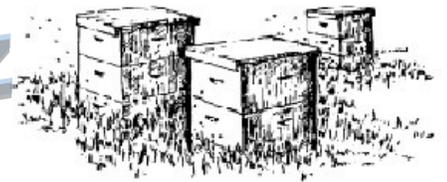




Fort Bend Buzz

newsletter of the
Fort Bend Beekeepers Association



July, 2016

The July 12, 2016 meeting of the Fort Bend Beekeepers will be held at 7:00 pm in Fort Bend County's "Bud" O'Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Rd., Rosenberg, Texas. Visitors (and new members) are always welcome (membership dues are \$5.00 for the calendar year). The Association provides coffee and lemonade for meeting refreshments while members volunteer to bring snacks. We still need some help getting the coffee and lemonade set up for us. We also have empty spots on our sign-up sheets for snacks and the opening invocation. Thanks to Arthur Reuter who volunteered to bring salty treats and Scott Eicke (something sweet) in July. The meeting will be called to order at 7:30 after 30 minutes of social time. Greg Pendley will give an opening invocation and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ask a dozen beekeepers...

Here is this month's Q (from one of our members) and a great big A:

Q: We've seen the emails about bees in traps and would love to get in on some of these the opportunities but we are not sure how this works.

An A: Our Association's swarm trapping program is proving to be of real value to our community. Each swarm of bees lured into a trap may have settled into the wall of someone's home instead. Hundreds of dollars in removal costs are avoided and the bees are welcome additions to a beekeeper's beeyard.

In early spring last year we began lending bee traps to homeowners. The traps consist of a square fiber nursery pot attached with deck screws to a 16" x 16" square of plywood. A hanging loop of wire and a splash of lemongrass oil complete the setup. In early 2016 Extension Agent Boone Holladay prepared a press release to inform folks about the program. Quite a few traps are out and bees have been moving in.

Brandy Rader at the Extension office administers the program, lending traps to folks that are concerned about bee problems in the spring. Beekeepers are adept at removing swarms before the bees find a permanent home. But a swarm in nearby woods high up in a tree or in the back corner of the yard may not be

spotted. An undetected swarm may then move into a trap instead of some other cavity where they may conflict with people. Hopefully as soon as the bees move in, the homeowner notifies the Extension office. It is important to frequently check the trap to see if bees have moved in since it really upsets Kelly Morris for anyone to have to cut out an established hive from a trap. As soon as Brandy is notified of bees in a trap, an email alert goes out to find a member to pick up the trap and give the bees inside a suitable home.

We encourage the trap to be hung where it can be easily removed. It is best for it to be relocated after dark since forager bees will have all returned to the colony for the night. Usually there will be bees on the outside of the trap but they are easily chased inside with a few puffs from your smoker. Before smoking them in though, first check for "leaks" (sometimes the bees can get out where the pot has pulled away from the plywood back). The best clue is a cluster of bees on the outside of the trap near the "leak". A puff or two of smoke will get them to move back into the trap. A quick and easy way to tightly seal the hole is to use a hive tool or screw driver to stuff it shut with a small piece of steel wool (its rough texture will usually hold it in place quite well). Once any leaks are taken care of, it is time to finish sealing up the trap. Steel wool will

work on the trap entrances too, but there is another trick that works really well. Push a square plastic pail over the end of the pot to close off all of the holes that the bees have been using to get inside. Home Depot and Lowe's sometimes sell heavy chain by the foot from very sturdy black pails. If you spot an empty one in the store, they will usually let you have it. It is a perfect fit and the black color seems to lessen the number of bees that exit the trap while it is closed up with a bucket.

At this point you would have the trap sealed up and ready to be relocated. It is important to know that if the bees have been inside for a week or more, the trap may be pretty heavy and the new white comb inside can be very very fragile in hot summer weather. Always handle the trap by grasping the fiber pot. If you hold it by the plywood back, the pot may break loose and become a real problem to deal with after it falls to the ground. In handling and in transit always keep trap oriented as you found it with the "up" side up (to keep from collapsing any comb that may be inside).

When you get to the beeyard that night, place the trap where the hive will be located and open the entrances to prevent overheating. If you used a plastic pail, expect bees to be inside when you remove it from the trap.

