



# East Texas Beekeepers Association

Vol. 41 No. 4

April 6, 2017 

## April Report by Dick Counts

Thank you for your continued support of ETBA.

We had 126 members and guests present at our March meeting. I look forward to seeing you again on April 6!

April is an important month for our club. During the meeting, we elect our board of officers who will guide us through the coming year. We will take nominations from the floor, and then vote on the nominees. You can nominate yourself or nominate another member. The only requirement is that you be a current club member.

Our elected board positions are Executive Director, President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Programs Director, Newsletter Editor, and Director-At-Large. If you are interested in becoming a nominee for any of these board positions and have questions, talk with President Matt or me. I encourage all members to consider being on the board. That includes our newer members -- you don't have to be a beekeeping expert to serve on the board. If you can run a meeting, you can be President. If you can take notes and type minutes, you can be Secretary. We are always looking for people who have good ideas and are willing to help.

I do want to say a special "Thanks" to some of our members for what they are doing for the club. For the past year **Joe Laws** has accepted and done an outstanding job as Program Director. Joe has worked hard to make sure we have an interesting and informative program each meeting. **Barbara Farguson** has done a lot of work not seen by most of us, arranging and coordinating our public outreach program and our two ETBA Ambassadors. Our former queen **Brittany** volunteered to continue her work with our corporate sponsor Eastman even though her role of queen had ended.

If you still need bees, please come talk to me. I have found a local supplier in the Frankston area who agreed to sell some Nucs to our members. I cannot guarantee how long they will be available but I am pretty sure we can get some if you need them now.

Photo by Isabella Crawford



President—Matt Thomas  
Vice President—Eddie Collins  
 Treasurer—John Holladay  
Secretary—Barbara Farguson  
Ex. Director and Reporter—Dick Counts  
Honey Queen Chair—Barbara Farguson  
Director-at-Large—Stanford Brantley  
Program Director — Joe Laws  
Co-Program Director—Bridgette Thomasson  
Webmaster—Ken Wilkinson  
Newsletter Editor—Trish Wilson

## Next Meeting April 6

United Methodist Church  
405 West Main in Whitehouse  
6:45 PM

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



Newsletter Easter Egg Hunt: *How many hidden eggs can you find? Which one(s) are your favorite?*



## HONEY QUEEN REPORT by Barbara Farguson



Hello to all, I hope your bees are building up into strong colonies.

Along with starting to present into the schools weekly, we have two large events scheduled for this month. On Saturday April 8th we have Eastman Family Day scheduled at the Eastman Family Park. We are anticipating possible visits from some of our former Honey Queens. It will be great to see them again. All members are invited to bring your honey and other hive products to sell and talk bees with the Eastman employees. You will find them to be a great group of folks and easy to talk and visit with.

Then on Saturday April 22nd our Ambassadors will be celebrating Earth Day at the Caldwell Zoo in Tyler and teaching the public about the honey bee. Caldwell Zoo usually has an attendance between 2500 - 3000 visitors on their Earth Day Celebration.

I want to quickly brag on Jacob once again for those whom were not in attendance at our March meeting. Ambassador Jacob was awarded third place in State 4-H Essay Contest.

Congrats Jacob...Good Job!

~Barbara



### MP<sup>3</sup>s

I like to eat. At first glance, that seems like a simple statement, until you think of all of the work that goes into getting food from the fields, to where it is cleaned and or processed, and then getting the finished product to its proper venues. Then it occurred to me, we don't even do the hardest part, the honey bees do. The hardest part of preparing our food is arguably pollination. Also, when you think about the estimated 16 billion dollars that the agriculture field brings in annually, it is also a very lucrative job.

These are not the only reason that honey bees are so important; they do pollinate 80% of the flowering plants, including cotton and alfalfa. As you know, cotton is used to make shirts, pants, sheets, and even parts of pillows, while alfalfa is used to feed livestock like cows, sheep and goats. Thus bees also contribute to the livestock and textile industries.

