

East Texas Beekeepers Association



Join us at the August meeting to hear

Meagan Elzner
of Elzner Farms

*Talk about the importance of testing and
treating for varroa mites
And an explanation of how to perform a
mite check.*

Hope to see you there!

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Next Meeting

August 1st

Whitehouse Methodist Church
405 West Main in Whitehouse

6:30 PM

On the Web:
www.etba.info

Practical Experiences in the Bee Yard

by Stan Brantley



August normally is a hot and dry month with “Dog Days” plaguing us most of the time. Much of East Texas has received an unusual amount of rain in June and July. It will be interesting to see if the rains persist into August or whether we move into the usual August dearth. If the rains stop, there will be little for the bees to work unless they find plants blooming in the woods and creek bottoms where some moisture and shade keeps some blossoms going..

With extraction completed, you have to decide how to store your supers. Remember honey supers that have not had any brood reared in them and therefore do not have any honey bee cocoons present, are not really interesting to the wax moth. However, you still cannot store extracted supers off the hive without providing wax moth protection.

If you have a few hives with two or three supers on each, you may decide to return the extracted supers to the hive for storage and to be protected by the bees from the ever-present wax moth.

The approved “off-hive” storage method is to stack supers in a cool dry location under paramoth crystals. I prefer to start with a Telescoping Outer Cover upside-down on the floor. Line it with several thicknesses of newspaper. Stack supers two-or-three high on the newspaper. Place an approximately 8x8 inch sheet of paper on the top super and add ¼ cup of paramoth crystals. Make sure to use the ParaDicloroBenzene paramoth crystals – DO NOT USE NAPTHA MOTH CRYSTALS. You can add another stack of two or three supers, followed by another paper with paramoth crystals, if you wish, or start another stack. Cover the top of the stack with another Outer Cover. The paramoth crystals will vaporize and permeate the stack of supers from the top down, repelling wax moths. They vaporize faster in hotter weather. Periodically check the amount of crystals remaining and add more, as needed.

The beekeeper’s activities in the bee yard are now focused on helping the bees weather the hot dry summer dearth period. Be aware that your bees may be cranky and bad tempered during the summer dearth. Use caution when working in the apiary and wear protection to reduce stinging incidents. Make sure fresh water is readily available. Your bee’s water intake will increase as they use evaporation to help cool the hive. Ventilate the hive by sliding the Outer Cover back and resting it on the edge of the Inner Cover.

Make sure there are remaining stores in the hive, especially if you extracted most of the honey. There may be little or no honey in the brood chambers. Determine your hive’s condition by inspecting frames from the brood chambers. If you are pressed for time, you can feel the hive’s weight by lifting the back edge using the ‘two-fingered lift’ technique. Just make sure the boxes are not stuck together when you try the lifting the edge. If the hive is light or you do not see much stores in the brood frames, consider feeding with 2:1 syrup.

It is also time to do a mite count. According to all published literature, mites must be controlled to prevent the hive from collapsing. To do a mite count, you will need a plastic dishpan, a ½ cup measuring cup, some powdered sugar and a wide-mouthed jar with 1/8-inch hardware cloth replacing the solid lid. Pull a frame containing open brood and shake the attending nurse bees into the dishpan. Scoop up ½ cup of bees and pour them in the jar and cover with the hardware cloth lid. Dump the rest of the bees back into the hive. Add a spoonful of powdered sugar through the hardware cloth lid. Roll or shake the jar in your hands for 90 seconds. Let the jar sit while you replace the frames back into the hive. Now, pour the powdered sugar through the hardware cloth into the bottom of the dishpan, shaking the jar to be sure all of the mites have been dislodged. Add some water to the pan to dissolve the sugar and count the mites. Since your ½ cup of bees was about 300 bees, divide your mite count by three to get the count per hundred bees. If there are three or more mites per hundred bees, consider treating your hive.



Got Questions?

*Question & answer group will meet from 6:00-6:30 before the meeting.
Join us if you are a new beekeeper or just have beekeeping questions?
We’ll try to get you some answers!*



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