



Editor's Notes

Merry Christmas!

It's that nice time of year when there is not quite as much to do in the beeyard.

I know I should be getting ready for next year, but I am still new enough that I don't know how many bees will live and how many will die. Last year they lived, so I had to buy more woodenware for the swarms and splits. If some die then I can reuse that equipment. It is a strange predicament. I want the bragging rights of having my bees live, but I don't really want more bees.

Be sure to check out this newsletter thoroughly. You won't want to miss the holiday pot luck dinner which will be instead of our regular meeting. Be sure to make note of the NCSBA spring conference.

I have had several requests for "what to do now in the beeyard" for newbees. I tried to write something this month, but it would sure be nice if one or more experienced beekeepers would be willing to write a column in the future.

Michelle Barry, secretary WCBA

Wake County Beekeepers Association

December 2007

December 11th Meeting

The December meeting is our annual Holiday Pot Luck dinner. Families are invited. The association will supply turkeys and hams. Please bring a side-dish or dessert to share.

Time is the usual: 7:30pm. Location: Wake County Commons Building, Cary Drive.

New Officers for 2008

The nominating committee will present the following members for officers for 2008. The voting will occur at the January meeting. Thank you, Jim Cook and Steve Hildebrand for your hard work twisting arms.

President- Danny Jaynes
V.P.- Bill Herndon
Secretary- Jill Currin
Treasurer- Vivian Joyner
Program Director- Mark Reep
Board of Directors- Jim Cook
Freddy Gregory
Mitchell Wren

Also, non-elected Secretary's assistants: Debbie White, Raleigh Myers, and Michelle Barry.

Door Prizes

Thank you to Jerry Brantley for donating and organizing the huge selection of door prizes for the November meeting. Most people attending won something. Steve Brown donated his beautiful eggs; Dadant, Walter Kelly, Better Bee, and Brushy Mountain donated hive tools and bee brushes.

We have had some members who have donated from their businesses over and over. Please remember to support Busy Bee Apiaries (Jack Tapp), Steve Brown's egg business, Mitchell Wren's strawberry and produce farm, and Karma Lee's strawberry farm.

Board of Directors

President

Ricky Barbour 269-0108
RickyBarbour@nc.rr.com

Vice President

Bill Herndon 934-4406
bherndon@nccommerce.com

Secretary

Michelle Barry 363-5458
Barrycary@aol.com

Treasurer

Whit Joyner 387-0164
vivnwhit@earthlink.net

Program Chairman

Larry Williams 501-9507
larry.a.williams@usps.gov

Directors

Jim Cook (3 year term)
919-321-0217
jimcook@operamail.com

Freddy Gregory (2 year term)
639-5758
fgre393@aol.com

James Knox (1 year term)
847-5098
James_Knox@bellsouth.net

Phone Mentor:

Jerry Brantley 919-269-9333

Website:

<http://www.ncneighbors.com/wcba>

Yahoo group:

wakecountybeekeepers
to subscribe send mail to
wakecountybeekeepers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
Back copies of newsletters and
the bylaws are available on this
yahoo group.

Club Extractors:

The club owns extractors that are
available for members to borrow.
Electric extractors: Ricky Barbour
(in Zebulon 269-0108) , Whit
Joyner (in New Hill 387-0164)
Hand extractor: Raleigh Myers (in
Raleigh 787-0058)

Refreshments

Thanks to Bob Kellam, Vivian Joyner, and Danny and Mary Jaynes for bringing refreshments to the November meeting. The December meeting will be the Holiday Pot-Luck so everyone needs to bring a side dish or dessert.

February 2008 Meeting

Put a big question mark on your calendar for the meeting on February 12th. We cannot meet at the Commons building. At the meeting there was talk of canceling it or looking for another location. It will be up to the new officers to decide if the meeting is canceled or moved to a different location.

