



# East Texas Beekeepers Association

## February Newsletter

February 4, 2021

*Valentine's Day*



When we get to January, I think of two things related to beekeeping: 1) equipment, and 2) bee nutrition. Let's take these one at a time.

**Equipment** – January is the time to plan and build/buy beekeeping equipment. It's too cold to spend a lot of time in the beeyard and springtime is around the corner. Hopefully by now you have a beekeeping strategy for the spring. You may be a new beekeeper who is getting bees for the first time. You will need a bee suit, smoker, hive tool, and hive equipment (deeps/supers, hive covers, bottom boards). Are you expanding your operation? You will need to build boxes, covers, bottom boards, and put together frames. Perhaps this even means getting that new extractor you've been wanting. This is also the time to clean up your old equipment and make sure it has a new coat of paint or just knock out the moth damage.

Please take advantage of the pause in the action to make sure your equipment is ready for the spring. It's a bad feeling to have an opportunity to catch a swarm and not have a box to put it in. In the spring, you'll be glad you got ahead of your equipment needs.

**Nutrition** – It's always been a little surprising to me that we see pollen activity in January. This past weekend (3<sup>rd</sup> weekend of Jan) I saw bees going into the hive with pollen. This is one of the triggers for the queen to start laying. I've historically thought that the bees need additional pollen for best build up into the spring. Most years, I've put pollen patties in my hives, thinking this gives both abundant and diverse pollen protein to the bees. At the January ETBA meeting, Eddie Collins opined that there is sufficient pollen in the East Texas environment, such that bees do not need supplement pollen. I'll likely test that assertion this year by feeding pollen to only half of my hives and assessing brood activity. Either way, I will inspect my hives in early Feb to make sure the bees are collecting and storing pollen. If pollen stores seem weak, I'll go ahead and add pollen patties.

February is the time I normally begin feeding syrup as well. With a growing hive, I want there to be abundant resources to feed the increasing population of bees as well as support any wax building that may take place. While I've heard differing opinions on this, I like to feed 1:1 syrup in early spring, which encourages the bees to consume rather than store syrup. I mix by weight, 1 part sugar to 1 part water. Many beekeepers also like to add a supplement, which is primarily a mix of essential oils. You can easily find recipes for supplements on the internet if you're interested in making your own. A word of caution: Once you begin to feed syrup, you should continue until the nectar flow begins. You do not want to build a strong hive, only to have it starve because it quickly consumes any stores and there is no nectar to forage. Inspect your hives regularly, though because you can overfeed your hives. This results in the bees storing syrup in the brood area and the queen running out of room to lay.

On a separate topic, I was able to buy my standard plastic honey bottles in January for the first time in several months. It appears that the honey bottle shortage may be resolving itself. Let's hope that's the case and prices and supplies return to normal soon.

*~ Jim Biles; Executive Director*

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*Next Club Meeting*  
*February 4<sup>th</sup>*

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



*The February 2021 Program.....*

Our February speaker is Matt Thomas of East Texas Honey. He will be talking about making splits—just in time for y'all to prep your growing hives for your upcoming splits. Matt is a 4th generation beekeeper and a past ETBA president. He's a wealth of knowledge and we look forward to hearing his tricks and tips! If you would like to learn more about Matt, his website is <https://www.easttexasapiaries.com/>.

Matt will also be offering beekeeping classes this spring, so be sure to check out those options on his website if you are interested in diving deeper into your hobby. See you soon!

*Take Care and Please Stay Safe*  
Meagan Elzner, Program Director



### Ethanol Plant Using Treated GMO Corn Poisons Town

Analysis by Dr. Joseph Mercola, January 20, 2021

- ◆ AltEn, an ethanol plant in Mead, Nebraska, secured a free source of corn to make ethanol by billing itself as a "recycling plant that accepts seeds treated with pesticides, including toxic neonicotinoids.
- ◆ The resulting waste is too contaminated to sell as feed for animals, as other ethanol plants do, so AltEn has been spreading the waste on farmland and holding the rest on the grounds surrounding its plant.
- ◆ Children and adults living in Mead reported illnesses that occurred after the ethanol plant arrived, while the stench from the waste has caused people to move and businesses to close.
- ◆ The University of Nebraska has a research farm about one mile from Mead, where every beehive has died, and the bee deaths are associated with AltEn's usage of pesticide-treated seeds.
- ◆ The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy cited AltEn for noncompliance of pollution rules due to astronomical levels of chemical waste at the plant contaminating air and water, and gave the company until March 2021 to clean up the pollution.

*Neonicotinoids are the most widely used insecticide worldwide. When used agriculturally, these pesticide treated seeds have been found to harm pollinators like bees at alarming rates!*

Hello Beekeepers!

I hope everyone is enjoying this New Year and the rainy weather. As we enter the new year, I hope that things will begin to go back to normal, or at least a normal where we can continue to meet and discuss bees again. However, no matter what this year brings us, it is good to encourage others in beekeeping. You never know who might enjoy beekeeping until they try it. I encourage you to take others out into your hives and let them see the bees up close. This epidemic has taken our bee club out of the community, so I hope the members will step up and continue educating others.

I know a wonderful lady at helping out where ever she is needed, and I asked her if she would be willing to help me feed bees this fall and maybe even with the queens this spring. She was a little weary, as most people are when confronted with bees in mass numbers. However, she was a good sport and suited up with me for a day of feeding bees. She was excellent and didn't run away once, even after getting stung. We fed the bees and even went through a few hives together. She asked where the queen was but found her before I even had a chance to look! I am glad she was comfortable with the bees, as now I have a great friend to help me out with the bees, but it is also possible that I have opened her up to the world of beekeeping as well.

Here at CNC Honey Farms, we have begun preparing for springtime! With my friend's help, we built all of the new hive boxes for this year, and we are currently working on bottom boards and lids. Soon we will be able to paint the new boxes if the weather will ever work with us. Work is continuing despite the rain, but I have to admit supplies have been harder to come by this year. However, this doesn't surprise me due to all of the covid restrictions that have been in place. The bees will be heading to California this month, and we are looking forward to beginning our year, and pray it will be a good one.

On another note, I was happy to see propolis mentioned in a news email I receive daily. I always love it when the public learns more about bees and their unique products as it gets them interested in bees as well. The article explained that propolis is a bee product but that it is not honey. The report also described how propolis is the hive defender; its germ-fighting abilities and helps in keeping the hive safe through many different plant compounds. Of course, they then tried to sell me a natural throat spray, which I passed on, but the information was excellent all the same. Articles like this make me happy because now others maybe lead to research the exciting honeybee.

If you are interested in the honeybee or in keeping bees yourself, be sure to reach out to another beekeeper for help. If you are interested in purchasing bees, be sure to contact us at CNC Honey farms. You can check out our website at [cncfarms.com](http://cncfarms.com) for all of our options and prices, and I will be happy to answer any of your questions. Just email me at [connie@cncfarms.com](mailto:connie@cncfarms.com). I hope you and your family have an excellent 2021!



~ *Connie Collins*



**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](mailto:Connie@cncfarms.com)