

East Texas Beekeepers Association



December 2022 Happy Holidays, Everyone!

This month's speaker will be Mr. Terry Wright, owner of Bee Wright Honey. He will be giving a demonstration on how to make mead!



We will also be having our **honey tasting contest**; enter yours!
To enter: bring an unlabeled squeeze jar (It doesn't have to be a full pound)

Reminder:

ETBA Scholarship Applications are due By the January meeting.
The application can be found on our *website*.

January *will* also be a full issue of the Newsletter!

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Newsletter Editor—Jenifer Babyak
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Next Meeting

Jan 5th

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

Practical Experiences in the Bee Yard

by Stan Brantley



When the weather is freezing at night and it stays too cold for bees to fly until after the noon hour, we wonder if our bees enjoy some down time. There will be little for them to do except go to the late blossoms since the freezing nights have eliminated the pollen sources. How about the lowly dandelion? You know that bright yellow head of color in the sea of brown that is the pristine lawn your neighbor worked so hard all last year to be the brightest green patch of “bee-less” pasture in the area. Somehow, Mother Nature knows how, when and where to provide that one, or many more, little yellow heads to pop up to greet us as we move about our apiaries on the cold December days.

I was out of town for the daytime hours last week, returning in the shortened daytime hours, and was pleasantly surprised when I went to check my honey house. There were a couple hundred of those little yellow dandelion heads scattered in the grass of the lawn. I also saw patches of dark green here and there and determined it to be the new 2023 growth of crimson clover germinating after the last rain. It was preparing itself to provide my bees with nectar in the months to come.

December is the time to enjoy the results of our labor and to monitor the mite population that developed in each hive throughout last summer and fall. It seems that now the best IPM for mite control is to monitor six times throughout the year rather than just in the spring and fall. Reports still abound of “My hives was full of bees last week but yesterday I found they were all gone.” About the only comment you can make is “What kind of mite count did you have?” followed by a short pause and then “You did do a mite check, didn’t you?” By that point, if you are looking the person in the eye, you know what the answer is going to be! Until we can get beekeepers to understand most hives are not capable of controlling the mite population without treatment, their bees are much more likely to die.

Demand for bees, bee hive products, and beekeeping equipment will continue to rise as long as the “Save the Honey Bee” attitude is alive. Prices quoted for hives of bees, Nucs and packages vary among the various growers and suppliers. I suggest that you shop not only for a good price but also for a reputable supplier. Not all bees for sale are the same. You get what you pay for most of the time. Seek the advice of a seasoned beekeeper about the quality of a supplier’s bees before you buy. A listing of bees for sale can readily be found on the Internet and Facebook. Many bee clubs have favorite suppliers or can recommend suppliers known to provide good quality bees that are proven successful for your locale. Some clubs even pool orders and buy in bulk.

If you know someone who started in beekeeping but is considering discontinuing for some reason, share with them that hives and equipment could be sold or donated to the local bee association to help the next new beekeeper get started. Some bee clubs are tax exempt organizations and such donations may be tax deductible.

New beekeepers can benefit from club programs or classes designed to help them get a firm grasp of basic beekeeping principles and practices. Our bee club offers classes for new or novice beekeepers. Consider helping to teach an existing class. You do not have to be an expert beekeeper to help a beginner get a good start in the profession. Even beekeepers with only a year or two of experience have information that is invaluable to someone just getting started. The Internet has a wealth of YouTube videos oriented for beginners from nationally known leaders in the field and academic sources such as University of Florida, Texas A&M and University of Alabama. New beekeepers are our future and I encourage you to invest your time teaching and mentoring them.



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!*

