



East Texas Beekeepers Association

April Report by Dick Counts

April 5, 2018

I hope to see you at our April meeting. One of our activities at the meeting will be to nominate and elect our 2018 club officers. This gives you an opportunity to become an officer and help guide the club through the coming year. The only requirement for becoming an officer is to be a current member. You do not have to be an expert beekeeper. You just need to be willing to help us plan and operate club activities for the coming year. If you have any questions about becoming an officer, give me or President Matt a call. Two of the positions we will be electing are President and Vice President. The President's primary duties are to conduct our meetings and to write an article for the newsletter. The Vice President steps up when the President is not available. If you are interested in either of these positions, let me know. We will also be taking nominations from the floor prior to voting.

Along with several other ETBA members, I had the opportunity to attend a presentation by Dr. Larry Conner on March 17 in Marshall. We had a good day, learned more about bees, and met some new people. I will share a report with you at our April meeting.

Our 2018 Beginners Beekeeping Class is nearing completion. Our boxes are now with Eddie Collins so he can start new hives in them. We are expecting them back full of bees toward the end of the month. During the March class, one of the hives in my yard swarmed. Our new beekeepers had the opportunity to watch the swarm issue from the hive and then land on a nearby tree limb. We were able to recover the swarm and put them in a new box.

Our speaker for April is Becky Bender, beekeeper and plant specialist. Becky writes an article about bee friendly plants for the TBA Journal. Last month, I got a little ahead of myself and wrote she was our March speaker. But she really is our guest speaker for April. Join us and meet Becky. She is an interesting and informative speaker. Bring any plant questions or a cutting of a plant you cannot identify. See you there.

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



Next Meeting
April 5th

United Methodist Church
405 West Main in Whitehouse
6:30 PM



Preventing the Swarming of Your Hives



I hope you have all been in your bees already this spring!!

You should be taking inventory of your hives and keeping an eye out for swarms! We grabbed one last week on a building in our yard.

Since it is getting warmer and things are starting to kick-off in the bee yard, I decided to write about something you should be doing now. It is time to add boxes, start to prepare for the honey flow and maybe even make some splits.

Early spring could be considered one of the busiest times of the year for bees. The queen has started laying eggs, and also encouraging the workers to start gathering pollen from the many plants that have started blooming. Unless

it is an extremely strong hive there will not be any drones in the hive at this time. However, very soon the hive will be full of new bees ready to swarm. Since no one wants to lose half of the bees in their hive, there are two things that can be done to prevent bees from swarming.

Honey bees swarm when the population of a hive has exceeded the capacity of the cavity their hive occupies. Expanding the room in a hive will prevent swarms because of the extra space in the hive. Two ways you can prevent swarming are by splitting and adding more boxes. Splitting prevents swarming by dividing the hive and starting a new hive. When splitting you can take a few frames of brood, stores (pollen and nectar) and start a new colony. When splitting; it is important to locate your queen so you can add a new queen to the new hive or the old one and know that both hives have a queen.

An alternate way to split is known as a walk-away split. A walk-away split is the same as a regular split except that the beekeeper does not provide the queen. Instead they make sure the split has eggs, then let them make their own queen. Another way to expand the room in a hive is by adding boxes. Adding boxes is not only a way to prevent swarming, but can also be a way to prepare for the honey flow.

Spring is not the only time that beekeepers should pay attention to what is going on in their hives. Online there are many different annual beekeeping resources, and new beekeepers should find one to use for reference in their own bee yards. Knowing what to be paying attention to at all times of the year is vital for every beekeeper and the health of their honeybees.



~ Peter

President's Letter *by Matt Thomas*



Greetings ETBA Members,

The bee season is among us and blooms of various different kinds are starting to present themselves. Christina and I were driving through town the other day and noticed the beautiful Wisteria vine adorning the tree tops. Wisteria is part of the legume family and produces a sweet aroma. I always enjoy seeing bees working the purple blooms and it is probably one of the first sources of nectar the honey bees have. There is already a little bit of Crimson Clover on the road sides but it has not matured yet in the fields.



