



East Texas Beekeepers Association

Vol. 30 No. 9

September 3, 2015

September Report by Dick Counts

We had a nice crowd of about 129 members and guests at our August meeting. I say “about” because it is hard to get an accurate count when we are filling that big room. Thanks for your continued interest and participation. ETBA works because you are there.

I will be hosting a final extraction day for club members on Saturday, September 5. Contact me for an appointment if you wish to extract some of your honey. Don't just show up, make sure you contact me ahead of time and arrange a time for your extracting.

If you are a beekeeper with new hives this year and just want to get a little of your honey, you can bring as little as two frames and a gallon container. Two frames can often make about a half gallon of honey. You can enjoy a little of your first year's honey without having to destroy the comb by crushing it to remove the honey.

The East Texas State Fair begins September 25. We need a good group of members to work the booth throughout the fair. We will have a signup sheet at the meeting so you can pick your favorite time slots. If you will not be at the meeting, give me a call or email to get signed-up. We will be able to sell our locally produced honey in the booth. The honey price will be set by the club and all honey will be sold using those guides. Unsold honey will be returned to you unless you wish to donate it to the club or to the fair staff. If you wish to sell your honey, bring it to the fair on the morning of the 25th. No gate pass is needed if you come before 11 AM.

Beginners Beekeeping class will start in January. If you are interested, it is time to submit an application. This also includes Youth Scholarships. If you have a youth or know an interested youth age 12 to 17, it is time for them to submit an application for a scholarship from our Youth Scholarship Fund. You can get an application on the Treasurer's table at the meeting or online at ETBA.info.

The cover picture on this month's newsletter was taken by Ginnie Jeske while traveling in Washington state. Different country, different climate, but the bees are the same.

President—Gus Wolf

Vice President—John Stewart

Treasurer—John Holladay

Secretary—Brenda Sheridan

Ex. Director and Reporter—
Dick Counts

Honey Queen Chair—Lani
Lanchester

Directors-at-Large—Stanford
Brantley

Program Director — Matt Thomas

Webmaster—Ken Wilkinson

Next Meeting Sept. 3

United Methodist Church
405 West Main in Whitehouse
6:45 PM
On the Web: etba.info
Or on the phone: (903) 566-6789

Photo by Ginnie Jeske

HONEY QUEEN REPORT by *Lani Lanchester*



The East Texas Beekeepers Association Queen Program is a large part of the educational outreach of our club. Queen Willow and Princess Brittany travel all over East Texas to teach a variety of ages about Honey Bees, pollination, and beekeeping. The fall is by far our busiest time of year. With schools being back in session, Autumn Fairs, and Texas Beekeepers Association Events, we will be working hard with our active schedules. There are plenty of opportunities for you to get involved in the Queen Program. If you are interested, contact Lani Lanchester or Dick Counts.



Texas roadsides are iconic for their blankets of bluebonnets and other wildflowers. These roadsides offer a great foraging place for pollinators. Recently Smith County has been working to integrate herbicide spraying into next year's budget. While the goal is not to kill the wildflowers but to kill the weeds such as Bermuda grass and Johnson grass, these treatments could still be detrimental to our honey bees. The county's main goal is to reduce the cost of roadside maintenance and believe substituting spraying for mowing will have this desired effect.

Looking at it from a purely financial position, spraying might seem like a better option. The herbicide treatments would be twice a year and contracted out. On the other hand, there is mowing which the county has been doing for years. Compared to spraying, yearly mowing seems like a huge waste of money and manpower. However everything has its side effects and spraying herbicides is no exception.

Spraying herbicides will have some negative effects. Some of those effects are the possible overspray killing plants that they did not intend to harm, such as those wildflowers that our bees rely on so heavily. Another downside is these herbicides are not always 100% effective. There is always a chance in Texas that it will rain and wash away the poison or that certain plants may not be effected by the specific chemicals being used. Some herbicides such as Glyphosate can even harm the honey bee or other pollinators themselves. The final factor that must be taken into account is that so much of Texas is covered in sugar sand and the roots of many of those weeds are all that is holding some hillsides in place. Killing these weeds down to the roots may not be the best idea.