NCSBA Spring 2008 Conference

Pull out your calendar and block off March 7 and 8th to attend the annual North Carolina State Beekeepers Association Spring Conference at the Ramada Inn Convention Center in Burlington. We are fortunate to have the meeting so close that you can drive and sleep in the comfort of your home each night if you don't want to stay at the Ramada Inn.

If you are an experienced beekeeper, this is a great chance to find out the latest research and meet old friends from around the state. If you are a new beekeeper, you don't want to miss this conference. You will learn so much from some of the best bee minds in the country.

The keynote speaker will be Kim Flottum who is the editor of Bee Culture. Even though the meeting is two days, if you want to hear this special speaker, you will need to attend on Friday as he does not speak on Saturday. Other speakers for the conference include Dr. John Ambrose, Dr. David Tarpy, Randall Austin, Alonzo Suazo, Joe Flowers, and Jack Hanel.

Besides the conference sessions held as large groups, there are smaller break-out workshops. Workshops include: Watering Your Bees, Preparing Honey for Sale, SHB Research, and Non-Honey Bee Stinging Insects.

Vendor exhibits and sales booths will provide interesting browsing and possibilities of stocking up on equipment, supplies, and books.

Special hotel rates have been established with the Ramada Inn Convention Center 336.227.5541 or 800.272.6232.

For more information and the registration form:

www.ncbeekeepers.org/meetings. This latest information about the conference is hot off the presses. If further information and a registration form is not yet on the website, check back in a few days.

November Meeting Review

We had a special guest for our November meeting: Freddie-Jeanne Richard from the department of Entomology at NC State University.

While this was one of our more technical meetings, we all learned about the importance of getting our queens well-mated. The queens that were mated with more than one drone were more accepted by the other bees and less likely to be superseded.

When you look through a hive, the well-mated queens should have a circle of her attendants around her. (You may have to wait for the bees to settle down if your hive inspection has disturbed them.) Singly mated queens do not attract so many workers.

One surprise of Dr. Richard's study was that what mattered was not so much the variety of sperm, but the quantity of sperm. A queen artificially inseminated with one drone and additional saline water was as well accepted as one inseminated by ten drones. While this queen may be well accepted initially, her sperm supply will run out sooner.

It appears that those buying artificially inseminated queens need to be asking the queen breeders how many drones their queens are inseminated with. While this may have seemed like a silly question a few months ago, Dr. Richard's study shows that this is an important question especially if you are buying an expensive breeder queen.

What to Do In the Beeyard This Month

If you read last month's newsletter or attended the October meeting, your bees are put to bed for the winter with low varroa counts and plenty of honey stored. What should you do now?

Now is the time to be getting ready for next year. You can make more frames and assemble and paint hive bodies and supers. Now is the perfect time to curl up next to a fire and browse through the bee catalogs making a wish list for Santa.

Outside the bees are consuming the honey as they shiver to keep the cluster warm. On nice days they will fly out and you can watch them bringing in pollen from Camellias and other winter blooming

shrubs. A strong and healthy hive may be raising small patches of brood through the winter.

If it is a nice day and you see very little activity at a hive, it is time to check that hive. You may have a dead-out. A dead-out may still have some bees, but they are the neighbor bees coming to rob the hive. Check the hive over for disease and varroa and if it is healthy you can give any honey or pollen frames to another hive.

Many hives die through the winter from starvation. If the weather gets very cold and the cluster gets stuck on one side of the hive while there is still honey on the other side, they can starve. Proponents of eight-frame medium equipment say the bees have an easier time moving the cluster and have a narrower, taller area – less chance to get stuck on one side.

If your bees do starve with honey still in the hive, there is not too much you can do, but if your bees starve because of no stores, you did something wrong. Each time you go to the beeyard, lift the backs of the hives, tilting them toward the front. This is especially important to do before or after you are going through the whole hive. You will get used to the weight that can be attributed to the woodenware and bees and the weight that is added by honey. Then during the winter as you lift your hives you will have a feel for hives that are getting dangerously low on stores.

