



# East Texas Beekeepers Association

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## *October Report by Dick Counts*

“Thank You” to the 110 members and guests who attended our September meeting. Not only was this an outstanding crowd but it was also on a school night! Those present heard an interesting discussion by our new State Apiary Inspection Chief Mark Dykes. Mark was not only informative but he was also a very entertaining speaker. You might say we not only learned a lot but had a good time doing so!

The East Texas State Fair got off to a great start on Friday the 19th. Jimmy Lanham and John Stewart and I set up the ETBA booth on Tuesday and were ready to go when the fair opened. Friday was Senior’s Day and we had a lot of Seniors visiting our booth. Some are repeat visitors who come every year. We always enjoy chatting and hearing stories about the good old days. Crowds really showed up on Saturday with hundreds stopping by our booth, many buying honey and hand cream. We had a good supply to sell, including donations of several cases of hand cream by Don Johnson and a case of honey by Johnny Cox. As usual, our observation hive always attracts a lot of attention. Our booth is staffed each day from 9 AM to 10 PM by ETBA volunteers. If you have never joined us at the fair, plan to do so next year. It is an enjoyable and rewarding experience. You meet lots of interesting people and you help educate the public about the honey bee.

While at the fair, I walked over to Harvey Hall to see the photo exhibit. A beautiful photo of a bee, a startlingly clear close-up with its tongue drawing nectar from inside a flower, caught my eye. That photo was by our ETBA Member Miss Ginnie Jeske and won second place! Congratulations Ginnie!

The Texas State Fair in Dallas is September 26 through October 19. Our ETBA Honey Queen and Honey Princess will be working in the TBA booth October 17, 18 and 19. Make plans to join us. Information will be available at the meeting.

The annual TBA Convention is in Houston, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, November 6, 7, and 8. That is different from the Friday through Sunday schedules of previous conventions. You can register on-line at the TBA website [www.texasbeekeepers.org](http://www.texasbeekeepers.org). We will also have additional information at our October meeting.

- 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**  
**Oct. 2**

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

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

## ***HONEY QUEEN REPORT*** by *Vi Bourns*



As I am writing this article, we are well into our activities at the East Texas State Fair in Tyler. Our Texas Honey Queen, Ms. Hayden Wolf, and ETBA Honey Queen Carrie and Honey Princess Willow will be educating children from 9am to 1pm on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. It is always fascinating to see the wonder and excitement in the eyes of children when they go by the observation hive and see the live bees.

Hayden will take one afternoon to help them prepare for their cooking demonstrations at the Dallas State Fair coming up Oct. 17-19. At the State Fair, they will reunite with other young ladies around the big state of Texas to intrigue the many visitors with their knowledge of cooking and marvels of the honey bee. It will not be all work, however. For fun, they will take time out to change into evening dresses and ride in the moonlight parade around the fair grounds.

After that comes the Texas Beekeepers Convention in Houston on Nov. 6-9. They will have an opportunity to hear special speakers, see TBA in action, educate children in KLAB, share their special recipes with other clubs, and enjoy lots of food and fun. Boy, what an exhausting week-end.

Speaking requests continue to come in, so they have begun a busy season. Hey, they will be as busy as a bee!

The supplement for our "Cooking With Your Honey" cookbook is coming along. We have entered over one hundred new recipes. We will keep you updated. A special thanks to those who did the typing, editing and proofing so we can meet our publishing deadline.



Hello everyone! I know you are as excited as I am about the upcoming events! This year's State Fair promises to be a huge success, as does all the smaller, more local fairs. In fact, Princess Willow and I are getting ready for our cooking demonstrations for the State Fair in Dallas, thanks to Ms. Vi and Hayden Wolfe! They've been kind enough to hold a class for us, teaching and guiding us through the process. I have asked my sisters for their tips on the subject as well. I am thankful I have sisters that have already experienced this!

I have just recently started working at a barbeque restaurant and discovered that they have been selling honey, (supposedly local) but the bottles don't have any labels on them whatsoever! This seemed a bit questionable to me, so I went to the manager about it. He was not aware he had a Honey Queen working for him, but he has been well informed on the subject now! And yes, he is having the honey label-issue looked into for me.

