



East Texas Beekeepers Association

Vol. 27 No. 9

September 6, 2012

September Report by Dick Counts

Last month, we had 103 members and visitors present to learn and share bee information. When I talk about the attendance each month, I hope I don't sound like a broken record. It is like music to my ears to say we had over a hundred present. THANKS for the effort and the participation.

The big news is CRYSTALLIZED honey! Pretty disappointing to pull your frames and discover that the honey is crystallized and will not spin out in the extractor. If you have found a way to salvage your crystallized honey, please share it at the meeting. I am still getting reports, even on some honey pulled as late as last week. The reports received to date seem to indicate that most of the problem is located West and North of Tyler. We have reports from beekeepers in Ben Wheeler, Mineola and Jefferson. If you are in a different area and have found your honey to be crystallized in the frames, let us know. I have sent a sample to Texas A&M to see if they can give us some answers.

I got just over 4 inches of rain last weekend. The wetter than usual August hopefully means we may get a "Goldenrod Flow" in September. If the Goldenrod blooms well, you will know your bees have been working it by the smell in your beeyard. Hives full of Goldenrod honey have a strong, almost unpleasant smell. Sometimes it is referred to as smelling "raunchy". Many people do not like the smell or taste of Goldenrod honey but the bees will happily feed on it during the winter.

We are gearing up for our East Texas State Fair which begins September 20. If you wish to work our booth or sell your own local honey, please contact me.

The Texas Beekeepers Association is looking for volunteers to help in the TBA booth at the State Fair in Dallas. If you are interested, see me at the meeting.

We will have more beetle traps for sale at the September meeting. They will be at the table with Tammy. Cost is \$2 each. Help yourself and drop the money in the box.

President—Gus Wolf

Vice President—Mike Rappazzo

Treasurer—Tammy Lenamond

Secretary—Karen Anderson

Ex. Director and Reporter—
Dick Counts

Honey Queen Chair—Vi Bourns

Directors-at-Large—Stanford
Brantley, Randy Bobo

Program Directors — Joe
Mekalip, Gus Wolf

Webmaster—Ken Wilkinson

NEXT MEETING

September 6

TJC West Campus — Room 104
1530 West Loop 323 S SW
6:45 PM

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



HONEY QUEEN REPORT by Vi Bourns



Happy Early Fall to all! The weather and rains are better and all in all it seems to BEE a good year for honey. My hives now number five since Dick helped me split one. We inserted a new queen they are doing well. The queen is beautiful and laying up a storm.

My first year as an independent beekeeper has been an exciting and learning experience. I have been trying some new things -- even got Dick to use Bee Go to rob the hives. I extracted enough honey to gain a commercial customer, have some for the East Texas State Fair, and donate some to the Happy Hills Children's Home near Ft. Worth.

At the September meeting, we will present Kellie and Brack their wedding gift from ETBA, a Money Quilt made from the money you donated, pinned to the bee quilt she made and placed 3rd at the Dallas State Fair. Thank you all for supporting and honoring her with your love. She served our club as ETBA Honey Princess 2009 and Queen 2010, then served the Texas Beekeepers Association as TBA Honey Princess in 2011.

Our 2012 Royal Court is still busy with several upcoming activities. We have already received requests to make presentations into 2013! Thank you for your support. Without you, the Royal Court would not have such an impact on educating the public about the honey bee, and their importance to life as we know it.



Hello Everyone! Unfortunately the summer is almost over, but with that comes the start of new events for your ETBA Royal Court! On Thursday, August 9th, I visited the Athens Rotary Club and gave a beekeeping presentation. My mom and grandfather accompanied me. Grandfather enjoyed hearing the presentation as he had never heard me do one before. I'd like to say a big thanks to Ms. Sherry Robson for inviting us to this event; I enjoyed it immensely! The people were wonderful and they had some good questions. I even met an older man who had been a beekeeper for 63 years! He said he learned several new things about bees that he had not known before, even though he had been in the business for so long.

