

East Texas Beekeepers Association



April 2022

April Report by Jim Biles

For the past several months I've been writing about significant issues facing U.S. beekeepers. This month is about pesticides. If you go all the way back to Civil War days, the first manufactured chemical pesticide (Paris Green) became commonplace, particularly in treating fruit pests. And it killed honey bees. Fast forward 150 years, and the plot is the same....just the names have been changed. For the past decade, neonicotinoids have been the new name in pesticide use, introduced to seedlings and becoming a systemic part of plants. The beekeeping industry marshaled against "neonics" and abundant information is available about the negative impacts to honey bees.

The latest development in pesticides is sulfoximides. These act in a similar way to neonics, but are just different in chemical structure. And we're already seeing the first lawsuits trying to curb the use of these chemicals. The first major court decision was announced in late 2021. This occurred in a California district court which ended the use of these pesticides in California. This is no surprise, given the possible significant harm to honey bees that pollinate California almonds. It remains to be seen as to whether this ban will move to other states as well.

While pesticides get most of the beekeeping attention, there are other chemicals that harm honey bees as well. Some herbicides and other agricultural chemical products have been proven toxic to honey bees. It seems overwhelming to the average beekeeper when we think about our bees foraging over a wide area and we don't know if there are toxic chemicals being used. What is a beekeeper to do?

Here are some thoughts:

Look for signs that your bees are into something that's killing them. In particular, react quickly if you see large honey bee kills. The State Apiary service is normally responsive if you have questions about such matters.

Have a secondary location if you need to move hives in the event of pesticide damage.

Stay abreast of current events regarding pesticide use. The American Beekeeping Federation is one of several organizations with useful information. They have several education videos discussing honey bees and pesticides.

Get to know the environment where your bees forage. Pay particular attention to large areas of agricultural activity. If you see many acres of a product, it would be useful to find out what is being grown and what chemicals are used (and application timing). While difficult, you may be able to get information from the county ag office, feed stores, or others in the area.

If you're a new beekeeper, please plan to attend the ETBA clinic scheduled for Saturday, April 9. I hope to see you there! Check out the flier at the end of the newsletter!

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Next Meeting

March 3rd

United Methodist Church
405 West Main in Whitehouse

6:30 PM

On the Web:
www.etba.info

FYI *by Meagan Elzner*



The April Program...

This month our meeting will require a bit of participation!

*We are going to do a show and tell **beekeeping gadgets** meeting*

*So bring your favorite or unique beekeeping inventions/gadgets/items you use a lot and we can all
mingle around the tables and learn about them.*

*It can be anything from a queen dip to a hive body to beeswax beauty molds to a cool swarm
removal device you may have invented.*

It will be fun to see what others have to show!

I look forward to seeing what everyone brings!

See you there!



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~ Meagan and Isaac Elzner ~



Practical Experiences in the Bee Yard

by Stan Brantley



On February 15th, I opened my front window curtains and a flash of pink blossoms on the Chinese Magnolia greeted me. Trees, flowers, weeds and dandelions have continued to bloom. I saw Bradford Pears blooming on March 3rd and the first white colors of the Wild Plum on the 6th. Everybody in the East Texas Beekeepers Association knows Dick Counts says it is time to put your first super on the hive when the Wild Plum blooms. The nectar flow has begun!

The flow will get stronger during April. If you have access to pastures of Red Clover, relocate hives to these pastures as soon as you can. Red Clover will not bloom long after the middle of May.

New Beekeepers --If you have made arrangements with bee suppliers for Nucs and packages, you should receive them April to mid-May. If you receive package bees, install and FEED THEM until they draw eight frames in a ten frame box. If you want honey this season, I suggest you then discontinue feeding and add an excluder and a medium super. If you just want to grow lots of bees and not harvest honey until next season, then add second brood chamber and continue to feed sugar syrup as long as they will take it even though the flow is still going strong. When they stop taking sugar syrup, add an excluder and a medium super.

Sometimes it is difficult to get the bees to move up into a super full of new foundation. An old trick is to make passage around the excluder for the bees to access the super. Remove the super and rotate the excluder ninety degrees on the brood box. This leaves about a two inch gap at the front and back of the brood box. Replace the super and check in six days to see if the bees have moved through this extra space into the super. I have found this is usually successful in getting the bees to move onto the foundation and start to draw it out. The queen usually stays in the brood box as she tends to lay on drawn frames in the center of the box. When the bees start working in the super, turn the excluder to its proper orientation. If you notice brood in the super, your queen did move up through the gap. You will need to find her and move her back below the excluder.

