

East Texas Beekeepers Association



Join us this month for our speaker,

Garrett Slater

Apiculture Extension Agent for Texas A&M
with 12 years of beekeeping experience.

He is going to talk about the new extension programming,
including the new programs they are developing.

Also, he will be speaking about his research in Overton,
which focuses on breeding and genetics.

Hope to see you there!

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

September 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



Thanks to the moisture from hurricane Beryl, the roadside vegetation and hayfields in many areas still has a green color unusual for late August in East Texas. However, I am beginning to see some of the unmowed areas becoming bright yellow. Not the color of desiccated grasses but the bright yellow of Bitter Weed. Bitter Weed does produce pollen and some amount of nectar for the bees to forage. Growing up on a farm, we could always identify “bitter weed milk” when the milking cows began to eat too much of the strong-smelling weed. It has been a long time since I milked a cow but I certainly remember the smell coming from the milk bucket. Bitter Weed does the same for your honey. Most people do not like the taste of honey made from Bitter Weed nectar but it does serve as a good winter feed for your bees. Here is a link to an interesting American Bee Journal article: https://bluetoad.com/publication/?i=78224&article_id=806241&view=articleBrowser

East Texas roadsides will soon begin to show blooming of Black-Eyed Susans, Asters, and a variety of sunflowers. We can also expect a good bloom of Golden Rod which also provides a good fall forage for bees. Goldenrod honey usually has a nasty odor, even to the point of making the hive smell like dirty socks. Most people do not like to eat it but it too is a good winter food for the bees.

If you plan to do a fall honey extraction, try to do so before your honey becomes flavored with Bitter Weed or Goldenrod. This is also a good time to do a mite check while you still have time to treat before cold weather arrives. For hives with a mite count of three or more, pull the supers and store under a moth protection system of your choice, then treat the hive for 42 days using a method that falls within the guidelines on the treatment product label. You can replace the supers on the hive after the treatment is completed.

Several queen breeders are advertising they will have queens available into September. Now would be an excellent time to purchase a mated queen and start a Nuc to overwinter. With a mated queen in an overwintered Nuc, the chances of that queen swarming in the spring of 2025 are reduced. I have long been an advocate of keeping Nucs for the purpose of having a queen available to resolve emergency situations. I like the analogy of having insurance on our homes and cars to deal with emergencies. The queen in a Nuc is insurance for your hive that needs a new queen. Consider a goal of having one Nuc for every two hives.

We blame the queen for most hive failures but the beekeeper gets part of the blame. It requires discipline to inspect your hives in a late Texas summer when the temperature is a hundred degrees. But we need to be diligent and check the brood chamber to see if the queen is laying a good pattern, or is honey bound and needs more space, or just needs to be replaced. Replacing a failing queen is an easy task if you have a Nuc in your apiary.

You as the apiarist must decide how you are going to combat the hive beetle. For many years, our weapon of choice was the plastic beetle traps. In the last few years, many beekeepers have added the unscented Swiffer sheets to help keep beetles down to a manageable population. I cut the sheet in half and place it in the top box of the hive. I have observed that most of the beetle jails built by the bees are on the frames in the top box and toward the back of the hive. I place the sheets in this area as I feel it is where the bees run the loose beetles. I check the sheet whenever I am working in the hive. If the sheet holds many beetles, I remove it and replace it with another half sheet.

As we move toward the winter season, make sure your queen has laying space and is not honey bound. Some beekeepers remove all of their supers from the hive and store for the winter. I suggest you leave at least one super on the hive for the bees to store any fall flow. If you live in an area with a stronger fall flow, you may need to leave two supers on the hive. Monitor this process and make sure your bees have room to store any fall nectar and not let them fill the brood frames with honey and create the “honey bound” situation for the queen.



