

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA AUGUST, 2008 NEWSLETTER

WWW.WCABA.ORG

(for meeting directions see website)

DATE: Tuesday, August 26, 2008
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
PLACE: Allen Baca Senior Ctr, 301W. Bagdad, (Cafeteria Dining Room), Round Rock
PROGRAM: Ice Cream Social; DVD and/or Discussion
HOSTS: **Randy Oakley Family, the Emersons**

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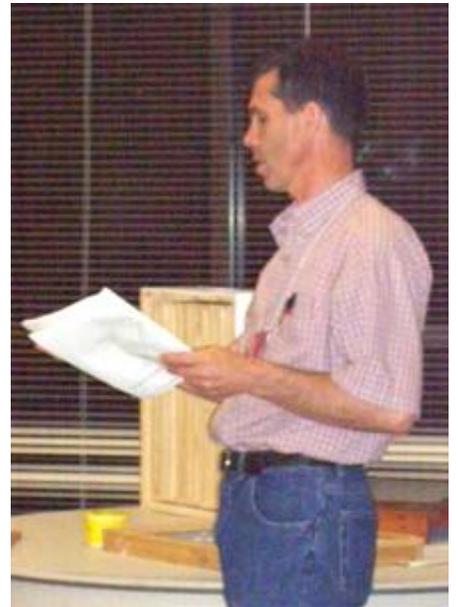
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Thanks to David Kohn, Jimmie Oakley, and Randy Oakley, we were given some very good information at the last WCABA meeting. David's Checklist to be used in keeping tabs on your hives can be found by going to our web site (indicated above). Jimmie discussed "Two Decades of *Varroa!*" and handed out a summary sheet, and Randy demonstrated using powdered sugar to aid in controlling that parasite.

If you like eating ice cream and visiting with fellow beekeepers and friends, the meeting this month should be your "piece of cake". Our hosts this month will bring cookies to go with the ice cream other members bring. If you didn't get to sign the sheet to bring ice cream or toppings, don't worry; we'll be happy to have your contribution, anyhow. There should be plenty to enjoy, whether or not you bring something. Anyone for bringing a freezer of homemade ice cream? There will also be an interesting DVD to watch while you're enjoying your bowl of ice cream or maybe general discussion of beekeeping.

Jimmie Oakley has been the WCABA program chairman for several years. Recently, he wrote, "I want to keep the meeting programs light and lively and enjoyable, so I anguished about how to fulfill that desire. As I toiled over my dilemma and read possible material, I browsed the article, *Just Starting Out? GET TO A MEETING!* Just what I needed. I cannot personally mentor all the good folk that need a helping hand or gentle direction when they are going wrong, and neither can you. But when we get together in a meeting environment, our help and suggestions can help many at once; we multiply ourselves (the core concept of public education). That is why we have bee meetings, to help as many folks as are committed to seeking our help. That is why our meetings have to be good. Their gas and our time are expensive."



We welcome new members, the Mailloux family, George, James, Jess, and John of Austin, and Giselle Nevada and Jamal Blackwell of Pflugerville. Also, we're glad to have former members, Nial and Darla Chase and their son, Allen Chase and family, all of Killeen. Others who visited last month were Elizabeth Locke, of Austin; Mary and Domenick Custureri and Ken and Milena Christopher of Dripping Springs. We hope visitors will be future members. I'm sorry I don't have all the visitors' addresses so I could send them a newsletter. If you bring visitors, please ask them to add their e-mail or regular mail address.

Reports on this year's honey crop in this area are reflecting the dearth of nectar resulting from the continued hot, dry weather. Some nearby areas had rain at the right time to make the flowers bloom, but on our farm, the rains would go east or west, or stop as the clouds entered Williamson County. Maybe next year will be our time. I hope you were in one of the favored areas.

Remember, we'll be having our honey tasting event at the September meeting. Be sure you save a small sample (as in a baby food jar) of your honey for everyone to sample and vote for their favorites. You may even bring a sample of honey you picked up on a trip or someone has given you, just for kicks. Also, at the September meeting we collect members' 2# jars of honey to be judged against a stated criteria; these jars are then sent to the State Fair to be displayed at the TBA honey booth.

