

the Forager



April 2009

Newsletter of the Tidewater Beekeepers Association
www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net

Vol.6 No.4

**President: Joe Taylor, Vice President: Bob Montcalm, Treasurer: Rick Fisher, Recording Secretary: Paul Kist
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,

I was pleased that approximately 30 people attended the package bee demonstration at my home. Thank you Steve Black, Frank Walker, Ron & Shirley Nelson, Rose & Curtis Nichols and Chuck Spann for your help.

Our bees here in Suffolk can't get enough warm days to fly; I have maple, apple, peach, and pear trees in bloom and the bees can't get to them. I have honey supers on all my hives so that if and when we get warmer weather, my bees can go to work. I lost a few hives over the winter. Four of them still had honey in them and the dead cluster was two frames away. I'm guessing that they got too cold. I hope to do better next winter. I haven't figured out how I'm going to put heat in the hives.

In closing, I want all of us more experienced beekeepers to volunteer to assist a new beekeeper in any way that we can. We need to get more honeybees working our food crops and flowers. I don't think that we will ever have too many honeybees. I hope to see a large group at our April club meeting and if I can assist anyone before the meeting, please give me a call.

Joe Taylor



Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 14, 2009 at 7:00 PM

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

Program: Making Splits for Swarm Control

Speakers: Rick & Pam Fisher

Special Workshop: Q & A at 6:00 PM

Have your beekeeping questions answered!

TIDEWATER BEEKEEPER "YARD NOTES"

For



April

- Remove entrance reducers and mouse guards.
- Feed any light hives until the nectar flow begins, especially if weather inhibits foraging. Make sugar syrup in a 1:1 ratio (5 lbs. sugar to 10 cups water) at this time of year.
- Replace 2 of 10 frames of old dark comb each year to reduce disease and pesticide loads in the hive.
- You should have your honey supers on already! A queen excluder may be placed under the first honey super.
- Do NOT use medications in a colony with honey supers for human consumption in place. NO EXCEPTIONS!
- If installing package bees in a hive, DO NOT open the hive for at least five days. After one week, check queen cage & release the queen if the bees have not done so already. Disturb the hive as little as possible during the first two weeks while they settle into their new home with the queen.
- Install a bait hive with one frame of drawn comb in a nearby tree to catch swarms.
- Make splits with queen cells to start new hives and prevent swarming.

Nominating Committee

Nominations are being taken for all positions on the TBA Board. If you would like to nominate someone, or you would like to volunteer for a position, please contact one of the members on the nominating committee:

Steve Black at (757) 255-4176 or

sblack@exis.net

Paul Kist at (757) 672-8865 or

paulkist@juno.com

Floyd Watkins at (757) 563-2275 or

beewaspflw@aol.com

Nominations are not closed or announced until the April meeting where nominations are also accepted from the floor. Elections will be held at the May meeting. The newly elected officers will assume their positions beginning with the June meeting.



Beekeeping Events

Virginia State Beekeepers Association

April 17 & 18, 2009

VSBA Spring Meeting

Northampton Community Center in
Hampton, VA

<http://www.virginiabeekeepers.org/meetings/meetings.htm>

Heartland Apicultural Society

HAS 2009

July 9 - 11, 2009

Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio

<http://www.heartlandbees.com/index.htm>



Eastern Apicultural Society

August 3-7, 2009

EAS 2009

Holiday Valley Resort in Ellicottville, NY

<http://www.easternapiculture.org/programs/>

March Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the March membership meeting are available to TBA members for viewing at:

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

Beekeeping Short Course



The TBA Beekeeping Short Course for Beginners was held March 6 & 7, 2009 at Virginia Wesleyan College in Norfolk. The course was a fabulous success with 70 students in attendance, 15 of whom joined our club.

Club Treasurer, Rick Fisher was kept busy registering people and working out A/V issues. Katlyn Wiggins made sure that all students who wanted to be included in the lottery for package bees received a ticket while Pam Fisher handed out class literature. Thanks go to Jennifer Meadows who ordered the books and Frank Walker who assembled the folders for the registration packages.

TBA Vice President, Bob Montcalm moderated the classroom portion of the event. Club members taught most of the classes: Andy Westrich spoke about *Bee Biology & Getting Started*; Dan Margolies presented *History of Beekeeping*; Kerry Bass & Paul Kist talked about *Beekeeping Equipment*; C.E. Harris taught *Seasonal Hive Management* and Steve Black discussed *Honey Production and Extraction* after showing Art Halstead's video production *From Bee to Bottle*. State Apiarist, Keith Tignor joined us to present *Diseases, Pests & Treatment*.

