

# East Texas Beekeepers Association



July 2023

## *July Report by Jim Biles*

### Welcome to Summer!

Hopefully you've either extracted honey or plan to do so, and I hope it's a great harvest! The demand for local honey is as strong as I've ever seen it, and it would be great for ETBA to saturate the region with our honey.

Because the next newsletter will not go out until October, I want to go ahead and put in a plug for the East Texas State Fair. This year we plan to continue our long tradition of hosting an ETBA booth. Please mark

your calendar....the Fair will run from September 22 – October 1. The success of the booth depends on our members being there to talk to fair goers about honey bees. Please set aside some time on the schedule to be an ambassador for beekeeping, local honey, and the ETBA. We'll start sign ups at the August meeting.

The Fair is also a great way to showcase and sell some of your honey. We'll be selling 1 lb bottles of honey, properly labeled, preferably in plastic bottles. If you're just getting started with producing honey, please think about your brand and getting labels that are distinctive. If you're not sure about the labeling requirements, please see me and I can coach you on what's required. It's frankly a lot of fun talking to the public about our honey and making a little money in the process! I will be giving full details about the booth and selling honey as we get closer to September.

We're halfway through the year, and it's been a great start! We have a great group of scholarship students, hosted a successful spring clinic, raised a lot of \$\$ for the queen/ambassador program with a terrific auction, elected some great folks to fill vacant leadership roles (with a smooth transition), Bee Day in the Garden, some nice meetings/programs.....let's keep it going!

Look forward to seeing you in July!

President—Connie Collins  
Vice-President—Joe Laws  
Exec. Director/Reporter— Jim Biles  
Treasurer—Jennifer Palmer  
Secretary—Tish Kennedy  
Member-at-Large—Jamie Crain  
Program Director — Christina Williams  
Newsletter Editor—Jenifer Babyak  
Webmaster—Ken Wilkinson



### Next Meeting

## July 6th

United Methodist Church  
405 West Main in Whitehouse

**6:30 PM**

On the Web:  
[www.etba.info](http://www.etba.info)

# FYI

by Christina Williams

## The July Program...

Our speaker this month is  
Megan Elzner from Elzner Farms.

She will be going over how to test for  
Varroa mites and treatment options.

It is essential to the health of our  
honeybees!

We look forward to seeing everyone there!



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~ Meagan and Isaac Elzner ~



## *Practical Experiences in the Bee Yard*

by Stan Brantley



I just returned from the Summer Clinic in Conroe where there was a class on just about anything bee related. We also had a wonderful meal of tacos that I understand were the volunteer work of a "Lady Beekeeper". Vendors were in attendance and were selling everything from live queens to specialty honey to cure all your problems. Both the Summer Clinic and the Fall Convention are great opportunities to meet a wide variety of beekeepers, vendors and educators on a scale you will not find in your local bee club. I encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities. If you are not a TBA member, consider joining. As a member, you have access to opportunities at the two annual meetings and to the TBA Journal, the bi-monthly newsletter full of helpful information.

For the beginners, be aware that honey extraction is in full swing in July. There may be some pockets of blooming flowers that still produce enough nectar for the bees to store but the primary flow is usually ending. As the July dearth sets in, robbing may begin in earnest. I suggest you close the hive entrance down to the smallest opening on the reducer. If you are concerned that you are still seeing too much traffic, use the next size opening until the traffic slows. If robbing does start, install a robbing screen or stuff the entrance with steel wool. Do not worry about the bees in the hive. At dusk, remove the steel wool so the robber bees can come boiling out to return to their own hive. When they all seem to be out, stuff the entrance again with the steel wool, leaving an entrance about the size of your little finger. The "hive bees" should be able to defend this small entrance at daylight the following morning and prevent the robbing from starting again.

When you extract your honey and want to return the supers full of wet frames to the hive for the bees to clean, I suggest returning them late in the evening, as close to dark as possible. This gives the colony a chance to clean all the dripped honey on the wet super during the night. This helps reduce the chance of neighboring hives being triggered to rob by the strong honey smell of a wet super.

Honey bees need a plentiful supply of water during these hot days. They use the water to cool the hive. If there is no natural source of water close by, do your best to supply a source for them. If your neighbor has a swimming pool, your bees may become unwelcome visitors in their search for water if none is nearby. Be sure to provide a reliable source of water close to your hive so they do not have to fly far searching for other sources.

