



East Texas Beekeepers Association

Vol. 29 No. 2

February 6, 2014

February Report by Dick Counts

The interest in beekeeping just keeps growing. We had 115 in attendance at our January meeting and were still missing some of our regulars. I did not get a head count but it appeared that we had about twenty first time visitors, most of them people interested in becoming new beekeepers. Let me say again "Thanks" to all of you who take the time, make the trip, and participate in our monthly meetings. Your effort makes ETBA a success.

Congratulations to the winners of our 2013 Honey Tasting Contest. Mel Marszalek was our First Place winner. Second Place went to Mike Rappazzo and Third Place to Kenneth Duesterhoft.

Our 2014 Beginners Beekeeping class is underway. We had our first round of classes during January. This year, we have seven scholarship students and 32 adult students. We are in the process of ordering equipment and supplies and building our boxes. Our goal is have boxes built, painted and delivered to our bee supplier by March 1.

Bees are in great demand due to an increase in interest coupled with winter losses. This is making bees harder to find than usual. We are actively looking for reliable sources and good prices. What is a good price? Prices seem to range from \$100 to \$150. Depending on the supplier, some are 10-frame boxes but some are only 5-frame nucs. These prices are on an "order now but deliver in May" basis. If you need bees for new hives or to replace winter losses, talk to me now. We are trying to put together a large order and need to know very soon how many bees we need to purchase.

If you plan to buy queens and have not made an order, you should contact your supplier and get on the order list. Most suppliers are taking orders now for queens to be delivered May or later. In buying queens, shipping is often as costly as the queen. You can order one queen and have a \$25 shipping charge. But that same \$25 shipping charge might deliver you a half dozen queens. If you can bundle orders among several beekeepers, you can certainly reduce the per queen shipping cost.

President—Gus Wolf

Vice President—Mike Rappazzo

Treasurer—Tammy Lenamond

Secretary—Lanette Lanchester

Ex. Director and Reporter—
Dick Counts

Honey Queen Chair—Vi Bourns

Directors-at-Large—Stanford
Brantley, Randy Bobo

Program Directors — Joe
Mekalip, Gus Wolf

Webmaster—Ken Wilkinson

Next Meeting
Feb. 6
United Methodist Church
405 West Main in Whitehouse
6:45 PM
On the Web: etba.info
Or on the phone: (903) 566-6789

HONEY QUEEN REPORT by *Vi Bourns*



We are ready to crown the 2014 Honey Queen and Princess who will be representing East Texas Beekeepers Association in the coming year. This event will take place at our Feb. 6th meeting in Whitehouse. We are proud to present Miss Carrie Lenamond as Honey Queen and Miss Willow Lanchester as Honey Princess. Both girls are active beekeepers and both love cooking with honey. I am anxious to see what healthy foods they will introduce to us this year. I am always amazed by the ways they mature as they are exposed to new challenges in their lives.

My six hives have so far made it through these ups and downs in the weather. However, when I check on them after each cold snap, I still hold my breath and hope to find them hearty and happy. Some trees are beginning to bud but the next freeze is on its way as I write this. I still need to watch my hives closely to make sure they have enough food to survive. Hope you are doing the same.

As a side note, a friend shared a new site for honey bee information, www.texasbeewatchers.com and I have found it to be very interesting and informative.

Hi everybody! My name is Carrie Lenamond and I am so excited to be serving as your 2014 ETBA Honey Queen! I am 16 years old and the 3rd daughter of Mike and Tammy Lenamond. I first started beekeeping when I was 8, taking a beekeeping class in 2004 taught by John Talbert and Blake Shook. Currently, I help manage three hives on our small farm. In addition to beekeeping, I enjoy playing softball, cooking and baking with honey, singing, being with my family, and leather crafting. My future goals include playing college softball and obtaining a degree in architecture and interior design. I hope to one day become a home renovationist.