C.E. Harris, Dan Margolies and Bob Schwartz opened hives in the Wesleyan beeyard for some hands-on demonstrations with the students. The weather was a balmy 70+ degrees, perfect for working the bees!

Even though it was beautiful outside, students were happy to get inside to Rose Nichol's incredible boxed lunches. Her catering experience was obvious as she provided snacks and lunch for over 70 people. Jim Doubler, Pam Fisher, Jennifer Meadows, Shirley Nelson and Lisa Wiggins helped Rose assemble the lunches from the many donated food items that club members provided.

The Short Course for Beginners is the largest outreach project TBA undertakes. Its success was due to the incredible dedication of club members to see it through from planning to implementation. Even our new members who attended as students took time to assist whenever there was a break. Thank you to all who participated; your assistance was much appreciated!





Queen-Rearing Course

In association with the VSBA meeting in Hampton, VA, Dr. Rick Fell and Keith Tignor are conducting a queen-rearing workshop at the Hampton Roads Agriculture Research and Extension Center (HRAREC). The workshop will be held on Thursday night, April 16, and Friday morning, April 17. Onsite registration and distribution of class materials for the workshop will begin at 7:00 PM on April 16 with lectures through 10:00 PM. Field demonstrations and participation on April 17 will continue from 8:30 AM until 11:30 AM.

Classroom topics covered Thursday night, April 16, include:

- Queen and Benefits of Queen Rearing
- Drones and Mating Behavior
- Biology and Techniques for Rearing Queens
- From Queen Finisher to Finished Queen

Demonstrations on Friday morning, April 17, will include:

- Miller and Grafting Techniques for Queen production
- Using the Jenter box
- Establishing starter and finisher hives
- Queen introduction techniques
- Practical queen evaluation

There is no fee for the class. Class size is limited to 24 participants. Pre-registration is required. Contact Keith Tignor by email at keith.tignor@vdacs.virginia.gov or by telephone at 804-786-3515 to register or for further information.

HRAREC is located off Northampton Blvd at 1444 Diamond Springs Road in Virginia Beach, VA 23455-3315. Directions and further information on HRAREC is at: http://arecs.vaes.vt.edu/arec.cfm?webname=hampton§ion=about_us



Beeswax Request

Finish Feeder Company, a local manufacturer of beeswax-based furniture polish for antiques, is looking to partner with regional suppliers of beeswax. If interested, please contact Chris Kelly at 757-362-7428 or Email him at finishfeeder@aol.com. For more information about their furniture polish, please see the company web site at: <http://www.finishfeedercompany.com>



Master Gardener Plant Sales

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

Chesapeake Master Gardeners have scheduled their *Spring Plant Sale* for Friday, April 24 from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM and Saturday, April 25 from 9:00 AM to Noon at 212 Holt Dr, Chesapeake, VA.

Virginia Beach Master Gardeners are having their annual *Plant Sale & Garden Day at the Market* on May 9th from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM 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 16th from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM and May 17^h from Noon to 6:00pm.

Portsmouth Master Gardeners Open House & Plant Sale will take place May 16th from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM at 105 Utah Street, Portsmouth, VA



Bee Emergency Responders

Bob Schwartz reported at the March TBA meeting that Keith Tignor, Virginia State Apiarist, is 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. 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 Bob Schwartz at moonlightbeekeeper@hotmail.com or 757-357-7829 to be added to the list of interested beekeepers.



April 24-26, 2009

TBA has been offered a booth at the Virginia Beach Spring Craft Market in the Virginia Beach Convention Center. We may sell honey and homemade crafts from hive products, no manufactured items please. This is an excellent opportunity to create a positive image of honey bees and emphasize their vital role as pollinators. We will be located in the guild section where we plan to offer educational demonstrations on rolling beeswax candles.

Pam Fisher will be coordinating volunteers. Please contact her with the day and time that you can help staff the booth. If you have products to sell, please let Pam know that also. You can reach her at 757-545-5076 or bgrrl@cox.net. This is a major undertaking for the club so many volunteers are needed. Please help if you can, a few hours of your time are most appreciated!



Feeding Honey bees

When feeding sugar syrup to bees, it is the sugar, not the water that the bees utilize. By mixing the sugar to water at different ratios, the beekeeper can encourage various honeybee behaviors. Below are ratios from Keith Tignor, Virginia's State Apiarist, and the actions they stimulate within the hive.



Sugar Syrup Recipes

1:2 One Part Sugar to Two Parts Water:

Feed in the spring to stimulate egg laying. Use only when enough honey is available for feeding the brood:

1 pound sugar to 1 quart water
or

5 pounds sugar to 5 quarts water

Stir sugar into warm water until dissolved.