Mowing the roadsides is what has been the norm for many years. Mowing is fairly effective but has to be done regularly to keep everything in decent condition. Mowing costs much more and removes workers from roadwork on the days allotted for mowing. While mowing is effective, it is labor intensive and inappropriate for infestations of a specific weed species. So mowing alone is not the best option either.

There is no pure yes or no answer to this problem. Herbicides on their own are unpredictable and mowing is not very cost effective. The state of Louisiana has a fairly reasonable plan in place. They mow down the weeds and avoid using herbicides unless spot treating for a specific weed type. This limits the exposure other plants get to the herbicide, leaving root systems intact, and also limiting the exposure pollinators have to these herbicides. If you are against the Smith County spraying their roadside with herbicides, I would encourage you to get involved and petition the Commissioner's Court to not convert to spraying but use it in moderation to treat problem spots. ~Willow

September Program Features



Lance Wilson

Lance is a certified Master Beekeeper (GMBP) He is a small scale beekeeper managing hives in Llano and Travis counties in Central Texas. Lance is a co-organizer of the Austin Area Beekeepers Association. He has presented lectures on honey bee

biology, management, behavior, nutrition, Africanized honey bees and Varroa and brood disease management annually at The North American Beekeeping Conference, Georgia's Master Beekeeping Institute, and at local beekeeping clubs all over the state. Lance serves on the new Texas Master Beekeeping Program Board and works as one of the Area Directors for the Texas Beekeepers Association.



The Benefits of Honey

The benefits of honey go beyond its great taste. A great natural source of carbohydrates which provide strength and energy to our bodies, honey is known for its effectiveness in instantly boosting the performance and endurance and reducing muscle fatigue of athletes. Its natural sugars play an important role in preventing fatigue during exercise. The glucose in honey is absorbed by the body quickly and gives an immediate energy boost, while the fructose is absorbed more slowly, providing sustained energy. It is known that honey has also been found to keep levels of blood sugar fairly constant compared to other types of sugar.

Among the many health benefits of honey, what is most impressive to me is that honey can be a powerful immune system booster. Its antioxidant and antibacterial properties can help improve the digestive system and help you stay healthy and fight disease. Start every brand new day with this cleansing tonic if you want to see this health benefit of honey: before breakfast, mix a spoonful of honey and lemon juice from half a lemon into a cup of warm water and drink it.

Many people don't know that honey also possesses carcinogen-preventing and anti-tumor properties! There are now more and more studies pointing to the potential role of honey in the prevention and the progression of tumors and cancer.

For thousands of years, honey has been recognized as one of the most natural home remedies to treat a wide range of ailments and complaints including yeast infection, athlete's foot, and arthritis pain. Its antiseptic properties inhibit the growth of certain bacteria and help keep external wounds clean and free from infection. Honey has been used as a natural cure in first aid treatment for wounds, burns and cuts as it is able to absorb moisture from the air and promote healing. Its antibacterial properties prevent infection and functions as an anti-inflammatory agent, reducing both swelling, pain, and even scarring. It is widely believed that Manuka is the preferred honey for wound dressing due to its strong antibacterial property.

One of the better known health benefits of honey is that it is able to help treat sore throats. Thanks to its antimicrobial properties, honey not only soothes throats but can also kill certain bacteria that causes the infection. Professional singers commonly use honey to soothe their throats before performances. The Chinese believe that excess "neatness" in the body causes sore throats and taking a honey drink can be helpful. ~Brittany



2015 TBA Annual Convention

Thursday October 29 through Saturday October 31

Belton, Texas

Lodging at La Quinta Inn and Suites

229 West Loop 121

254-939-2772

Register online at :

<https://texasbeekeepers.org/annual-convention-2015/>



President's Letter *by Gus Wolf*

I lost track. Was it six or eight weeks that, for all intents and purposes, we had no rain? In Big Sandy, it may have been a full two months. I do know that some other areas were favored with rain, but intermittently. If you grew tired of the same weather report every day, think of how the bees felt. As the ground and plants dried up more and more, there was less and less for the bees to forage. This has resulted in bees that can be more cranky and defensive than usual. The other thing to note is that the hives can be in danger of starving for lack of food. Since you all probably extracted your honey not too long ago, it is very possible that you took too much and the bees now have no stores to support themselves. Remember that they do not make honey because they like us. They make it to support their hive during times of dearth. And that happens yearly during the winter and, often times, during a summer dearth. All that to remind you to check the hives and possibly supplement them by providing sugar syrup. One-to-one would be appropriate but even two-to-one will work well. If you let them run out, at best the queen will stop laying eggs as there is nothing to support the developing brood. Or, worse, the hive organism will starve to death. That's not something any of us would want.

