

East Texas Beekeepers Association



May 2022

May Report by Jim Biles

In March I started paying close attention to my hives to prevent swarming. This actually started last summer when I re-queened all of my colonies. Conventional wisdom says that new queens are not prone to swarming. The buildup was going strong as we got along in March so I shook bees from strong colonies to make a cell builder (to raise queens). Then I made “mini-splits” as well, putting together several nucs. I continued to shake bees as we got into April to relieve strong hive populations. In spite of this, two of my hives swarmed in a one-week period in early April. One of the swarms occurred as I brought a group of new beekeepers to my apiary during the April 9 clinic. It’s ironic that we had 10 vehicles at my apiary, and the bees decided to stage their swarm on the front of my pickup! I say all of this to make the point that sometimes things don’t work out exactly the way you’d like, in spite of doing all of the right things. Don’t misunderstand this to mean that it’s all right to just leave the bees without active management. My observation is that good beekeepers are almost always more successful than bad beekeepers. But the point is to not get down when you’ve done all you know to do and the hive still swarms, or loses a queen, or otherwise fails. Another point is that just like investing, diversification is a good thing. Having several hives gives you a cushion against the unexpected problems. I’m sure somewhere in the newsletter you’ll be encouraged to bring items to put in our auction this month. My encouragement is to bring \$\$! There is always cool stuff in the auction and buying cool stuff while supporting the ETBA is a good thing! We’ve started putting the observation hive together at the Tyler Rose Garden for the season. By the time you read this, it should be in service. Stop by and check it out. And please encourage your family and friends to do the same. Thanks to Scott Ratcliff and his carpentry skills and Connie Collins for donating the bees!



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Next Meeting

May 5th

United Methodist Church
405 West Main in Whitehouse

6:30 PM

On the Web:
www.etba.info

FYI *by Meagan Elzner*



The May Program...

Please note, for this meeting we will not meet in our usual room,,

We will be in the room where we hold the Q&A.

Our May meeting brings back our annual auction, with funds being raised for the Queen program.

If you are able, please bring an item to donate to be auctioned off.

Also, if you have any auctioneering skills please reach out to me, as I need someone to assist since Dick used to be the one to do it. My email is elznerfarms@gmail.com.

We will also talk about getting our hives ready for making honey.

Let's hope this years honey crop is better than last year!

See you there, Meagan



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We offer pure, raw, local honey & bees to our surrounding communities.

~ Meagan and Isaac Elzner ~



Practical Experiences in the Bee Yard

by Stan Brantley



Swarms in May, worth a load of hay. Swarms in June, worth a silver spoon. I have no idea when these sayings were created but we need to realize there is a price difference between 1850 and 2022. If you have prepared, then the swarms in May will come your way if that swarm trap is ready. In my area, swarms began in mid-April. May will provide even more chances to trap swarms and expand your apiary.

There are several things you can do with a captured swarm. Feed them a gallon of sugar water and help them build that wax needed to store honey for surviving the coming winter. Since they are really a wax-building bunch, you could pull several frames and make a Nuc or a split to sell.

There is always someone looking for bees to purchase! If you have several queens on hand, the young bees this swarm produces could double or triple your number of hives. You could make several two frame queen castles that would allow you to have replacement queens on hand when you “need one NOW!” Prior planning is really a good thing!

More Red Clover began to bloom alongside the highways during the first and second week in April. Pastures will be blooming from Mid-April to mid-May. The Tallow bloom will start around the third week of May. Other blooming plants in my area that produce nectar include Rattan Vines, English Ivy and Prickly Bark Ash to name a few.

Successful beekeepers are the ones who observe the flowers, trees and ivies around them, record the blooming dates, and have their hives prepared to store nectar as soon as it become available for their bees to collect.

If you ordered bees, hopefully you have received them by the first week of May. Since the nectar flow will be increasing, the bees may not take the sugar syrup you offer them. Continue to observe their expansion and note when there are 8 of 10 frames of foundation drawn out. It is then time to make a decision. Do you want honey or do you want bees? If you want honey, put on an excluder and a super. If you want to grow the strongest hive possible, add the second brood box.

