to TBA members on our website at:

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

2008 Spring Craft Market Review

April 18th, 19th & 20th

By Carol Watkins



The following people made the 2008 Spring Craft Market at the Virginia Beach Convention Center a huge success:

Barbara & Ryan Hickey, Rick & Pam Fisher, Richie & Kellie Smith, Bob Montcalm, Chris Harker, Hugh & Ginny Taylor, Jim Doubler, Kerry Bass and C.E. Harris.

Floyd & I and Hugh & Ginny were the only ones who had honey. Hugh had some wonderful peanut butter creamed honey. Pam, Hugh & Ginny and I had wonderful pure beeswax candles, and Pam & I brought some great smelling hand-made soaps.

We talked with so many people who were interested in beekeeping, and several that definitely wanted to come to the next club meeting. Everyone seemed to be so concerned about the plight of the honeybee.

We had many of our volunteers who overstayed their sign-up time. Floyd & I really appreciated the support. Barbara & Ryan came every day and stayed all day. Barbara stated she not only had a good time but also learned a lot in the process. Ryan enjoyed being cashier for Floyd & me for a while so he received some reinforcement in math while also learning about honeybees.

We thank each and every one of you for all your help and support not only for us but also for your support of the club. Getting the word out about not killing the honeybees and the importance of their existence is one of our main objectives but also recruiting new members to keep this wonderful club going for years and years. I feel that we obtained some of those objectives during the three days of the **2008 Craft Show**. THANKS TO ALL OF YOU WHO PARTICIPATED!

Heating Kills Honeybee Pathogen

Researchers at Montana State University have discovered a possible treatment to sterilize beekeeping equipment exposed to *Nosema ceranae*, according to Dr. Robert Cramer, an expert in fungal pathogenesis.

Julie Elser in the Cramer Lab discovered that treatment of the spores with heat at 50°C (122°F) for 90 minutes led to 96% mortality of the spores. Similar treatment of the spores with extreme cold did not significantly affect viability.

While these results are preliminary, the ease, cost, and safety of heat treatment suggests that beekeeping equipment could be disinfected at temperatures that will not melt the wax in the combs.

Many beekeepers have hot rooms that could be used to clean up comb, says Dr. Jerry Bromenshenk, CEO of Bee Alert Technology, Inc. in Missoula, MT. At this time of the year, beekeepers who have lost bee colonies to *Nosema* disease may be reluctant to put new bees on to old combs, fearing re-infection. A 2-3 hour exposure of bee equipment to temperatures around 120°F may be warranted.

Bee Alert is working with the Cramer lab, Randy Oliver, and other beekeepers to set up field trials of the effectiveness of heat treatment. Funding for the *Nosema* research was provided by the California State Beekeepers Association and the Montana Agricultural Research Experiment Station.

The Great Honey Hunt Begins!

The Hoople Group, Zuula Consulting and The American Honey Producers present the rules for the biggest gathering of honey varietals in U.S. History

The Great American Honey Hunt will award prizes for small, medium and large producers and everyone making delicious, American-made honey is encouraged to enter.

Send us a 1lb. sample of your best honey and include the following details:

1. Your name and contact information.
2. The honey's floral source and varietal.
3. The number of hives you maintain.
4. Your annual honey production.

Also, we'd love to get to know you and your honey better, so please share a little about who you are. Sample questions to answer:

1. How did you become interested in honey?
2. How long have you been producing honey?
3. What's the funniest/scariest/most unbelievable experience you've had while making honey?
4. How do you feel about your bees?
5. Do you have any special or surprising honey recipes to share?

Please pack your honey carefully. We don't want to lose a drop!

Send it all to:

The Great American Honey Hunt
c/o The Hoople Group
12105 Browning Court
Richmond, VA 23233



All entries must be received before Memorial Day, Monday, May 26. Questions? Please email Peter at the World Honey Hunt Headquarters - peter@hooplegroup.com

Urgent TBA Cookbook Message

Nina Calvano is ready to send the cookbook off to the publisher. Unfortunately, Nina has misplaced the list of TBA members who have contributed recipes. The publisher will not accept the package without a list of contributors. If you gave recipes to Nina for the cookbook, please let her know by calling her at 482-0851 as soon as possible. Thank you for your attention to this matter.



Pungo Strawberry Festival

The 25th annual Pungo Strawberry Festival will be held May 24th and 25th. TBA members have been asked

to man a booth selling hive products and educating the public about honeybees. This is a great opportunity to implement our mission statement to 'preserve, protect and educate'. Carol & Floyd Watkins will be coordinating volunteers. Please let the Watkins know if you can help with the display or if you have honey or hive products to sell. Their phone number is 757-563-2275 or you can e-mail them at beewaspflw@aol.com





Honeybee Repellent



Inscent, Inc. has received a Small Business Innovative Research grant from the US National Science Foundation (NSF) to continue the testing and development of novel honeybee repellents. Inscent, Inc. is designing environmentally responsible insect control products that will eclipse the current generation of insecticides. Inscent's research, which is geared toward products based on behavior alteration of targeted species rather than insecticides, has been supported extensively by federal research grants and private industry funds. NSF reviewers described the honeybee repellent project as "fascinating" and "highly desirable," and new federal funding commences in July 2008.

The honeybee is critical to US agriculture, and a Cornell University study estimated the direct value of honeybee pollination in this country exceeds \$14 billion annually. Although the initial use of the repellent will be to prevent seeds in mandarin oranges, it will also provide a solution for keeping bees out of fields that have been treated with insecticides. Honeybees are threatened by insecticide use and recent incidents of colony collapse have caused great concern among the farming and apiculture industries. These factors have combined to generate an urgent need for effective products that are safe to humans and insects alike.



Suffolk Beekeepers Seminars

The Beekeepers Seminars held on April 8th and 10th by the Virginia Cooperative Extension were incredibly successful. So much so that the original number of 75 participants increased to over 300! The location of the seminars was moved from Bunny's Restaurant to the National Guard Armory in Suffolk to accommodate the crowd. The speakers were state apiarists and apiary inspectors from both Virginia and North Carolina. The purpose of the seminars was to attract more citizens to beekeeping and thereby increase the number of managed honeybee colonies in order to safeguard food production in the southeastern United States.

The 1st seminar covered the basics of beekeeping such as apiary location, installing package bees and the honeybee biology. The 2nd seminar was more advanced with programs on honeybee pests, queen evaluation and colony management for a honey harvest.

The highlight of the seminars was the awarding of over two-dozen unassembled hives to new beekeepers who had no hives of their own. Each recipient of a hive was asked to sign a contract promising to have honeybees in the hive by June. It was exciting to see several new Tidewater Beekeepers Association members receive hives from the drawing. Even more exciting was seeing recipients that were not previously TBA members attend our April membership meeting. Suffolk extension agent, Rex Cotten, approached TBA officers about the possibility of hosting a beekeeping short course every year for the next four years. Mr. Cotten offered the support of his office staff, his advertising prowess and the Suffolk Armory as a location. Keith Tignor talked about the possibility of hosting a queen rearing class in Tidewater during June or July of this year.

Many of the novice beekeepers from the seminars have come to our club for guidance and we need to ensure that they are paired with mentors who will offer assistance as they begin their beekeeping endeavor. If you know of a new beekeeper in your area, please offer your support if at all possible. It is the mission of TBA to foster cooperation among members and helping out a new beekeeper is one of the most rewarding activities a seasoned beekeeper can experience.

