



# East Texas Beekeepers Association

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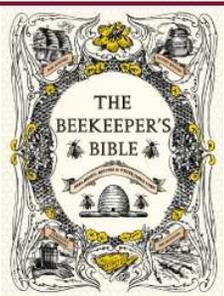
August 3, 2017

## *August Report by Dick Counts*

It is always nice to see a good crowd at our monthly meetings. Though I did not get an accurate count, by my guess we had 90-95 members and guests at our July meeting.

Public interest in bees and beekeeping continues to be strong. I find it interesting that the two primary things attracting public attention are “not enough bees” and “too many bees”. People become concerned when they hear stories about bees who are dying or disappearing, often wanting to know what they can do to help. On the other hand, people also become concerned when confronted with large numbers of bees, such as a large swarm hanging on the side of a car or branch in a public area. They also become concerned when they discover that a large hive of bees is living in the wall or ceiling of their home!

I was asked by local TV news to participate in two interviews about bees during July. Over the years, I have worked with our local TV news organizations to help them respond to bee-related issues. Our first interview talked about concerns of poor honey harvests this summer. The second interview involved a lady who found her wall was full of bees, to the point of having bees coming out of a wall plug when I removed the cover plate. I do appreciate the “bee awareness” of our local news teams. They do a good job at keeping bee and beekeeping issues in the public spotlight.



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, & 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.**

President—Matt Thomas

Vice President—Eddie Collins

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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

# August 3

United Methodist Church  
405 West Main in Whitehouse 6:30 PM  
On the Web: [etba.info](http://etba.info)



Hello Fellow beekeepers! I have arrived safely from my great African adventure, and before I dive into my article, I wanted to thank you all for your support. This month I am going to write about some of the predators of the bees that come from outside of the hive. These pests and predators can have a significant impact on the well-being of our beehives.

One of the biggest, most impactful predators is a skunk. They can eat a large portion of the bees in a hive. They go and knock or scratch on the outside of the hive to draw the bees out of the hive; meanwhile, they lay their tails across the entrance and catch the bees in the thick fur on their tails. They will chew up their catches to get any honey out, and then spit out the bee's hard exoskeleton. They will often do this all night, and can eat several thousand bees a night. Some methods of control can be to put a small fence around your bees, or to put some tack strip to keep them from leaning up against the hive to scratch on the boxes, or even just raising your hives up about 2 feet.



Some pests can affect the well-being of a hive, without actually eating the bees. These include mice, ants, and other small creatures. These pests are looking for either a warm place to live, or a source of food, and can overrun the hive. The best prevention is to keep a strong hive, to discourage the pest from making it into the hive in the first place. For mice, a smaller entrance can make it harder for them to get into the hive and establish a home.

Then there are some pests that can affect the outside of a hive unintentionally. These are animals like cows and horses, which can knock down the hive by scratching on it, or can affect the forage levels of the hive. These animals aren't actual pest, though they can make it hard for the bees, especially if they knock the beehive over. One of the largest impacts that they have is the lack of forage they can create. Whether through grazing, or the exclusive seeding for hay grasses, they can cause large losses of forage. The best way to help the bees is to keep them away from the beehives.

I hope that you have started to get the theme that keeping strong hives is the best way to keep most things out. Whether it is various predators, pests, or diseases, strong hives are the best. This article hopefully will get you thinking about some of the larger predators and pests, and looking for specific signs in or on your hives.

~Jacob

Hello everyone. As I mentioned last month, I have decided to write the next couple of months on common pests in the beehive. The pest I chose to write about this month is the wax moth. Wax moths were first reported in 1806 and were probably introduced through imported bees from Asia.



The wax moth normally deposits its eggs in small cracks in the bees hive equipment or any other suitable crevice in the hive. Once the eggs hatch they proceed to tunnel through the wax combs. The darker wax of the brood combs contains the exoskeletons that the bee larvae shed while developing, and it might also contain pollen. These things are both highly attractive to the wax moth larvae.

As the larvae bore through the comb they leave silk strands through the combs. Once the larvae are ready to pupate they will fasten themselves to the face of the frame or they will burrow into the frame to pupate. This can ruin the equipment and can destroy the hive quickly.

The one good thing about wax moths is that they are opportunists. This means that the wax mother can only get in and take over a hive that is already very weak. There are many ways that a hive can become weak: Varroa mites, Small Hive beetles, many diseases, and bad management of a hive.