I had new neighbors move in today. Upon taking a short break from mowing the lawn, I heard that distinctive hum in the air. Going to the front apiary, I noticed there were bees everywhere. Inspection of the tree branches revealed a modest clump of bees about 20 feet off the ground, directly over a styrofoam nuc box. Of course, that box had bees going in and out like they had discovered the best hive site for miles around. It only took a few minutes for the clump to dissipate and take up residence. I love it when swarms come to me! I have no idea where they came from. There is a distinct advantage to leaving old equipment out where the bees can find it, because, to bees, nothing smells more like home than used equipment! I know the old adage about swarms in July not being worth a fly, but I'll see if I can nurse them through the winter. Now if I could just remember if there are frames in that box! I guess that means I will need to open it up tomorrow and take a peek.

My top bar hive survived the blistering heat in fine condition. Mr. Brantley had called me with a caution concerning it that I had never considered. When it gets too hot, the honey-laden combs can become too weak from the heat and may separate from the top bar itself. That makes a mess in the hive. I kept an eye on that condition and am happy to report that all the combs stayed in place. I do only have five bars left for them to grow into so it looks like it is now really time to build a bigger hive for them.

My daughter Hayden, the American Honey Princess, came home mid-afternoon on Monday after a month long tour visiting New Jersey, Minnesota, Ohio, Indiana and New Jersey again. She leaves Wednesday morning, yes after only a little more than a day home, to travel for another month. While she was in New Jersey, she got to experience her first bee beard and yes, we have pictures. She is delighted to have another opportunity this coming month. Be sure to follow her travels at the American Honey Queen Program on Facebook.





Practical Experiences in the Beeyard by Stan Brantley

September in East Texas is the beginning of a change inside our hives from surviving the hot summer to preparing for the coming winter. We will soon be seeing the blooming of fall flowers such as asters and goldenrod. Bees will forage the fall blossoms to collect a last round of pollen and nectar to store for use this winter. Many people find the smell and taste of goldenrod honey to be unpleasant. If you have any honey in your hive that you want to extract before fall, plan to do the extraction before the goldenrod blooms. If you wait too late, you may find the taste of the honey is compromised.

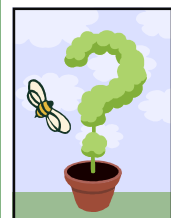
As the weather cools a bit and the fall flow begins, queens will increase laying to ensure that the hive has a good population of young bees in preparation for winter. These will be the bees that support the hive until spring. Make sure the queen has adequate space to lay. If the brood chamber frames are filled with honey and pollen, you may need to swap a couple of the filled frames for empty drawn comb to give the queen room to lay.

September is also the time to make a fall treatment for mites. Many of the bee writers I read are becoming more concerned about the effects of mites than of hive beetles. We tend to focus on beetles because we see them in the hive. Mites are usually not readily visible in the hive but are hidden away and doing their damage. To assess the mite load, you have to do a "mite count", using the alcohol wash method or the sugar roll method. Either method will give you insight into how large of a mite population is in your hive. You can find numerous Internet articles that will show you how to do these tests and how to interpret the results. If your mite count is high, September is about the last chance to treat the hive before winter. Hives going into winter with high mite counts are much more susceptible to failure than hives with controlled mite levels.

For many years, we beekeepers took pride in our "chemical-free" hives. However, the growing impact of mite infestations may be leading the responsible beekeeper to make proper choices about treatment methods, which can include the use of various commercial medications. Some of the treatment methods that made us feel better, such as powdered sugar dusting, have been found to be of less value than previously thought. High mite counts are not to be ignored—if you find a high count, get some advice and take some kind of action. Left untreated, the mite population will only continue to grow.

