



WAKE COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 9, 2010 at 7:30 pm

Location: Wake County Commons Building

Featured Speaker: State Beekeeping inspector, Don Hopkins and WCBA VP, Ricky Barbour will speak on the topic of Preventing and Capturing Swarms

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New Beekeepers & Soon to be Beekeepers:

We are asking for everyone to arrive prior to our regularly scheduled meeting at 6:30 pm to receive free instruction on what do to in preparation for receiving bees and becoming a beekeeper.

President's Message

February's meeting was full of WCBA members in attendance! It was so full in fact, that by the end of the night it was a standing room only event. It was great to see so many new and returning beekeepers attending the meetings. I encourage everyone to continue to attend the meetings.

As President, I want to be heavily involved in the operations of the WCBA but as members I encourage you to also become involved by attending the meetings, joining the committees, and sharing in promoting our association any way possible. Every little bit of participation from members helps



out tremendously. Whether it's signing up to bring refreshments to one of our meetings, becoming a mentor to a new beekeeper, signing up to be a first responder to swarms, or serving on the Bug Fest committee; member participation is key to our success!

We will have sign up sheets available at the March meeting on the tables where you pick up your name tags for those of you who would like to volunteer for one of the above mentioned areas.

-Mitchell

Membership Renewal for 2010

Don't forget to renew your WCBA and NCBA memberships for 2010.

Email the club Secretary, Sarah Pleasants at sarahpleasants@piedmontlitho.com, if you need the renewal form emailed to you.

Please remember that you must renew your membership by March 1, 2010.

Failure to renew your membership will result in your removal from the database and you will no longer receive

correspondence from the club.



New Beekeepers Workshop - Date Change



A reminder for new beekeepers and soon to be beekeepers **who signed up** for the New Beekeeper Workshop – Mark your calendars and make sure you attends this one day workshop! **Please note that the date has changed due to a**

scheduling conflict with the facility where the workshop is held.

Door prizes of 10 bees & hives will be given away to lucky winners!

When: Saturday, **March 20, 2010** from 8:00 am – 4:30 pm.

Where: Commons Bldg., Cooperative Extension Center, Wake Office Park, Carya Drive, Raleigh.

Cost: \$30 – Includes a book, handouts, and a hotdog lunch.

Sponsor: Wake County Beekeepers Association

Additional Information: Date for working in the hive – TBA.

Event Coordinator: Danny Jaynes
djaynes101@nc.rr.com or 919-567-9568

Education Credit Opportunity:

Root Elementary is having a science day April 30, 2010! The school is located in North Raleigh across from North Hills Mall. They are requesting that a beekeeper/s come and do presentations on beekeeping. The presentations are about 30 minutes in length. There will be several different science classes that will be attending. Please contact Julia Caldwell at 781-6705 or jtc@4caldwells.com if interested. All presentation materials will be available for use from the WCBA – Larry Williams (919-557-6050 or Larry.a.williams@usps.gov) has those education materials. This is a great way to earn your service credits toward your beekeeping certification.

February Meeting Summary

Bug Fest will be held on September 11th, 2010. Now is the time to begin planning for the Bug Fest activities. WCBA President, Mitchell asks that people interested in serving on the committee for Bug Fest to email or call him: 919-306-2735 or wrennbees@yahoo.com. Bug Fest is the main money maker for our association and it is important for as many members as possible to help volunteer for this event. Any members who were on the Bug Fest committee last year who would like to help organize this event again would be greatly appreciated.

Sign up sheets for the mentor, swarm, and refreshment list were passed around for members to sign. If anyone did not get a chance to sign up for one of areas please contact Mitchell (President), Sarah

(Secretary), or sign up at the March meeting. Any member who would like to know a mentor in their area may contact Mitchell and he will provide you with that information.

Mitchell asks that members who signed up for the swarm list make sure they note specific days and times that they are available. A 15-20 minute response time is required when being called to catch a swarm. Last year there were not many swarms in our area but this year may be different and we need to make sure members on the swarm list will respond appropriately.

The association has decided to purchase one extractor to replace several older ones. Currently there are three extractors that are old, one of which is in bad shape. The board is shopping around to get

the best price and will let the association know once the new extractor has been purchased. The older extractors may be available for members to bid on (further information will be provided if a bid is to take place).

Mitchell noted that several date changes have been made due to scheduling conflicts in our normal meeting room: New Beekeepers Workshop has been moved to March 20, 2010. The location and time remains the same. April and May's meeting date/location will have to change (updates on the changes will be emailed once determined).

A raffle for one lucky winner was held for a fully assembled 8 frame English Garden hive.



Beekeeping Question & Answer

In February we had the pleasure of WCBA honorary members Jack Tapp, James Knox, and James Howard lead an open question and answer forum for members of the WCBA.