You should plan on moving the bees into your hive the next morning. Move the trap aside and set your hive body on the bottom board with four or so frames to the outside (if you have old drawn comb it will save the bees a lot of work). Give the frames a few squirts of sugar syrup from a spray bottle as a powerful attractant. Gently lay the trap over on the plywood and remove the screws that are holding the pot in place. Carefully lift the pot off the plywood and check to see what things look like on the inside.

Hopefully you'll find just a few small curtains of new white comb (if the bees are well established, you get to learn what ticks Kelly off). Slam the open pot down on top of the hive body to drop the bees in their new home. Remove the comb and brush the bees off into the hive. (Just discard the comb or, if you are curious, save the comb and study the brand new eggs and nectar in the cells with a magnifying glass.) Put the remainder of the frames in place and close things up for a week or so before checking to see how the bees are getting along. The bees get established really quickly if you can give them a frame of mostly capped brood (no bees) from another hive. Set the trap pot and plywood aside so that stragglers can find their way over to their new home. Later in the day, reassemble the trap and make plans to return it either where you got it or to the Extension office.

June Meeting Notes

58 members and guests signed in at our June meeting. Seven new and renewing members paid their 2016 dues in May, bringing our roster total to 139 members.

After 30 minutes of social time, President Daryl Scott opened our meeting with an invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Daryl then welcomed everyone and again reminded us that there are still a few slots open for volunteers for meeting snacks and our opening invocation. He thanked Sharon Moore and Jessica Boudreaux for volun-

teering to bring snacks for the meeting. First-timers in June included John and Shane Gillett who keep bees in Katy and potential new beekeepers James and Irene Morrison from Needville and Volkmar Voigt from Richmond.

Larry Hoehne from the Brazoria County Beekeepers Association announced the upcoming Brazoria Honey Expo on Thursday July 21. He also had raffle tickets available for a "live hive" and another for a calf.

Daryl referred to a recent American Bee Journal article "Why did my bees die?" from the Michigan State Extension as an interesting read. His monthly fun facts for June noted 2015 U.S. honey consumption of 543 million pounds, 71% of it imported. Texas beekeepers produced 8 million pounds while Texans consumed 41 million pounds. Daryl noted that the spring honey flow is about over and preparations for harvest should be in place. Also be on the lookout for signs of robbing, especially weak hives that may have swarmed.

As a followup to last month's *Buzz* Q & A, Gene deBons gave a short review of how he deals with "sugared" honey. He recrystallizes honey in an oven at 125 degrees. His best advice was to store honey in oven safe glass jars not five gallon pails!

Our program for June was a review of Texas beekeeping laws by Apiary Inspector Mary Reed. The Texas Apiary Inspection Service is part of Texas AgriLife Research and was founded by statute in 1909 in response to American Foulbrood disease. The current law is in the Texas Agriculture Code Chapter 131.

The principle focus of the Texas Apiary Inspection Service is the import and export of hives by migratory beekeepers. Inspectors issue health certificates for hives found to be free of American Foulbrood. Permits and fees are established by law. Mary noted that

bee removals are unregulated and pest control licensing is not required so long as pesticides are not used. Registration with TAIS is required however to move hives across county lines (beekeeper registration is free and voluntary). More details can be found at <http://txbeeinspection.tamu.edu/>. Information about the Texas Master Beekeeper Program can be found at <http://masterbeekeeper.tamu.edu/>.

Door prize winners in June included: Larry Hoehne (a fishing lure donated by Doug Rowell), Craig Rench (a honey bee poster donated by Marilyn Pawelek), Rebecca Eicke (Haly's Honey donated by Larry Hoehne), Jack Richardson ([Beekeeping for Dummies](#) donated by Daryl Scott), and Irene Morrison (honey donated by Gene deBons).

Treasurer's Report

Our June treasury balance was reported incorrectly as \$2,188.46 due to an editing boo-boo. The correct balance was \$2,219.51. In the meantime, we collected \$25.00 for a new mentee plus dues from 7 new and renewing members (\$35.00) and a donation of \$20.00 for Gene deBons' help in capturing a swarm. We spent \$121.25 for a gray mobile cart to store supplies for our meetings. The resulting treasury balance is \$2,178.26, consisting of \$40.00 in cash and \$2,138.26 in our Wells Fargo checking account.

**TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION**

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