



East Texas Beekeepers Association

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November 13, 2014

November Report by Dick Counts

Vi and I spent three days, October 17, 18 and 19, working in the TBA booth at the State Fair of Texas in Dallas. Queen Carrie and Princess Willow worked with girls from other bee clubs doing cooking demonstrations and talking to visitors at the booth. If you had been there with us, you could have talked about bees until you were blue in the face, out of breath, pulling your hair out and really enjoying the people. Lots of people, a constant stream though the TBA booth. We did work hard but had a lot of fun and met a lot of people. If you have never participated, you need to come next year. It is definitely a very interesting and rewarding experience.

Several things are happening at our November meeting. First, we will be meeting on **November 13, the second Thursday**. The church will be using the facilities on our regular meeting night so we will come the following week. Be sure to mark this correctly on your calendars. Don't show up on the wrong night. Hopefully everyone will receive and read this newsletter but it would not hurt for you to remind all of your beekeeping friends of the date change.

We will be having our annual Honey Tasting Contest. Our ETBA honey tasting contest is strictly based on flavor. We do not evaluate color, clarity or consistency. So bring your best product, whether it is light or dark. Contest rules are included elsewhere in this newsletter. Note that the rules require the honey to be in an unmarked squeezable container and the container must have a spout or flip-top lid. We will do the tasting and voting at the November meeting and present awards at the December meeting.

We will also be voting for our 2014 Beekeeper of the Year. We will take nominations and vote in November and present the award in December.

Several ETBA members will be attending the TBA State Convention November 7, 8 and 9 in Houston. I will share a report of the convention news at our meeting on the 13th.

See you on the **second Thursday of November!**

President—Gus Wolf

Vice President—Mike Rappazzo

Treasurer—John Holladay

Secretary—Lanette Lanchester

Ex. Director and Reporter—
Dick Counts

Honey Queen Chair—Vi Bourns

Directors-at-Large—Stanford
Brantley, Larry Tarr

Program Director — Matt Thomas
Brenda Sheridan, Eddie Collins

Webmaster—Ken Wilkinson

Next Meeting

Nov. 13

United Methodist Church
405 West Main in Whitehouse

6:45 PM

On the Web: etba.info

Bee on Fall Blooming Confederate Rose Hibiscus

HONEY QUEEN REPORT by *Vi Bourns*



As the Queen Program Chair, in the quiet hours of the morning, with no phone calls or other things to distract my attention, I reflect back on the past year and look forward to the challenges of 2015. Into my thoughts enter two phrases we are all familiar with; “busy as a bee” and “she got a bee in her bonnet.”

Busy as a bee would describe our Honey Queen, Miss Carrie Lenamond. She has spent the year juggling her time between high school, courses at community college, and working. As circumstances allowed, she attended club meetings and wrote articles for the newsletter. She represented ETBA by attending functions in Tyler and at local garden clubs and nurseries and the Dallas State Fair doing cooking demonstrations. She has been “busy as a bee.”



Our Honey Princess, Miss Willow Lanchester, has also been very busy this past year.

She was always willing to represent you any place and any time. She presented educational programs at schools, science clubs, garden clubs, Earth Day, Forest Awareness at Eastman, and the East Texas State Fair. She did cooking demonstrations for Fresh and for TBA at the Dallas State Fair. She is busy with high school and with college level classes at Tyler Junior College. She is active in the Civil Air Patrol and Junior Red Cross. The phrase “she got a bee in her bonnet”, fits Willow perfectly. You suggest an idea and she begins researching it, thinking how to apply it with her beekeeping knowledge, and then following through to accomplish the task. She has reached out to community resources to improve her many talents. After taking a series of art classes, she used her art to teach about the honey bee. Her final project was a watercolor of bees on comb that she plans to auction at the state convention in Houston to support the Texas Queen program.



The European Honey Bee versus the Africanized Honey Bee.

At the East Texas State Fair, I was asked many questions about Africanized bees. This inspired me to do some research on the differences between the European and the Africanized honey bee. The European honey bees are favored by most American beekeepers and have been domesticated for thousands of years. In 1957, an attempt was made to breed a new and improved honey bee. Later that year, twenty-six of these new bee colonies escaped into the Brazilian rainforest, just beyond the apiary where they were kept (Ring). This produced the dreaded Killer Bee, more properly known as the Africanized honey bee. Since that time this genetically engineered “franken-bee” has taken over both South America and a portion of North America.