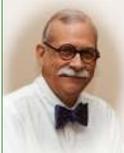
Having been given this opportunity to be your Honey Queen, I feel certain that the experience will be rewarding in all future endeavours. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve our club and teach others about the amazing honey bee! I hope to see you all at the next meeting! ~Carrie

My name is Willow Lanchester, soon to be 2014 ETBA Honey Princess. My parents are Ryan and Lani Lanchester. I have a younger sister, Laurel, who is 10. I am 15 years old and am a homeschooled 9th grader. My first encounter with ETBA was at the 2010 East Texas State Fair, just after moving to Tyler. I remember Laurel and me searching for the queen bee in the observation hive and eating honey sticks. About a year after first attending the ETBA booth at the Fair, my 4-H leader, Judy Giles, encouraged us to attend our first ETBA meeting. I was surprised at how fun the meetings were and was immediately hooked. Since then, we have learned so much from other beekeepers who are all so willing to teach. Last Spring, I received a scholarship from the East Texas Beekeepers Association to take beekeeping classes from Mr. Dick Counts and received one hive and bought a second one. Unfortunately, this December, I lost one of my hives. After losing my hive, Judy Giles urged me not to be discouraged but to seize the opportunity to learn more. I decided that I will try to catch swarms and do more bee removals to compare feral hives to the domestic hive. I am interested in observing which will be more resilient to mites and other pests.

I have been watching and reading more documentaries and books on beekeeping than I care to count, and yet it still amazes me that there are as many different methods for beekeeping as there are beekeepers. It is equally amazing how important these small insects are for our world. It is extremely sad to imagine this world without bees and for this reason I think that it is important that we preserve them.

I do not yet really know what I am going to do with my life, though I have loved three things since I was little — bees, art, and birds. I know that whatever I do in life, my art will be my constant companion. It is a way of speaking to the world and spreading awareness, whether it is about bees, politics, or God. No matter what I do or where I go, I will take my art with me to ensure my voice is heard along with the voices of others.

I believe that being the Honey Princess will provide the wonderful opportunity to educate people of the importance of bees and the beekeeping industry. I hope to promote knowledge of the honey bee, because they are vital to the survival and beauty of this world as we know it. I am thrilled to be able to work with all of you this year. I look forward to any input or advice. Thank you so much for this amazing opportunity. ~Willow



President's Letter *by Gus Wolf*

I think it's amazing and it happens every night! I retire to a supine position in bed and for six to eight hours I never once think of food! Even if I get up in the middle of the night, it's not food I am thinking of when I'm headed back to that warm mattress that's calling my name. But not long after I wake up the next morning, I head for the kitchen to make something to satisfy the hunger I am feeling. From then on, it's about every four hours that my stomach clock goes off and demands that my body furnace get some more fuel. Mind you, that does not include the occasional between meal snack or two.

Bees don't sleep but they do think about food all the time. From sun up to sun down, weather and temperature permitting, they look for nectar, pollen and propolis. During the winter, which this year has been coming and going weekly, there are no blooms and thus no food. But we know that is why they have stored up all that delectable honey.

This time of year bees need increased protein in order to feed the new brood they are rearing and getting ready for the spring nectar flow. With scant trees blossoming, pollen is not exactly abundant this time of year. You could purchase a pollen substitute from one of the bee suppliers to supplement the bee's diet. Open the hive and stick a patty in and they will make it disappear.

The question of open feeding came up in last month's meeting. Open feeding would be offering dry food to any bees that would come to an open feeding station. At the Texas Beekeepers Association Convention this year, open feeding was discussed in one of Randy Oliver's presentations. Although we did not have Randy at last month's meeting, we DID have Jan Aerts there. Jan has a secret recipe for dry bee food. I'd share it with you but, because of the personal research he does, he is keeping it under wraps for now. Judy Giles, however, said that chickpea flour works and that the bees take it when offered in an outside open feeder.

That got me to thinking and I remembered an article written a while back by T'Lee Sollenberger in the American Bee Journal about a simple bee feeder she had made from plastic plumbing fittings. A simple search on the internet yielded the issue number and I quickly went to my stash of back issues and found the February 2013 article that she had written. Since I already had some of the hardware from a chicken related project, I went to Lowes and purchased some additional parts. In just a few minutes I had three feeders made. My wife brought home chickpea flour from the local health food store to fill the feeders.

