



Wake County Beekeepers Association

March 2024

Swap Shop

**Buy/Sell/Trade/Give Away
March 12 6:30PM
Commons Parking Lot**

Only current 2024 members may sell or trade. Anyone can purchase or take advantage of give aways. Bee equipment/ tools, garden items, and similar are welcome. Feel free to advertise on the club's Facebook page beginning March 1. If successful, we hope to have this twice a year.

Next Swap Shop will be in October.



Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 12, 2024

**Wake County Commons Building:
4011 Carya Drive, Raleigh 27610**

SWAP SHOP (parking lot...see adjacent article) 6:30 PM

MEETING: Varroa Mites presented by Greg Morrison 7:00 PM

Snacks (homemade and pre-packaged) will be available



Wake County Beekeepers Association is an ALL-VOLUNTEER group! It takes many hands to make a successful organization. Perhaps there is an opportunity for you to assist your fellow beekeepers. A little or a lot, it is all beneficial!

Hospitality Committee: Volunteers are needed to bring a homemade snack to the regular meeting, once or twice in 2024. Additional opportunities will become available for other social gatherings.

State Fair Booth Committee: Assist with designing and building state fair booth; Help recruit contributions (entries).

Fundraiser Team: Assist with the planning and execution of fundraiser(s) for NCSU Apiculture Endowment Donation.

Mentor Volunteers: Assist new beekeepers with "figuring it all out!" Contact Cary Orange at caryo@yahoo.com

Swarm Team On-Call: Volunteer to take and pass along information, and possibly respond to swarm calls from the public. Volunteers are needed for each geographic area in Wake Co: southeast, southwest, northeast, northwest and central parts of the county. To sign up go to <https://wakecountybeekeepers.org/Swarm-List-Guidelines>

To sign up and/or see **additional volunteer opportunities**, and see where you can serve that best fits your time, interests, and abilities, please fill out the survey at <https://forms.gle/w8oVkjQNSDJjtAS7>

January 2024 Financials (through January 30)

INCOME	\$4420.00	
Beekeeping School	1870.00	
Memberships	2240.00	
General Donations	310.00	
EXPENSES	\$1619.13	
General	503.76	
Beekeeping School	1469.13	
NCSU Endowment Donation	150.00	
CURRENT BANK BALANCE	\$22,030.17	

(Due to recent loss of our treasurer's father, current balances will be available in the April newsletter)

Shout Out to the Pullen CC Team!

For the last three years, members of our club have presented a free “Introduction to Beekeeping” for Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources’ Pullen Community Center. This partnership grew out of our rental of the center during COVID. Now, in exchange for presenting free programs, the club is able to use space at the center, for free, when the Wake County Commons Building is unavailable, as it will be in July, August and October this year. If you see one of these members, tell them thank you!

(Left-Right: Susan Benton, Rick Bordeaux, Jim Blye, Gordon Goeking, and Greg Morrison)



Save the Date.....

April

9 (Tue) General Meeting-Wake Co Master Gardeners-“Gardening for Pollinators”

May

14 (Tue) General Meeting-TDB
18 (Sa) SPRING PICNIC!! @NCSU Apiary. Details to come

July

13-15 (Th-Sa) State Conference at Sandhills CC in Pinehurst

Our deepest condolences go out to Ben Crawley on the loss of his father, The Honorable Jack Crawley, and to Tony Gaddis on the loss of his father, Brigadier General Norman Gaddis



March Topic: Varroa-keeper” (An Introduction to Varroa)

Based on Greg’s experiences, this presentation is an introduction to the arch enemy of our honey bee, the Varroa Mite, and geared towards the beginning beekeeper. This talk is designed to ultimately help new beekeepers develop management and treatment plans with a goal of keeping mite counts low so the honey bees they keep will survive and thrive.

Greg has been hooked on keeping bees since his wife gave him a starter set and lessons ten years ago. He has been active in the club, including holding positions on the board since 2015. Greg has achieved the level of Journeyman and is working on his Master certification. Greg keeps 10 hives near his home in Zone 1 (north) and enjoys how the bees “always keep you humble!”



March in the Bee Yard

Chris Hagwood

March is looking to be a very active month again this year. Early warm weather has the bees brooding up, making drones, and likely a few early swarms. I expect most of March to be full of colony swarming.

I wanted to get ahead of the swarms this year, so I purchased mated queens out of Florida from Sam Comfort. If you've seen Sam in person or online, you may recall that he is a proponent of a simple hive box without frames, just top bars. He performs frequent splits and does grafting to produce queens first in Florida, soon to be NC, and in New York as the season progresses.



Shipping box with mated 2024 queens. Attendants are OUTSIDE the queen cages and have fondant to feed from in the shipping box. They keep the queens fed during transport. After opening the box, I placed the queen cages into queen-right hives to continue caring for the queens in the cages until I had them all placed into splits.

I found the 2023 queens in the largest of my colonies, often finding lots of drones, and in at least one case, a few swarm cells with larvae. I also found a virgin queen, that I suspect came from an early season supersedure. I marked all my queens last year, but a fair number of those we found were unmarked, so likely later season supersedure queens.

With the number of drones I was seeing, I think that if you wanted to make splits, any time after March 1st would be OK. If you'd rather wait for signs of swarming, you can inspect weekly and pull your old queen into a split if you find swarm cells. It will be important to avoid delays longer than 1 week between inspections if you want to get your queen out ahead of a swarm.



EARLY STAGE SWARM CELL (not visible, but royal jelly and larva inside)

Another task for those overwintering bees will be to establish your baseline mite count. I would not expect any with large numbers yet, but there are always outliers that don't show up until you check. March will be a good time to use Formic Pro/Mite Away Quick Strips with formic acid. The temperature range will likely make this safe, effective treatment for mites. Using Apivar at this time of year is more difficult, because you will not be able to super the hive for at least 42 days, and that's likely to be after the nectar flow has started.

If you're new to beekeeping, you will be waiting for your package bee delivery date, or possibly an early nucleus colony. Normally, locally produced nucs aren't ready until April, but some are conducting early splits and may have overwintered queens in nucs ready in March. When you get your new colony home and in your hive, begin feeding in order to build new comb, while preparing more hive bodies and frames for them to expand into.

In summary,

March will be a prime swarm month, so keep an eye out for swarming. Make splits if you find swarm cells, as it's really difficult to prevent swarming once they make cells.

Feed new colonies, and any that are packed with bees and don't have surplus honey. If we get a rainy cold spell, the bees could still starve if left without anything in the hive.

Test for mites and treat early if you have a count above or close to the threshold (usually 9 mites in a half-cup sample of bees).