Established Beekeepers – It is time to decide if you are going to split some of your hives or attempt to reduce swarming tendencies by re-queening with a newly purchased queen. You may also consider starting one or more Nucs. Pull a frame of solid capped brood and place it in a Nuc box with a frame of eggs and a frame of honey and let them raise a queen. Or add a queen cell or a new caged queen. New beekeepers are always ready to buy good, locally produced Nucs.

If your hive is a double brood configuration, check and see if the bees have moved into the top brood box over the winter. If they are in the top box and the frames are full of brood, you may wish to reverse the top and bottom brood boxes and allow the queen more overhead expansion room. Remove the top and bottom brood box and scrape the bottom board clean. Then place the top brood box full of brood onto the bottom board. Put the original bottom box on top of the new bottom box. This will allow the queen to expand upward with her laying without feeling stress of overcrowding.

Supers can be filled quickly during a strong flow. Monitor your supers to determine when to add additional ones. One technique is called bottom supering. Additional supers are added to the hive under the supers already in place rather than being placed at the top of the stack. Some beekeepers believe placing the new super just above the excluder reduces the feeling of crowding in the hive and reduces the tendency to swarm. For those of you who are building swarm traps, you need to get rid of the new wood smell to make them more attractive to bees looking for a new home. We typically add a frame of old drawn comb to entice the bees to enter. Another suggestion is to pick a handful of green grass, trees leaves, azalea leaves, or other blooming plant leaves and vigorously scrub the opening and inside of the swarm trap. This leaves the natural odor of the plant residue and covers the new wood smell.



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!

Connie Collins - ETBA President

Hello Beekeepers!

Just a quick message this month to say hello. I hope you are enjoying the springtime with your bees! As beekeepers we are very busy this time of year making queens, splits, and a mess of things. I hope to see you all at the next meeting, and I am looking forward to our 2022 beekeeping class this year.

Happy Spring!



HONEY FARMS
WHITEHOUSE, TEXAS

FOR SALE: NUCS - HONEYBEES

Available for pick up mid-April.
Whitehouse & Crockett
Orders available starting January 1st, 2021
Gift Certificates on sale now!
Contact Connie Collins (903) 316-6335 Connie@cncfarms.com



.....from the Editor

Check out the flier on the next page for our upcoming Beginning Beekeeping Class. Share with someone you know who might be interested.

Sign up and pay your annual dues if you haven't already, so you will continue to receive your monthly newsletter. See Jennifer Palmer at the meeting. (spalm474@gmail.com if you have questions.)

Don't forget to send in your business card size ads if you have something "bee" related you want to buy, sell or give away! There is no charge to place an ad! Send ads to jenifer@babyak.org. If you need help getting your info in "ad format", let me know, and I'll try to help.



ETBA Beginner Beekeeping Class

Join us April 9th - 8:30am-4pm - Whitehouse, 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 at least 3 hours checking hives

Details:

- Cost: \$100 (box lunch included)
- You can pay Jennifer Palmer at the meeting or mail a \$100 check (post marked before March 20th) made out to East Texas Beekeepers Association to:

**East Texas Beekeepers Association
PO Box 9662
Tyler, TX 75711**

- All proceeds go to the club for 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.

Classified Ads

There will be NO charge for placing an ad in the classifieds. It needs to be a business card size ad (one ad per person). Your ad needs to be "bee" related. Please send your ad to jenifer@babyak.org.

FOR SALE

BEE EQUIPMENT Spring 2022

6-12 frame radial Dadant stainless steel extractor \$450
20"x 44" uncapping vat w/stand & electric knife \$150
25-gallon Dadant stainless steel bottling tank \$175
Solar wax melter \$50
55 6-5/8" supers w/ 9 frames drawn comb \$35 ea
40 deep boxes with 10 drawn combs \$25 ea
20 treated bottom boards \$7.50 ea
20 lids \$7.50 ea
Contact: stevesbees54@gmail.com

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WWW.ELZNERFARMS.COM
ELZNERFARMS@GMAIL.COM



MEAGAN ELZNER
BEEKEEPER/OWNER
618.410.6239

ISAAC ELZNER
BEEKEEPER/OWNER
713.504.3635