Jack Tapp is the proprietor of Busy Bee Apiaries in Orange County, where he is a commercial beekeeper and local supplier of Brushy Mountain beekeeping supplies and other advice and equipment.

James Howard has been a WCBA club member for more than 10 years and previously has served as president. He grew up on a farm where they kept bees, and took up beekeeping again after retiring. Dr. John Ambrose was his mentor who got him back into beekeeping.

James Knox, a building contractor by trade, has been a hobby beekeeper for over 60 years and keeps 20 hives.

Several of the Q & A topics are below:

Q. As a new beekeeper what should I be doing to prepare for my bees?

A. Begin reading and studying beekeeping. Subscribe to the *American Bee Journal* and read books such as *First Lessons in Beekeeping*, *ABC & XYZ of Bee Culture*, and *Hive & The Honey Bee*. Also find a mentor from the club and get some hands on experience with them. (The club president, Mitchell has the mentor list – contact him for mentors in your area).

Q. When should you start feeding a pollen substance?

A. In the spring, make sure you have plenty of food storage for your bees before you pollen feed. Pollen causes the Queen to it's time to get in production mode and lay lots of brood. The more brood in the hive, the more sugar water/sugar syrup is required to feed those bees. You don't want them to essentially starve from not having enough food. In the fall, there is often a lack of pollen in plants available for the bees and it is recommended to use a pollen substitute at this time.

Q. Why do you reverse hive bodies and how often do you reverse them?

A. The bees will tell you when they hive should be reversed. Over the winter the bees move up in the hive to get to the food stores, in the spring when you open the hive up, you will notice that the bees are clustered toward the top. When the top hive body is full of bees reverse it so your bees won't swarm.

Q. How can we help bees during the cold snap with the new nucs?

A. During the cold weather weak/small nucs aren't large enough in population to stay warm. To prevent from losing a weak/small nuc, combine 2 weak/small nucs into one hive to make them 1 strong hive going into winter. Wrapping or heating the hive is dangerous. Making the hive warm inside fools the bees

into thinking that it is warm outside of the hive. In turn the bees leave the hive and freeze or die from the cold outside temperatures. Often times a weak/small nuc will starve to death in the winter even with plenty of food stores because they will not leave the brood to get the food. Combing hives is the best way to combat this problem.

Q. Will the sugar water freeze during the cold temperatures?

A. No, the sugar water will not freeze because the temperature in the hive is warm enough and the sugar to water ratio is very concentrated.

Q. When do you start to take honey?

A. In this area the main nectar flow is from late March to the end of May. When you see capped off frames in late June then you can process the honey. During a good nectar flow you can have about 80 – 120 lbs. of honey per super. Remember to leave the bees a minimum of 40 lbs. of honey for their consumption.

Q. What is the best structure to put a hive on?

A. Your hive should be 6 – 8 inches off the ground. Sender blocks are the best materials to use because they are durable, cheap, and easy to find.

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(Beekeeping Q & A continued on Page 4)

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Location of Club Extractors:
The club owns extractors that are available for members to borrow. Please contact the following people for access to those extractors:
Steve Hildebrand: Knightdale 919-266-9464; Vivian Joyner: New Hill 919-387-0164; Raleigh Myers: Central Raleigh 919-787-0058; James Knox: Raleigh 919-847-5098

Beekeeping Question & Answer - Continued

Q. When do you start putting supers on the hives and how many do you use?

A. For a hobbyist beekeeper put one super on top then when 75% of that super is full of capped honey, add another on top. Commercial beekeeper, Jack Tapp, puts 3 supers on all of his hives by April 15th because he doesn't have time to add supers on one at a time.

Q. Should I use 9 or 10 frames in my hive?

A. Use 10 frames when you start a hive with new foundation. You can switch to using 9 frames once you have drawn comb built up on your frames.

Q. What should you be doing in February with your bees?

A. Check to see how your Queen is doing when the temperature is above 60°F, look for the quantity and the pattern of brood, and make sure the bees have plenty of food stores.

Q. When do you take your entrance reducers off?

A. When you begin to see the bees looked congested at the entrance going to go in and out of the hive then you should go take the reducer off. Some beekeepers such as James Knox, has hives with a 3/8 inch entrance and doesn't use entrance reducers.

Q. When the bees eat the sugar stores in the hive, do they move the entire clump of bee up or do they go one by one to get to the sugar stores?

A. The bees move up to get the food as a cluster once the brood has hatched. The queen will continue to lay eggs further up towards the food source.

Q. What do I do about ventilation?

A. A screened bottom board will circulate enough for ventilation. If you need more ventilation put a stick on the inner cover to allow the top to be raised up. It is good to allow extra ventilation to keep moisture out of the hive.

Q. When is the best time to requeen?

A. The best time to requeen is during a nectar flow or right after a nectar flow. This is because the bees are busy and happy making honey so they are more likely to accept a new queen during that time. Also if you have a virgin queen you can requeen easily because she hasn't mated and isn't putting off as much pheromones. The best way to requeen is to find the old queen, pop her head off, and stick the queen cage in the hive and let her emerge several days later or stick her directly in the hive if the nectar flow is on.