You can help the bees cool the hive by venting the Outer Cover. Set the front edge of the telescoping Outer Cover in the edge of the Inner Cover. When I use this method and look under the cover, there are usually several hundred bees sitting all over the Inner Cover venting air out of the bee escape hole.

Strong colonies will help keep the Small Hive Beetle population in check, especially if your hive is in the sun the majority of the day. If you do use a beetle trap, be careful not to spill the oil from the trap onto the frames. Dry Unscented Swiffer mop or duster sheets are very helpful in reducing SHB populations. Place a half or full sheet on the top bars of the hive toward the back where the bees will normally "jail" the beetles if a sheet is not used. Make sure the fuzzy or fuzziest side is facing up as it seems to catch the most beetles.

Thirty years ago, a local cemetery manager asked me to remove bees from an oak tree inside the cemetery. The hive entrance was about eight inches above the ground. I set up a trap-out and was successful in removing the bees. Afterward, I plugged the hole by forcing a 6x10 inch piece of hardware cloth as far into the hole as I could, then packing in a really wet mixture of cement. I have driven by this cemetery often over the past 30 years. On June 19th, I decided to stop and check around the old oak tree. Normal tree growth had closed the hole where I removed the bees. However, on the ground at the base of the tree was my 6x10 hardware cloth mesh with about eight pounds of cement still embedded in it. Apparently, as the tree grew and closed the hole, it forced the cement plug out of the tree and nobody troubled to pick it up!

## *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!*



## *Connie Collins - ETBA President*

Dear Beekeepers:

Summertime is here! I hope you are enjoying it with family and friends. Also, do not forget about your bees during these hot summer months. While the last thing I want to do is suit up in heavy clothes in this heat, it is a good idea to check on your hives.

If you have any announcements for future ETBA newsletters, please email me. [connie@cncfarms.com](mailto:connie@cncfarms.com).

I hope to see everyone at the July meeting. Happy Summer!

### **\*\*\*Free Honey Extraction at Legacy High School\*\*\*** **Do you have honey that needs extracting?**

**Legacy High School will be hosting a free honey extraction day on their campus.  
Please bring a 5-gallon bucket.  
They will not jar your honey for you.  
Buckets will be available for purchase.**

**When: Saturday, July 1 st .**

**Where: Tyler Legacy High School. Culinary Lab. Enter at the front of the campus off of Rice Rd. Go in the right-hand door.**

**Hours: 8:30 AM – Until finished. Contact: Daniel Lennon. (903) 539-3437.**



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## LOCAL GOINGS-ON!

### **TBA Annual Convention:**

1<sup>st</sup> Weekend in November 2023  
Mayborn Convention Center  
3303 N 3 rd St, Temple, TX 76501

### **East Texas State Fair - ETBA Booth:**

September 22 nd – October 1 st , 2023  
East Texas Fair Grounds

### **Local Beekeeper Club's Meeting Dates:**

Jacksonville Area Beekeepers  
Third Monday of the month 6PM  
Jacksonville First United Methodist Church-1031 TX-456 Loop, Jacksonville, TX 75766

Longview Beekeepers  
First Tuesday of each month. 6 PM  
Texas AgriLife Extension Office 405 E. Marshall St. Longview, TX 75601

Marshall Beekeepers  
Second Thursday of each month. 5:30 PM  
Cumberland Presbyterian Church 501 Indian Springs Dr. Marshall, TX 75672

Hopkins County Beekeepers  
Third Thursday of each month. 6:30 PM  
Hopkins County AgriLife Building 1200 West Houston, St. Sulphur Springs, TX 75483

Lamar County  
First Thursday of each month. 6:30 PM  
Lamar County Fairgrounds 570 E. Center St. Paris, TX 75460

Wood County Beekeepers  
First Tuesday of each month. 7 PM Winnsboro Civic Center Hope LN Winnsboro, TX 75494

Caddo Trace Beekeepers  
Second Mondays of each month. 7 PM - Titus County AgriLife Extension Building

North East Texas Bee Association Second Monday of each month. 5:45 PM  
Canton Baptist Church 303 South Athens St. Canton, TX 75103

Kaufman Area Beekeepers Second Tuesday of each month. 6:30 PM  
208 S. Houston Street Kaufman, TX 75142

## *Tish Kennedy -*

A lot of people call me a weed but I am a friend and I have come to help.