This is certainly the busiest time of the year for honeybees and beekeepers alike. Some beekeepers are shaking bees out of big parent colonies and creating cell builders to raise queens in. Shaking nurse bees out of big parent colonies both helps us manage swarming and raise a few queens too. Once you have

raised queens out of your cell builder you can either use the bees or populate weaker colonies or stick one of the cells you raised in the cell builder and start a new colony. Managing your apiary or bee hives is mainly about using the resources in the hive to help other hives. When you and I walk away from our apiary, every colony should be equal and queen right (if Queens are available). This time of the year if you have an enormous hive that is thinking about swarming you can either shake some bees out of it to make a cell builder, split it with cells the colony has already raised, or kill the queen cells and take emerging frames of brood and put them in other colonies that are weaker.

This time of year if you are not managing the population, you can almost certainly expect the bees to swarm. A lost swarm is potentially a failed honey crop. Translation-Go out and check your hives regularly. If your colony gets really big and while checking it you see swarm cells hanging from the bottom of the frames of brood, split it. Find the queen and put her in the bottom box with an excluder above her, equalize all the brood, pollen and honey frames like you want them (minimum-2 frames of brood, one of pollen and one of honey per split) in other boxes. Make sure you put all frames with queen cells on them above the excluder so when you take them off and put them on bottom boards the virgin queens will hatch out in your new colonies. You equalize all the resources in the hive during the day. Come back right at dark and take your boxes above the excluder off and put them on bottom boards. If you are not interested in raising queens this is how you can increase colonies. Be mindful that colonies get really big really fast. You have to pay attention and keep a close eye on them or they will swarm on you. Be sure to check them regularly.

Before I close out this article I would like to give a heartfelt condolence to Jeff and Morgan Wood and their son Gus. A very short time ago Jeff and Morgan lost their son Olin Wood at 30 weeks pregnancy. Morgan and Jeff are members of our club and are some of the nicest people you would ever want to meet. Please keep them and their son Gus in your prayers in this difficult time. We love you guys!

Blessings,

~ Matt

See you in April!

Practical Experiences in the Beeyard by Stan Brantley



The possibility of a good honey production this year is looking better and better. Privet is blooming much better than last year's poor showing. Cherry Laurel, Redbud and Black Locust are adding to the forage mix. The Bradford Pear has already burst into snow white blossoms and then to slick green leaves. The Crimson Clover along the highways is beginning to bloom. White and Crimson Clover will be seen in hayfields and pastures in about another week.

Swarm calls are now coming at regular rates, an indication that hives are expanding and feeling the need to swarm. When you enter the area of your bee hives, be observant for swarms. Remember to look up and all around the area because swarms do not always settle less than head high and within a few feet of the hive. They also settle in the high branches and often a long way from the hive. Here is a trick that may help you capture a swarm settled high in a tree. Using a short fishing rod; cast a weighted line over the limb and pull up a rope. Attached a Nuc box to the rope and pull it up to the swarm. The Nuc must touch the bees for them to migrate inside. If you do not have a Nuc handy, you can use plastic bucket with two or three drawn combs inside and a little lemongrass oil added for that "come hither" effect.

During this period of rapid hive expansion, your job as beekeeper is to try your best to prevent your queen from swarming. One approach could be to add two or three supers above the brood chamber without a queen excluder between. This allows the queen to lay eggs anywhere she chooses, eliminating that sense of crowding that often starts the swarming urge. As the flow continues to increase and the brood begins to hatch in the supers, workers will clean the cells and begin to store honey in them, causing the queen to move back down into the brood chamber. At some point, you can install the queen excluder under the supers – just make sure the queen is below the excluder. The excluder will also prevent any drones trapped above it from exiting the hive. Open the hive occasionally to let the drones escape or you will find lots of dead drones stuck in the excluder when you harvest your honey.

