



East Texas Beekeepers Association

Vol. 36 No. 11

November 3, 2016

November Report by Dick Counts

We had 123 members and guests at our October meeting.

The ETBA booth at the East Texas State Fair is an important activity for our club. It gives us a chance to fulfill that part of our By-Laws about educating the public on the importance of the honey bee. Our Royal Court did an outstanding job representing ETBA in the TBA booths at both the Tyler and Dallas State Fair. I want to say many "Thanks" to the volunteers who helped at the Fair September 23rd through October 2nd and those who helped us setup and take down. We had a good turn-out of volunteers and kept our booth operational throughout the Fair. In addition to hundreds of school kids, we had people stopping at our booth almost constantly, asking honey bee questions and many of them purchasing honey and honey products. Thanks to items donated for ETBA to sell, we were able to put \$557 in our club bank account.

Several ETBA members will be attending the TBA Conference in Belton from November 3-5. Some of us may not be able to attend the ETBA meeting on November 3rd. My travel plans are still being finalized but I am hoping to stop by the meeting for a while before we head out of town. If not, I will see you in December with a report of the convention activities.

It is time to start thinking about our 2017 Beginner Beekeeping Class which will start in January, 2017. This year, there will only be openings for a total of 20 students, including regular and scholarship students. At the present time, I am expecting at least two class members to be scholarship students. See our ETBA website for eligibility requirements and the scholarship application. Scholarship applications should be submitted to me no later than December 1st. If you wish to be a regular student, talk to me within the next few weeks.

Don't forget that the November meeting is our Annual Honey Tasting contest and the voting for our Beekeeper of the Year.

We look forward to seeing you at the November ETBA meeting.

Thank you for your faithful and continued support of our organization.



Next Meeting *November 3*

*** CHANGE OF MEETING ROOM
PIKE HALL - Center of Bldg.**

**United Methodist Church
405 West Main in Whitehouse
6:45 PM**

**On the Web: etba.info
Or on the phone: (903) 566-6789**

HONEY QUEEN REPORT by *Barbara Ferguson*

ETBA Annual Honey Tasting Contest

Each member can enter one 8 to 12 ounce squeeze No glass bottles. The bear or bottle must have The bear or bottle must have no names, the bear or bottle to Gloria Harmon or Gloria will assign each container with a

During the contest, members will be containers, and honey samples. Each sample number of the best tasting please). Ballots will be collected and Third place winners. Winners will be Bears, bottles or left over honey will not

If you get honey on something, ask for a wet cloth to clean up.



bear or squeeze bottle of honey. a cone spout or flip top dispenser. no labels or no identifying marks. Give Linda Pelham before the meeting. sample number.

provided with ballots, plates or other member will write on the ballot the honey (only one sample number tallied to determine First, Second and announced at the December meeting. be returned. Help us keep the room clean.

It's time for us to start looking at candidates for our 2017 Royal Court. Applications for the ETBA Honey Princess and the Ambassador program will be available to pick up at our club meeting. If you know a young lady or young man who is a beekeeper and would like to join the royal court program, encourage them to complete an application. Applications must be completed and returned by November 3rd. The Royal Court Committee members will be interviewing for the Princess and Ambassador positions in November. For any questions please call me at (903) 477-5299.

Both, our Queen Brittany and Ambassador Jacob did an excellent job representing the Beekeeping Industry, along with our local club at the state fair this year. This was the first year TBA asked the Queens, Princesses, from around the state, and our Ambassador to serve as a panel in judging of the Honey Competition held at the State Fair. After a training course in the eleven criteria standards and why they are important in judging honey, the panel selected the top three winning entries for the Extracted Honey Category.



We will miss all of you at our November meeting; we will be attending the TBA Convention that Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. I hope many of you will be able to join us at the convention.



Experienced keeper helps Nacogdoches boy explore passion for bees

What do 30,000 honey bees, a 75 year old beekeeper, and an 11 year old special needs child have in common? A house that has been the residence to these thousands bees where JaCorey Spencer's grandmother; Shirley Thorn once lived. She had become so overwhelmed by her unexpected guests over a span of 5 years that she moved out of the house.

What became an inconvenience for Ms. Thorn, sparked interest in JaCorey. He'd been watching TV shows and news accounts about the importance of honey bees, and as a result, he convinced his grandmother to call a beekeeper to save the bees' lives. "They're kinda my friends," he said, "I love bees."

Beekeeper Jimmy Lanham of Troup, got the job and said when he arrived and spent some time with JaCorey, went on to say that the boy knows what he's talking about.

"I eat honey every day. I'm 75 years old," Lanham said. "I go up and down those ladders. Building scaffolds just like I did when I was 40 years old." Spencer stood at a safe distance as Lanham vacuumed bees into his own bee box, but that all changed when he learned about the 11-year-old's keen interest in bees. "Let's get you a hood," Lanham said. Lanham buzzed over to his truck. Quick as a bee on honey and Spencer was suited up. "Thank you, sir," Spencer said. "Yeah, just lookey here. You gonna like this. Oh. Lookey there," Lanham said with a giggle. "Come on down here."