At our September meeting, I will be giving a presentation to the club that I gave in a 4-H competition this year. It is a presentation on all of the products of the hive, which isn't a topic that I cover very often in a regular presentation. However, I've learned quite a lot through researching this topic and I can't wait to share with you all of the fascinating information I have found!

The State Fair of Texas is almost upon us!! All of the Queens and Princesses across the state anticipate this event every year. We are all so excited! If you are planning to attend the State Fair, make sure to go by the TBA booth and maybe you'll get to hear a cooking demonstration given by one of the girls!!

I can't wait to see you all at the meeting! Every member of ETBA means so much to me. ~Bekah



This month's report is about a statement that the National Honey Board (NHB) released earlier this month pertaining to the confusion over pollen and ultra-filtration. Before writing this article, I wanted to research just who the NHB is and how they were chosen for this important job. According to their website, "the NHB is a federal research and promotion board under the oversight of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that conducts research, marketing and promotional programs to help maintain and expand markets for honey and honey products. The ten members on the NHB, who represent producers (beekeepers), packers, importers, and a marketing cooperative, were appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture." Since I knew very little about the Secretary of Agriculture, I looked up some info on the USDA website about who he is and how he arrived at this position. According their website, the Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, was appointed by our current administration.

In the NHB's statement, they stated that they want to clarify any misconceptions about pollen and ultra-filtration. I found, however, that I was thoroughly confused by their "clarification". As I've written in previous newsletters, there has been some confusion about honey and honey filtration. In the NHB article, they quote Bruce Boynton, the CEO of the NHB, who said "the term 'ultra-filtration' has been misused in association with traditional filtering methods commonly used by many U.S. honey packers, leading some consumers to believe that any honey (con't on page 6)



President's Letter *by Gus Wolf*

Happy September, Beekeepers! The season should be winding down as the spring - summer honey flow is over. The bees should be preparing for the winter, gathering as much pollen and nectar from the fall plants as they can. Since it was not so long ago that you may have harvested honey from your bees, be sure they have plenty to eat and feed them if needed.

It was a happy time in our house two weeks ago. We finally got to harvest honey from the our lone producing hive. It's Hayden's hive, of course. The super was pretty much full and the upper brood box was really eight frames of honey, the other two frames being brood. This year we extracted the honey in our guest house. It conveniently has a tile floor for easy cleanup! Remember that two years ago, the last time we extracted, I did it in the open garage and found out just how alluring honey is to bees. That was how I discovered why beekeepers have honey houses. This year it was just Hayden, Graeme and me in the "honey house", with just a few straggler bees that were bouncing off the windows trying to get out. They had zero interest in the honey we were extracting. Everyone got a turn at uncapping and spinning, and, of course, tasting. All in all, we got a little over three gallons, which, for a single hive in a nectar poor area, is not too bad. If only I would have had eight hives just like that one!

One of the frames had an area that was drawn apart from the foundation, sort of an "isthmus" of comb. It fell off into the uncapping tray like a large piece of sirloin. The two junior beekeepers gently lifted it out and put it on a plate and have been savoring slices of it a little at a time. It sure is good comb honey!

On Friday, August 10, we got a call to remove a hive from a water meter in Liberty City. Graeme, Hayden and I went at dusk with high hopes of getting as many bees as possible. Working with red light, we scraped three small combs from the underside of the lid into the nuc box we had brought. At one point, Hayden thought she saw the queen on top of the water meter but try as we might, we couldn't find any sign of her. On Sunday, I took the three combs and mounted them with rubber bands on an empty frame, side by side. I looked all over the box – no queen! However, the comb did have eggs, larva and capped brood.



Tuesday morning, the owner of the house called me and said he lifted the lid to peek at the straggler bees that were still in the meter and there was a quantity festooned on the underside. On the way home from work that evening, I again stopped by to claim the bees but they were all gone, not a bee to be found! I figured that the queen had been there and took flight with what little attendants she had to find a safer place to raise her children.