I hung up one of the feeders with about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of chick pea flour in it and added a few drops of honey to the landing area along with a few drops of anise oil. Anise is very attractive and was extensively used by old time beekeepers before lemongrass became widely available. It did not take long for the bees to find it, the honey that is, and to haul it away, leaving the chickpea flour



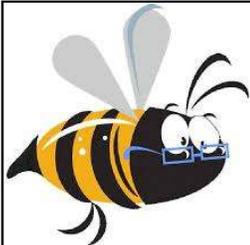
behind. I was skeptical. But before long, there was a small cloud of bees hovering at the front, waiting for their turn at the line dance going on inside. Bees dancing on the flour, rolling around white from what they rolled in, and forming little beads of chickpea flour on their pollen baskets. I ran to the nearest hive and sure enough, white bees going in! I didn't waste any time in hanging up another feeder closer to my other hives. They, too, were soon swamped with visitors.

Although I'd love to try different flours and feeds to see what they prefer, it may have to wait until next year. As soon as abundant real pollen becomes available, bees will likely abandon the fast food restaurant I have for them. I'll bring some of the feeders to the February meeting so you can see how they are made.

More from President Gus

For those of you looking for inexpensive bee books, look no further than your computer or wireless device. If you have a Kindle reader, even better. Amazon also offers a free kindle reader software that can be installed on your computer, tablet or smart phone. You can then download Kindle Ebooks from the Amazon website.

Here is how to do it: Go to www.Amazon.com. To the left of the "Search" box, select the drop down arrow and click on "Kindle Store". This will search only for electronic books. Type in a key word like Beekeeping or Bees and then click "Go." This will bring up the related Ebooks. Look over on the right side where it says "sort by" Relevance. Use that drop down box to reorder the selections by "price, low to high" All the free books priced at \$0.00 are listed first. In case you missed it that means FREE. Currently five classic titles are free and a number are less than a dollar. From time to time the free titles change, so check frequently and grab them when they become available. The education is there for the taking and the price is right!



Bee Facts by Eddie Collins

Did you know that all bee hive boxes, no matter the size, are called "supers"? There are three sizes I'm most familiar with that we'll discuss in this article. I do know there are several other sizes that are currently made or have been commercially available in the past. We also sometimes see home-built supers -- and the sky is the limit on what we see in the homemade boxes.

The three most common sizes in East Texas are:

The large size hive box is commonly referred to as "the deep box" or the "brood box" or even "deep super". When calling it a "deep super" this is normally in the context of using the deep box as a honey super; more on that in a little bit. Depth 9 - 9/16.

The next size box is commonly called a "medium supper" or just "medium" or 6 & 5/8 super. Some beekeepers even call it an "Illinois supper". Depth 6 - 5/8.

Shallow super. This is a smaller supper that drives me crazy, given I only have a few of them and their frames will fit into the medium but not vice versa. Depth 5 - 3/4.

Now for the difficult question I get asked. "What sizes of boxes should I use and if I use a combination of sizes, how should I use them?"

Let me start by saying I prefer to use two deeps for brood and then mediums on top of them. Remember that my reasons for this may be completely different from the reasoning that makes sense in your apiary. You can analyze this in a lot of ways, but I believe the size of the box to use really comes down to the preference of the beekeeper and not the bees. One example of this is if you are worried about lifting the weight of a heavy box (a deep full of honey might weigh 75-85 pounds), then just go with all mediums. The bees will be just as happy. If you are not worried about the weight and prefer to have all your boxes the same size, then go with all deeps.

If you do use deeps for honey supers, be aware that most non-commercial grade extractors cannot extract deeps in the radial mode. Most require deeps to be extracted tangentially — in other words, you have to extract one side, then turn the frame around and extract the other side, requiring twice the work and twice the time. One more word of caution about using deeps for honey supers- [Don't Show Up At Dicks's With Deeps To Extract.](#)

Can it be confusing – YES. But in the long run just find what setup works for you and enjoy the bees. If you need some boxes, I buy quality boxes in bulk and bring them to the meetings for those who need a few. I will have some Deeps (\$12) and Mediums (\$11) at the next meeting.



