

East Texas Beekeepers Association



March Program

(brought to you by Christina Williams)

*This month's program will be presented
by Heather and Chris
from*

Hives for Heroes

*Hives for Heroes is a national nonprofit teaching
beekeeping and helping transition
veterans and first responders*

Come learn about their programs and mentoring opportunities!

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Program Director — Christina Williams
Newsletter Editor—Jenifer Babyak
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Next Meeting

March 7th

United 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



My part of the Ark-La-Tex recently had two days of rain. Let us be thankful for the moisture that will bring an abundance of vegetation and a bounty of blossoms for our bees to forage. Before the rains came, this same area was blessed with a couple days spring-like weather. Daytime temperatures in the 60s, not much wind and a chance to inspect your hives.

On inspection, you probably found a queen laying several frames of eggs. With a few more days of nice weather, these will soon be frames of capped brood. But along comes the next cold front with night temperatures back into the 20 to 30 degree range, causing the bees to again move into their “winter cluster”. The cluster will probably not be large enough to cover all of the capped brood. The uncovered brood may become chilled and die.

As the daytime temperatures move back into the 50s and 60s, the bees will break cluster and become active again. Any chilled brood will be removed from hive and the cells cleaned and readied for the queen to lay new eggs. You may see the removed brood on the ground in front of the landing board. Do not panic. You do not have a disease in your hive and it is not going to die. It is just bees keeping up with proper housekeeping in the early spring season.

Now is the time to monitor your hives for food stores. You will see bees bringing in loads of pollen but that amount is not enough to sustain the food requirements for the developing larva that want to be fed. You want to ensure that the hive does not run out of food. If food stores are low, add a little supplemental sugar syrup and a small amount of pollen substitute.

Early blooms and tree pollen are increasing. Be prepared for the highway right-of-way to explode in red as the crimson clover blooms. A person who has kept bees for several seasons should be able to expect what the next source of pollen will be. As a new beekeeper, you would be wise to keep track of blooming dates in your area. Record the dates in a log so you can refer to them next season.

Most beekeepers have moved to plastic foundation rather than the older type of wired wax foundation. If you find frames of plastic foundation that have not been drawn by the bees, they made need to be recoated with melted wax to attract the bees. A plastic frame with no beeswax on it is not attractive to your bees. Pull those undrawn frames and brush on a fresh coat of melted beeswax and return them to the hive. You can actually do this right in the bee yard using a propane camp stove and a double boiler to melt the wax. I believe the smell of fresh wax on a frame inserted immediately into the hive will excite the bees into quickly drawing comb.

This season’s bee schools are getting started and it may be time to invest in one. Some of our local bee clubs offer classes for beginner and advance beekeepers. For example the Central Texas Beekeepers Association in Brenham offers three levels of beekeepers training (<https://centraltexasbeekeepers.org/bee-school>). Their classes will be held on March 2 this year. For information about classes in your area, check the websites of local or nearby bee clubs.

For those wishing to purchase NUCs, packages or queens, it is time to decide what race of bees you want to raise. The most widely used race in our part of the country is the Italian honeybee. Italians build up quickly in the spring, are normally a gentle bee, and with proper management will not be prone to excessive swarming. When ordering bees, be sure to determine if they have been bred to include mite resistant genes. Bees with strong mite-resistant qualities help keep the varroa mite damage somewhat under control.

I would like to see a program focusing on breeding and marketing locally bred bees. A “Buy Real Texas Bees” program whose goal is to develop bees known to thrive and successfully overwinter in our area.



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!*

ETBA Beginner Beekeeping Class

Join us April 6th - 8:30am-4pm – New Summerfield, TX



You will learn:

- Basic bee biology
- How to check a hive
- Beekeeping equipment
- Pests & diseases of the hive
- Yearly overview of bee hive management
- Hands on experience

We will spend approximately 3 hours checking hives

Details:

-Cost: \$100 (lunch included)

-Sign up via our website <https://www.etba.info/etba-beginner-beekeeping-class/>

-All proceeds go to the East Texas Beekeepers Association towards the Scholarship Program

-You need to provide your own protective gear and bring it to class that day.

Students without proper protective equipment will not be allowed to work in the bee yard.

This class is intended for those who are new to beekeeping or have very limited beekeeping experience.



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NOW OPEN! M-SAT

9:00-6:00

SUNDAY 9:00-5:00

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