Our dependence on bees is the problem. Since 1940, bees have declined 50%. Parasitic pests, harsh chemicals, lack of genetic diversity, loss of forage, and a combination of all of these factors manifest themselves as colony collapse disorder (CCD). CCD has been the bane of all apiaries for years, claiming more hives than almost any other factor. Though bees have been in the spotlight for several years, it is not enough right now.

This is where a Managed Pollinator Protection plan (MP3) becomes important. MP3s are a set of recommendations and practices for the protection of managed pollinators that encourages both crop production and successful beekeeping. MP3s provide a step by step process for everyone involved to be able to effectively cooperate and communicate. As of now, they cover managed species, which is defined as "any species of pollinators that are managed by humans, be it for pollination services; the production of honey, beeswax, and other products; or some other purpose." This is mainly honey bees (*Apis mellifera*), but could include other species. In addition to neutralizing risks from pesticides, they can also establish clear expectations among stakeholders when pesticide applications are made near managed pollinators. As of now, approx. 30 states have implemented or are in some stage of the MP3 development process. Each plan is defined by its state, rendering each one unique to its state, but there are twelve common parts.

Mainly, a MP3 requires Public stakeholder participation, Grower and applicator awareness of managed pollinators, inclusion of best management practices (BMPs), and a defined plan for public outreach. MP3s developed so far have benefited from direct discussions involving beekeepers, growers, applicators, and other agricultural stakeholders. Discussion helps to identify key issues and create better solutions, while also encouraging relationships between different parties. Grower and applicator awareness of managed pollinators helps them to realize how important honey bees and other pollinators really are. It involves them learning about where managed colonies are, and how bees forage. Inclusion of BMPs is essential to beekeeping, as it allows beekeepers to collaborate, and share often hard earned knowledge.

*... continued on page 3*



### Three things you can do to encourage bees & other pollinators by Peter Cole

One way we encourage bees to our garden is making homemade bee waters. It started a couple years ago, when we were starting our fall plants, after we watered there were bees all over the dirt, almost like digging in it. So my mom asked my dad what they were doing, and he said they're getting water. She did not believe him, but she got a bowl and filled it with marbles. When it was time to water she filled the bowls with water, and sure enough the bees started getting water from the bowls.



Another way you can encourage bees is by reducing or stopping use of pesticides. When you use Round-up®, seven-dust or any other chemical pesticide while the bees are out foraging will harm bees and other beneficial insects, as well as, harmful insects. At our house we try not to use any chemicals; instead we use Diatomaceous earth (DE) which will kill everything also so we are very careful when we do use it. Another thing we use is fish emulsion; it doesn't kill the bugs, but it smells really fishy, so it repels lots of bugs.



Finally, the last way you can encourage bees into your garden is by planting "bee friendly." Planting bee friendly is not very hard. Bees really like plants with purple flowers because they see purple deeper than us. One plant they really like is called horsemint, or bee balm, it has a pink flower and grows wild along roadsides in the spring. Although most plants are good for the bees, there are poisonous plants, plants that kill brood, have poisonous pollen, make honey poisonous to us, or are just plain toxic.

Some of the poisonous plants are: yellow Jessamine (causes brood death), California buckeye (toxic pollen & nectar), Bog Rosemary (honey that paralyses limbs), Wharangi Bush (honey fatally toxic to humans), Sheep Laurel (honey toxic to humans), and Azaleas (honey toxic to humans), Oleander (toxic honey), Amaryllis (toxic honey), Datura (honey toxic to humans). These are just some of the toxic plants. There are other plants that also attract bees; such as; Hollyhock, Sunflowers, Elderberry, Wild Plum Tree, Borage, Mexican Sunflower, Maple Trees, Blackberry, Redbud Tree, Tulip Poplar Tree, Echinacea/Purple Coneflower, Goldenrod, and tons more. I suggest you look at the whole list at:

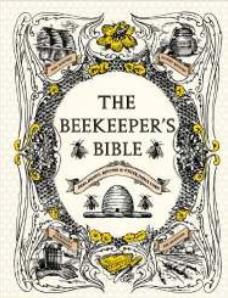


<http://homesteadingthebackforty.blogspot.com/2008/06/bee-garden-plant-list-good-and-toxic.html>

... continued from page 2 (**MP<sup>3</sup>s**)