The European honey bee (EHB) and the Africanized honey bee (AHB) are so similar in their overall anatomy that scientists must usually resort to genetic testing to distinguish between the two. Although the Africanized honey bee and the European honey bee are nearly identical in form and appearance, their attitudes towards protection, foraging, and brood rearing could not be more different.

Africanized bees have become famous for their aggressive protection of their hive, whereas the European honey bees' ferocity has been completely overshadowed. In reality, honey bees of any strain are not aggressive, rather more correctly, defensive. The EHB is more likely to hide within their hive and wait for danger to pass instead of engaging in conflict. Although The Beekeeper's Handbook states that, should the need arise, they may become terrifying, vicious, and fully capable of killing the attackers, which are usually insects or small animals (Sammantaro pg.253). *Bees & Beekeeping* supports this statement with the fact that when the honey bee stings it leaves behind an alarm pheromone that smells like bananas and rouses the rest of the bees to attack or flee the site (Morse pg.112). This is one of the reasons the bees may go from complaisant to lethal. On the other hand, the AHB are constantly accused of being horrible and vicious monsters that have no other purpose in life than to murder everything in their path. When they feel even slightly threatened, they attack with a cruel, unyielding bloodlust until the threat has fled or died.

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President's Letter *by Gus Wolf*

The meeting coming up in November will be held on **the 13th**, this is the **second Thursday** of the month, because our room is not available for our usual meeting date. Please remember that. If you show up on the first Thursday, you can join the church members in their activity. I figured to get this important information out first so it does not get lost in the rest of the article. I am sure it will be highlighted more than once in the newsletter. Please don't forget. We want you to come on the correct night!

One of the November activities will be our annual Honey Tasting Contest. I never cease to be amazed at how varied the flavors of honey can be. Wildflower honeys from differing parts of the state have a character all their own. And varietal honeys are always a rare treat. Having grown up with only "clover" honey in the house, it is great to be exposed to so many differing flavors now that I am a beekeeper.

With all of Hayden's travels, she has been coming home with honeys from all over. She recently came back from the State Fair with a number of left over honey bears, each having an ounce or two in the bottom. We all got to sample from each bear. I'd love to be a professional honey taster. I have to admit the light honey from Cox Honey Farm is one of my favorites this year. Johnny Cox belongs to our club and I'd love to know what is in that honey!

Our own honey this year was different even hive to hive. We had a number of frames that wanted to taste like roasted marshmallows! Hayden got to sample a goodly amount of it while it was still in the frames. Try as we could to segregate that honey in the extractor, it mixed in with too much of the residual and tastes like all the rest.

It is the time of year to prepare your hives for winter survival. That means possibly feeding them in a variety of ways. Sugar water, protein patties, honey and who knows what else! Since Hayden has been writing for the Texas Beekeepers Journal, I have become aware that there may be some cautions in order as we feed. She has been writing about the effect pesticides and herbicides are having on the bee population. Some of you will tune out, I know, but I also know there are those of you who have concerns about all the chemicals that are being used in the environment, particularly as they affect bees.

Almost all protein patties contain soy. All soy in the United States is genetically modified. That in itself may not be too much of a problem, but one of the modifications is to be resistant to ever increasing amounts of Glyphosate herbicide (RoundUp). All soy has trace amounts of this herbicide which is known to affect the bee gut biology and queen laying vitality.

All corn and corn products sold in the United States are also GMO. That means High Fructose Corn syrup and any corn syrup has trace amounts of Glyphosate. The modified corn even affects your bees if you dust them with powdered sugar for varroa mite control. Surprise! The confectioner's sugar has corn starch in it as an anti-caking agent. It may not be a big concern to you but, if it is, read the label and do your research. I encourage you to read Hayden's articles in the TBA Journal on their website.



Working the TBA Booth at the Dallas State Fair of Texas



Cooking Demonstration with the Chef Team from Brookshire's Fresh in Tyler



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Like any other honey bee, the Africanized bees leave behind the alarm pheromone, but unlike any other strain of honey bee, they react more violently and it drives them to sting the offending person or animal until it dies. A study done in Brazil showed that after an Africanized hive had been disturbed, they may remain agitated for days (Ojar). This shows some significant differences between the temperaments of these varieties of honey bees.

Besides their sting, the European honey bee has been regarded for centuries as one of the best pollinators in the world but it seems that the Africanized bees have passed them up as foragers. The EHB has been bred for pollination and honey production for hundreds of years. Beekeepers from ancient times till today have bred their colonies of bees to be better pollinators. To this day, honey bees pollinate one third of all the food that we eat (Sammataro pg.233). However, the more recent African hybrid was genetically engineered for honey production. As a lucky by-product, they have become one of the world's best pollinators. In the tropics, the AHB directly influences 25-30% of flora reproductive success (Ojar). Before the escape of the AHB, Brazil ranked 17th in the world's honey production, but today they are placed at number four (Ring).

