

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA SEPTEMBER, 2009 NEWSLETTER

WWW.WCABA.ORG

(for meeting directions see website)

DATE: Tuesday, September 22, 2009
TIME: 7:00 P.M.—Honey Tasting & Judging; 8:00 Coronation & Awards
PLACE: Allen Baca Senior Ctr, 301W. Bagdad, (Cafeteria Dining Room), Round Rock
PROGRAM: Crowning of WCABA Honey Queen; Honey Tasting & Judging
HOSTS: **Janet Church, Shirley Doggett**

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REMEMBER: September has 5 Tuesdays; we meet on 4th Tuesdays!

As promised, a social hour eating ice cream and cookies at our last meeting was then followed by an informative explanation regarding construction of bee-vacs and using them in removing bee swarms from difficult nests, or in watching the video, "Silence of the Bees"(see pics last page). We also were happy to welcome several guests and two new WCABA member families: Layne and Lyle Muilman, Georgetown; and Fred and Myrna Herber, Leander. Also, we are happy that Ed and Karen Eacritt, Copperas Cove, joined WCABA at the July meeting.

September is National Honey Month and we plan to celebrate it with our Honey Tasting and Honey Judging at our meeting on the 22nd. For the honey tasting, bring a small jar (such as a baby food jar) with the honey you want to enter—no names or labels, please. The person accepting it will put a number under the jar and that number and your name on his/her list. Read the Up Coming Events page for more instructions.

Honey to be judged should be in a two-pound queenline jar. Clint Walker of Walker Honey and exclusive distributor of *Gamber Glass* in Texas has provided the jars for our club to use for this purpose. Jimmie Oakley had those at the last meeting. If you still need one, contact him. Bring your honey in a quart jar if necessary, and transfer your honey after you get to the meeting. Criteria for judging honey are the following: container appearance, level of fill, density, free of crystals, free of bubbles and foam, free of wax, free of lint, free of other foreign matters, flavor, and brightness. Judging the honey against the above standard assures a quality honey worthy of being displayed at the State Fair. All honey meeting this high standard will be awarded a blue ribbon. Usually, most of the entries have been blue ribbon honeys. Provide a label (of your design) to go on your jar that will appear at the Fair.

The Williamson County Beekeepers Association is pleased to announce that we will have a Coronation Ceremony at our Tuesday evening meeting to crown Miss Rebekah L. Jones as WCABA Honey Queen. Miss Allison Adams, Collin County Honey Queen, and Mrs. Shirley Acevedo, Texas Honey Queen Chair, will be on hand to sanction the

ceremony and perform the crowning. It is most fitting that we hold this ceremony during National Honey Month at our annual Honey Tasting and Judging. Rebekah is the 15 year old daughter of Paul and Cindy Jones of Spicewood, Texas. Rebekah will be assisting in our award presentation and will travel to Dallas in October to appear at the Texas State Fair to represent WCABA in the cooking demonstrations.

I am happy to hear that some of our young beekeepers are planning to assist in the Honey Booth at the State Fair in Dallas later this month or early October. Nial Chase said his grandson, Colter Chase (one of our 2009 Ed Wolfe-Robert Bost scholarship recipients) has signed up to go. Join in the fun of the Fair, volunteer.

Door prizes last month were contributed by Chris Doggett, Jennifer Youngblood and the Youngblood Family, and Micah Martin. Lucky winners were Mike Slaughter, Rebekah Jones, Micah Martin, Kyle Muilman , and Michael Tutor.

We thank Janet Church and Shirley Doggett for providing the refreshments this month. Everyone helps with the beverages by “feeding the Kitty” when you get coffee or a cold drink. I have been asked to include the names of next month’s hosts so they will be prepared, and I’m happy to do this. October hosts are Harold Kind and Mikale Slaughter.

Ready for a chuckle? I received this little ditty from my son, Rick Bost. This just goes to prove that not all college professors are stuffed shirts (he is a psychologist and professor of Behavioral Sciences at a college in Tulsa):

“I eat my peas with honey—I’ve done it all my life; it makes the peas taste funny—but they sure stick on the knife.”

