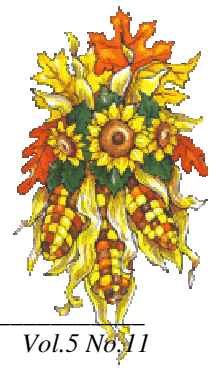


the Forager



November 2008

Newsletter of the Tidewater Beekeepers Association
www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net

Vol.5 No.11

**President: Joe Taylor, Vice President: Bob Montcalm, Treasurer: Rick Fisher, Recording Secretary: Ed Cart
Webmaster & 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 the year is almost over? When we get together again, it will be November. It is the time of year when we should have done our mite control and by all means, please make sure that there is ample food supplies in all your hives. If you got a late season swarm, I'm sure that they will need feeding all winter.

I would strongly suggest that we all take stock of our hives and use our past history of wintertime losses. If you think that you might need to replace some bees, it would be smart to start planning and order as soon as you can.

All who plan to attend the Christmas dinner at Old Country Buffet in December, please contact Steve Black and put your name on the list of attendees, if you have not done so already. We always have a good time at this get together.

See everyone at the November meeting at Towne Bank Towne Hall Room. Let's try to fill the room. Bring a friend or a new beekeeper.

Respectfully,

Joe Taylor



Next Meeting: Monday, November 10, 2008 at 7:00 PM

Location: Towne Bank Hall, 137 Mt. Pleasant Rd., Chesapeake, VA 23322

Program: Beekeeping Equipment Discussion - bring any unusual or antique equipment for ID, original creations you would like to share with the group or new equipment you tried and found helpful.



New TBA Meeting Time & Location

The agricultural trailer, where we have held our monthly meetings for years, now has a maximum occupancy of 50. In order to accommodate our growing membership, TBA has moved the meeting location to Towne Hall, a wing of Towne Bank. Towne Hall is located near the intersection of Mt. Pleasant Rd. and Battlefield Blvd. in Chesapeake at 137 Mt. Pleasant Road.

The November meeting will be on the 2nd Monday of the month, November 10th at 7:00 PM in Towne Hall.

In lieu of our December meeting we will meet for the Christmas Party at Greenbrier Old Country Buffet from 5:30 to 9:00pm

Starting with January 13, 2009, our meeting date will be moved to the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM in Towne Hall.

TIDEWATER BEEKEEPER "YARD NOTES"

For



November

Your hives should be heavy with stores, at least 50 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. As a TBA member, you are entitled to an Association Discount. 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 2009 season. In just a few short months you will be busy with a new beekeeping year!

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

Christmas Party

Steve Black has arranged our annual Christmas Dinner, which will be in lieu of the December monthly meeting, for Tuesday, December 9th. 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 \$12.00 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 a choice of any of the wrapped gifts. The holder of the second ticket will also have a 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!



Package Bee Orders

In anticipation of the demand for 2009 spring bee packages, TBA decided to place an order as early as possible. Floyd Watkins volunteered to chair this project and he has been able to secure a reservation for 50 packages from Brushy Mountain. The supplier is the same one Brushy Mountain used last year, Gardner's Apiaries/ Spell Bee LLC of Baxley, GA. The cost of the 3-lb. packages has not yet been determined. If you would like to reserve a package, please contact Carol Watkins at 563-2275 or Beelady1952@aol.com.



Equipment Workshop

Several new beekeepers attended the Equipment Workshop for Beekeepers on Saturday, October 11, 2008 from 9:00 AM to noon at the Extension Trailer in Chesapeake. They were provided with an equipment list as well as catalogs from various beekeeping suppliers.

Harold & Nick Delphia, Pam & Rick Fisher and Floyd Watkins provided beekeeping equipment for the hands-on display. Pam and Floyd took turns discussing the various pieces of equipment while Joe Taylor shared his experience utilizing different products. Carol Watkins took orders for the club's woodenware order from Beeline Apiaries as well as reservations for spring 2009 bee packages from Brushy Mountain.

It was an informal setting where the new beekeepers were encouraged to ask questions, handle the equipment and learn from the experiences of other beekeepers.



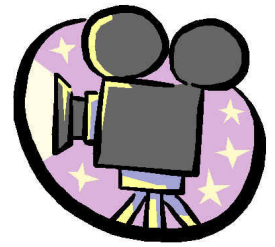
The Gift of Bees

A \$60 gift of two hives complete with bees and beekeeping classes was approved as a TBA holiday charitable contribution in 2007. The colonies were donated through Heifer International. Honeybees from Heifer International help struggling families worldwide earn income through the sale of honey, beeswax and pollen. By increasing pollination, beehives can as much as double some fruit and vegetable yields. In this way, a beehive can be a boon to a whole village. Although most Heifer partners keep bees as a supplement to family income, beekeeping can be a family's livelihood. The gift of bees is available at the same price this year and TBA members may want to consider making a donation of bees again this holiday season.