Practical Experiences in the Beeyard by Stan Brantley

The best of the bee world was in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, January 7-11, at the American Beekeeping Federation. Since it was so close, I could not pass up the learning opportunities and attended the convention along with over 700 other beekeepers from across the USA. There were also 150 vendors of bee related products displaying and selling their wares and services. Some nice bargains were available as the vendors were reluctant to repack and take home all the items they brought to sell. By planning ahead, some beekeepers were able to save on the hefty shipping costs from East or West Coast vendors by picking up the products at the convention. I met a young man from Pakistan displaying ventilated bee suits made by his company Apisafe Technologies. His bee suits could be purchased in a variety of colors, including camouflage. At the Used Pallet Company booth, I learned they produced many things other than the name implied. Some of their bee-related products included hive boxes and outer covers, available in a variety of weather-proofing finishes. The outer covers can be manufactured to your specification with feeding holes cut where you want them. Their products are advertised to be lower in cost since they are made from reclaimed lumber. Their company has been in business in Fresno California for over 20 years. You can find them on Facebook or call them at 559 264-6664. The 2015 ABF Convention will be in California at the Disneyland Hotel, January 6-10. Should be a great place for a family vacation and a beekeeping event all rolled into one.

For our less experienced beekeepers, ETBA has a Monthly Guidebook geared toward keeping bees in East Texas (available from ETBA for \$1 to help cover printing costs). Guide book suggestions for February discuss colony strength, amount of stores or supplemental food needed, and the feeding of 2-to-1 syrup. As the days get longer and warmer, the queen will begin to lay more eggs. When the eggs hatch, the larvae must be fed and the hive will begin to use more stores. If you are not regularly checking the hives, the colony could use the available stores before you become aware that there is little or no food to support the increased amount of brood, resulting in starvation of the brood or even the entire hive.

Elm trees typically begin to bloom in mid-to-late January. I am already receiving reports of elms in bloom and bees bringing pollen into the hive. This sudden availability of natural pollen also triggers the queen to increase brood production. Look at your hives on the warmer afternoons when bees are flying and look for pollen coming in. While elms do provide a source of pollen, they are not considered as a source of nectar. That is why you must ensure that the hive still has stored honey or feed supplementally until nectar producing plants begin to bloom later in the spring.

As we move into February, Maple and Wild Plum trees will begin to bloom. It is an old East Texas beekeeper's saying that the blooming of the Wild Plum heralds the beginning of serious brood production by the queen, preparing the hive for the soon coming spring honey flow. Resolve in 2014 to note the dates of the different blooming varieties in your area. Also note the activity you see at the hive as the blooms progress through spring. Keep the records in a notebook so you will be able to reference them in your future beekeeping journey.

I checked my hives at the house and was surprised to find three dead-outs. I had observed bee activity at these hives during the warmer days in January and thought them to be OK. However, it appears that the activity was robbers from the nearby hives removing the unprotected stores from the dead hives. Perhaps they thought they were visiting a Bed and Breakfast for a free meal. I will have to tend to the hives before the weather warms but at this time of the year, with the twice weekly severe cold spells, I am not worried about moths or beetles getting into them.

I have had reports of other beekeepers losing hives in this unusually cold winter. Some have been lost due to running out of stores. Others have reported losses not so easily explained. One beekeeper reported that a strong healthy hive absconded leaving behind an empty hive heavy with honey, both in the super and in the brood box, with a 3 - 4 inch circle of capped brood on both sides of two frames, surrounded by honey and pollen. It sounds like a textbook example of what a late winter hive should look like — except there were no bees, either dead or alive. The box was full of bees one Saturday, eight days later it was empty. What happened? We will never know, it is just one of the mysteries encountered in beekeeping.

The "Got Questions" room will be open 6:00 – 6:30 before the meeting. If you are new to beekeeping or just have some beekeeping questions, join us in the Got Questions room before the meeting and we will try to help you find some answers.