This morning, he called me again and said they were back. I stopped mid morning and, yes, there were bees back but try as I might there was no queen to be found anywhere. I even stopped again late in the afternoon and was able to entice about 75% of the bees onto a small drawn frame I had brought, but still no queen. So it's a mystery about what happened to the amazing, disappearing queen.

Meanwhile, I took a frame of pollen, nectar and brood, including eggs, out of one of our other two hives and installed it in the queenless hive. They are supposed to raise their own queen, but we'll see what happens. Not much is going according to plan with this hive. Just when you think you have learned something, everything you know is wrong!

See you all at the meeting! Don't forget that the auction is coming up in October— not this month but at the October meeting.

Also, if you need sugar for your bees, see Les Jeske. He has access to almost unlimited quantities at a price that is sure to please!



Safer Summer Beekeeping



Hello, everyone! September is almost here, and perhaps cooler weather along with it. But while we still have a few more weeks of summer left, the high temperatures pose a possible problem for us beekeepers. Combined with our thick suits and the lifting of heavy supers, a summer afternoon in the bee yard spells a perfect recipe for heat stroke. However, by knowing the symptoms and treatment of heat stroke, we can take precautions against it and safely enjoy our summer beekeeping.



First, know the symptoms. Heat stroke is the second phase in heat stress, our bodies' response to overheating. The first phase in heat stress, heat exhaustion, is characterized by fatigue, heavy sweats, and cold skin. Heat stroke, the second phase, occurs when the body becomes dehydrated and loses control over its temperature regulation system. This results in an internal temperature above 105 degrees and other symptoms that usually include dizziness, confusion, headache, nausea, rapid breathing, and pale or flushed skin. It may also be marked by a lack of sweating while still exposed to high temperatures. If left untreated, prolonged heat stroke can be fatal.

If you notice any of these symptoms, take action. Immediately stop working and move to some shade. If you suspect heat exhaustion, cool yourself off with a wet towel on your neck or face, or sit in your car with the air conditioning on. Also, make sure to drink water, taking a few small sips at a time. If you have Gatorade or another drink containing salt and electrolytes, sip some of it along with the water to replenish your body's supply of salts and minerals. Even when you're feeling better, avoid being in direct heat for the rest of the day. If you think you may be experiencing heat stroke, call 911 and get medical assistance. While waiting for help to arrive, move to the shade and follow the same advice as for heat exhaustion.

The much simpler and easier way to forgo treating heat stroke is to take precautions against it in the first place. Keep bottled water in your car or at your bee yard so you always have it handy. If you're going to work the bees on a hot day, slip a bottle in the back pocket of your bee suit, or set several bottles on top of the hives you plan to check. Also, don't forget to take a short break every 15-20 minutes to drink a little water. Another way to stay cool is wrap a wet towel around your neck or wear a wet shirt. I've even read of a man who jumps into a pool with his suit on before checking his bees! Speaking of suits, if you have a jacket and veil combo or feel comfortable with only a veil, you might consider wearing it instead of a full suit. All in all, staying safe from heat stroke is easier than you might think.



Knowing about heat stroke, treatment, and prevention can help us beekeepers, especially during summer. Heat stroke results from dehydration and causes high body temperature and other unpleasant side effects. To treat it, seek medical help and cool yourself off with liquids and shade. However, you can avoid it altogether by keeping yourself hydrated and taking short breaks when working in the bee yard. Hopefully this information will help us all stay safe these last few weeks of summer. Happy beekeeping! ~Martha

STATE BEEKEEPING CONVENTIONS — COMING SOON!

The **Texas Beekeepers Association** annual convention will be November 8-11 in Killeen, Texas at the Shiloh Inn Suites Hotel (reservations 800-222-2244, front desk 254-699-0999). Registration forms and information will be in the August TBA Journal.