For more information, visit the Heifer International web site at:

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

The Secret Life of Bees



The Secret Life of Bees, the 2002 best-selling novel by Sue Monk Kidd, has been made into a movie that was released on October 17, 2008. Starring Queen Latifah, Dakota Fanning, Jennifer Hudson, Alicia Keys and Sophie Okonedo, the movie is set in 1964 South Carolina against the backdrop of the civil rights movement. The film tells the story of Lily Owens, a white 14-year old girl who flees her home and is taken in by a family of black female beekeepers.

The Secret Life of Bees was shot on location during the months of January and February 2008, primarily in Burgaw, a small North Carolina town outside Wilmington. Since bees are normally worked during warm weather, 12 beehives were imported from Florida and kept in a warm greenhouse. Julian Wooten, a North Carolina beekeeper with 50 years' experience, instructed the actors on bee biology, extracting honey, and general beekeeping procedures.

The film crew met many challenges in reproducing the setting of the novel. In order to transform the winter woods into the verdant landscape depicted in the novel, a massive amount of artificial leaves and flowers were installed on location. The ancient honey house was actually newly built and then antiqued for realism.

In conjunction with the film's release, Sue Bee Honey has produced a Special Edition cookbook and Black Madonna Honey, the brand of honey bottled by the beekeepers in the film. All net proceeds from the sales of the cookbook and Black Madonna Honey will go to benefit First Book, a nonprofit organization that gives new books to children from low-income families. The cookbook features recipes from the main cast members and the Black Madonna Honey features artwork from renowned artist and philanthropist Charles Bibbs.





Bee Emergency Responders

Bob Schwartz reported at the October TBA meeting that Keith Tignor, Virginia State Apiarist, was willing to provide training to TBA beekeepers interested in volunteering as 'First Responders' to bee spills, Africanized bee reports or other bee emergencies. A sign-up sheet was circulated for members wishing to participate. Floyd Watkins volunteered to maintain the list. If you would like to receive training on bee spill response procedures as well as volunteer to assist the Commonwealth with bee emergencies, please contact Carol Watkins at 563-2275 or Beelady1952@aol.com to be added to the list of interested beekeepers.



TBA has purchased two spaces on the main floor for the upcoming Mid-Atlantic Home & Flower Show at the Virginia Beach Convention Center on February 13 - 15, 2009. Carol Watkins will be coordinating volunteers. Please contact Carol at 563-2275 or beelady1953@aol.com if you would like to assist with the display. Please let Carol know if you have honey or hive products to sell so that she can ensure adequate space for your display. More information will be available on the TBA website and published in *The Forager* as it becomes available.

2009 TBA Short Course

Virginia State Apiarist Keith Tignor and Suffolk Extension Agent Rex Cotton have tentative plans to conduct another Beekeeping Educational Seminar at the Suffolk National Guard Amory during the week of February 18, 2009. TBA has been asked to actively participate during the program with exhibits as well as a membership drive. TBA was also asked to plan our biennial Beekeeping Short Course for the Saturday following the program in order to further facilitate the training of new beekeepers.



State Apiarist Report

Keith Tignor, Virginia's State Apiarist, gave the following report at the VSBA meeting in Weyers Cave on November 1, 2008:

- We had swarms earlier than normal and lots of them.
- Honey production was average to low across the state.
- VDACS received more calls for defensive bees, but FABIS tests confirmed NO Africanized bees.
- Colonies currently have very low food stores and beekeepers should be feeding to ensure 50 to 60 lbs. of honey on each hive for winter.
- More beekeeping classes were held across the state resulting in more beekeepers getting started this year.
- More beekeeping clubs and groups were formed (Keith recognized TBA member, Bob Schwartz, for his role in starting the new Emporia beekeeping group.)
- More queen and nuc producers were established in the Commonwealth.
- If you rent bees for pollination, please complete the *Pollination Survey* (attached) to allow VDACS to determine the average fee for colony rental. All responses are confidential.
- An Advanced Beekeeper Workshop will be held at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond on November 14 & 15, 2008 for those beekeepers who would like to fulfill the classroom requirements to move from the Qualified to the Certified level of the Virginia Master Beekeeper program. More information is available at: http://www.lewisginter.org/events/event_detail.php?event_id=59
- Letters of recognition from various state legislators were read on the occasion of VSBA's 90th anniversary.
- Governor Tim Kaine designated November 1 - 8, 2008 as 'Virginia Beekeepers' Week in the Commonwealth of Virginia'.