Let me again encourage you to make landing board observations a regular part of your visits to the beeyard. Standing quietly and observing activity at the landing board can give you insight into the health of your hive. Lots of activity with bees coming and going, peacefully entering the hive carrying pollen is a good sign. Small numbers of bees, agitated guard bees, bees hovering back and forth in front of the entrance and being challenged by guard bees are bad signs. Likewise, less activity at the landing board than the last time you visited is a bad sign. If you are concerned by the activity or lack thereof at the landing board, you may need to open the hive and check the status inside.

Beekeeping is always a new adventure. Sometimes, you would never be able to guess what is coming next. Standing in line at Lowes, wearing my bee club cap, a lady asked if I was a beekeeper. She went on to say she had a couch on her front porch and it was full of bees. I asked if she was sure it was bees, thinking it was most probably yellow jackets, but she insisted it was full of bees. About 8 pm that evening, I drove to her house to inspect the couch. On the front porch were two overstuffed chairs and a six-foot couch. At the end of the couch nearest the door were two silver dollar sized holes ringed with fanning honey bees. How about that! I called the lady and told her she did indeed have a couch full of bees but I did not think we could easily remove them and save the couch. She said that she had planned to take the couch to the dump but then discovered the bees and would be happy if I could take it away. I have to admit I was a bit intrigued. I have removed bees from a lot of places and a lot of things but never from a couch! A few nights later, I rounded up a couple of helpers and we drove to her house. We covered the couch with a tarp, loaded it in the back of my truck, and closed the camper-top door. After safely relocating the couch to my house, I began to wonder if the bees stayed inside for the ride. Bending over to peek under the tarp, Bam!, Bam!, two guard bees stung me on the lip. Next month, I will share with you what we did with the couch full of bees.



The Got Questions? room will be open 6:00-6:30 before the meeting. Join us if you are a new beekeeper or have some beekeeping questions. We will try to help you find some answers.



Bee Facts by Eddie Collins

This is the time of the year I consider the official end of the beekeeping year. All the extraction has been completed and my supers are all stored safe in the storage container. The step after the end becomes the beginning of the next bee year. Now is the time to start thinking about next year's goals and the steps that need to be taken to accomplish them.

Get the bees ready for the winter. The colony health now drives the success of overwintering the bees and the quality of the bees going into next spring. Feeding, re-queening, and any necessary treatments are vital at this time.

Now is the time to start planning for extra equipment to support your bees, the planned size of your apiary, and any bee related projects, like queen rearing, that you would like to do next year.

If you're thinking about selling at the local county fairs or festivals, most of these have application deadlines so now is a great time to start researching the requirements.

Is it time to create your own customized label? If interested here is the link of the lady I use to create and print my labels. She does a great job. Anne Turnham: <http://customhoneylabels.blogspot.com/>

I recently met with some Oklahoma beekeepers and they have an interesting county program that incorporates the local area code to show that the products are local.

If you will be needing early spring queens, now is the time to get them ordered. Yes, I am serious on this one. The early demand for queens is truly amazing.

Keep a close eye on those hives. If you lose the bees, be sure and protect the comb. Those moths will move in faster than a spinning honey extractor.

What's up with the beetles this year? I have seen more beetles this past month than ever. I wonder if the population explosion has anything to do with the wet spring? Maybe we should plan doing a program on beetles and how to get rid of them with something other than a hammer or a blow torch?

See you at the next meeting! beeman@cncfarms.com. Be on the lookout for my new website coming soon to an apiary near you.

19th Annual Field Day

Presented by USDA Honey Bee Breeding, Genetics and Physiology Laboratory and the Louisiana State Beekeepers Association

Saturday, October 10, 2015 9:30 — 3:30
1157 Ben Hur Rd., Shreveport

A nonrefundable pre-registration fee of \$30.00 is required for attendees 12 years of age and above. Snacks and lunch are included. Registration after October 1, 2015, will be \$40.00 per person.

You may register online at labeekeepers.org and pay through PayPal or credit card or you may mail your registration form that is located on the labeekeepers.org web site and your check payable to the Louisiana Beekeepers Association to: David Ferguson, P.O. Box 716, Brusly, LA 70719

For additional information please contact Dr. Lanie Bourgeois (225-767-9299), Sandra Hineman (225-767-9280) or Joe Sanroma (318-346-2805). For questions regarding online registration, please contact David Ferguson (225-726-1664) or Robert Taylor (985-386-4647).

<http://www.labeekeepers.org/>