More and more people are turning back to raising their own vegetables and many gardeners are recognizing the importance of having bees nearby to pollinate their gardens and fruit and nut trees. An interesting letter in *The Classroom*, a column of questions and responses given by Jerry Hayes in the September '09 issue of **Bee Culture** magazine, posed the question “Is it possible to have vegetables that are not ‘bitten by the bugs’ yet safe to be visited by the precious bees?”

Jerry Hayes responded affirmatively: “You can be a successful gardener and be a successful beekeeper, too.” He suggested several methods of controlling bugs: handpicking them off, using insecticidal soaps or oils, diatomaceous earth, ladybugs, etc. He also suggested that if one must spray, do not spray blooming plants and spray in the late evening after the bees are not foraging on the plants. Be sure that your beehives are far enough away from your garden that any spray drift doesn’t become a problem and don’t spray when it is windy.

If you don’t subscribe to a bee magazine, may I suggest that you do so. Perhaps you could even suggest that **Bee Culture** and/or **American Bee Journal** would make a welcome Christmas gift. Both magazines offer nice discounts to members of beekeeper clubs. Check with Jimmie Oakley about this.

In a recent issue of the Heifer International magazine, World Ark, I noticed a recipe using honey and pecans. It also had the following comment: The name “pecan” is a Native American word of Algonquin origin that means “nuts requiring a stone to crack”. How true.

TEXAS HONEY-SPICE PECANS

3 Tbsp. melted butter
½ tsp. cinnamon

¼ cup *Texas* honey
¼ tsp. allspice

¼ cup brown sugar
3 cups *Texas* pecan halves

½ tsp. salt

Mix the first six ingredients, then stir in the pecans. Spread on a baking sheet and bake at 325 degrees for 20 minutes. Allow to cool. Store in an airtight container.

Pollinator Preservation

The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center has a new asset in its quest to demonstrate the best of Texas wildflowers and native plants -- two on-site bee hives. Bees, like butterflies and hummingbirds, are pollinators essential to plant reproduction.

Horticulturalist **Deryn Davidson** (WCABA member) established the bee colonies on site because of her interest in pollinators, after joining the Williamson County Area Beekeepers Association last year to learn more about the art and science of caring for these essential creatures. Once prepared, she proceeded to create the first bee colony in April 2009.

For the first colony, Davidson purchased a three-frame nuc box (a partial hive) from an apiary. This colony was already established in its social structure. A second hive was established by transplanting a colony of wild bees.

First-time beekeepers usually choose the mail order route, because transplanting wild bees is more challenging, but Davidson said that transportation of the colony was very successful. The queen bee made it through the trip, which is a critical factor in colony success. "I felt really lucky that the queen did not get left behind or killed in the move," she said.

Honey bees are non-native, but have long been established at the Wildflower Center. They are docile, but the hives are located well away from public areas.

There is a preservation aspect to Davidson's project because honey bees, mainly those used for pollinating commercial crops have been subject to colony collapse disorder and other problems. A U.S. Department of Agriculture survey this year showed a 29 percent decline in honeybee population in the past year, much of it due to colony collapse disorder, which causes adult bees to desert their broods for no apparent reason. Pesticide drift and parasitic mites are also reducing the bee population.

The hives at the Wildflower Center are thriving. Davidson visits them frequently and says she feels calm when around them.

"And the honey is a nice perk," she added.



(reprint from Web Feature - Wildflower Center website)

ICE CREAM SOCIAL GALLERY



above:
Now why do we need a LifeGuard at an Ice Cream Social again? Rescue us from what?? ref. N. Exley

top left:
Everyone digs in...big kids help little kids! Yum!!

left: Many are interested in discussion and demonstration of the "bee vacs" brought to the meeting.
ref. Randy Oakley & David Kohn



**Williamson Co. Area
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