"I'm ready," Spencer said. Spencer watched as his newfound mentor pulled out portions of cones weighing as much as 15 pounds. "Now how's that for a monster?" Lanham asked. It was a confidence booster for the special needs child. "He is a natural. I just wish he could go with me for a year," Lanham said.

NACOGDOCHES, TX (KTRE)

To view the full news story .. go to or click on this link

<http://www.ktre.com/story/33465783/experienced-keeper-helps-nacogdoches-boy-explore-passion-for-bees>



ETBA Christmas Celebration



Finger Food Potluck

Bring finger foods — deli tray, small sandwiches, Lil'smokies, chips and dips, queso, fruit, veggies, cheese balls, crackers, etc.

ALSO, everyone please bring your favorite Christmas dessert goodies!



Arrive early and have your food setup by 6:30. That is 15 minutes earlier than our regular start time. The room is open by 6:00.

Stay a few minutes after the meeting to help with the cleanup.



I Can Hardly Wait!!!

Are you familiar with the expression, “don’t count your chickens before they hatch.” Even though I know this, I like to look on the bright side. This small little truth can be applied to a lot of areas of our lives. Beekeeping happens to be one of them.

I am making plans for the spring with my current hive count and strength. I am counting my eggs (hives) before they hatch. At best, I will probably lose 5 percent. At worst, I could see a 30 percent decline. I do know they won’t starve. I can control that better than other hive killers. The most prominent killer would be mites or disease. If we treat for mites and make it through the winter with a large cluster we will more than likely have an enormous colony for spring build-up. I am anticipating this increase. All I can see are big clusters, great queen stock, and healthy bees.



I can hardly wait for the spring. Plans are being made for extra hardware with the anticipation that bees will be busting at the seams. I can hardly wait for the grafting room and making up cell builders. I can hardly wait to try a 2 queen colony and make comb honey.

Spring is probably the favorite time for most beekeepers. There is new growth, new life, and new possibilities. With all of this comes the anticipation and planning portion of a beekeeper’s life. How will you and I manage our bees? How many queens will you need? How many frames of brood, honey and pollen will you split with? Will you have to add a couple of bee yards this year? Everything is dependent on how your bees came through the winter. If they come through winter with a big cluster you will more than likely have a better production year. To the left is a picture of a queen I raised this year.

Several years ago I kept bees down in southeast Texas on the clover and tallow trees. Every colony was at least a hundred pound colony. The first year I acquired the bees, I was able to get some queens from my grandfather. I went in to every colony and killed the old queen and re-queened everything. I remember making 4 ½ barrels of honey. It sure was a lot of extracting. After the honey flow, I stored the boxes and went on as usual. I didn’t check on the bees much after that. I would look on them occasionally but didn’t really take care of them.. I wasn’t managing the colonies, and as a result, lost numerous hives. I was losing colonies because I didn’t know what to expect from them and what they really needed from me to flourish. I also didn’t know what they were capable of! Beekeeping error has to be on the top of the list of the reasons bee colonies collapse. I lived by the idea of survival of the fittest. I was guilty of only managing my bees in the spring through tallow bloom. After that, I left them alone to fend for themselves. It was a big mistake.



Noah and I working the bees

Perhaps one of the most important messages you and I can hear is; bees need to be managed. Honeybee survival and fruitfulness will largely depend on you and I making sure they have what they need and knowing what the bees will do in each season of the year. Understanding the nature of the bees is important. Knowing what they forage on and when is important. Having some experience keeping bees and managing pests is important. Hanging around with beekeepers who actually manage their colonies can be invaluable for your own management. Hopefully this winter and spring we will have opportunities to visit a local apiary and go through some hives.

There is no experience like firsthand experience. Would you be interested in visiting an apiary and learning about how to manage a beehive/apiary? Let me know. I took a few pictures for your enjoyment. Have a great month!

Blessings, Matt

November 3, 2016

Practical Experiences in the Beeyard by Stan Brantley



November is the real beginning of the “winding down” of the bee season for this area of Texas. Before the month is past, we will see the first cold nights and the first killing frost. For you computer savvy beekeepers, here is a website that will give you info about the average first frost in your area:

<http://davesgarden.com/guides/freeze-frost-dates>

There are several things we beekeepers need to be doing to prepare our hives for the coming cold weather. If you have not already installed entrance reducers, now is the time to do so. For strong hives, the larger entrance is OK until the temperatures start dropping into the 40's. You can then turn the reducer to use the small entrance for the winter. If you have some hives that do not have a large population, install the reducer with the small entrance open. With diminishing forage available, small hives will become the target of robbing bees and wasps. The small entrance gives the hive bees a better chance of defending the entrance against robbers.

I remind you again to ventilate your hive as the weather gets colder. The brood nest generates heat and humidity that can condense on the cover and drip back down into the hive. Placing a small stick or thin piece of wood like a popsicle stick on the edge of the top super or Inner Cover can lift the Outer Cover enough to allow moisture to escape.