Established colonies that survived the past winter and have not swarmed may be able to produce honey by the third week of May. If this is the case, you may be able to remove and extract frames or even complete supers of capped honey. This early honey will normally be very light and is probably a mix of clover and Privet Hedge nectar. After extracting the frames, return them to the super for the bees to clean and fill with the next available nectar crop. Supers of new wax foundation can be drawn out easily in May. Some advise placing the new supers below the queen excluder until the bees begin to draw out comb, then moving them above the excluder for the bees to store nectar. Another way is to take an already drawn frame from a different super and put it in the super of new foundation to entice the bees to move up on the frames of foundation.

If you allow the hive to become crowded, the bees usually begin preparations for swarming and away goes your honey crop. Younger queens can sometimes calm this activity through her ability to produce copious amounts of pheromone. Stay ahead on adding supers so they bees do not feel crowded. Removing and extracting frames and supers of honey and returning the wet supers to the hive for the bees to clean and refill can also help.

As you are doing all these other things in the hive, you MUST NOT neglect doing mite checks. There are many YouTube videos showing how and when to do mite checks. Randy Oliver has an excellent video showing the mite check process. You can find Randy’s video at ScientificBeekeeping.com. The timing of mite treatments during honey flow depends on the type and brand of miticide used. The mite infestation must be kept below acceptable levels. If the mite level is too high, you may later find the hive in trouble, possibly even dying from the viruses carried by the mites.



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!*

Matt Thomas - Member at Large

Greetings Beekeepers,

Recently a friend of mine was featured on Texas Country Reporter for beekeeping. It may be of some interest to you. If so, you can go to the Texas Country Reporter website and look for season 50, Episode 22. It is great to see a growing interest in the stewardship of bees. The highlight of the episode is the secret to fruitful beekeeping, life and culture. With great care and attention we can learn something from the honey bees and polished practices of beekeepers.

Probably good to eliminate what beekeeping is not about, in my estimation. Anyone can learn how to manage bees, make cell builders, graft, raise queens, manage pests, sell bees and queens and market a business around bees. We can learn all of that and still miss the fundamental message from the beehive. Not dismissing any of what is mentioned above or the need to be good stewards of the bees, there is a lesson we learn when we take a deeper and concentrated look at the bees that can directly be applied to our life, culture and faith.

I learned this lesson several years ago when I began raising queens. I had to start shaking bees out of the big colonies or they would swarm on me. I used the excess bees to raise queen cells. It takes a lot of pollen and honey to raise queens. It equally takes a lot of time and patience to raise queens. It takes a lot of bees to raise great queen cells. The investment is substantial. The result is equally rewarding. What I learned is the secret to raising good queens is generosity. Generous portions of syrup, bees and pollen are vital. The opposite is also true. Skimping on your bees, pollen and syrup will result in small and underfed queens.

Bees, when preparing to swarm, raise enormous cells because they have plenty of bees and pollen to carry out the task. Bees do it big and are generous in their doing. Generosity is the key to successfully raising quality queens and bees. In your management, in your life and in your work, if you can find ways to be generous, like the bees, you will be more than blessed. Bees can teach us a lot, but it will require a deeper dive. Keeping bees is not just about buying and selling, producing honey or being the best or most knowledgeable. It's about generosity. -Matt



.....from the Editor

Sign up and pay your annual dues if you haven't already, so you will continue to receive your monthly newsletter. See Jennifer Palmer at the meeting. (spalm474@gmail.com if you have questions.)

Don't forget to send in your business card size ads if you have something "bee" related you want to buy, sell or give away! There is no charge to place an ad! Send ads to jenifer@babyak.org. If you need help getting your info in "ad format", let me know, and I'll try to help.



Classified Ads

There will be NO charge for placing an ad in the classifieds. It needs to be a business card size ad (one ad per person). Your ad needs to be "bee" related. Please send your ad to jenifer@babyak.org.

FOR SALE

BEE EQUIPMENT Spring 2022

6-12 frame radial Dadant stainless steel extractor \$450
20"x 44" uncapping vat w/stand & electric knife \$150
25-gallon Dadant stainless steel bottling tank \$175
Solar wax melter \$50
55 6-5/8" supers w/ 9 frames drawn comb \$35 ea
40 deep boxes with 10 drawn combs \$25 ea
20 treated bottom boards \$7.50 ea
20 lids \$7.50 ea
Contact: stevesbees54@gmail.com

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