1:1 One Part Sugar to One Part Water:

Feed in the spring and summer for installing packages and to encourage comb building:

1 pound sugar to 2 cups water
or

5 pounds sugar to 2½ quarts water

Bring water to a boil and turn off heat. Stir in sugar until dissolved and let cool.

2:1 Two Parts Sugar to One Part Water:

Feed in the fall to increase food stores in preparation for winter:

1 pound sugar to 1 cup water
or

5 pounds sugar to 5 cups water

Bring water to a boil and stir in sugar. Continue stirring over heat until all crystals dissolve. Remove from heat and cool.



Beehives at the White House

From *Catch the Buzz*

From the perspective of probably every beekeeper in the U.S., the first day of spring, 2009, should be one of the most memorable in decades. It was on that day that Michelle Obama announced that not only would there be a garden on the White House lawn, the first since FDR's Victory Garden, but there would be, yes, BEE HIVES!

The chefs at the white house are looking forward to cooking with locally grown fresh vegetables (and sharing what they can't use with a soup kitchen near the White House), and being able to use honey in some of their recipes. Honey produced right outside their kitchen door.

Mrs. Obama readied the garden plot on the first day of spring with the help of a couple dozen local fifth graders. They worked to remove the sod and loosen the soil in preparation of planting of the spring crops. The L-shaped plot will contain year-round vegetables once completely established, with vegetables, berries and other tasty edibles. All will be raised organically.

To complete the garden, two bee hives will be moved in early this week. The beekeeper, a White House employee is a three year veteran beekeeper and had a strong desire to keep bees and beekeeping in front of the folks who live where he works, and to keep reminding them of the importance of the pollination efforts their bees will be performing. The hives belong to the beekeeper.

As far as we can tell, there's never been a bee hive at the White House, so this first-ever apiary event is something that beekeepers everywhere are excited about.

At the ground breaking on Friday, March 20, 2009, the kids, with the help of the First Lady removed sod and started the process. In a couple of weeks the planting will take place. The garden is to be a year-round source of vegetables.

The L shaped garden is 40' tall, 40' wide at the bottom, and the width at the top of the L is 20'. There are marigolds, nasturtiums and zinnias lining the two walkways through the garden. Several raised beds surround the garden.

An organic garden and beehives at the White House...it doesn't get much better, does it?



AFB-Sniffing Dog

Maryland has a new weapon in their arsenal against American Foulbrood – Klinker, the AFB-sniffing dog!

Her handler, apiary inspector William Troup, trained Klinker, a 22-month-old black lab. When Klinker detects the scent of AFB, she sits and stares at the suspect hive. Her reward is some playtime with a rubber ball. She is much more efficient than humans, able to inspect about 100 hives in 45 minutes. How reliable is Klinker? "I have not found her wrong yet," answered William Troup. She actually detected AFB in a colony that an inspector had missed but was later confirmed to harbor the bacterial disease.

TBA Meeting Changes

If you haven't noticed, our TBA meetings are really crowded; we have almost outgrown our new meeting hall! In order to make the monthly membership meetings run more smoothly, the TBA officers would like to introduce some changes beginning in April.

The educational program will be presented first with the business meeting to follow the break.

If you would like to address the group, please Email Bob Montcalm at montcalm@verizon.net or call him at 487-2143 by the Friday prior to the meeting to be included on the agenda. This will give Bob some idea of how much time he can devote to education and how much will be taken up by club business.

Sign up sheets will no longer be circulated; they will be available on the credenza at the front of the room. Any flyers of interest to the group as well as membership rosters will be available there as well.

In an effort to foster mentoring, we would like to attempt seating club members together by city. Beginning in April, signs for each city will be placed on tables. Please give this seating arrangement a try to allow new beekeepers to meet the experienced beekeepers in their area.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation as we attempt to streamline our meetings!





SCBA/NCSBA Joint Spring Meeting

By Elizabeth LeGall



The South Carolina Beekeepers Association hosted a joint spring meeting with the North Carolina State Beekeepers Association in Rock Hill, South Carolina, on March 6 and 7. The meeting began Friday afternoon with a general session followed by a panel discussion that addressed questions from the audience. Another general session began on Saturday morning with six workshops offered in the afternoon. Over **535** participants gathered to hear from a variety of speakers that included Kim Flottum, editor of Bee Culture magazine; David Tarpy, N.C. State University; Bart Smith, USDA/ARS Beltsville, Maryland Bee Lab; Stanley Schneider, UNC-Charlotte, Jerry Hayes, Florida Department of Agriculture; and Jennifer Berry, University of Georgia.