TBA Contribution

TBA Member, Carol Watkins, offered her handcrafted beeswax candles for sale during the October membership meeting with the proceeds going to the TBA. Her efforts brought the club \$40. Thanks Carol - your generosity and support is greatly appreciated!

Bees Detect Disease and Fertility

From The Irish Times

Blowing into a glass bubble that holds buzzing bees sounds a little weird. But, according to Portuguese artist Susana Soares, doing so could help detect disease and monitor fertility cycles.

Ms Soares has some scientific backing for her claims: certain illnesses or, more accurately, the chemicals they release have distinctive odors; and with 170 smell receptors and a 99 percent accuracy rate, Ms Soares believes honey bees could become a promising diagnostic tool. Researchers are already working with cancer-sniffing dogs, and scientists are developing electronic noses to detect viruses.

Last year, Ms Soares began working with bees trained to detect pheromones and toxins specific to skin and lung cancer, diabetes and tuberculosis. To get the bees to act as a diagnostic tool, she designed glass instruments with two chambers - a large one to house the bees and a smaller chamber into which the patient breathes. The bees smell the patient's breath and fly toward the smaller chamber if they detect a specific pheromone or toxin.

With this device, Ms Soares said, diseases could be diagnosed earlier and ovulation cycles could be more sophisticatedly pinpointed.

There's no harm to the bees, which can be released after the test.



Honeybee Gene Research

A new Genome British Columbia research project will soon put advanced genomics tools into the hands of bee breeders, enabling them select only the strongest, most resistant bees for breeding programs.

Dr. Leonard Foster is leading a one-of-a-kind research project entitled *Apis mellifera* Proteomics of Innate reSistance, that was announced at the British Columbia Bee Breeders Association annual conference on October 24.

Dr. Foster (UBC) and his fellow investigators Dr. Stephen Pernal (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada) and Dr. Katherine Baylis (UBC) will develop a set of tools to identify disease resistance in natural bee populations.

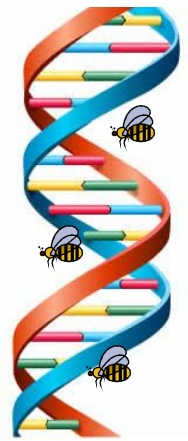
The researchers will use the bee genome to identify molecular markers of resistance to both mite and bacterial infections by doing proteomic analysis of different bee populations.

"By understanding the traits that make bees naturally resistant to pathogens the long-term hope is that beekeepers will no longer need to use miticides, fungicides, and antibiotics to control them," says Foster. "We will be able to improve the efficiency of bee breeding by using protein markers to map desirable traits in bee families through generations."

Michael Campbell, general manager of Campbell's Gold Honey Farm and Meadery, is optimistic about what Foster's new research will allow them to accomplish. "What everyone is hoping for with this proteomic approach is that we will know what to look for in a disease-resistant bee, instead of guessing. Essentially, it will reduce our dependence on chemicals - something most bee keepers disdain, but are obliged to employ in order to save their hives."

"Genome BC is very pleased to support such a critical and unique project," says Dr. Alan Winter, President and CEO of Genome BC. "Honey bees provide immeasurable value both economically and in terms of our food supply.

We look forward to the results that this project will yield, within the next two years."



HONEY BEE POLLINATION SURVEY – 2008

Please enter the crop name for each pollination contract. Also indicate the county, approximate number of acres pollinated, number of colonies and the price charged per colony for each contract.

| | CROP | COUNTY | ACRES POLLINATED | NUMBER OF COLONIES | PRICE PER COLONY |
|----|------|--------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | |
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| 19 | | | | | |
| 20 | | | | | |

Estimated number of colonies you owned **at the end of 2007**: _____
 Estimated number of colonies you owned **at the beginning of 2008**: _____
 (*these numbers will be used to calculate % winter mortality*)

Estimated percent split of your annual gross beekeeping income between:

honey sales _____ %
pollination rentals _____ %
other _____ %

Commercial beekeepers only: How many full time employees did you have in 2008?

What is your estimated **TOTAL** cost (in dollars) to maintain one colony for one year? \$_____

Send responses to: Keith Tignor
 VA Dept. of Ag. & Consumer Service
 P.O. Box 1163
 Richmond, VA 23219
 Email: keith.tignor@vdacs.virginia.gov