

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA February, 2011 NEWSLETTER

www.wcaba.org

(for meeting directions, see website)

DATE: Tuesday, February 22, 2011
TIME: Exec: 6:30PM; 7:00 PM-Beekeeping 101; 8:00PM-Program
PLACE: First United Methodist Church Georgetown (basement)
PROGRAM: Planning, scheduling, and distributing of bees & queens.
HOSTS: Frank & Barbara Hunt, Ed & Karen Eacrett

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NEWSLETTER

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Our 2011 beekeepers year has gotten off to a great start. WCABA must be doing something right. Fifty-two members have renewed (and more are coming in each day's mail) as well as our welcoming 21 NEW MEMBERS to our active bee association. Much interest is being shown in trying to help reverse the decline in honey bees and other pollinators. People are recognizing the importance of these small creatures in maintaining our food supplies. Everyone can help by including flowering plants and trees in their landscapes.

Our youth are showing much interest in beekeeping, also. We have received 11 applications for the Ed Wolfe-Robert Bost Memorial Scholarship. The Scholarship Committee will be meeting and interviewing these young people Tuesday evening in the parlor (the room on the left at the end of the stairway) prior to the start of the meeting.

Jimmie Oakley, the WCABA Program Chair, would like to bring to your attention the following: A very successful program that WCABA has fostered and promoted for at least the past 12 years is the "queen and package bee group order". That first year (1999) the club ordered 29 packages and 100 queens; but how times have changed. With the increased losses of beehives to Varroa mites, Nosema, and CCD the demand for bees has been ever increasing. We have been so blessed to have a local producer, Walker Apiaries, provide our needs either with packages or nucs for all these years. This year we have had to choose a new supplier, and in the beginning it looked very promising that Avoyelles Honey Company in western Louisiana would be able to satisfy all our needs. The attractive 3lb. package price and the promise of free delivery made this program even more popular than ever. The WCABA bee and queen order quickly exceeded our expectation, and the unexpected cap placed on the number of packages available to our club caused us to overbook our capacity to deliver. With the deadline for ordering packages set as our February 22nd meeting the final tally is not in, but the reality is that all we have asked for will not be received in our initial order. Our President, Gary Bible, has been working very closely with Avoyelles personnel to leverage our position to get as many extra packages as possible, and the allotment at

present is 110 packages for pick up on April 15. There is the hope that due to customer cancellations at Avoyelles we can secure additional package at a slightly later date; therefore we are asking all members that have ordered packages be present at the business meeting as we will be discussing the best way to satisfy everyone's needs and still remain true to the principle of the group order: to promote beekeeping and new beekeepers in our club and community. We will need to defer some part of all multiple orders to be able to assure that all who have ordered can participate in the initial distribution of packages. I trust our generous spirit and sense of cooperation and fairness will help us address this issue with the desire to see that all come away with something to be glad about.

Gary Bible would like to remind you that if you want to be included in the "group equipment order" (to save shipping charges) be sure when you write or call Margaret or Terry at Dadant (1.877.632.3268) that you tell them you are a member of WCABA and that the order will be picked up in Paris, Texas by Gary Bible and cohorts. Place the order using your last name and pay for it by check or credit card. Then be sure to call Gary at 512.548.6194 or email him (glbible@austin.rr.com). These orders will be delivered at the **MARCH** WCABA meeting.

We welcome our new members to WCABA. We hope you will find our club helpful, friendly, and happy to share our beekeeping knowledge and experiences with you. This is where you can ask questions, check out books and CDs on bees and beekeeping and perhaps receive other assistance. Our new members are **Joe Alaniz**, Lago Vista; **Mark Bradley**, **Carrie Guipe** and **Edgar Dianderas**, **Jim and Jeri Houstoun**, **Dustin Rolla**, and **Jason and Kristin Allen**, all from Austin; **Scott Burrows**, Spicewood; **James and Patsie Gentner**, McDade; **Todd Holland**, Marble Falls; **Martha Lawson**, Killeen; **Karen Marquardt**, Round Rock; **Zachary Zzulka** and **Katie Ney**, Granger; **Bob Choate**, Lexington; **Marilyn Partney**, Cedar Park; **Larry and Judith Jez**, Temple; and **Justin and Elita Perusek**, Copperas Cove.