It involves both beekeeper and applicator, and helps to help minimize pollinator exposure to pesticides and promote tested beekeeping practices, including Integrated Pest Management practices (IPMs). Lastly, the best way to preserve a movement is to get the public involved. If we want beekeeping to continue to thrive, we need to educate the public, and encourage new beekeepers. In this way, we can start to reverse the decline of bees. While it may take a while for the effects of MP<sup>3</sup>s to reach noticeable levels, their effectiveness in generating partnerships and garnering awareness are invaluable to bees & beekeepers. Protecting our pollinators is an essential step in preserving our natural resources. MP<sup>3</sup>s provide an excellent answer to the question of how can we best help the bees.

~Jacob



The Beekeeper's Bible is as much an ultimate guide to the practical essentials of beekeeping as it is a beautiful almanac to be read from cover to cover. Part history book, part handbook, and part cookbook, this illustrated tome covers every facet of the ancient hobby of beekeeping, from how to manage hives safely to harvesting one's own honey, and ideas for how to use honey and beeswax. Detailed instructions for making candles, furniture polish, beauty products, and nearly 100 honey-themed recipes are included. Fully illustrated with how-to photography & unique etchings.

**Available from Amazon and other on-line book sellers for around**

9E = 201H

Beginning January 2017, annual club dues are as follows: Individual ETBA Club Membership \$25.00, Family \$45.00

## President's Letter *by Matt Thomas*



### **Bee Happy**

The spring is perhaps a beekeeper's favorite time of the year. Splits are made and cells are placed in new colonies. The waiting game ensues, having to wait on the queens to hatch and get mated, it seems like an eternity. I finished my splitting and waiting patiently and feeding constantly. "Trying to Bee Happy while I wait". All the hard work preparing for the splits and resources expended getting to this point is worth it. Now comes the fruit! The queens will tell the tale or will they?

Successful queen rearing and overall beekeeping practices are only a part of the tale. Is 1500 pounds of honey success in beekeeping? What about hive multiplication? Being able to raise quality queens and grow enormous colonies is certainly very important for any beekeeper. Being able to assist others in managing their apiary is rewarding. Teaching classes on how to work bees is fun. Having my children out in the bee yard with me is cool (especially in feeding season). Raising bees and packaging honey is rewarding no doubt. Watching others enjoy honey, finding good bee yards, raising good bees, grafting, making cell builders and even moving bees has been pure joy. Even sharing sacred information about how to steward the honeybee has its rewards. All of the above has value but only in context. I owe a



lot to Arthur Banta, Duff Thomas, Cliff Thomas, Art Thomas and many beekeepers along the way. There is a sacred past that has developed my beekeeping abilities. There is also a sacred past that has formed my present and future—my faith.

Something tells me beekeeping has more meaning if it is done with friends. I have had friends help me extract honey, put boxes together, move bees and put cells in! A friend is really a friend if they help you move hives. Beekeeping doesn't really mean much unless it is with friends. Sure...we can each make more bees and fill bottles of honey. Is that it? My friends helped me become a better beekeeper. At the end of the day we have a common interest in beekeeping but our time together is not just about how to manage this exceptional little bee. In everything, there is an educational piece, mentoring component, and, hopefully, a friendship emerges. One of the blessings of being a part of ETBA is not only the education we receive but the family we become a part of.



These pictures are of my nuc yard and the other is one of my beekeeping friends. He has a rubber band around his head.

Why, you ask? The bees were stinging his ears and they swelled up. To keep from getting stung even more he put a rubber band around them to press them against his head. I had to take a picture. At the heart of beekeeping is buffoonery and great friendships.

Thanks John Stewart for the picture.



Roger Farr is scheduled to speak about proposed Texas law on beekeeping.

Roger is our area director for Texas Beekeepers Association.

See you in April!

~ Matt



## A New Supply of Honeybees

Purchasing packaged bees is another method to start new hives. Since packaged bees are shipped from commercial suppliers to almost anywhere in the U.S., they are an alternative for beekeepers who do not have a local supplier of nucs. Suppliers have developed reliable methods of packaging and shipping with high success rates.