The **Louisiana Beekeepers Association** annual convention will be November 30-December 1 in Bossier City at the Ramada Bossier City. Rooms must be reserved before November 1. Mobility impaired individuals may wish to request a downstairs room as the motel does not have an elevator to reach the upstairs rooms. All meetings will be held downstairs. Additional information will soon be available at www.labeekeepers.org.



Practical Experiences in the Beeyard by Stan Brantley

September in Texas is a month of transition. We come out of hot August weather and begin to move to the beginnings of Fall in October. Our bees are also in transition. They have survived the hottest and leanest days of the season and are ready to prepare the hive to survive the cold days of winter.

The beekeeper's goal for September is to help the hive build FAT bees and set aside sufficient stores to survive the winter. Feeding the hive with 2 to 1 sugar syrup triggers the queen to increase egg laying, helping fill the hive with plenty of workers to forage for nectar in our fall blooms. Regular feeding also helps ensure healthier, robust bees ready to endure winter hardships, the type of bees Dr. Larry Conner calls "Fat Bees".

The primary fall forage in East Texas is the Goldenrod bloom, usually occurring in September and October. Wetter than usual weather this year is already starting to trigger Goldenrod bloomings. A friend of mine ran across an early blooming patch along the highway near Mt. Pleasant two weeks ago. If we have a significant Goldenrod bloom, you may even see several frames of capped Goldenrod honey in your hives. Foraging bees will also be bringing in a lot of Goldenrod pollen, so expect to see frames packed with pollen. If you do not see honey and pollen being stored, begin feeding sugar syrup regularly. In absence of sufficient nectar, bees will store and cap the sugar syrup to use as winter food. A word of caution – if you are still planning on extracting honey before winter, do not start feeding sugar syrup until after you have extracted.



September is also a good month to start assessing whether you need to requeen a hive. Your goal is to have a queen that produces a good and consistent brood pattern. Because of the hot days of August, you may not see a lot of brood in early September. As the days began to cool, you should expect to see more eggs, larvae and capped brood, especially if you are feeding sugar syrup. However, if you begin feeding and the queen continues to lay only a small number of eggs, you may wish consider requeening the hive.

When you are inspecting the brood, don't be surprised if the caps on the brood cells look darker than usual. In the Spring, caps on brood cells are usually light brown. By September, the caps may be dark brown or almost black. You will also notice similar color changes in the wax of drawn comb. The new wax is soft and almost white but turns darker and harder throughout the season. Frames of honey in new light comb need to be handled carefully in the extractor to prevent blowout while honey in older dark combs resists blowout better.

While you are checking your hives, it is also a good time to do a powdered sugar dusting for mites. You can safely dust for mites even if you plan to extract again. Hives with lower mite loads have a better chance of surviving harsh winter conditions than hives heavily infested with mites. Powdered sugar dusting in the fall helps the bees groom away adult mites. The mites fall through the screened bottom board rather than parasitize the adult bees all winter long.

A few more comments about requeening – Several ETBA members have recently purchased queens from Wooten's in California. Wooten queens have developed a reputation of laying heavily and producing unusually gentle bees. If you saw the Internet videos featuring Randy Fair of the Louisiana bee club, you may have noticed that neither Randy or the news reporter used any type of protective gear and were digging pretty deep into a hive of bees from a Wooten queen. It will be interesting to see if our ETBA members have the same experience with their Wooten queens.

The USDA Honey Bee Breeding, Genetics and Physiology Laboratory and the Louisiana State Beekeepers Association will hold their 16th Annual Field Day on Saturday, October 20th, 9:30-3:30 in Baton Rouge. The Field Day will include activities for beginners, intermediate and more experienced beekeepers. There will be a variety of workshops covering subjects for all levels of beekeeping. You must pre-register before October 1. Pre-registration fee is \$25 per person or \$30 at the door. The registration fee includes coffee, pastries and very good catered lunch. For more information, see www.labeekeepers.org or call Lanie Bourgeois (225-767-9299) or Sandra Hineman at (225-767-9280). Or you can talk to me at our September meeting.