Finally, in spite of the successful brood rearing of the European bee, the Africanized hybrid may be superior. The European queens are extremely effective egg layers. At her peak in the summer, she can lay up to 2,500 eggs a day and 58,000 in a year. The EHB worker takes 21 days to mature from egg to adult, and a queen takes 16 days to mature (Sammataro pg.258-259). While these numbers may seem impressive, the AHB have surpassed even these. In the summer, an Africanized queen is capable of laying up to 4,000 eggs a day and 105,000 yearly. The AHB worker takes 18.5 days for metamorphosis from egg to adult, and a queen takes only 15 days (Sammataro pg.258-259).

Despite their similar appearances, these two breeds of bees are extremely different in defensive habits, foraging, and reproduction. Whether or not the Africanized honey bees will ever become as popular as the European honey bees, it has yet to be seen. It may be that the beekeeping industry continues on as it always has or may dramatically change in one way or another. One day Africanized bees may be accepted by North American beekeepers, but it is definitely not any time soon.

Works Cited

Morse, Roger A. *Bees & Beekeeping*. London: Cornell University Press, 1975. Print.

Ojar, Christina. "Introduced Species Summer Project: Africanized Honey Bees." Columbia University, 1 March 2002. Web. 29 September 2014.

Ring, Ray. "Killer Bees could help solve Honey Bee Colony Collapse." High Country News, 24 September 2013. Web. 29 September 2014.

Sammataro, Dianna and Alphonse, Avitable. *The Beekeeper's Handbook*. London: Cornell University Press, 2011. Print.

**ETBA Annual Honey Tasting Contest**

Each member can enter one 8 to 12 ounce squeeze bear or squeeze bottle of honey. No glass bottles.

The bear or bottle must have a cone spout or flip top dispenser.

The bear or bottle must have no names, no labels or no identifying marks.

Give the bear or bottle to Gloria Harmon before the meeting.

Gloria will assign each container a sample number.

During the contest, members will be provided with ballots, plates or other containers, and honey samples.

Each member will write on the ballot the sample number of the best tasting honey (only one sample number please).

Ballots will be collected and tallied to determine First, Second and Third place winners. Winners will be announced at the December meeting.

Bears, bottles or left over honey will not be returned.

Help us keep the room clean. If you get honey on something, ask for a wet cloth to clean up.



Practical Experiences in the Beeyard by Stan Brantley

Recent rains in the Jefferson area have been very beneficial to the fall blooming plants. Out in the fields, I see bees working the fall blossoms in search of the last nectar and pollen harvest before frost. This is the last effort by our bees to collect food for their winter stores needed to feed the hive till spring. While the field bees are busy foraging, other activities are happening back at the hive. I have been watching the hives at my house and see a lot of activity at the entrances. In addition to the busy coming and going of foragers, I see many yellow jackets trying to dart into the hive. In fact, I don't remember ever seeing as many yellow jackets trying to invade the hives as I am seeing this year. The guard bees are spending a lot of energy fending off these hungry invaders. Entrance reducers help the guard bees by narrowing the space they have to defend. If you have not installed your entrance reducers, now is a good time to do so. At this time, install them with the smaller or "winter" entrance showing. If you have reducers installed with the larger or "summer" entrance showing, go ahead and turn them to the smaller entrance.

The first frosty mornings will be coming soon. Check the Internet for the average date of the first frost in your area. For most of the East Texas area, the first killing frost usually arrives by the middle of November. Most of the fall forage is already starting to decline and will rapidly disappear with the first frosts. Hopefully, you have already made a plan for inspecting and feeding hives after the fall forage is gone. Make note of those hives that seem to be low on stores. While the bees are still active during the not-yet-freezing days of November, provide supplemental feeding to help these hives bolster their stores. Feeding sugar syrup now will allow them to have ready access to the hive's stores when the weather becomes too cold and wet to open and feed. At this time, I suggest holding off on adding protein patties until the weather becomes cool enough to discourage hive beetle activity.

