

East Texas Beekeepers Association



January 2023

January Report by Jim Biles

As we start a new ETBA year, it seems appropriate to take a minute and reflect on the old year. We kicked off 2022 by awarding youth scholarships to 6 young people. It's been great hearing from them each month regarding the status of their hives. This is a great program for growing beekeeping in East Texas, and we look forward to continuing the tradition this year. (Note: applications need to be in by the January meeting to be considered for a scholarship) In April, we hosted our annual beekeeping clinic for new beekeepers.

We had both classroom and bee yard training, with a large group of attendees. This is a great way to learn the fundamentals of beekeeping, and if you are a new beekeeper please consider attending the 2023 clinic. We also elected officers in April (the new slate of officers looks a lot like the old one!)

During the spring, we refurbished the Rose Garden observation hive, with dedication and "pollination day" activities in June. In August, we agreed to let the Legacy High School bee club assume responsibility for maintaining the hive going forward. This will be another good way for East Texas youth to learn about beekeeping.

In September, we set up and operated the ETBA booth at the East Texas State Fair. Member participation was high, with many volunteering their time to work the booth. In spite of a lean year for honey production, honey sales were strong!

At the December meeting we had the annual honey tasting contest and learned how to make mead. We will be announcing the winner of the honey contest and awarding Beekeeper of the Year at the January 2023 meeting.

Throughout the year we were fortunate to have a strong slate of speakers, lined up by our Program Director Meagan Elzner.

I'd like to say a big Thank You to all who helped make 2022 a successful year for the ETBA! The things we are able to do would not be possible without the efforts of many of you. And with your help, we can look forward to a successful 2023 as well.

President—Connie Collins
Vice-President—Joe Laws
Exec. Director/Reporter— Jim Biles
Treasurer—Jennifer Palmer
Secretary—Tish Kennedy
Member-at-Large—Matt Thomas
Program Director — Meagan Elzner
Newsletter Editor—Jenifer Babyak
Webmaster—Ken Wilkinson



Next Meeting

January 5th

United Methodist Church
405 West Main in Whitehouse

6:30 PM

On the Web:
www.etba.info

FYI *by Meagan Elzner*



The January Program...

We look forward to seeing you all in the new year!

We will have two short presentations in January.

The first will be our club newsletter editor, Jenifer Babyak. She will be speaking on behalf of Dr. Chrissy Mogren of the Environmental Protection Agency regarding pesticide related bee die offs. See informational links below.

Our second speaker will be Alison Bryant from Plants of Texas. She will be going over some exciting beekeeping supply related information about their brand new store location here in Tyler. We are so excited to hear what's in store for their new adventure! See ad below.

See you there!

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:

<https://www.epa.gov/pollinator-protection>

National Pesticide Information Center: <http://npic.orst.edu/>

Bee Informed Partnership: <https://research.beeinformed.org/>

Honey Bee Health Coalition:

https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/resource_category/best-management-practices/

U.S. Department of Agriculture: <https://www.usda.gov/pollinators>



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~ Meagan and Isaac Elzner ~



Practical Experiences in the Bee Yard

by Stan Brantley



The first disaster of the 2023 bee season has already taken shape and, as I write this in mid-December, you may not even be aware of what is coming. In my home town of Jefferson, we had a week of 70 -80 degree weather. Daytime temperatures in Shreveport Louisiana, 60 miles east on I-20, reported a new all-time high of 80 degrees. So where is all of this going? I have several colonies on a friend's farm near Lake of the Pines. On the 12th of December, he advised me that all of the buds on his oak trees were beginning to swell and show that light green tint that occurs just before the leaves appear. Now the weather forecast is calling for temperatures to fall into the teens or below just before Christmas.

All of those tender buds will be frozen. This will cause a delay in those trees going through the process to again produce new buds, tassels, and the 2023 crop of leaves.

Pull on your working boots and get ready for the new year. If you have been in the program for a year or more, think about what you were "not ready" for last spring. You have only about a month to ensure that you have all of the needed wooden ware and supplies. Plan, as best you can, to prevent the "I don't have another box to hive this swarm".