My brothers and I went outside this morning and it was just perfect weather! So beautiful. Benjamin (my 8 yr old brother) looked at me with that goofy grin he gets, and said: "Carrie! Do you smell that? It's Christmas!!" I'm not sure about that, but I am definitely thankful for the break from the heat! Christmas always is here before we know it, and I do believe it's a short 15 weeks away. Goodness, 2015 isn't going to give us a chance to prepare!

I can't wait till this meeting, I hope you have all been well! See you soon! ~Carrie Lenamond

### **And That is Cooking with Honey!**



The Dallas State Fair is quickly approaching. At the Texas Beekeepers Association Booth, each Honey Queen and Honey Princess will demonstrate their recipes two times. Thousands of people will be visiting the TBA Booth where they will learn about cooking with honey and sample our magical creations.

Preparing my recipe has been an adventure. I have tested dozens of honey recipes on my family, friends, and the ETBA Club. I chose my sister Laurel's recipe "Honey Apple Crisp." My mom, sister, and I attended cooking demonstrations at FRESH to observe how a live cooking demonstration is performed. This week, I am excited to be going to a cooking demonstration training tutored by Texas Honey Queen Hayden Wolf. I have also been invited to demonstrate my recipe at the cooking demonstration kitchen at FRESH by professional Chef Michael Brady. I will be teaching two groups of school children. My recipe should be perfect for this group since it was created by my ten year old sister! Chef Michael promises that he will give me pointers on how to best teach while chopping, mixing, baking and serving.

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## President's Letter *by Gus Wolf*

When you take even a cursory look at our membership list, you can see that we cover a fairly large geographic area. That being said, every time storms roll in, I keep my computer set to the Weather Underground Wunderground Map to watch the regional activity. The area I am most concerned with is the Big Sandy area. And I have noticed what seems to be a trend. Everyone else seems to get rain and we don't. Countless times, storms have rolled through all four points of the compass and they somehow manage to skirt our area.

All that to ask, how is the fall nectar flow in your area? Those areas that have had sufficient rain will have fall blooms to support a good nectar flow. Whereas, in my area, there is a borderline dearth. It would be a good idea to keep an eye on what the girls are bringing in, or NOT bringing in. The Fall flow is what you will let your bees keep for the winter. Or, if you like dark heavy bodied honey, you might want to extract it. In either case, you may need to start feeding your bees. Make sure they have sufficient resources now and for the winter. If too little food is available for them now, the queen will stop laying. That would then mean your hive population would begin to dwindle. Will your colony be big enough to keep warm during the cold weather? Monitoring them now can save you from losing them later.

Well, they say that a "swarm in the fall ain't worth nothing at all." We've had our share of swarms around our house the past few weeks. My son Graeme has been busy with them. He had two calls to remove recently established hives from water meters and we had about six swarms in the front of our house.

We have enough bees and previously used boxes around our house that bees looking for a home might be attracted to the intoxicating bee odors wafting from our neck of the woods. Perhaps that is why we've been hit with so many swarms. We are really not sure of their origin but are fairly sure they are not our own bees. The swarms have been small but Graeme's interest has really been in the queens. He has wanted to split some of his hives but had no queens with which to populate them. Here in a week he gets free queens!

This brings up a skill that Graeme has developed in the short time he has been beekeeping and from having worked with Eddie Collins and Mike Rappazzo a few times. Graeme has become pretty adept at finding queens, especially in a swarm. If you can find the queen, put her in a hairclip carrier. The bees will go wherever you put her and won't be leaving. The last swarm had Graeme in the center of one of our magnolia trees, on the top step of an eight foot step ladder, poking around a swarm looking for her royal highness. Find her he did and that swarm followed him down and into a nuc box not far away.

Something you might want to consider, especially if you have a small number of hives, is marking your queens with an unusual color rather than the standard colors. If you don't have many hives, it should not be too difficult to keep track of how old your queens are. If you mark them the same as everyone else, then when you find a swarm in your backyard, how do you know whose queen she is? If the color is day-glow orange and that is what you used to mark your queens, it would immediately identify the swarm as coming from one of your hives. It's just a thought, albeit a crazy one. Just don't use Paisley, please, because that's what I mark my queens with!

