

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA JUNE, 2010 NEWSLETTER

WWW.WCABA.ORG

(for meeting directions, see website)

DATE: Tuesday, June 22, 2010
TIME: 7:00 P.M.—Beekeeping 101; 8:00--Program
PLACE: First United Methodist Church Georgetown (basement)
PROGRAM: Extracting Honey, using WCABA equipment: Jimmie Oakley
HOSTS: Sara Reeves, Myrna Herber, and Elizabeth Exley

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REMEMBER: June has 5 Tuesdays: WCABA meets on 4th Tuesdays!

By the time you receive this newsletter, I hope many of you will have made plans to attend the TBA Summer Clinic in Webberville. Those who attended last year reported having a very good experience. It's not often we get to have such an opportunity to attend these clinics in our "back door", and now this is the second year in a row.

Our program this month should be especially helpful to our newer WCABA members. Jimmie Oakley will be using the club's extracting equipment and you will have an opportunity to not only see how it's done but also take a turn at doing some of it. Also, this will be a good time to get your name on the calendar to use the equipment. Check with Mary Bost to set a date most convenient for you to use the extractor. You will have three days to use it, clean it, and return it to the Bost farm (4355 CR 110, Georgetown). This is one of the perks of being a WCABA member.

Welcome to our new members: Bill Evans, Bartlett; Paula Nemeč and family, Taylor; Dave Rosales, Taylor; Daniel Simon, Liberty Hill; and Michael Stuart, Georgetown. We trust our "experienced" beekeepers (notice that I didn't say "old beekeepers") will make a point of greeting our newer members, help them with any questions they might have, and share your beekeeping expertise with them.

We had several guests last month but they didn't add their email or address so we are unable to send them a complimentary newsletter. We are always happy to have guests and prospective new members; however, it would be good if our members would greet them and ask if they have added information enabling us to recognize them by sending them a newsletter.

The door prizes at our last meeting were donated by the Youngblood family, Clyde Anderson, Elizabeth Exley, Jared Rutherford, Ana Lerma, Jimmie Oakley, and Barbara Hunt. Lucky winners were Michelle Diaz, Anthony Diaz, Darla Chase, Anna Nemeč, Dan Kohn, James Brashey, Tommy Rutherford, Mary Bost, Lynn Kelch, Nancy Young, and Janet Stuart.

One of our new members, Tina Perez, has been assisting me with selling honey at two Farmers Markets for the past two years and has become an avid believer in the healing benefits of honey for both people and pets. Recently her 15 year old Persian cat, Angel, had developed allergies so severe that she was scratching herself until several places were raw, and Tina was considering having her euthanized. Then she decided to try drizzling a little honey on Angel's cat food. Angel loved the taste, and within two days she had stopped scratching, the raw places healed and now her coat is as beautiful as ever. Angel still loves honey on her cat food.

Tina's next story is about her horse, Dolly. Dolly was being pestered by many little black flies and soon the tear ducts in her eyes began to clog up with matter and her face swelled. The vet came out and cleaned the tear ducts and administered an antibiotic cream with instructions to keep using the cream and to continue keeping the mask over her face. Instead of getting better, Dolly's eyes swelled shut, so Tina put honey in a little syringe and, pulling the horse's lower lid down, drizzled a small amount of honey in each eye. Within a few hours, Dolly's eyes began to open, the swelling diminished, and in two days she was back to normal. Now Dolly also likes to lick honey out of Tina's hand—a real treat. Tina is a vocal advocate for using honey to combat allergies, whether it's pets or people.

About 20 years ago, one of our WCABA members (now deceased) showed Robert and me his bee hives that he had established on his almost-flat roof. We thought it was unusual although it had the benefit of being out of the reach of fire ants that were being a problem to many of us. Now I have recently read an article about rooftop beekeepers being "New York City's Next Big Cottage Industry". The author, Sarah Gilbert, quotes Megan Paska, a Brooklyn rooftop beekeeper, as saying she keeps getting emails and phone calls from people wanting to buy her honey which she sells for \$28.00 a pound—and here I think I'm doing okay at one-fourth that price!

Since our program this month will be about extracting your honey, I thought it might be a good idea to mention a few things you can do beforehand to make the job easier. These are ideas gleaned from our experiences before we had a honey house and had to do the extracting in our home.

First, bring as few bees as possible into the house with your frames of honey. We took empty supers to the hives in order to take filled frames from the hive. We set the empty box on the tailgate of our pickup, covered it with a wet towel or other cloth, and as Robert would take the honey-laden frame from the hive he would shake bees back into the hive, hand it to me and I would brush off as many remaining bees as possible, carry it back to the empty box and cover it with the wet towel. (Commercial beekeepers don't have time for this but we're talking about the hobby beekeeper with only one or a few hives.) As the box is filled, we would set the first one on a hive cover, then add another empty box on the first one and again, cover it with the wet towel. In this one-at-a-time method, if a frame wasn't at least 2/3 full of wax-covered honey, we would leave it on the hive for the bees to continue filling and capping it.

Before bringing the honey into the house, we would prepare the extracting area to do the job with as little “sticky” left on the floor as possible. Large cardboard boxes opened up and spread on the floor of your work area makes for an easy cleanup when you have finished. Also, a nearby bucket of hot water and a roll of paper towels allows for quick removal of honey from your hands. Arrange the extractor on a bench at a comfortable height, with one of the plastic buckets under its spigot. Place the boxes of honey nearby, also on something that has them at a comfortable height for reaching to get the frames.

The two plastic rectangular tubs also need to be at a comfortable height. Place the wood stick—the one with a nail stuck in it—across the top tub that has a bottom covered with squares of wire that will catch the wax cappings as you remove them with either the scratcher or the electric hot knife. I always used the hot knife; Jimmie Oakley prefers the scratcher. Put the frame of honey on the nail (it will hold it in place and also allow you to turn it when you have finished removing wax cappings from the first side), then, starting at the top of the frame, remove the wax working downward.

Place the frame you have uncapped into the extractor barrel with the wider board (the top) next to the barrel side. When you have the required number of frames in the extractor, start turning the extractor handle slowly at first, increasing the speed to a comfortable level as centrifugal force removes some of the honey. After about 20 turns, check a frame to see if most of the honey has been removed; if not, spin it a few more times, then replace the empty frames with the next frames of honey. Keep in mind that spinning the frames too fast may cause the weight of the honey to “bow” out the foundation or even break it.

Return the empty frames to the hive as soon as possible; the bees will finish cleaning them. But it’s your job to clean the extracting equipment. Some folks have found taking it to a car wash in the back of a pickup truck to be the quickest and easiest way to clean it; however, it is your responsibility to clean it and return ALL pieces to the Bost farm in 3 days time. If rainy weather prevents returning it in that time frame, call Mary Bost and ask if an extension is possible.

This hot weather makes a cold drink tempting. Here are two suggestions from Joe M. Parkhill’s “Honey! A Sugarless Cookbook”.

Always Ready Lemonade

1 cup lemon juice

½ cup honey

Mix well and keep in refrigerator in tightly covered jar. To each ¼ cup of sweetened lemon juice, add 1 cup ice water, and there is lemonade ready in a flash.

Orange Honeyade

2 cups orange juice

½ cup lemon juice

½ cup honey

1 cup water

Combine ingredients and stir well to dissolve honey. Pour over cracked ice in tall glasses. Garnish with orange slices or cherries.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Dues \$10.00 per year – single member or family



New Member / Renewing Member
(circle one)

Date: _____

Name: _____ Amount: \$ _____
Cash/Check # _____

Address: _____

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