When you are inspecting your hives, look for signs of excessive mite activity. If possible, do a powdered sugar mite drop count. It is still not too late to do a powdered sugar treatment for mites, hopefully reducing the mite load for the winter. Though recent studies from some sources question the effectiveness of the powdered sugar treatment, they agree it is most effective in the late fall, reducing the number of adult mites at a time when they are not being replaced rapidly in the brood cycle. If you find a hive with a severe mite infestation, you may need to look at the possibility of applying a commercial miticide treatment, though it may be too late in the season. At this late date, treating with medication may have to be based on a decision of whether the infestation is so great that the hive will not survive with winter. Check carefully the instructions of any commercial treatment you may want to apply. If necessary, additional information may be available from the Apiary Inspection Service at Texas A&M.

Now is also a good time to evaluate the frames in your hives to determine if any need to be replaced before the spring flow begins. This would include frames that are damaged or that have been in the hive for several years. Some bee experts suggest replacing frames of drawn comb on a 3- or 5-year cycle to prevent buildup of chemicals in the wax. Mark the topbar of frames that need replacing with a colored thumbtack or with a magic marker. Move them toward the outside edge of the box. This spring, pull out the marked frames and replace with new frames of foundation. Be sure to write the date on the new frames so you can track them for future replacement.

Becoming a beekeeper is a constantly evolving experience. As new beekeepers, we often have more "book knowledge" than "field knowledge". Learning how to recognize situations in the field and then applying what we learned in a class or from a book is part of the maturation process. New beekeepers sometimes just need to be able to ask a question about something that they encountered and did not know how to handle. You don't always have to have 20 years beekeeping experience to answer many of those kinds of questions. Don't be afraid to share with newer beekeepers the things you have learned through your experiences. Make yourself available by phone or email or even at the snack break on meeting night to help a novice. I find it quite rewarding to know I have helped another beekeeper solve a problem or learn something new.

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. Come through the double doors on the far side of our meeting room and follow the signs in the hall to our Got Questions room. If you cannot make it by 6:00, join us whenever you arrive. I have a conflict and will not be able to attend. Jimmy Lanham will be leading our Got Questions discussion. Come early and ask lots of questions.



Bee Facts by Eddie Collins

Another bee year is quickly coming to a close. I hope your jars are all full of honey! Now is a great time to start thinking about next season. Don't forget about your bees but there are a lot of other beekeeping activities to take advantage of this time of the year. Start by planning what you would like to accomplish next year then go from there. Build boxes. Repair equipment. Maybe even start reading up on how to raise a few queens or make your first split.

One thing to think about is maybe doing something related to bees that a lot of other beekeepers don't do. For example, you could make beeswax candles.

Did you know that beeswax candles have been around since at least 40 BC? Through the years beeswax candles were often preferred over tallow candles because they smelled better.

Why burn beeswax candles?

100% natural. Did you know that there are no regulations on having to list a candle's ingredients. A candle can be falsely labeled or contain very little beeswax and still be labeled as a beeswax candle. Just as in honey – know your beekeeper or supplier.

Originate from a renewable resource.

Burn nontoxic. Most paraffin candles release carcinogenic toxins when burned.

Beeswax candles are carbon neutral.

Beeswax candles normally have a 2 to 5 times longer burning time. This is something to consider when you're making a decision based on price and the beeswax candles cost more.

Beeswax are the only candle that emits negative ions to purify, cleanse, and improve air quality.

I have a question for you. What is the correct name to call somebody who makes candles? Is it a Chandler or a Tallow Chandler or a Wickerman or a ????



My First Year as a Beekeeper By Brittany Miller

My dad and I started taking beekeeping classes from Mr. Counts in January, 2014. At the first class I attended, I was informed about a scholarship I was eligible to receive. I was excited about going to the bee classes but when I was awarded the scholarship and acquired my own hive, I was even more excited!

I received my hive at the end of April along with the two hives my dad bought. Out of the three hives, mine was the smallest starting out this past summer. I watched as my hive grew bigger and stronger and as summer came to an end, mine was the strongest of the three hives. My family raises and keeps a garden and we have the hives close by. I noticed that our produce was much more abundant this year. We have a peach tree that in the past has not produced any fruit. This summer it was loaded down with peaches.

One summer day while I was outside, I noticed a small ball of bees on the back of one of the hive boxes. I put on my bee suit and gently brushed over the bees and discovered there was a queen in the middle of them. I got a nuke box and I brushed the bees inside the box. I was able to identify the queen and also the older and younger bees that were part of the ball formed on the hive. This was an interesting experience for me as new beekeeper.

As I continue to watch over my bees, I learn more and more about their hives, their daily activity, and their behaviors. When my dad and I inspect the hives, I have been able to identify larva, brood, pollen, honey, and queen cells due to the classes I attended and my increasing experience.

I enjoyed my first year as a beekeeper. I have only been stung once, but I'm sure there are more to come!