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!*



BY KENNETH ARTZ
 KARTZ@ATHENSREVIEW.COM

Connie Collins, the eldest daughter of Eddie Collins, who started CNC Honey Farms in Whitehouse, is a fourth-generation beekeeper and now runs the day to day operations of the farm, which no longer sells honey and instead focuses on selling bees and making queens. She was the guest speaker at the Henderson County Beekeeper Association meeting, delivering a talk entitled, "Replacing & Introducing Queens," last Thursday night.

Working alongside her father, Collins "became pretty good at making queens," she said.

"If you ever want to learn the most about bees, then make queens," she said. "You will learn every facet of bees and you will believe in God, because you'll see every step of the bees' lifecycle. You'll cry, you'll swear, and then you'll smile."

Collins is very proud of her queens and says it's her passion in beekeeping, and

her niche.

"Anyone who's ever split a hive knows that finding the queen is the hardest part," she said. "So one day my father brought a frame of fresh larvae, put it on a Cocoa Puffs box on the counter, and said, 'Graft!' and I grafted. That was one of the first queens I ever made."

Last year, Collins grafted around 10,000 queens! She sells to bigger beekeepers and will be selling bees and queens in the spring.

"My dad said that if he could get a beekeeper to their first bottle of honey, then they were hooked," Collins said. "I think that if you make your own queen you're addicted because there's nothing like checking your split and seeing that queen that you made with God and the bees.

It's different than finding a queen you bought... it's a beautiful thing."

Making queens definitely lets you work closely with nature, she said.

"I feel like I'm manipulating nature a lot of the time but She wins every time – it doesn't matter what I do," Collins said.

Queens can be problematic, though, Collins

SEE BEES,
 PAGE 5A



Kenneth Artz Photo

(L-R) Connie Collins (CNC Honey Farms), Brandon Walker (CNC Honey Farms), and Katherine Middleton (Henderson County TX Beekeepers Association).

An article originally published in the Henderson News:

Queen Bee: Honey bees are all the buzz for local apiculturist

Amber Lollar Aug 9, 2024



Beekeeper Kaleigh Clark looks on as a handful of her recently relocated hive dwellers build a tiny bee bridge on her gloved fingers. (Amber Lollar/The Henderson News)

While the garden aspect of the Clark homestead is on hiatus the notion hasn't gone away completely. Clark hopes to redesign and revisit the idea, not only for the necessary addition to reach self-sustainability, but as easily accessed and pesticide free foraging for her buzzy brood.

"I've always loved bees," said Clark, this statement evidenced by wall art and cup towels displaying bee-related puns, such as 'Always Bee Honest'.

"I've always been fascinated with them. Always wanted to learn things. Anytime I've come across an observational hive I've got my nose in it just being a nerd."

"I purchased my first nuc, which is a nuclear colony that comes with five frames of brood and food and a mated queen. It's your starter hive," Clark explained. "I bought a hive box and now I'm up to 17 colonies."



"Within that first year I was trying to be as hands on as possible because now I actually had a colony of bees to tend to. I realized that beekeeping is not as cheap of a hobby as people think it is."

Eager to learn and smart enough to go straight to the experience and the experts, Clark attended East Texas Beekeeper's Association meetings in Whitehouse. In these gatherings, bee removal and the demolition work often involved was on a few occasions the topic of conversation, sparking an interest that has quickly taken over.

"I grew up in between the studs and 2x4s of a house, snapping chalk lines and things for my dad and didn't really realize how much I'd picked up on, but when they were talking about bee removal, I realized I could do that," she said.

Never one to rush into anything without some research, Clark mentored under another experienced bee remover and caught the "bug" very quickly.

"It all started with chickens..." Kaleigh Clark's homestead experiment began with a small brood of chickens and one distinctly majestic rooster named Rocky. (Amber Lollar/The Henderson News)



The hive's queen is marked with a bold green dot to make her quickly identifiable. (Amber Lollar/The Henderson News)

"It was after helping with that first bee removal that I bought my first bee vacuum and the rest is honestly history," Clark said. "This year I'm one of four main bee removers in the area and I'm the only female doing it. I've been consistently busy with bee removals since February. It's been a very busy season."