This was my first beekeeping conference and I was impressed with all aspects of the meeting. The conference was well organized and the speakers were very informative. It is impossible to summarize all the excellent information presented so I will list some highlights that may be helpful and informative to fellow TBA members.

David Tarpy, Extension Apiculturist at NC State University, presented “**James Bond, Beekeeping and Living with Mites**” in the general session where he reviewed interesting research on the “live and let die” approach to dealing with Varroa mites. A conclusion of the research was that withholding all Varroa mite treatments allows nature to select out surviving bee colonies that are resistant or tolerant to the mite. In the workshop “**Varroa Mite Control**”, Mr. Tarpy pointed out:

- Dealing with Varroa mites is the #1 issue that will affect every beekeeper
- We cannot eliminate the Varroa mite but we can take measures to protect our hives
- Routinely monitor mite levels with sticky board count or sugar roll
- Integrated pest management practices (IPM) uses a combination of measures to reduce mite population and increase hive survival.
 - Screened bottom boards
 - Drone trapping
 - Powdered sugar shakes
- The mechanical methods employed in IPM have advantages over chemical methods since they can be used when bees are collecting and producing honey.
- Consider using stock resistant or tolerant to mites: Russian strains or re-queening with queen selected for hygienic behavior.
- Goal is to delay or ideally avoid chemical treatments
- When mite count or mite load exceeds “economic threshold”, then chemical treatment is warranted. However, the exclusive and continual use of one chemical product is more likely to result in resistance by the pest. Several different products should be used on a rotating basis

Bart Smith, Entomologist, USDA/ARS Bee Lab, Beltsville, MD, presented “**At Your Service – Bee Disease Diagnosis at the Beltsville USDA Bee Lab**” in the general session and conducted a hands on workshop entitled “**Recognition and Treatment of Bee Diseases**”. Highlights include:

- One mission of the Bee Research Laboratory is to conduct research on the biology and control of honey bee parasites, diseases, and pests to ensure an adequate supply of bees for pollination and honey production.

- Disease diagnosis service: A **FREE** service for the diagnosis of bee diseases provided by the laboratory for beekeepers and state inspectors.
- Wondering what's wrong with the health of your hive? Any beekeeper can submit a sample.
 - See the USDA/ARS Bee Lab website for information on how to submit a sample of adult honey bees or comb for diagnostic testing:
<http://www.ars.usda.gov/Services/docs.htm?docid=7473>

Jennifer Berry, Researcher at University of Georgia, headed the “**Small Hive Beetle Management**” workshop. She discussed ways to control the small hive beetles (SHB) in and outside of the hive. She advocates using IPM and natural treatments for SHB management. Some key points were:

- SHB traps are effective when filled with vegetable oil and an attractant such as apple cider vinegar or ground crickets. Some available SHB traps:
 - AJ Beetle Eater (preferred)
 - Hood trap (good, but takes up space in a frame)
 - Freeman trap (to be evaluated)
- SHB seek warm areas in the hive. Place traps in these areas.
- Coumaphos (CheckMite+) is a pesticide product to control small hive beetles (SHB). It is effective, but she doesn't advocate.
- Roach and ant bait (fipronil) is illegal to use
- For beetles during larval activity, soil dwelling nematodes (indica) can be placed in front of the hive to feed on larva
- To prevent SHB intrusion, caulk cracks around the hive
- A queenless hive sends out an alarm scent that attracts hive beetles
- Does not recommend using GardStar® on the ground around hives (considers worthless)
- Chickens will eat the larvae in the ground around the hive
- Audience recommendation – see FatBeeMan video on YouTube on how to make a cheap and effective SHB trap. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_KDPp8H6PU

Jerry Hayes with the Florida Department of Agriculture presented “**What You Need to Know about Africanized Honey Bees**”. He discussed some differences between the European honey bee (EHB) and the Africanized honey bee (AHB) and the need to be prepared in advance of their arrival. Key points were:

- AHB swarm about 15 to 20 times per year. The swarm is about softball size.
- AHB nests are smaller than EHB nests and are found in strange places – in the ground, water meter covers, hollow poles
- AHB were introduced to Florida through their main ports by shipping traffic
- It is impossible to differentiate the AHB from EHB by sight. AHB are differentiated by a series of morphological tests which measure specific wing size and span
- AHB swarms are calm and can be mistaken for EHB swarms
- If attacked, the advice is to cover your mouth and nose and run away. AHB have pursued up to 300 yards and will target CO₂ from the mouth and nose.
- Developing action plans and providing training to school kids, emergency responders, and 911 operators in advance of AHB arrival is highly recommended. This will prepare the public and help protect the beekeeping industry from bad press.

