

# East Texas Beekeepers Association



January 2025

## January Report by Jim Biles

Happy New Year! I hope all of you had a great Christmas and quiet holiday season.

January is a month that many beekeepers consider to be quiet and uneventful. But it's an important month, especially to set up a successful beekeeping season.

Here are some things to think about in January:

**Bees** - If you're intending to buy bees this year, January is the perfect time to get this nailed down. Our club has several beekeepers that sell bees. If you haven't ordered bees yet, come to the January meeting and you can talk to those who are taking orders. The same is true if you're planning to buy queens.

**Clinics and training** - If you're a new beekeeper, or even if you've been keeping bees for a year or two, this is the time to be intentional about improving your skills. The ETBA has a New Beekeeper clinic in April. Others in the area teach both New Beekeeping and Advanced Beekeeping clinics. The January ETBA meeting is also a golden opportunity to find an experienced beekeeper in your area to get connected with a mentor. I recommend this as one of the best ways to improve your beekeeping skills quickly.

**Developing or fine tuning your plan** - Regardless of how large your beekeeping operation is, this is a good time to develop or revise your plan. Here are some things you may be thinking about.....

- Moving into different honey production methods (e.g. comb honey, creamed honey, a different extraction process)

- Expanding your operation to include beeswax products, selling bees, making queens, etc.

- Trying something different to be more effective (e.g. learn how to use oxylic acid to control mites, look for a second location, sell at a farmers' market, etc.)

- Learning how to make splits and/or raise queens.

None of this just happens. A good plan will go a long way to making sure you move in a direction that will help you meet your beekeeping goals.

**Equipment** - With a good plan, you'll know what you need in the way of equipment. Whether it's buying equipment or cleaning/refurbishing equipment you already have, you should take advantage of the January lull to make sure you have the equipment you will need in the coming year.

I look forward to seeing you at the January meeting. In the meantime, stay busy, my friends!

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## Next Meeting

# January 9th

Whitehouse Methodist Church  
405 West Main in Whitehouse

**6:30 PM**

On the Web:  
[www.etba.info](http://www.etba.info)

## *Practical Experiences in the Bee Yard*

by Stan Brantley



January 2025! What a difference from January 1972 when my sister (retired U.S. Army nurse) and I (retired U.S. Army) returned to our birth place in Jefferson, Texas. We began rebuilding our lives in the civilian world. She bought local honey from two beekeepers in the area. Since both beekeepers were in their eighties, she was concerned about a long-term source of local honey. One day she informed me that we were going to become beekeepers and harvest our own honey. A nurse aid at the county hospital where she was employed told my sister her husband needed help assembling bee hives. He was making boxes from scrap 1x12 lumber discarded by a local cabinet plant. And so, our beekeeping adventure was born.

In 1972 there were no bee clubs in this part of the Ark-La-Tex. You learned about beekeeping by reading books (The ABC and XYZ of Bee Culture) or catalogs from bee supply companies like Walter Kelly. If you were lucky, you found a nearby beekeeper who would share their knowledge with you. Several years later, I learned about the beekeeping magazines "Gleanings in the Bee Culture" and "The American Bee Journal".

Word got around that we were becoming beekeepers and calls starting coming in. "I've got some bee boxes and equipment that has been in my barn for years. Come see if you can use any of it. If you want them, come get them." Much of our initial supplies came this way. I am probably one of very few beekeepers who owns a piece of aluminum foundation that was used for a while by commercial beekeepers.

At the end of our first season, an old high school classmate offered the use of a two-frame reversible Walter Kelly hand-crank stainless-steel extractor and a couple of "cold" capping knives. We were excited and ready to extract our first honey. We did that first extraction in my sister's kitchen. 3900 pounds in my sister's kitchen. Afterwards she said, "Never again in my kitchen!" Fifty years later, I'm still a beekeeper.