Another method is to add one at a time, adding that next super when the one on the hive has about six frames full of nectar. In most hives, wax drawing or nectar storage will begin at the rear of the hive in the center frame and move toward the front of the frame and toward the side frames. The last frames to be drawn or filled will be the outside frames. Some beekeepers will move the completed middle frames to the outside, shifting the edge frames to the center to encourage the bees to draw and fill all nine or ten frames.

If you are starting a package or a Nuc, feed the bees to help them produce wax and draw comb. Even if you used drawn comb in the new hive, go ahead and give them a gallon of sugar syrup so they do not have to leave the hive to collect food. This will greatly speed the process of drawing the comb, and allowing the queen to have plenty of room.

I encourage you to spend time watching your hive to see what the bees are doing.

Around four o'clock to five o'clock in the afternoon, the drones return to the hive from their mating flights. As dusk approaches, you may see hive beetles trying to fly into the hive. Guard bees will gather at the entrance and attempt to prevent the beetles from entering the hive. You can sometimes tell if there is a problem in the hive by large numbers of beetles attracted by the "hive alarm pheromone" coming out of the hive. If you see a lot of beetles going into the hive, do a hive inspection as soon as possible and make sure the queen is viable and laying.



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.

F.Y.I. by Joe Laws



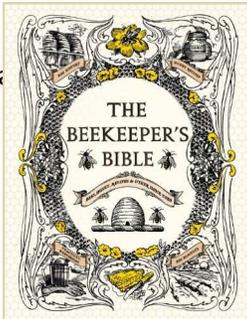
Becky Bender

Becky Bender is an R.N. with a Master's degree in Science. She's a Texas Master Naturalist and a member of the Collin County Beekeepers Association in north Texas. Over the past several years her beekeeping hobby evolved into a passion for learning about the conservation and restoration of bee habitat. Becky restored her own land and yard with native Texas vegetation and now manages it for all wildlife and honey bees. Becky writes "The Buds and The Bees" column for the Journal of the Texas Beekeeping Association.