Since the wax moth is an opportunist, it is very easy to combat them. Just keep your hive strong. There are many ways to keep your hive strong. One way is by great management and going through your hives weekly. Weekly inspections help you know when something does get into your hive and you can stop it before it grows. Another way is to keep your hives in full sun. Most pests that can weaken a colony, like small hive beetles, do not like the sun light. Keeping the hives in full sun can reduce many varieties of pests.



The last way to keep the bee colony strong is by re-queening regularly. The queen will usually dictate the hive's condition; if it is an old queen, the hive will normally be weaker, but if a hive has a young queen, that hive will normally be stronger. Replacing the queen every 1 to 2 years helps guarantee that the hive will always have a younger queen. If you practice this, and your hive gets weak you will know that it is not because the queen is old.

If you happen to lose a hive to wax moths, don't throw away equipment that is not completely destroyed. Just scrape off the silk and pupating larvae and stick it in a freezer to kill anything that you missed. Then put it back onto a hive and the bees will clean it up.

I hope this has been helpful while wax moths are a menace; there are a number of ways to prevent them. Remember, a strong hive is a healthy hive!!

~ Peter



## President's Letter *by Matt Thomas*



### Post Honey Goal



The post honey goal is to make sure your what other beekeepers do after the honey honey frames are put back on the hive the brood. Since I have taken a considerable right after I put deep combs back on. I also feed a gallon of syrup. With the honey I leave on them plus the syrup I give them, it will hold them over for the Fall flow. Fall flow will also be the time I re-queen some of the colonies I didn't get around to previously.

bees stay healthy for Winter. I don't know flow is over but this is what I do. Any deep day after extraction. I run two deep boxes for amount of the hive's honey, I begin to feed do mite treatment at same time. I typically

The post honey flow is a perfect time for mite management, feeding and checking bees and queens for health. The real goal is for there to be a big cluster for Winter with 7 frames of honey, which they will no doubt accumulate during the Fall flow. I do not ever pull Fall honey. I leave it for the bee's nutrition. Everything you do from this point is getting your bees healthy and ready for Winter. You don't want to go through Winter with weak hives because you will more than likely lose them. It would be better to merge the weak hives together, treat and feed them. Most beekeepers spend the majority of their time on their weakest colonies to the neglect of their strongest colonies. Merging colonies together make a colony stronger and will help them winter well. Those merged colonies can often make you three colonies the next season. When merging colonies; take your weakest queen and kill her and take bees and brood from a weak colony and put them with the stronger of the two weak colonies. The Fall flow will help to make your clusters healthy and big.

I hope you had a good honey crop this year and your bees are healthy. See you at the August meeting.

~ Matt

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

### *August Program:*

*The presentation will be on new license plates with honey bees that are available. Proceeds from the sale of these plates will go towards honey bee research. (Similar reference; <http://www.franklincountybees.org/beeplate>) ... Then, Eddie Collins (our vice-president) will be speaking on a double nuc cloak board device and then we should still have time for a question and answer period.*

**Interesting related link:** *Feeding the honeybees in Autumn.*

<https://petalsandwings.blog/tag/honeybee-in-autumn/>

Petals and Wings ~ Backyard Nature Lover's Experience

**Article:** Honeybees in Autumn

08MondayDec 2014

Posted by P&B in Beekeeping



## *Practical Experiences in the Beeyard* by Stan Brantley



August will soon be here and bring with it the 100 degree days that we have mostly avoided this summer, and the hot dry period known as the “summer dearth”. Little or no nectar will be available for our honey bees. Brood production will decrease, Small Hive Beetle issues will increase, and activities in the hive will change. Fewer bees will be bringing in forage and more bees will be bringing in water to help cool the hive in the hot afternoon temperatures. The hive will be congested with bees that are not as busy and not as happy as during a good nectar flow. This can cause a change in a hive’s temperament. Bees that are normally well mannered can become cranky and less tolerant of disturbance. Take care and pay attention to the bees’ reaction when you need to work in the hive. If the bees do become agitated and start buzzing loudly, you may wish to close the hive and come back another time.

Bees may gather in large numbers on the outside of the hive in the hot afternoons. Known as bearding, this is a normal bee activity and not a sign of a problem in the hive. The bees are trying to move body heat outside the hive and lessen the congestion inside the hive, allowing for better air flow in the hot part of the day. You can help increase ventilation by propping the front edge of the Outer Cover with a small stick or by setting the front edge on the top of the box below it. I like to do this on the front of the hive so the slope is to the back, allowing any moisture to run off the back and not on the landing board. You may not want to do this for weak hives as it does increase the opportunity for robbers to get inside the hive.