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Chef Michael encouraged me to put together a fact sheet about honey to hand out to the cooking class. I have been extremely busy researching honey facts. It is difficult to make decisions about what to put into it because honey has so many benefits! I am particularly impressed with two historical honey facts. Honey heals damaged tissue and has been used as an antibiotic for wounds since ancient times until modern antibiotics were discovered in 1928. In addition, honey was used during the ancient Greek Olympics to increase stamina in athletes.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the October meeting, where I will share my finished honey fact sheet for your critique and advice. ~Willow

#### Sources Cited

Palmer, Alice. "Honey: The Facts"

Runner's World. May 7, 2010.

[www.runnersworld.co.uk/nutrition/honey-the-facts/5285.html](http://www.runnersworld.co.uk/nutrition/honey-the-facts/5285.html)

# ETBA at the 2014 EAST TEXAS STATE FAIR of Tyler



Here are some Contest Prize Winners that we know about:

Ginnie Jeske  
2nd Place Photography

Willow Lanchester  
1st Place Painting

Laurel Lanchester  
1st Place Embroidery  
2nd Place Apparel  
1st Place Rock Collection





## *Practical Experiences in the Beeyard* by Stan Brantley

I have heard several reports of golf ball sized gatherings of bees hanging from the edge of the telescoping cover or from the edge of the bottom board between the hive supports. A close inspection will show a small queen with the group of bees. She will usually be short and have a wedge shape and be easily identifiable as a queen. So, what is going on? I believe for some reason the hive feels threatened and has produced several queens. The excess queens issued from the hive and attempted to mate. At this time of the year, there are limited numbers of drones for mating. The queens return to the hive poorly mated or even unmated and are reluctant to enter. They find a protected place to rest, usually hanging on the edge of an overhang such as the Outer Cover or the Bottom Board. Other bees cluster around the queen, giving the impression of a small swarm. The beekeeper finds this cluster of bees and wonders what is happening. Is it possible to capture this small cluster and start a new a hive? I would not say it is impossible but the odds are against success, even if you placed them in a two-framed nuc on drawn comb. These small clusters of a hundred or so bees would require lots of care and feeding in order to survive. The queens mated status is uncertain and may not be able to sustain the hive. Additionally, this late in the season, even in the best of circumstances, the hive will probably not increase sufficiently to survive the winter.

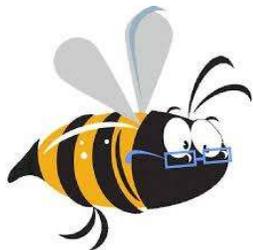
Late September into October is a time of transition for our hives. Even though some of our days still feel like summer, the calendar says we have already passed the first day of Autumn. We are seeing the first cooling trends and the emergence of fall foliage. Our bees certainly understand that the shortening daylight hours and cooling temps are telling them to start preparing for the coming winter. It is also time for the beekeeper to shift thoughts and actions into helping our bees prepare for winter. Take a look at the activity on your landing boards. You may see newly hatched bees making orientation flights. These are the new crop of field bees that will be working the fall forage to build up hive stores. The bees that the hive is producing now are also the “wintering bees” that will survive the winter and emerge in the spring to gather the first pollen and nectar that will allow the queen to produce the next year’s bees. If we want to see hives emerge from winter happy, healthy and ready to explode with new life, we need to ensure that the bees of October have every chance to succeed in their tasks.

Observe the vegetation in your area. Most of East Texas promises to have an abundant fall bloom. The cooler and wetter summer has most of the roadsides and fields already showing goldenrod, milkweed and asters, all important forage plants. These forage sources should last until the first frosts arrive. You should see bees bringing in pollen and nectar when you are watching your landing boards. If you do not see a good crop of fall flowers or do not see bees bringing in pollen, you may need to think about supplemental feeding with sugar syrup.

