

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA AUGUST, 2007 NEWSLETTER WWW.WCABA.ORG

DATE: Tuesday, August 28, 2007
TIME: 7:00 P.M.- Ice Cream Social
PLACE: Allen Baca Senior Ctr, 301 W. Bagdad, Bldg. 2 Rm. 2 , Round Rock
PROGRAM: " Tales From the Hive," DVD
HOSTS: **Gail Huffstutler, Mary Bost**

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It has been our custom for several years to celebrate summer by bringing that summer-time treat—ice cream—to share and eat at our August meeting. This gives us an opportunity to visit with other beekeepers, learn more about their operation, and pick up a new idea or two. Several people signed to bring ice cream or toppings but if you didn't sign and would like to bring your favorite flavor of ice cream, it would be welcome. The hosts will bring cookies to go with the ice cream. We will also have a TV screen set up so those who want to watch it can see and enjoy "Tales From the Hive", a well-narrated and photographed segment about bees. Those who signed to bring ice cream or toppings, etc., were Sally Tutor, Cherie Miller, David Kohn, Randy Oakley, Kimberly Arnett, Janet Church, Gary Bible, Suzan Gibson, and Veda Capps.

Jimmie Oakley gave some good tips on retrieving swarms at our last meeting. I am still getting calls about bee swarms. It seems as if a number of calls are about bees in places that are hard to get to the bees.

Jimmie has been in touch with John Talbert regarding the Bee Short Course that had to be cancelled. They decided that it would be best to count on scheduling it again early next spring. One benefit to that time is that making splits would be a good topic to include. We'll let you know as soon as a date has been set and hope that this will be beneficial to many of our members.

We welcome Janet Church of Hutto as a new member of WCABA. Also Byron Whited of Austin, a former member, renewed his membership at the last meeting. We hope they will receive much benefit as members of our beekeepers organization.

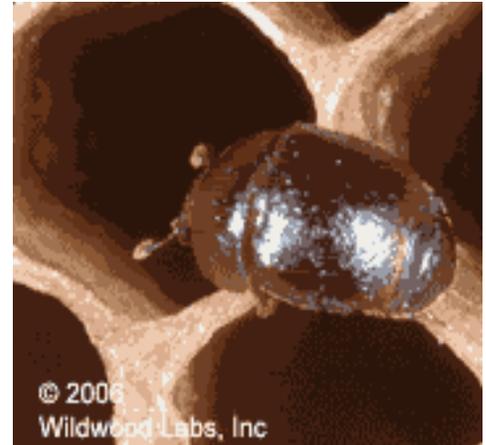
Door prizes last month were donated by Clyde Anderson and Gary Bible. Thanks, guys. Lucky winners were David Kohn, Janice Hartley, and Michael Holman.

Our unusually wet weather here in Central Texas has resulted in honey with a high moisture content in the honey that is being harvested. In *The ABC and XYZ of Beekeeping* by A.I. Root, it states that "Honey with more than about 19 per cent water will ferment if it's not



pasteurized.” A preferable moisture content is about 17 per cent. We have been using a dehumidifier for buckets of honey in the hot room as our honey was testing about 20 percent, and it’s amazing how much water has been removed from the honey this spring. Doug Branch wrote to tell me that he has two refractometers and if any of our members want to check their honey for moisture content, they could call him at 512/288-1123. Doug lives in Austin.

A word of caution as you start doing your extracting process: when you pull your honey supers off of your beehives be sure to extract within 24 hours and then return the empty frames to the hive as quickly as possible. Most hives now have a few small hive beetles and it doesn’t take long for the beetle larva to get started in the combs. Return the frames to the hive quickly and the bees will be better be able to control the beetle population. This will also help control the wax moth population in the combs. If you determine that you have a small hive beetle problem there are several treatments that are available from CheckMite strips for adult beetle(42-45 day treatment) for inside the hive, to GardStar ground drench to control small hive beetle larva which pupate in the ground around the hive opening(last 2-4 months). These products are advertised in the supply catalogs along with recommendations on when and how to use. You may also check out the major supply companies’ web site for similar information. Trapping the beetles in a ‘sandwich box’ trap as Susan Gibson demonstrated in the Beginning Beekeepers session is also an option. Hygiene in your bee yards and honey house are a must in prevention and controlling the small hive beetle in your operation.



