

East Texas Beekeepers Association



Join us this month for
our
November speaker,

Walter Faught

He is going to talk about mead making!
Should be fun!

Hope to see you there!

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Next Meeting

November 7th

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



Goldenrod is usually our best fall forage crop. Bees feed heavily on the plentiful Goldenrod flowers and can collect nectar and pollen to supplement their winter stores. With essentially no measurable moisture for the past month, I did not know whether my area would see a Goldenrod bloom. By the first week of October, the unmowed pastures and low spots in the creek bottoms did begin to become yellow with this fall's Goldenrod crop. If you did not see a good Goldenrod bloom in your area, you may need to feed early and often to help your bees store enough food for winter. When feeding for storage, use at least a 2:1 sugar/water mixture. It would not hurt to make it even thicker. The thicker syrup requires the bees to do less work to evaporate the water content and allow the cell to be capped.

By November, most of the work in the apiary has been done. Now is the time to evaluate the condition of the hive bodies of your active hives. Small cracks in the wood can be repaired with water-based putty or DAP to keep them serviceable for another year.

Dead-outs you have stacked behind the garage or honey house can be cleaned and prepared for use next season. Old wired wax frames can be scraped and made ready for installing plastic foundation. Based on my years of experience, let me share a tip with you – before you start grabbing one of those stacked hive bodies for cleaning, be sure to check for any late swarms that may have decided your stack of boxes looked like a good place to start a new colony! Also, be alert for wasp nests and spiders. Taking just a moment to look may save you some discomfort.

It is also a good time to do another mite check. The hive's bee population will diminish to its lowest level as we move into winter. It becomes easier for the Varroa mite to overwhelm the reduced population and cause the hive to fail. If your mite check shows more than three mites per hundred bees, treat your hive. Follow label directions and when the directed treatment time is up, repeat the mite check. If your mite level still exceeds three mites per hundred bees, repeat treatment using a different miticide.

If you follow my column, you know I frequently reference mite checks and treatment. The first many years of my beekeeping experience the biggest pest was the Small Hive Beetles. Varroa was unknown. The arrival of Varroa changed the way we inspect and protect our hives. Several years ago, the general Varroa guideline was to check your mite levels twice a year. Now the information seems to indicate you probably should check your hives every two months. A positive side of doing frequent mite checks is that you see the state of the hive (brood pattern, laying space, stores) before an issue becomes a problem.

I recently assisted a fellow beekeeper inspect a hive. It was a double brood hive with two extracted honey supers on top of a queen excluder. The top brood box was packed with capped and open honey and several frames of pollen. When we removed the top brood box, we found the bottom brood box was mostly packed with honey, pollen and open cells of nectar. There was very limited space for the queen to lay. We found only scattered capped worker cells on several frames. The hive had plenty of bees but probably would not have made it to spring because of very limited space for the queen to continue to lay. We put one of the extracted honey supers between the two brood boxes to give the queen free space. Ten days later, we re-inspected the hive. The super we had placed between the two brood boxes contained eggs, larvae, pupa and a few capped worker cells. The queen was actively laying and the hive should survive the winter.

The Texas Beekeepers Association convention is scheduled for November 15-16 in Austin, Texas. I encourage all beekeepers to attend. It is a wonderful opportunity to learn the latest information in bee research, products and practices. You will also have an opportunity to vote on individuals nominated to be the TBA leaders for 2025.



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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