I live inside the city limits and often see my bees on the landing board carrying fresh pollen from the Garden Club member's flowers growing in pots and window boxes after naturally blooming plants have gone into winter rest. And that rotten little dandelion scattered across urban lawns does a pretty good job of producing a good quality pollen. In a few weeks, they will be carrying pollen from the natural early bloomers like Elm, Maple, and Wild Plum. Each will have a different color to their pollen. An interesting internet project for a cold winter's day would be to research the different early pollens available in your area and learn to recognize them from the different colors being carried by your bees.

Are you a novice beekeeper or thinking about becoming a beekeeper? One of the first things to think about is how to obtain bees to start or expand your apiary. One source is the Mann Lake store in Marshall, Texas. Mann Lake will sell Nucs from various bee breeders. So you say, "What is a Nuc?" A Nuc is usually a four or five frame "starter" box of bees that is well on the way to becoming a full hive of active honey bees. The Nuc contains an active queen, brood and enough bees to allow the hive to expand. The contents of the Nuc box can be transferred to a regular 8 or 10 frame hive box and allowed to expand to a full colony.

I always encourage new beekeepers to purchase and study some the good books about basic beekeeping. Some to choose from include Beekeeping for Dummies, Backyard Beekeeping, Bee-Sentials, Beecabulary Essentials, ABC-XYZ of Bee Culture, The Hive and the Honey Bee. Many are available through Amazon. Follow up by joining a local bee club and taking a beekeeper training class offered in your area. Participating in a local club gives you access to a group of seasoned beekeepers willing to share their knowledge and experience. It is a place to ask questions and get help about the equipment, methods and practices needed to become a successful beekeeper.

If you already have bee colonies, you can begin inspecting the brood nest in January. Pick a sunny day with a temperature of at least 60 and little or no wind. Do not keep the hive open any longer than necessary. The queen is probably not laying a lot of eggs and will be relatively light and may be inclined to fly off the frame into the wild blue yonder. Check to make sure there are still stores of honey and pollen available in the hive. If needed, you can add a small amount of dry pollen substitute or a small piece of pollen patty. Do not use a big piece of patty or pile of dry supplement. Add only the amount your bees can eat in a week or two. You can also add some 1:1 sugar syrup. The sugar syrup is to make the queen think a nectar flow is about to begin and encourage her to produce more brood.



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!

With the New Year approaching I wanted to update everyone on the events that will be taking place in the beekeeping community. I hope this will enable you to plan to take part in the many exciting things happening over the next few months. If you have an announcement you would like to see in future ETBA newsletters, please contact me. I pray everyone has a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Upcoming Beekeeping Classes:

ETBA Beekeeping Class

Saturday, April 1st, 2023

Location: REC Center in Whitehouse, TX

Morning will be a classroom instruction. The afternoon will be in a local apiary. Lunch will be provided. Please contact Jennifer Palmer, treasurer of the ETBA for payment details. (903) 570-6258

Cost: \$100

Marshall Beekeeping Class

Spring 2023

Class Dates:

February 11th & 25th

March 11th & 25th

12:30 PM - 4:30 PM

Location: Marshall Fire Station

601 S Grove St. Marshall, TX

Contact: Beth Derr, Treasurer

210 Meadowlark, Jefferson, TX 75657

(903) 777-8636

Central Texas Beekeepers Bee School

April 2023

Contact: Michael Kelling

Centraltexasbeekeepers@gmail.com

(979) 277-0411

East Texas Honey Beekeeping Classes

Spring 2023

Contact Matt Thomas for details.

