

East Texas Beekeepers Association



Our December meeting will be our annual

HONEY TASTING CONTEST

*Is your honey the best in the club this year?
Bring a jar and find out!*

Bring your honey in an unlabeled plastic bottle
for everyone to taste and vote on.

Hope to see you there!

President—Connie Collins
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Member-at-Large—Jamie Crain
Program Director — Christina Williams
Newsletter Editor—Jenifer Babyak
Webmaster—Ken Wilkinson



Next Meeting

December 5th

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



December is the time of reflection, gnashing of teeth, and beating our heads against the deadout hives now consolidated in our shop, garage or work area. Don't look at your neighbor beekeeper, just look in the mirror because you are the only one responsible. What you really need to do is look at all the notes of hive visits you created during the past year. Reviewing your notes will help you see where things started to go wrong. Oh Me! You don't have any notes to review? Shame on you unless you have a better memory than most. In case you have not figured it out, no two hives will grow, swarm, requeen or produce the same amount of honey. Each hive is unique and must be carefully monitored to achieve the best results.

As we move into the colder months of December and January, monitor your hive's stores of food. If you have hives with low stores, feed 2:1 sugar syrup. New beekeepers often ask about how to mix the proper 1:1 or 2:1 mixtures. Here is a helpful table:

By weight:

| | |
|-----|--|
| 1:1 | 1 gallon hot water, 8 pounds of sugar |
| 2:1 | 1 gallon hot water, 16 pounds of sugar |

By Volume

| | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|
| 1:1 | 1 gallon hot water, 1 gallon sugar |
| 2:1 | 1/2 gallon hot water, 1 gallon sugar |

5 Gallons at a Time: In a 5 gallon bucket, place 24 pounds of sugar and SLOWLY add 3 gallons of hot water, stirring the mixture as you add the water. The hotter the water, the easier the sugar dissolves.

1:1 mixtures usually dissolve easily. The thicker 2:1 mixture can be more difficult to get all of the sugar in solution. In real life applications in the apiary, these mixtures do not have to be precise. As one of my commercial beekeeping friends used to say about 2:1 mixtures, just get as much sugar dissolved as you can. The bees will take it from there.

Sometimes during inspections, you find bare spots on plastic foundation where the bees refused to draw comb. Try brushing melted wax over the bare spots and see if the bees will begin to draw the comb. If the spots are left bare, the bees will not anchor cells to the bare plastic. They may find a place on any drawn comb above the bare spot and make comb that does not touch the bare plastic. This is referred to as a "pancake". The bees will draw the midrib of the comb down away from the plastic and usually wind up drawing shorter length cells on each side of this pancake. When I find this type of cell building on a frame, if it is not full of capped brood, I use my hive tool to crush the wax down against the plastic foundation. This often entices the bees to start drawing comb on the previously bare spot. I have found this often works well for small areas. Large bare areas may require replacing the foundation.

Reversing brood boxes in the early spring on double brood hives is one of those beekeeping practices that generate a lot of dialog. The theory is that the bees and queen will be in the top brood box of a double brood hive by spring. In fact, this is usually but not always the case. Reversing the order of the boxes gives the queen an essentially empty brood box above her for spring expansion. Not all beekeepers chose to reverse the boxes. If you decide it is a good practice for you, check the boxes and make sure your queen is really in the top box before you reverse them.

Beekeepers are really a strange lot as we love to attend club meetings, workshops, and conventions where we can listen to many different ideas, practices and shortcuts (most approved, some not approved that could get our honey in trouble). And then, guess what we tend to do! We tend to think we know more than the other person and decide we will just keep on doing it our way. We also often not only want to do "our thing" but want to recruit other beekeepers to think like us. Let me encourage you to be open to new ideas and techniques. Be willing to look for better practices in your apiary.



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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**NOW OPEN! M-SAT
9:00-6:00**

SUNDAY 9:00-5:00

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