Make sure the bees have access to water for cooling the hive. If you are finished extracting for this year, you may want to start feeding sugar syrup. Thin syrup, one part sugar to one part water, is good for this period of dearth. The bees use the sugar for food and the water to help cool the hive. I do not usually recommend feeding pollen patties until later in the Fall. If you do add a pollen patty, add only a small piece so the bees can eat it rapidly. Beetles like to lay eggs under pieces of pollen patty that remain in the hive too long.



Now that you have extracted your honey, the question is “Are you proud of your product?” I have seen some beautiful jars of very light honey shown at recent bee club meetings, particularly from some of our first-time beekeepers. Let me encourage you to put aside a few jars to display and to enter in honey swaps or in honey judging or honey tasting contests. Many local bee clubs have honey contests, awarding ribbons and bragging rights to those whose honey is picked as local favorites. TBA sponsors honey swaps and honey judging at their Summer Clinics or State Conventions. For 2017, TBA is working on revised honey contest rules designed to encourage more beekeepers to participate and enter their honey at the next State Convention. Some of the changes include dropping the entry fee and not requiring TBA membership to enter. Ann Harmon, who, among many honey bee and educational ventures, writes for Bee Culture magazine, will be present and working with local members to assist the judging of honey entries.

As you attend the various Bee Club meetings, get acquainted with the new beekeepers in your area. Many new or novice beekeepers can learn a lot from more experienced beekeepers in your club. Your assistance could help alleviate a lot of the frustration that new beekeepers find when trying to develop a routine of managing their bees in the field. Some expert advice at the right time can alleviate a lot of frustration and maybe even prevent some catastrophic mistakes. There are a lot of benefits to mentoring other beekeepers. Not only do the “newbees” learn from you, but you may be stretched a bit in properly understanding their problems and answering their questions. I always like to say that mentoring another beekeeper makes you a better beekeeper also. Let me encourage you to become a mentor -- you never know when you might need that new beekeeper to help you move hives or pull supers!



### **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.

# The HONEY BEE ~ HISTORY and SCIENCE .... by Trish



## GIANT HONEY BEE, *Apis lithohemaea* Engel, FOSSIL

Fossil of a “giant honey bee” found in Miocene deposits of Iki Island, Japan. KU Entomologist Michael Engel estimated the fossil as being over 19 million years old.

Source; <http://reporting.journalism.ku.edu/spring06/kuhr-musser/2006/03/>

### 100 million years ago

The earliest fossil evidence of bees found to date is preserved in a piece of amber found in a mine in northern Burma. It is believed to date back as far as 100 million years to the time when bees and wasps split into two different lineages. The fossilized insect appears to share features both common to the bee and wasp, but is considered to be more bee than wasp.

### 35 million years ago

The earliest known fossil evidence of the honey bee (genus *Apis*) was found in Europe and is believed to date back 35 million years. However, it is widely believed that the honey bee first evolved in eastern Africa some 40 million years ago and spread northwards into Europe and Eastwards into Asia. Honey bees did not appear in the Americas, Australia or New Zealand until European settlers introduced them in the 17th century.

### 7000 years ago (5000 BC)

The earliest known evidence of mankind’s interaction with bees were found on cave paintings discovered in Spain dating back between 6000 and 8000 years ago. Our Neolithic ancestors would have gathered honey from wild colonies of bees.

### 2400 BC

Earliest evidence of bees being “kept” by humans. Illustrations from ancient Egypt show the use of hives as long ago as 2400 BC. Hittite scriptures recording the theft of hives were found in Anatolia (Turkey) dating back to 1500 BC.

The Mesopotamian civilization was first recorded as having kept bees in hives from at least 700 BC although their use of hives could have been much earlier due to records showing their harvesting of honey from as long ago as 2450 BC.

### 1662 AD

Honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) first introduced to the east coast of America by British settlers. Bees were kept in traditional skeps and simple wooded boxes. It took around 230 years before beekeeping reached the west coast.

### 1853 AD

Invention of the wooden beehive with movable frames and “bee space” between frames by Rev L Langstroth in America. The new design revolutionized the way bee keepers managed their bees, allowing much more control over bee colonies.