When you are feeding in the winter you need to be sure that the bees can get to the feed. They will not be able to get to a hive top feeder or a Boardman feeder during cold weather. You need to be sure the food is right next to the cluster. If the cluster is in the top of the hive, a bucket feeder placed over the hole in the inner cover may work. Others use frame feeders or frames prepared with a special fondant instead of comb.

Cold weather is not dangerous to bees with plenty of food, but too much moisture inside the hive can be deadly. Some people use screened bottom boards open all winter. Others leave the notch in the inner cover slightly open or put popsicle sticks on the top of the inner cover so it can ventilate the moist air. It is NOT necessary to wrap your hives like you may have seen done up north.

Zoo Honey Bee Exhibit

Have you helped raise money or volunteered at the zoo? Finally, finally, finally it looks like the Honey Bee Exhibit is going to happen!

The North Carolina Zoo Society
Cordially invites you to join us
for a special groundbreaking ceremony...

Honey Bee Exhibit
Friday, December 14, 2007 at 10:00 a.m.

Our guests will gather at the
North America Entrance of the N.C. Zoo
to be transported to the site of the Honey
Bee Exhibit.

Please R.S.V.P. by December 10, 2007
by calling 336-879-7285 or e-mail ksparks@nczoo.com
Comfortable walking shoes are recommended.

Internet and Media Links

Todd and Monica Warner have a nice web site:
The Carolina Bee Company
<http://www.carolinabees.com/>

WUNC has a nice radio program called "The Story".
Recently, honey bees have been the topic of choice. Neat
stuff. You can download and listen to the podcasts:

Where are the bees(2007-04-30):

"Scientists and beekeepers are stumped at the mysterious
and seemingly sudden disappearance of billions of
honeybees." Jeff Lee is a large part of this discussion.

* weblink:

<http://thestory.org/archive/the_story_239_Where_are_the_Bees.mp3/view>

* listen:

<http://thestory.org/archive/the_story_239_Where_are_the_Bees.mp3>

The Bee Truth (2007-10-15):

"Wayne Esaias says he has learned something important
from caring for his honeybees - the nectar is flowing
earlier, suggesting the climate is heating up."

* listen: <http://podcastdownload.npr.org/anon.npr-podcasts/podcast/4788725/510185/15297756/APM_15297756.mp3>

Insurance for Your Bee Business

I asked on the yahoo group for information about what people are really doing about insurance for their bee business. I heard from one member. Is everyone else ignoring the need for insurance or do you just not want to talk about it? I would like to include a little more about this subject in the next newsletter so send me email if you have insurance. I will keep your name confidential.

You may find that you need insurance if you attempt to sell honey at a local business. They may require a large liability coverage policy. Also if you remove bees from buildings, the homeowner or building owner may want you to have insurance to cover any damage that may accidentally occur.

A liability policy providing coverage up to \$1,000,000 per incident, \$2,000,000 annual maximum costs the member \$131.00 per quarter or \$524.00 annually. It covers any honey sales issues, any issues that arrive when renting bees or issues related to removing bees from property or structures.

Your auto insurance may not cover the bees or problems they could create in an accident. Upgrading insurance to include coverage when moving bees either on a truck or on a trailer increased auto insurance cost for the member by \$50.00 dollars per year.

Raffle of a 5 Frame Nuc

Karma Lee won the nuc at the November Meeting.

Beeyard Picture to be Raffled at the December Meeting

The associate will be raffling a beautiful framed print of a beeyard at the December meeting. Tell your spouse that this would make perfect Christmas gift... hint, hint.

Florida Beekeepers Leave Industry

Here is an interesting story from the November 24 edition of the Orlando (Florida) Sentinel about the challenges of Florida Beekeepers. Note the number of Florida beekeepers in comparison to our nearly 2,000 NCSBA members and the estimation of more than 10,000 beekeepers in North Carolina.

<<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/community/news/lermont/orl-beekeepers2407nov24,0,4852321.story>>