When it gets cold and the cluster forms, bees will generally not propolize this ventilation crack. On a really cold and still morning, it is fascinating to see vapors rising from the hive and condensing in the cold air.

Most areas of East Texas have seen a good growth of fall forage plants. Hopefully, your bees have been busy stocking the hive for the winter. As the fall forage begins to fade over the next couple of weeks, check your hives to ensure that they are indeed well stocked. Give each hive the “two-finger lift”. If the hive does not feel heavy, take a look inside and check the storages. If the hive does not have 8-10 frames of stores, start feeding with sugar syrup. If the hive has adequate stores, you may not need to feed until early spring when the queen is ready to start expanding the brood nest.

If you do feed a hive, I recommend feeding inside the hive to help prevent attracting robbers. Place your Boardman feeder or baggie of syrup on the Inner Cover, close to the bee escape hole. Add an empty super to enclose the feeder before you put on the Outer Cover. Placing the feeder inside the hive can be the difference between survival and being robbed out, especially for a weaker hive. If robbing does become a problem, adding a Robbing Screen can stop it.

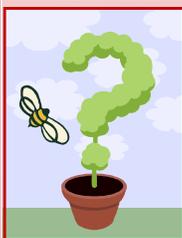
Unfortunately, a weak hive can be robbed before you have a chance to respond. Robbing Screens are available from various bee suppliers or are an easy DIY project. Google “bee robbing screens” and you can find several DIY tutorials.

Even though we are just now preparing for winter, it is also time to start thinking about ordering queens or packages that you will need for the spring. For the past several years, the demand for queens and bees has exceeded the industry's ability to provide. Determine your needs and start contacting suppliers. You may be able to place orders now or at least get on a waiting list. Based on experiences of the past few years, most suppliers will be sold out by December or January.

Another issue to think about is the ability to obtain antibiotics to treat your hives for diseases such as Nosema or AFB. Effective January 1, 2017, new FDA regulations will require a prescription or a VFD (Veterinary Feed Directive) from a veterinarian to purchase antibiotics. This is part of an FDA program to slow the development of drug-resistant bacteria in animal husbandry. As the law is currently written, you will need a prescription or VFD from a veterinarian to purchase the antibiotics but will still be able to apply them yourself. It is my understanding that there is still some discussion about exempting bees from this requirement but at the present time, bees are covered in the law. You may need to follow the development of this new regulation if you need to use antibiotics in your hives.

<https://www.avma.org/News/PressRoom/Pages/Honey-Bees-Food-Animals-Prescriptions-Veterinarians.aspx>

I will be attending the TBA Convention November 3-5 and will not be at the ETBA meeting. Jimmy Lanham will be hosting our Got Questions? group.



The Got Questions?

The group will be open 6:00-6:30 before the meeting. Join us if you are a new beekeeper or have some beekeeping questions. If you have not joined us before, ask someone to point you to the Got Questions? Room. We will try to help you find some answers.

Bee Friendly Plants by Janelle Cole

After such a great amount of interest in our talk about Beescapes last month at our October meeting, Peter and I wanted to get the lists of Bee-Friendly plants to everyone! Here are most of the plants what we mentioned in our presentation. Hope you are able to get your hands on a few of them this fall, to get a head start on your spring garden!

Native Plants that are preferred by honey bees;

Goldenrod
 Foxglove
 Lemonbalm
 Liatris
 Rosemary
 Vitex
 Blackeyed Susan
 Lavender
 Yarrow
 Columbine
 Borage
 Basil
 Lupine
 Carolina Jasmine
 Huckleberry
 Aster
 Obedient Plant
 Salvias
 Esperanza
 Coreopsis

A few other plants:

Annuals— Alyssum, Aster, Cosmos, Marigold, Pentas, Sunflower, Verbena, Zinnia

Perennials— Butterfly Weed, Goldenrod, Lantana, Mexican Petunia, Milkweed, Mistflower, Phlox, Purple Coneflower, Salvias, Tickseed, Yarrow

Trees & Shrubs— Ash, Azalea, Butterfly Bush (especially Purple Knight), Buttonbush, Elm, Glossy Abellia, Toothache Tree, Willow, Peach, Plum, Hackberry, Redbud



Host Plants for Butterflies;

Tiger Swallowtail -
 Green Ash
 Magnolia
 Mexican Plum
 Cottonwood
Black Swallowtail -
 Fennel
 Dill
 Rue
 Parsley
 Queen Anne's Lace
Gulf Fritillary -
 Passion Vines
Texas -
 Shrimp Plant
 Mexican Petunia
Snout Butterfly -
 Hackberry
Painted Lady -
 Calendula
 Yarrow
 Sunflower
 Borage
 Hollyhock
Pipevine -
 Dutchman's Pipevine
Buckeye -
 Senna
 Clover
 Other Legumes

Hope you see a few on here that you want to add to your current landscape. Remember, to really encourage the bees to visit often stagger your blooming season, and plant at least a 3 ft section of the same flowering plant. Try to avoid reds, and choose purple, yellow or white flowering plants.

Lastly, if it does not survive, do not fret, try again!!