When you see me remember that I am the ONLY one who wants to and can grow in that particular spot.

This is because, the soil is too compact, stomped or hard and I want to loosen it for you with my roots.

Or it could be because the soil is too acidic or that it has too little calcium.

Don't worry, I will replenish that for you with the dying of my leaves.

I am here because your soil needs my help so best you let me grow without disturbing me and when I have righted your soil and everything is fixed, I will disappear, I promise.

You can even tell by growth at which stage my help is at.

If my leaves are flat on the ground then I am far from ready but if they all reach up then I am almost done.

I am one of the first bloomers if spring, my flowers are the first food for insects and unlike most other plants, I have pollen AND nectar.

I am usually the first source of food for the honeybee.

My flowers, roots and stems are also food and medicine for people.

I used to be called Honey (or gold) of the poor because my flowers are so sweet.

The internet is full of recipes.

Just make sure not to pick everything, the bees (pollinators) will be grateful!!

And lastly when you see me standing there and instead of yellow petals I have a head of fluff..... blow hard and make a wish, I will try to make your wish come true.

Sincerely, Dandelion



Good luck and Happy Gardening!

## Joe Laws - Vice President

### What are the bees eating in June and July?

March has blackberries and dewberries, April has clover, fruit trees, blueberries and the start of wildflowers. May is wildflower month, and generally a great time to be a honeybee. By the time June and July come around and the heat sets in what is left? Well, in my neck of the woods, a bit north of Palestine, this is when my bees make honey. Before the big snow of 2021 this was tallow time, it all froze to the ground then, but is starting to make a comeback. Next year it should be big enough to bloom. Another tree that is considered invasive (and many would like to eradicate) is the mimosa, which comes into full bloom in June.

Several years ago I had my honey tested to find out what flowers my bees had used to make it and was surprised to learn that almost 60% of it that year was found to be acacia, i.e. mimosa. The good thing about mimosa is that it blooms over a six-week period. The honey is light in color and has a very nice flavor. This year with the rain that we have had many of our wildflowers have continued to bloom (and will hopefully continue into July). Some that should continue to do well in the heat if they have some rain are horsemint (beebalm) and sunflowers. Horsemint makes wonderful honey. We had no horsemint and few wildflowers last year because of the drought.

One day a few years ago I was in the yard when I heard the sound of many bees up in the oak tree. My first thought was that I had a swarm of bees or a wild hive of bees up in the tree. Upon further investigation, I realized that my honeybees were working the Virginia Creeper vine. I hadn't realized that it blooms and the honeybees love it. It has small, white flowers in clusters. This is the vine that is often mistaken for poison ivy, but has 5 palmate leaves instead of the three that poison ivy has. (leaves of three, leave 'em be) Honeybees also will work the flowers of poison ivy and it will not cause any allergy issues with the honey that is produced. Also coming into bloom at this time is American Beautyberry. This is a 3-5 foot tall shrub that has a small purple flower cluster up and down each stem. It produces small clusters of purple berries in the early Fall that are eaten by deer and other wildlife. It has even been used to make a purple jelly! The leaves can be crushed and used as a mosquito repellent.

A late blooming wildflower in disturbed and poor soil is the partridge pea. As its name suggests it is a legume and as such will add nitrogen to the soil. It grows to about 12-15 inches tall, has a yellow flower and the plant has mimosa type leaves.

Remember that anytime you are out in nature, keep your eyes and ears open- You never know what you will find!

## *Jennifer Palmer - Treasurer*

As the treasure for the ETBA I hope all get to experience their own honey. When one extracts their own honey, it is an accomplishment and lots of work. I enjoy it every year I have done this.

When the extraction is done it is the time, we are all gearing up to build the hives for the winter. We all want to make the hive strong so we can make more bees for next year. I hope all have enjoyed the season and the seasons to come.

Just a reminder about each meeting we all need to sign in and make sure email addresses are correct. We want to make sure all emails are reaching every member of the club.

Remember also to give pointers on how to make the meeting bigger and better.

If you have any questions on membership please contact me, [spalm474@gmail.com](mailto:spalm474@gmail.com).

Jennifer Palmer





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