See you there!
Joe Laws, Program Director



...from the Editor



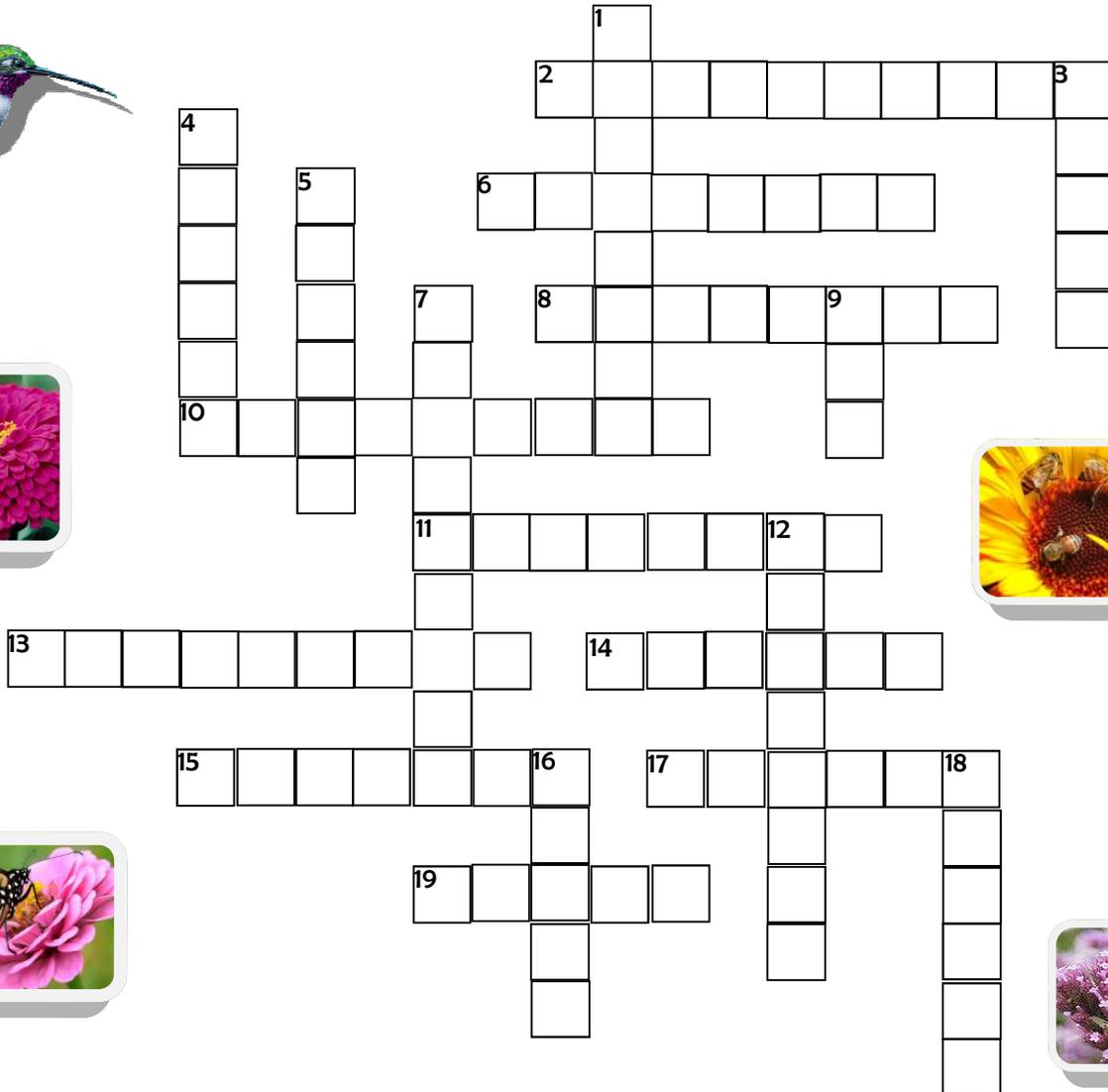
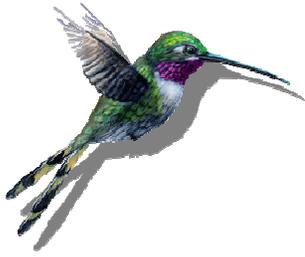
The Beekeeper's Bible is as much an ultimate guide to the practical essentials of beekeeping as it is beautiful almanac to be read from cover to cover. Part history book, part handbook, and part cook book, this illustrated tome covers every facet of the ancient hobby of beekeeping, from how to manage 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 \$27.**

"Bee-ing Like-minded"

Do you have news you would like to share with the club members?
Are you looking to purchase or sell honey, equipment, bees, volunteer, etc?
Have a question or idea you thought of after the meeting?

Send a *detailed email to: Trish.etba@gmail.com
If room allows, I may be able to include it in the following month's newsletter.

*It has to be honeybee related and please include your contact info.



Down:

- 1. tall plant with pink or white bell-shaped flowers
- 3. aromatic annual European herb used in pickling
- 4. beautiful and bright, but not to be confused with a harmonious universe
- 5. of the legume family with spikes of blue, purple, white or yellow flowers
- 7. buttercup family with red or blue irregular spurred flowers
- 9. tree or shrub with silver-gray bark, tiny white flowers and orange-red berries
- 12. sweet-smelling with multitude of tiny bluish-purple flowers
- 16. white, blue, purple or pink daisy-like flowers; family *Asteraceae*
- 18. unscramble these letters—laeaza

Across:

- 2. wood and cotton
- 6. named after the French botanist Pierre Magnol
- 8. a woody perennial herb used in cooking
- 10. one of the biggest and brightest flower of them all with edible seeds
- 11. ornamental plant with yellow, orange or copper-brown flowers
- 13. herb with showy yellow flowers, having medicinal properties
- 14. four leaf is the luckiest
- 15. attracts all pollinators, drought-resistant, and bares small five petal flowers
- 17. starts with the last letter of the alphabet and has long-lasting large flowers
- 19. tropical shrub or tree of the family *Verbenaceae*