Your beekeeping task for January should be to determine your goal for the coming year. Now, with access to the internet, Google, Facebook, YouTube, major bee conventions, and local bee clubs, there is more than enough information, training and products to purchase to make you a better beekeeper.

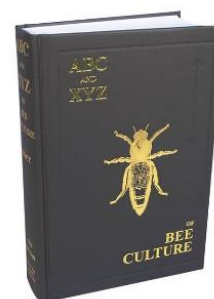
In January you should be ready to order queens, Nucs, colonies or package bees. Order early and get your name on the supplier's lists for spring delivery.

Hives in this area will contain colonies of bees ready to wake up from the winter. Some pollen will begin to be available from Oak, Elm and Maple.

Inspections may be done on warm days when temperatures reach 60 or above. Make it quick and don't keep the hive open too long. If you pull a frame with the queen on it, be aware she is not heavy with eggs and can fly off the frame.

Clean any deadouts and get all empty equipment ready for the swarms that may start to show up as early as mid-March. If you lock your deadouts in the garage or shop, a swarm can't get to them. Place the used hive bodies in a sheltered place so, swarms can find them. The empty boxes smell like home to a passing swarm. Always check the boxes carefully before you pick them up again, they may contain a resident swarm.

Check with your local bee club for available beekeeping classes. What! No local bee club available? Start one with the help of the Texas Beekeepers Association.



### *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!*

# FYI

by Christina Williams

*The*

*January Speaker*

*is...*

*Melissa Maeker,  
owner of Honey Maeker Bee Farm,  
and past ETBA President,  
will be giving a talk on Beginning  
Beekeeping.*

*Melissa is an excellent beekeeper.  
She usually maintains about two dozen  
hives.*

*She has taught the ETBA class in the past  
with club founder, Dick Counts.*

# Notes from our Secretary by Tish Kennedy

## Fire Cider

### *What is Fire Cider?*

Some say it is just a spicy concoction, others say it is an immune booster like no other. It is also to improve circulation and digestion.

Fire Cider was popularized in the late 1970's by none other than Rosemary Gladstar. Renowned herbalist and founder of the California School of Herbal Studies.

Fire Cider combines hot, sweet, pungent and sour tastes into one powerful drink. The original recipe requires:



- \*fresh garlic
- \*fresh ginger
- \*horseradish
- \*cayenne pepper
- \*honey

It instructs you to soak all the ingredients except the honey in a jar filled with apple cider vinegar for up to 4 weeks and add the honey before drinking.

Other ingredients can also be added such as turmeric, rosehip, onion, jalapeño, lemon and orange.

Recommend dosage is 2 to 3 TBSP throughout the day or one large 1.5oz shot to boost the immune system.

If the taste is too strong it can also be added into other recipes such as soups, sauces, marinades and meat dishes.

## Words from the Vice-President by Joe Laws

# Wax Months The Scourge of Beekeepers!

Drawn comb is “gold” to beekeepers. It’s bad enough when you lose a hive, one of the only bright spots is that you have drawn comb to give your next hive a head start, IF you can protect it from being eaten by wax moths. Now to be clear, wax moths do not kill the hive, but they are like vultures coming in and eating the wax that is left. The standard to use for protection is Para Moth crystals, which work well and are fairly easy to find, however a new product has been added to our arsenal of protection in the form of a liquid which you spray on your frames.

Many of you may be familiar with *Bacillus thuringiensis*, which is a commonly used biological pesticide often used for cabbage loopers or gnats in our gardens. This product, called B402 Biological Larvicide Certan is also *Bacillus thuringiensis* and is now available to purchase and use to protect against wax moths. It is to be mixed with water at a ratio of one part product to 19 parts water, then use a sprayer and spray your frames. Personal protection, including gloves and mask with a filter is required. (Always read the product use labels.) This product is becoming more available and can be ordered through most honey bee supply stores.

It’s always good to have a backup plan when dealing with wax moths!



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