Twenty-five members renewed their membership in WCABA at the January meeting and we have been receiving dues in the mail almost daily. Remember: it's time to renew your membership for each calendar year, beginning in January through November. In order to join in the savings by ordering bees or equipment through the club, you must be a current 2011 member of WCABA. Although renewals have been coming in steadily, there are still quite a few procrastinators. Please send or bring your \$10.00 dues ASAP if you are not a current member.

Another benefit to being a member of WCABA is that members can order one or both of the very informative beekeeping magazines—Bee Culture or American Bee Journal—at about a 25% discount by using the forms available at the registration table. Ask Sherry or one of her helpers for it.

Do you enjoy the snacks that are provided during the break between Beekeeping 101 and the Program? We need at least 2 people, preferably 3, to bring the refreshments for each meeting. Susan and John Philpott are the coordinators: please sign up for the month when you can do your part. The money we drop in the "kitty" pays for the coffee/juice and for necessary paper ware.

The unusually bitter and prolonged cold snap we have just experienced makes the following information very relevant. I hope you had already removed the queen excluder, if you used one, in order for the queen to move with the cluster of bees as they tend to move upward as they use their honey stores. Also, placing a solid bottom such as plywood or corrugated cardboard under the screened bottom board

that most of use nowadays will break the cold air draft. Placing a mouse guard or other reducer at the entry opening also cuts down on air flow into the hive.

The article, "Transitioning from Winter to Spring" in the February 2011 issue of *Bee Culture*, has some common sense suggestions for helping your bees survive as "the transition to Spring is the most challenging time for honey bee colonies," according to Ross Conrad. Although he targets the colder areas for his comments, Conrad's statement that "This is the time when honey bees tend to be the most vulnerable and beekeepers need to be the most attentive," holds true for Central Texas beekeepers as well.

Temperature swings cause bees to invest precious energy and limited honey and pollen stores in expanding the brood nest during warm spells, only to have the cold return and due to their decreased population, they are often unable to adequately cover the expanded brood area and keep it warm enough to prevent it from getting chilled and dying.

If the colony loses contact with the stored honey (or doesn't have sufficient stores) when the weather is cold and they are unable to move around easily in the hive, starvation results. A telltale sign of starvation is that many of the bees "can be found with their abdomens sticking out of the cells as they scrape the back of the cells that form the comb with their tongues, desperately looking for that last drop of food."

If you can't tell whether the hive has enough stores by hefting it to test its weight, wait until a warm day (50 degrees or warmer) to quickly peek inside. If the bees have moved into an upper chamber, quickly remove the empty boxes below the colony and reduce the entrance to fend off potential robber bees. If you feed a sugar syrup, be sure the bees will be near enough to it that they will not get chilled in trying to reach it. A good substitute for a liquid syrup is the following recipe for a basic fondant.

1 cup white sugar 1 cup 2:1 sugar syrup ¾ cup water Boil the water and slowly add the sugar and syrup and mix until completely dissolved. Heat the mixture and check with a candy thermometer until it reaches 238 F or 114 C, then allow to cool undisturbed until cool. Mix solution briskly (the color should lighten). Pour into a waxed paper mold or shallow pan and allow to solidify. The fondant should have the consistency of taffy. Place the fondant on the frames over the cluster of bees.

Creamy European-Style Hot Chocolate

3 Tbsp. Honey 2 Tbsp. European Style Dutch Processed Hershey's Cocoa ¼ C water 1 ¾ C Half & Half (or milk)
½ tsp. vanilla (use 100% pure vanilla) Preparation: Combine honey and cocoa in a sauce pan. Stir in water. Cook and stir over medium heat until mixture boils. Stir in Half & Half and heat but do not boil. Remove from heat and add vanilla. Add marshmallows if desired. Makes 2 servings. Submitted by WCABA member: Gayle-Suzanne Barron

Dr. Malamud's Sinus Remedy

1 Tbsp. Local Honey 1 bag chamomile tea 1 honey-lemon cough drop (Halls or Vicks)

Combine the above ingredients and a little hot water into a sort of syrup in a cup, then fill the cup with water and heat it in the microwave. Drink it as hot as comfortable. (*This works! I would have a spell of laryngitis every winter when I was teaching and this would relieve my symptoms. MB*)



Starting a new season with a three pound package of bees in the spring; we can hardly wait!!

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Randy Oakley
Samuel Oakley

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