Much like construction work, the pricing for removal jobs will vary by situation.

"Pricing is based on the length of the colony, how long have they been there," explained Clark. "The size of the colony and the severity of the job. What kind of materials

are they in? Are they in brickwork, wood frame, are they first-story, second-story? And then, have they been sprayed with pesticides?"

The use of pesticides adds an extra problem for bee removal. When relocating bees treated with any pesticides, beekeepers run a high risk of cross contamination, and potentially passively poisoning an entire apiary.

"When you open them up they're generally sick so you're at a much higher risk for colony collapse because there's frames of wax you cannot touch. The bees won't be on it anymore because it's poisoned. These colonies generally take a lot more work to get back up and going," Clark explained



Addressing the common misconception that those needing bee removal are doing beekeepers a favor by giving them hives invading their homes and property, Clark said, "There's a whole mentality around the fact that people think that their bees in their wall have a monetary value to the beekeeper. The brass tacks truth of it is that when you have a removal done the work only begins for the beekeeper."

Apiary supplies are a huge investment with hive boxes routinely costing \$150. Feral colonies are typically infested with varroa mites and small hive beetles, requiring

treatment to avoid contaminating other nearby hives.

"Right off the top you have to house them in a \$150 box and that's building it yourself. And then you have to medicate them," she explained. "Because you're doing a removal and taking them out of their environment you'll have to feed them as well and sugar costs money."



"Whenever I approach someone that is threatening extermination, I try to educate them that you're not just paying for the bees to be gone, you're paying for the bee remover's expertise, their investment in tools, their time their gas to get out to you. It's actually a lot more involved."

She pointed out that extermination is only the first step for homeowners reluctant to pay for removal, and not the end all that most would assume.

"If the bees are not maintaining the colony, the brood, the honey, the food, rots in your wall," she said. "Then you'll start to get that smell of death and decay

seeping through your wall. Not to mention it invites beetles, cockroaches, squirrels, mice...all these other fun pests into your home.”

“I wouldn’t believe that wax could rot,” added Clark’s husband James, an occasional helper but more often a runner. “It turns almost into sludge and it is foul smelling. It liquifies and drips and ruins everything it touches.”

Clark recommends anyone seeking removal of a colonizing hive do their due diligence before settling on any removal service. Ask questions, ask for referrals, and evidence of work done previously. New bee keepers and removers make their way into the field regularly, many who haven’t had training and routinely walk away from the surprisingly overwhelming jobs.

If you have a bee problem and you wish to seek out the services of Clark and her trusty bee vacuum, visit her Facebook page at East Tex Bee Removal or call her at 903-830-0735.



BEEKEEPING SUPPLY SHOP

**ALL ETBA MEMBERS RECEIVE A
10% DISCOUNT ON ALL
BEEKEEPING RELATED ITEMS.
SOME EXCLUSIONS APPLY.**

**NOW OPEN! M-SAT
9:00-6:00
SUNDAY 9:00-5:00**

• TOOLS • PPE • BEES • HIVES • CLASSES



ESTD

2015

PLANTS *of* TEXAS

Homegrown Garden Goods

**Located at: 17470 FM
2493 Flint, TX**

Call us: 903-426-2558

www.plantsoftexas.com

ELZNER FARMS

1080 JENNINGS RD. JACKSONVILLE, TX 75766

LOCAL HONEY - BEES - AG EXEMPTION

WWW.ELZNERFARMS.COM
ELZNERFARMS@GMAIL.COM



MEAGAN ELZNER
BEEKEEPER/OWNER
618.410.6239

ISAAC ELZNER
BEEKEEPER/OWNER
713.504.3635



HONEY FARMS
WHITEHOUSE, TEXAS

CONNIE COLLINS
(903) 316 - 6335
CONNIE@CNCFARMS.COM
WWW.CNCFARMS.COM

FOR SALE:
NUCS & SINGLE HIVES
QUEEN CELLS
HIVE RENTALS