Christophe Vain won the delicious-smelling whole wheat cinnamon bread that Ana Lerma baked and donated at the last meeting, and Bryan and Cindy Pruett won the WCABA tee-shirt in the door prize drawing.

If you need to use the club extracting equipment during the dates August 21 to September 1, please contact Jimmie Oakley to arrange with him to pick it up. Or if you want to sign up to use it while you are at the meeting, check with Sally Tutor at the registration desk; she will have the calendar to choose your date. I will be on vacation; I'm going on a cruise to Alaska with my brother and his wife and our cousin. I'll think of you as I put on a sweater or coat to stay warm.

Did you pick some dried seed heads from your favorite wildflowers, as described in Deryn Davidson's informative instructions in last month's newsletter? I have four sacks of gaillardia seed heads drying on my back room counter, and am looking forward to scattering them in September or October, hopefully just before a good rain. Now is a good time to get your planned location tilled and ready for planting seeds this Fall.

The July '08 issue of *Bee Culture* magazine has a comprehensive article about "Late Blooming Shrubs for Bees" by Connie Krochmal. It begins, "Though many of the bee shrubs bloom during the Spring, there are a number of excellent summer flowering species. These help to provide nectar and pollen during Summer dearths." Although she names 10 different species, I shall summarize her description of the Butterfly Bush and the Smoke Tree.



Butterfly bush. This shrub is hardy to zone five. New shoots can easily grow five feet in a single season and if left unpruned, can reach 15 feet tall and half as wide. When grown from seed, butterfly bush blooms the very first year with small blossoms forming huge, upright, terminal spikes, which can be 1 ½ feet long. The *Buddleia davidii* specie has pinkish-purple blooms with an orange eye but other varieties with other colors,

including pink, red, and white, are available. **Butterfly bush blossoms have a wonderful honey-like fragrance.**

All of the butterfly bushes do especially well in dry, sunny spots but need a well drained soil. Most will easily self sow and are more floriferous if pruned on a regular basis. All provide nectar and pollen.



Image Erv Evans
NC State University

Smoke Tree or Bush. This is an open, upright, spreading shrub with attractive, blue-green textured foliage. It blooms from mid-June onwards. The individual blooms—yellow with five petals—are quite small and appear on panicles that are up to eight inches in length. Purple flowering varieties are available. The smoke tree needs no special attention once it is established and grows well in a wide range of soils and pH levels. It adapts to dry, rocky sites but grows best in a well drained, sunny spot. This plant can cause dermatitis in susceptible individuals as it is related to poison ivy and cashew. Bees find this to be a **good source of nectar.**

Other species Krochmal (who is also a beekeeper) described are **Bladder senna**—provides nectar and pollen; **Bush cinquefoil**—nectar and pollen, a favorite among bees; **Chenault coralberry**—nectar and pollen; **Common gorse**—nectar and pollen; **Dyer's greenwood**—nectar and pollen; **Holly osmanthus**—nectar and pollen; **Hydrangea**—the less conspicuous fertile flowers, nectar and pollen; **St. John's wort**—pollen; and **Thorny elaeagnus**—nectar and pollen. If you are interested in knowing more about any of these plants, contact me by e-mail and I shall endeavor to have copies made of this article or of a particular plant description.

In 1986 or '87, a Georgetown business sponsored an ice cream competition. We decided WCABA should enter and made the recipe described below. Thanks to one of our young members, Claire Mealy (new member, Mrs. Claire Holt) who dressed in a bee costume and buzzed around inviting people to come taste our ice cream, we won a prize. Here's the recipe as it appeared in the 1993 WCABA cookbook.

MARY'S ICE CREAM

5 cups milk 4 eggs 1 cup sugar 1 cup (scant) **honey** dash salt 4 Tbsp. flour
1 Tbsp. (envelope) gelatin 2 Tbsp. flavoring 1 cup whipping cream or 1 can evaporated milk

Scald 4 cups milk. Beat eggs until thick, then add sugar, honey, flour and salt. Stir until blended. Add mixture to hot milk and cook, stirring often, until it thickens and coats spoon. Cool and mix flavoring and 1 cup milk. Add gelatin. Add to cooled custard. Beat cream or chilled evaporated milk. Put in freezer can and add custard mix. If needed, add enough milk to bring custard mix to recommended level for freezing. Freeze according to freezer directions.

Bees

Queens

Honey

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