I will be at the meeting early. Look for me in the Question Corner, 6:00 to 6:30 before the meeting. If you have bee-keeping questions, I will try to answer them.

(Hayden — continued) without pollen is not real honey.” He also said “the truth is that honey is made by honeybees from the nectar of flowers and plants, not pollen.” The NHB article continued by saying “after the honey is removed from the beehive and extracted by a beekeeper, it is shipped off to a honey packer, who warms the honey and removes any foreign material or residue from the beehive, often including whatever pollens may have been introduced during the extraction process.”

I always thought pollen got into the honey before extracting so I did a little more research and found an excerpt from the book “New Frontiers in Palynology” I read “How does pollen get into honey?” This article states “Some may fall into the nectar that is sucked into the bee’s stomach. Later, that pollen may be regurgitated with the nectar into the cells of the honeycomb. Also, as a result of a bees grooming of her body, loose pollen can fall into open cells of the comb.”

I also came upon an article called “Beekeepers Stung, European Union orders a pollen warning on honey jars.” This article from November 2011 says that The European Court of Justice, in a ruling that cannot be appealed, has reclassified pollen as an ingredient of honey rather than an intrinsic component. This means that anyone who sells honey to the public, including Britain’s 40,000 amateur beekeepers, faces expensive tests. To a small beekeeping operation, the expense of those tests could put them out of business.

To me, honey is what is inside the capped cells in a beehive; that substance is called honey. To the general public and to many of the large honey packers, honey is the clear sweet liquid they sell on the shelves of the supermarket. To these undiscerning people, the absence of pollen is not an issue. Those of us who are beekeepers understand the importance of keeping honey the way the bees made it — with pollen. We know where and whom to buy our honey from and who we can trust to handle our honey to ensure that all its nutritional qualities remain intact.

That’s all for now! Next month I’ll continue my report on the article I’ve written about in the last 2 newsletters. Next months section is called “What’s wrong with Chinese Honey?” See you all at the next meeting! ~Hayden

Dr. Larry Conner will be returning to East Texas this October to offer another day of instruction for beekeepers. Dr. Connor’s teaching format is a combination of talks and hive visits. The focus of this session is to expand your knowledge of bees and beekeeping after your first season of bees. Emphasis will focus on issues facing the not-quite-new beekeeper. We will review some of the biology of bees and bee pests useful to successful beekeepers. The use of nucs and home-reared queens will be reviewed. Plenty of time will be given for questions from participants.

Title: Beekeeping 102 Master Class – Beekeeping for second year and small-scale beekeepers

Instructor: Dr. Larry Connor, Wicwas Press (entomologist, author and publisher)

Topics (Subject to change):

- Beekeeping for fun AND profit
- Beekeeping biology as it impacts bee management *
- Mite sampling and integrated pest management *
- Two and a half (or more) hives—Why and How?
- Queen production in the back yard *
- Discussion

*Lecture and/or bee yard topics. All participants are requested to wear a bee veil during the hive visits.

The session will be hosted by Mike Rappazzo on Saturday, October 20, 2012.

Location: Kingfisher Acres: 3405 Kingfisher Gilmer TX 75645

Registration is \$125 per person or \$200 per couple/partners and includes breaks, lunch, and one copy of Dr. Connor's newest book, “Bee-sentials: A FieldGuide” or one of his other titles.

REGISTER BY OCTOBER 1ST. To register, go to www.wicwas.com and enter the PayPal store.

Or mail a check for \$125 (postmarked by October 1st) per person or \$200 per couple/partners to:

Wicwas Press 1620 Miller Road Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Questions??: Contact LjConnor@aol.com or kingfisheracres@gmail.com