When you receive your package of bees, immediately inspect the package for dead bees in the bottom. A few dead bees are to be expected. However, if the bottom is covered with an inch or greater layer of dead bees, there may be a problem. Immediately call the supplier and describe what you see.

If all looks good, spray both sides of the screened shipping package liberally with sugar-water mixture and place the package in a cool, dark place until you can install them in your hive. Make sure your hive is set in its permanent location – you do not want to move it after the bees are installed. It is best to install the bees late in the day, if possible.

To install the package, bring the package, your hive tool, a sprayer of sugar water, a pair of needle-nosed pliers and several thumbtacks. Make sure your permanent hive is ready to receive the packaged bees. You want everything ready to receive the bees as soon as you open the package. Remove the Outer Cover, Inner Cover, and five frames (five adjacent frames starting from one wall), setting them against the side of the hive in easy reach.

Begin by spraying both sides of the package heavily with sugar-water. Bounce the bottom of the package on the ground to get the bees down into the bottom. Use your hive tool to pry the wood or cardboard cover that is over the metal can of syrup inside the box. Quickly grasp the rim of the can with the needle-nosed pliers and pull it out of the box. Cover the hole in the box to keep the bees from escaping. Set the syrup can aside and bounce the package on the ground again to settle the bees back into the bottom.

Lift the cover and quickly remove the queen cage from the package. Again, bees contained. Inspect the queen cage to make sure she is active. If the queen is not alive, contact the supplier. Remove the queen cage to the center of the top bar, using a thumb tack through the tab on the queen cage. Place this frame back into the hive, making sure the screen of the entrance of the hive – not toward the back of the hive. Have five frames in the hive with the



queen cage between frames number 4 & 5. After the frames are settled, reinstall the Inner Cover and Outer Cover. Feed the bees sugar syrup on the top of the Inner cover, using your favorite method.

Spray the bees in package lightly with sugar water and bounce them down to the bottom again. Remove the package cover and start pouring about a third of the bees into the hive over the top bars where the queen cage is located. Shake the rest of the bees into the space that has no frames. If some do not shake out easily, place the can on the ground at the hive entrance, open top up, and the bees will crawl out and into the hive. Place four of the five removed frames back into the hive – gently and without crowding. Bees underneath the frames will begin to crawl out and the frames will settle down on the frame rests. DO NOT FORCE THEM DOWN OR YOU WILL SQUASH THE BEES UNDERNEATH.

After the frames are settled, reinstall the Inner Cover and Outer Cover. Feed the bees sugar syrup on the top of the Inner cover, using your favorite method.

Go away and leave the bees at least five days to claim their new home. When you return for your first inspection, make sure the queen has been released from the queen cage. Remove the queen cage. Properly space the nine frames and add the tenth frame that you had removed.

If the queen was still in the cage, you can release her into the hive. Carefully remove the screen on her cage, holding the opening pointed down into the frames so she can run out of the cage between two frames. Do this carefully and gently, holding the cage close to the frames so she will not fly away.



### The Got Questions?

The group will be open 6:00-6:30 before the meeting. Join us if you are a new beekeeper or have some beekeeping questions. If you have not joined us before, ask someone to point you to the Got Questions? Room. We will try to help you find some answers.



## Welcome Spring!

**F.Y.I.** by Joe Laws

**The April Speaker is .....**

Roger Farr : He will be talking about the new legislation on beekeeping and doing a presentation on small scale queen rearing. - *See you there! - Joe Laws, Program Director*



Time Magazine – March 2017 issue

### The bee drone

How much technology would it take to replace a bee? That's the question industrial-design student Anna Haldewang aims to answer with Plan Bee, a hand-size drone that detects flowers with an ultraviolet camera, then uses a special suction mechanism to suck pollen from one plant and blow it into another. For now, the product prototype – which won't hit the market for at least two years – is meant to help people understand how bees pollinate, say Haldewang, adding that she has no plans to "take over the bee population." However, similar technology may soon be necessary on a larger scale, as pesticides and climate change threaten the future of bee colonies around the world – and, by extension, the crops they pollinate. – Julia Zorthian