### 1904 AD

Varroa mite first discovered (and described by Oudesmans) in Java in 1904. First infestations of honey bees (*Apis cerana*) were found in 1958 in Japan with colonies of the Western honey bee (*A. mellifera*) believed to become infected around 1960 -1962 following their importation to the Philippines.

### 1957 AD

During experiments to improve local bee stocks by cross-breeding African bees with European bees, the accidental release of some of the newly created hybrids in Sao Paulo state in Brazil led to the creation of the Africanized “killer” bee.

### 1992 AD

The varroa mite (*Varroa destructor*) finds its way to the UK.

Source ; [barnsleybeekeepers.org.uk/history.html](http://barnsleybeekeepers.org.uk/history.html)

### Species Diversity.....

Kingdom	<i>Animalia</i>	Spine
Phylum	<i>Arthropoda</i>	Jointed Leg
Class	<i>Insecta</i>	head, thorax, abdomen
Order	<i>Hymenoptera</i>	membrane winged
Superfamily	<i>Apoidea</i>	the bees
Family	<i>Apidae</i>	honey & bumble bees, orchid bees, some stingless bees
Subfamily	<i>Apinae</i>	perennial social colonies
Tribe	<i>Apini</i>	only 1 extant; honey bees
Genus	<i>Apis</i>	hive bee
Species	<i>mellifera</i>	“honey bearing”, western world



Italian Honey Bee  
*Apis mellifera ligustica*



Japanese Honey Bee  
*Apis cerana japonica*

# Taxonomy, Subspecies & Origins

y m k g d o b n t c e u a j w m a l w d n z k b w c a l c i  
 u i s k g k n p n a e a e t a a m e g a p i s p g x n o l n  
 n c o i f r h s r c g c d c i a p i d a e g b x z q i o g t  
 y r l f d u b j k l k t r p f k v h i m a l a y a n m e g e  
 m a d d y s h s n a g y u o p i x w w c h s i o h n a a u r  
 d p o b u s h v s s q a b q p o y d v g s q i j q v l d q m  
 c i n o j i d x d s o n v b c i p g g j j y t c w p i w p i  
 c s r o o a g y q a k i c l o r a v x v u y d b u f a o l s  
 w p p p l n c t k d s c a f r i c a n i z e d h t l p f q s  
 o i r q c b j v v r b h y c u h g l u w x i i c z g a z u a  
 v e t m h d c a r n i o l a n y h u m a c e d o n i a j q e  
 b e s x o q f o u w o p k g y q v h v s i r o k k k y t y t  
 z d s i j h k a w g g i v x j n k g f x o y a o b q s v e a  
 d d z d n f p c m q n u n y b u c k f a s t s q k c k o r z  
 v g h c j d w e e i s j p j i p v l u r j a p a n e s e h s  
 w b k x g f o o q j l g i c m e l l i f e r a u q y p l q u  
 k b s y f b g n c c c y e v e k b f v q q a a a e j n r a p  
 k o u u u k a j e f n z e n r o i j m a p s i z o h a w p e  
 i w d k b c o a u s g j z u u l n n d z k i b f n g r w i r  
 n e o h v f a t p x i w a u r s r m g h s a e o i e t s s f  
 s a v u b h a r k o q a m v y o y u e d d n r l s i h z x a  
 e s o b w i v m n f i c n p r h p g j b o n i r f x r z p m  
 c t s r y a f v i i q d l e f w c e p m j m c a s r o i h i  
 t e k d d q a s o l c t e y o y c r a j a l a a p s p t y l  
 a r d j i e i p l l y a d a p k d m r n h p t l e t o a l y  
 m n c m v x r u i a f y l g o w b a g a n b h f c r d l u q  
 h d l z h r w d e n y b r z i q g n d r k n r i i a i m d  
 q s o n a n d o t u i u u f n f t m x r b e y w e b g a t v  
 s a h a r i e n s i s w h y m e n o p t e r a u s e u n y k  
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- |             |             |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| africanized | superfamily | sahariensis | hymenoptera |
| indonesian  | intermissa  | arthropoda  | macedonia   |
| subfamily   | himalayan   | carniolan   | mellifera   |
| animalia    | japanese    | cecropia    | european    |
| micrapis    | buckfast    | kingdom     | megapis     |
| russian     | species     | italian     | iberica     |
| carnica     | family      | german      | phylum      |
| insecta     | sicula      | apidae      | apoidea     |
| genus       | class       | eastern     | order       |
| apini       | asian       | tribe       | apis        |