(903) 279-7903





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Upcoming Conferences and Meetings:

80th American Beekeeping Federation Conference & Trade Show
January 3-7 2023
Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront, Florida

Local Beekeeper Club's Meeting Dates:

Longview Beekeepers
First Tuesday of each month.
6 PM
Texas AgriLife Extension Office
405 E. Marshall St.
Longview, TX 75601

Marshall Beekeepers
Second Thursday of each month.
5:30 PM
Cumberland Presbyterian Church
501 Indian Springs Dr.
Marshall, TX 75672

Hopkins County Beekeepers
Third Thursday of each month.
6:30 PM
Hopkins County AgriLife Building
1200 West Houston, St.
Sulphur Springs, TX 75483

Lamar County
First Thursday of each month.
6:30 PM
Lamar County Fairgrounds
570 E. Center St.
Paris, TX 75460

Wood County Beekeepers
First Tuesday of each month.
7 PM
Winnsboro Civic Center
Hope LN Winnsboro, TX 75494

Caddo Trace Beekeepers
Second Mondays of each month.
7 PM
Titus County AgriLife Extension Building

North East Texas Bee Association
Second Monday of each month.
5:45 PM
Canton Baptist Church
303 South Athens St.
Canton, TX 75103

Kaufman Area Beekeepers
Second Tuesday of each month.
6:30 PM
208 S. Houston Street
Kaufman, TX 75142

*Joe Laws - Vice President***Why East Texas?**

Why do so many large commercial beekeepers bring their bees to East Texas? The answer is simple - Mother Nature. First, we have mild winters that let the bees build up when fed. They can develop strong hives and get an early start due to two trees that are common in this area: the lowly elm and the beautiful maple. These trees start producing copious amounts of pollen by late January to early February. This, with a heavy feeding regime will start the queen laying prolifically in preparation for travel to the almonds in California. Upon return, the commercial keeper splits his hives, replacing yearly losses and selling the extra. Some hives move to other areas to pollinate and some stay here until May when they are transported north for honey production.

But how does this help us local beekeepers? If we take our clue from the “big guys” we can have a booming hive going into our Spring Flow. Without supplemental feeding in March we can easily lose a hive to starvation. It is very important to monitor our hives until our first MAJOR nectar source: dewberries and blackberries. When these start blooming we can stop feeding our established hives. The dewberry and blackberry blooms are followed quickly by pear, plum, dogwood, and privet trees. Walk the area around your hives and listen for the sound of bees, you will likely be amazed at what they are working. Trees with very small flowers that you have never noticed, sassafras, persimmon, Carolina buckthorn, and cherry laurel are all great sources for our bees. Once the wildflowers start to bloom in your area you will have started your honey flow. This usually lasts from early May to the first of July depending on Spring rains. This gets us to through the first half of the year. Future articles will cover what to expect in a summer dearth and a Fall flow and how non-native and invasive plants affect these.

Joe Laws

AN INTERESTING ARTICLE FROM ONE OF OUR MEMBERS. THANKS, MIKE!

Sunflowers make bees poop--a lot.

Here's why that's good.

The flower's pollen works like a medicine for bumblebees afflicted with a nasty parasite.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/sunflowers-vanquish-bumblebee-parasites>

"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity;
an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."
- Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965)



.from the Treasurer

My name is Jennifer Palmer, and I am the Treasurer of the ETBA. I hope all are doing well and are ready for the cold weather that has come our way. I am not a cold weather person, so I am NOT ready. I wanted to let you know a little about me. I am married, have 3 girls ranging from 14-24. We stay very active with our 14-year-old. I work at the farm on weekends in Chandler, where my bees are. We have moved to Lake Tyler to take care of my mother-in-law. We stay very busy as do some of you. We Love the bees and hope to continue taking care of them for years.

I hope that by moving the newsletter to quarterly more people will take the time to read it instead of glancing over it. Each year I hope that all of you re-register at the beginning of the year. When you do this, please print all the information on the form so the emails can get to the spreadsheet correctly. I know I have several emails that keep coming back to me each month. We do want all of you to be able to read the newsletter, and I think this might help. If you are a member and have not been getting a newsletter from us, please email me directly: spalm474@gmail.com or text 903-570-6258. I will work really hard on fixing the problem so you do receive all the emails from the ETBA.



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