If you do not have an entrance reducer installed, now is a good time to add it, using the larger entrance. The entrance reducer will help the bees defend the hive against robbing, beetles and mice. As the weather becomes cooler, we will turn the entrance reducer to the small or “winter” entrance. I have already noticed some of my hives without entrance reducers were building propolis to narrow the entrance. I cleaned out the propolis and added entrance reducers to those hives.

As we move closer to the colder weather, we will need to evaluate the amount of stores in our hives. Ideally, a hive should have a full super of honey and several frames of pollen in the brood chamber as we head into winter. We have talked about using the “two-finger lift” to estimate stores by feeling the hive weight. Typically, we talked about lifting the hive from the back. Beekeepers use many different methods to support their hives -- hive stands, landscape timbers, railroad ties, cinder blocks and even things you and I might never consider. It is not always practical to perform the two-finger lift from the rear of the hive. Find the lifting place that works best for your hives, front, back, side, doesn’t matter. Just be sure to always lift the hive in the same manner each time so you can compare the change in weight. If you are not familiar with weight of a full or empty hive, do some field practice. Test your hive with a two-finger lift, then look inside to see how much honey and pollen is stored. Repeat the process a few times and educate your two-finger lifter!

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.



## *Bee Facts* by Eddie Collins

If you missed your opportunity to work the ETBA booth at the Tyler fair, you missed a great opportunity to introduce bees to the public and to learn about bees yourself. I always learn a lot just by answering all the questions. It never fails that I get asked a question I can't answer and it causes me to do some research. Also, if you're looking for "free" bees, there are always people stopping by who would like to give them to you. Maybe at the next meeting we can talk about what "free" bees really mean!

This past month, I fed syrup and treated for mites. I had two hives that were small, only three or four frames of bees, so I combined them with a stronger hive. This time of the year, I normally go with the combine method vs trying to keep them going through the winter. Next spring, I'll take the combs from the small hives and use them to make splits from larger hives. This works well for my apiary operation. If you have only a few hives and you have the time, then you can "baby" the smaller hives and get them through the winter. Just keep an eye on them and make sure they have a queen. You may even want to re-queen them.

As a general rule, it's a bad idea to combine two weak hives. Two weak hives just make a bigger weak hive. One thing you do need to consider is – Why are they small in the first place? Missing a queen? Mites? Lots of hive beetles? No food? More than likely, if you can't resolve the original problem, then the hive will not make it until next spring.

Here are a few ways to combine two hives of bees:

**Just combine them:** As a general rule, this is not a good idea because the bees from each hive will fight each other. In the end, you may have a lot of dead bees from each hive. There are ways to reduce the fighting, like spraying the bees with sugar water, but other than special circumstances, I don't recommend combining this way.

**Shake method:** Take the weak hive and shake all the bees in front of the strong hive. Just shake them on the ground. The bees will then crawl into the hive. Place the comb from the weak hive on top of the strong hive or place them in storage. If you have any brood from the weak hive, just put them in the middle of the strong hive's brood.

Important Note — if you are storing brood comb outside the hive, they are very attractive to moths and beetles so be sure to store them properly.

**Newspaper Method:** Remove the top from the strong hive and place a sheet of newspaper all the way across the top of the hive. I usually make a few slits in the newspaper for ventilation. Next place the brood boxes from the weak hive on top of the newspaper. The bees will then eat through the newspaper. By the time they get all the newspaper removed, the two hives will be one.

**Division board:** This is a special piece of equipment that goes between the two combined hives. It allows the hives to smell each other but does not allow the bees to get to each other. The board usually has an entrance for the top hive. After a few days, you remove the board and the bees will peacefully combine into one hive.

The division board can be as fancy as a commercial Snelgrove Board, which has multiple doors for controlling bee movement, or as simple as a Queen Excluder or Inner Cover with a layer of hardware cloth or screen wire on each side, with a small gap between the layers to separate the bees. Be sure to use wire on both sides because the bees can fight each other through a single layer.

Note that in all methods, if you don't first kill one of the queens, the bees will eventually do it for you. I recommend first killing the queen from the weaker hive before combining. If you don't, then the weaker hive queen may survive or the remaining queen may get injured in the process.



**Snelgrove Board**