Plant These to Save the Bees

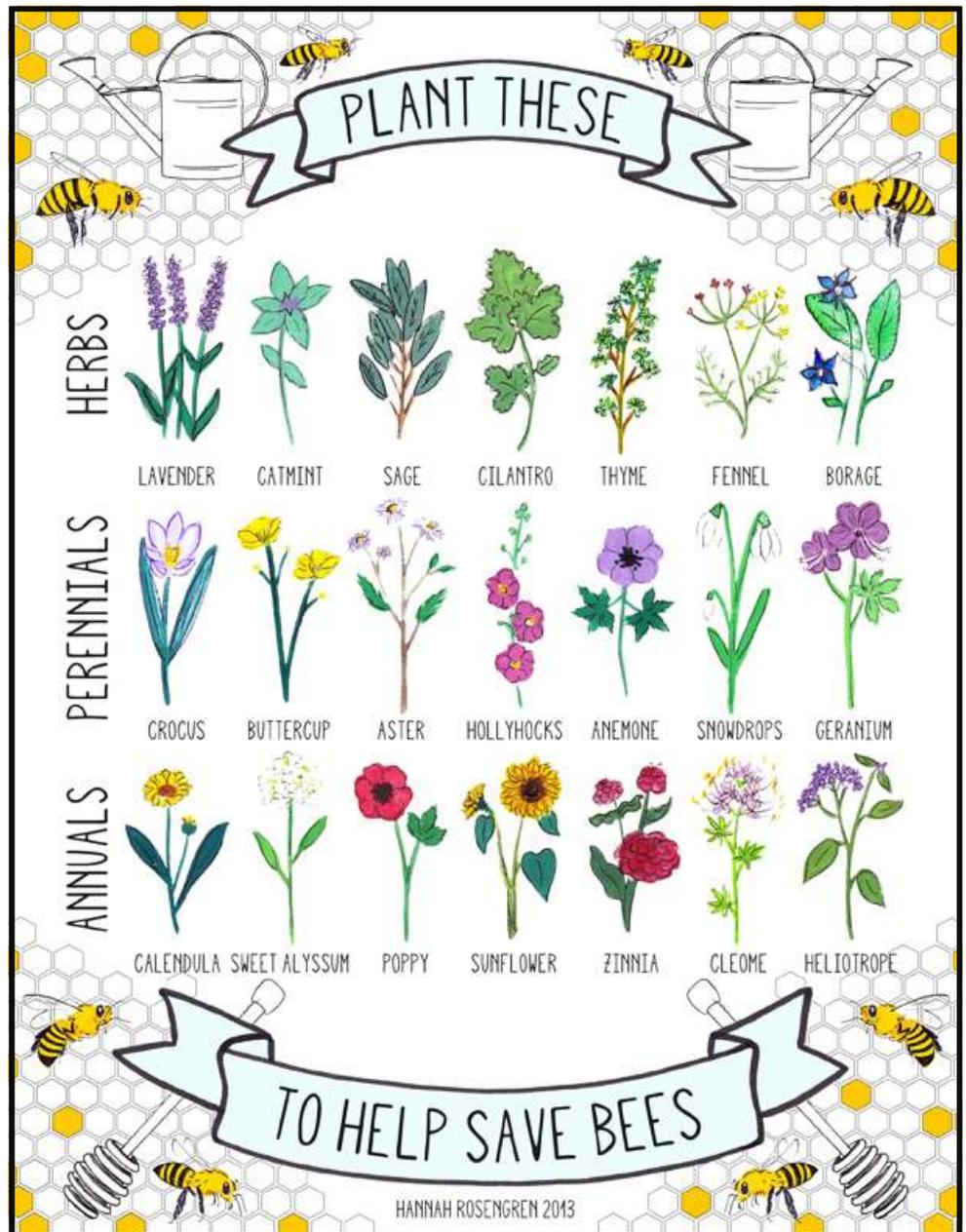
This wonderful poster was created by artist Hannah Rosengren. Hannah lives in Maine, about as far northeast of Texas as one can go and still be in the USA! Her works cover a variety of areas but she has a special interest in illustrations for children's literature.

ETBA member Richard Eubanks saw Hannah's poster and sent a copy to me, suggesting that it might be an interesting addition to the ETBA newsletter. It beautifully shows several plants that are good forage for the honey bee. Hannah was most gracious to give us permission to include her poster. I also learned that Hannah's poster is appearing in the February 2014 edition of the American Bee Journal.

If you are interested in Hannah's work, you can see more on the Web at :

<http://www.etsy.com/shop/HannahRosengren?ref=12-shopheader-name>

You can even purchase the "Plant These and Save the Bees" poster in different sizes, along with some of her other art.



Renew Your ETBA Membership for 2014

Individual \$10 Family \$20

**Three ways to renew: Online at www.etba.info,
Pay Tammy at the ETBA meeting,
Mail to ETBA, PO Box 9662, Tyler, TX 75711-9662**

**After March 1, we will update our membership database for 2014.
If you have not renewed your membership, you may be removed from
our postal mail and email lists.**