Holley Bishop gives some interesting facts about the lives of honey bees in her book, *Robbing the Bees*. She tells us that honey bees live for about six weeks on their diet of nectar and hard physical labor. Their contributions to the hive are dictated by their age. When they are hatched, their first duty is to clean up their own larval debris from the brood cells. Then, in their first 21 days they remain in the hive, working as carpenters, guards, and nurses. They help feed and clean the queen, build new combs, nurse the larvae, cure honey, and take sentry duty protecting the entry ways to the hive. Some work as air conditioners by fanning their wings at the entrance or distributing water in the warmer areas of the hive. Finally, young bees take orientation flights to familiarize themselves with the local landmarks and plant nectaries. At three weeks of age, the bees leave the nest to forage. Five hundred miles of toil and flight take a heavy toll. With torn and tattered wings and exhausted bodies, they wear out after about three weeks outside, usually expiring away from the hive.

In comparison, the queen can live up to several years. If a hive needs to replace their queen, they can make their own queen by constructing “ special” wax cells around seven or eight existing fertilized eggs, creating oblong armored incubators that resemble small peanuts. The female eggs and larvae in these cells are slathered almost continuously with royal jelly, a vitamin-rich hormonal goo secreted by the worker bees. After about two weeks of this spa treatment, a new monarch emerges from one of the queen cells and goes directly to the other peanut cells to sting and kill her erstwhile competitors, who may have been only minutes behind her in the race to hatch and claim the crown. Then, as one of her royal duties, the new queen often unceremoniously murders her poor ailing mother.”

The young virgin queen remains in the hive about six days before leaving to go on her mating flight. Soaring high into the air, she will mate with up to ten males, receiving a total of three to eight million spermatozoa. The drones that succeed in mating with the queen soon die. The queen will then remain in the hive the rest of her life, laying up to 1,500 eggs a day. She determines the sex of her offspring; fertilized eggs become female worker bees, the unfertilized eggs become drones, with about 99 percent of the eggs being female. This female population performs all of the work of the hive.

Male, or drone bees, can't fly well and they don't gather food, clean, sting, secrete wax, or care for the young. Their only benefit is to mate with a queen, therefore, they are useless to the hive and, with a fertile queen in the hive, the female worker bees persecute the drones by withholding food and sometimes gnawing off their wings and legs in an effort to evict them. Most go willingly and die outside in a few days' time. By Fall, when nectar resources are scarce, no drones are left in the hive; those reluctant to leave are pushed out and left to die.

With school bells ringing this week, many of us are looking for healthy snacks for our youngsters. This recipe (although it's advertising a particular brand) gives some healthful ingredients for snacks.

Peanut Butter Energy Bites

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 ½ cups lightly sweetened o-shaped multigrain cereal | 1 ½ cups granola cereal |
| ¾ cup dried cranberries or raisins | 1/3 cup firmly packed brown cereal |
| 1/3 cup honey | ½ cup Skippy Natural Creamy Peanut Butter Spread |

In medium bowl, combine cereals and cranberries; set aside. Spray 8 x 8-inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.

In small microwave-safe bowl, combine remaining ingredients. Microwave on HIGH 45 seconds or until peanut butter spread is melted. Pour peanut butter mixture over cereal mixture and toss to coat. In prepared pan, firmly press cereal mixture and cool completely. Cut into 16 bars.

The following recipe is taken from the 2004 Idaho Honey Queens' brochure. It sounds interesting.

Tangy Chicken Breasts With Citrus Sage Sauce

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------------|--------------------|
| 8 boneless skinless chicken breasts | 6 oz. frozen lemonade concentrate, thawed | ½ c. Honey | |
| 1 tsp. sage | ½ tsp. lemon juice | ½ tsp. thyme | ½ tsp. dry mustard |

Rinse chicken breasts under cold water and pat dry with paper towels; place in shallow baking dish. Combine remaining ingredients in small bowl. Pour half the sauce over chicken and bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Turn chicken and pour remaining sauce over top. Bake 20 minutes more or until chicken is no longer pink in center. Makes 8 servings.

Bees

Queens

Honey

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