Q. Do you recommend painting the hive with latex or oil based paint?

A. It doesn't really matter but latex is easier to work with. Buy whatever paint is on sale, the color doesn't matter except white or a lighter color keeps the hive cooler in the summer and never paint the inside of the hive.

Q. Could you recommend an easy way to reverse the hive?

A. Use some smoke on the hive body to drive the bees down, separate the top hive body from the bottom, use some more smoke, then place the top hive body on the bottom and the bottom hive body on the top.

Suggestions of things to remember while beekeeping:

- Make sure you have a water source for your bees so that they won't linger into your neighbors' pool or bird bath.
- Park your car away from the flight path of your hives or you will get "yellow rain" on your paint. Advise your neighbors and visitors of this too.
- Stay away from top bar hives if you are new in beekeeping. They are not standard; they cannot be properly inspected accordingly to North Carolina State law.
- Call a State Inspector if you ever suspect your hive is infected with a disease such as AFB.

A special "Thank You" goes out to our panel experts who lead the beekeeping Q & A.



Upcoming NCSBA Events:

The North Carolina State Beekeepers Association Spring 2010 Meeting will be held March 5-6 at Robeson Community College in Lumberton, NC. The Summer Meeting is TBD, possibly Rowan County. The Eastern Apicultural Society will have its annual conference in Boone, NC, August 2-6, 2010.

Check the NCBSA website for details of these events:

<http://www.ncbeekeepers.org/news.htm>

Interested in raising queens in North Carolina?

Check out the Born and Bred in NC website for details on how to sign up for this informational session on how to raise queens in NC:

<http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/entomology/apiculture/BornAndBred.html>

This workshop series is conducted by the NCBSA and the NC State Apiculture Program.

General Announcements:

- If any member of the WCBA would like to submit pictures, articles of interest, honey recipes, or any other valuable beekeeping information in the monthly newsletter please contact the WCBA Secretary: Sarah Pleasants at 919-880-8208 or sarahpleasants@piedmontlitho.com
- Also if any member of the WCBA would like to suggest a speaker or a topic to be presented at the meetings, please contact the WCBA Program Chair: Kate Hanser at 919-387-7631 or kahanser@ncsu.edu

We look forward to hearing from you!



Check out the WCBA website:

www.wakecountybeekeepers.org

- Up to date information on the WCBA events
- Educational resources
- WCBA Newsletters
- Valuable information on what the WCBA has available for you!

March in the Bee Yard

On a warm, sunny day with calm winds, preferably during the early part of the month, thoroughly check each colony. The following items should be checked during the month of March:

- 1) **Evaluation of Food Stores:** If your bees are still clustered in the brood chamber and the super is still mostly full of honey then you should be ok. If your bees are clustered in the top super check and make sure they have at least 15 pounds of honey in storage. If they do not have adequate food storage, begin feeding them sugar syrup (for spring, mix one part

sugar and one part hot tap water).

- 2) **Check the amount of brood and the brood pattern:** By early March, a normal colony with a good queen should have several frames of brood. It's also a good idea to check the condition of the comb on your frames. Dark brown or black comb should be replaced with new foundation. Repairing/building equipment in preparation for splitting a hive or purchasing a nuc or package should be done.
- 3) **Write down your findings:** It is a good

idea to keep a log or record on each of your colonies. Record data such as the date the colony was requeened, etc. After working with a particular hive, write down what you did and what you saw. Record anything that may be of interest at some later date.

After the above checks have been completed, your next goal is to have all colonies at full strength around the middle of April in time for the tulip poplar honey flow.

Information derived from:
The Alamance County Beekeepers Association - <http://alamancebeekeepers.com/mar06.aspx>

New Procedure for Attendance & Name Tags

As many of the members have noticed the current procedures for picking up name tags and passing around the attendance sheet often times doesn't work.

When people come in to collect their name tags the front area becomes bogged down with people and the attendance sheet rarely gets passed around to the entire room.

In order to elevate these problems, the officers have decided to implement new procedures. Please read over the new procedures to help make this a smooth transition.

New Procedures:

- There will be a sign displaying the location of the name tag/sign in area.
- Look for the sign for your last name separated by 2 tables A-L and M-Z.
- When you pick up your name badge please check your name off the attendance sheet.
- There will also be a table for the raffle tickets and the door prize tickets. Don't forget to pick up those tickets.
- There will be designated treasurer table for members to pay dues, etc.

Members who have comments or suggestions on how to improve these new procedures are welcome to contact: Program Chair: **Kate Hanser** at 919-387-7631 or kahanser@ncsu.edu and Secretary: **Sarah Pleasants** at 919-880-8208 or sarahpleasants@piedmontlitho.com.

