

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WCABA AUGUST, 2011 NEWSLETTER

www.wcaba.org

(for meeting directions, see website)

DATE: Tuesday, August 23, 2011
TIME: 7:00 PM-Beekeeping 101; 8:00 PM-Bus Meeting & Program
PLACE: First United Methodist Church Georgetown (basement)
PROGRAM: Organic Farming, concept & fundamentals: Gerald Cole
HOSTS: Meredith Duke, Randy Oakley, Chris & Shirley Doggett

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What better way to cool us down than a big bowl of our favorite flavor of ice cream, be it homemade or Blue Bell! August is the month when our beekeepers group likes to meet, eat ice cream, and swap stories about beekeeping. If you didn't sign the sheet last month but have a flavor that you particularly like and want to bring that or a topping you like to put on your ice cream, feel free to do so. The hosts will provide the cookies to go with the ice cream.

There was good response to last month's viewing of the DVD documentary, "Vanishing of the Bees". If you didn't get to see it or you'd like to see it again when you can study it more closely, a copy has been donated to our club library, thanks to Chris Doggett.

The Beekeeping 101 session this month will discuss diseases of bees that beekeepers need to be aware of and prepare to avoid their consequences where possible. Varroa mites entered the United States via Florida over a decade ago and have wreaked havoc since then. The Small Hive Beetle showed up a few years later and has caused problems. Chris Doggett will cover recognition and coping suggestions that beginning beekeepers should know about.

The importance of organic farming and farmers cannot be overstated to beekeepers because they offer the type of environment that is most suited to bees and beekeepers. Gerald Cole of Taylor owns and operates an organic farm/ranch southwest of Taylor, but it wasn't always that way. In our program hear how he has converted his property into a bee friendly environment using principles that improves and benefits the land and it's inhabitants.

The Williamson County Beekeepers have received thanks and appreciation for their participation in Nature Nights at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in June. Those who took part in the Bee themed presentation were Jimmie Oakley, John & Susan Philpott, Frank & Barbara Hunt, Gayle Suzanne Barron and the three thousand bees in the observation hive. (see picture next page)

We welcome six new members to WCABA: four joined at the July meeting and two have mailed in their application from our web site this month. We trust you will want to visit and share beekeeping information with Lee Bello of Liberty Hill; Henry and Mary Chidgey, Burnet; Karl Fisher and his mother Joanne Covey, Florence; Devon Greer, Austin; Hal and Catsy Mettes, Austin; and Daniel and Kathrine Olszewski and family, Hutto. We're pleased that Keith and Charlene Neiman of Florence have renewed their membership, too.



John Philpott helps those interested find the Queen in the observation hive.

Door prizes last month were donated by Wayne Baker, Gary Wende, Dean Hamilton, Ana Lerma, and Gayle Suzanne Barron. Prize winners were Catsy Mettes, Paula Nemec, Dean Hamilton and Jennifer Youngblood.

All types of wildlife are having a difficult time surviving in this extreme prolonged heat and excessive drought. Honey bees have not been excepted! There is almost no water to be found in natural sources and the heat has dried up almost all available nectar for the bees to forage on. That's why it is so important that we keep some type of watering device available to them; also it's important to keep feeding the bees some sugar water frequently so they don't starve. Ordinarily, bees are smart enough to take care of their own needs; so are deer and all other kinds of wild life. In the meantime, KEEP PRAYING FOR RAIN!



The WCABA Honey Queen, Rebekah Jones, has been invite to do a two day presentation at the Lake Travis United Methodist Church Preschool in Lakeway, Texas. This will be a big event for her and she will need the assistance of her entire family to do the program. She has been asked to be there for two days in order that all the youngsters get to see her presentation, complete with "live bees" and honey samples. For her effort the LTUMC PS will present her a check to go to her college fund to show their appreciation.

I have just finished reading a very helpful article in the August 2011 issue of *Bee Culture* entitled, "Using Smoke". If you subscribe to this magazine, be sure to read it; it's helpful and insightful. The author, Dr. Norman Gary, has kept bees for 63 years and has been a honey bee research scientist at the University of California Davis for 32 years. He has also written a new book entitled The Honey Bee Hobbyist, "an entertaining, authoritative, easy to understand, practical guide for hobby beekeeping".

"Smoke has been used to control the defensive behavior of bees since primitive man learned how to rob honey from wild bee trees", says Norman Gary, and "smoke remains the primary tool of contemporary beekeepers. . . . The first responsibility of beekeepers is to protect animals and people from stings. . . . The image of beekeeping, whether hobby or professional, is defaced when there is a stinging incident that could have been prevented."

A smoker that is not full of fuel tends to burn faster and gets very hot as indicated by a thin, bluish, hot smoke. What is wanted is a dense, white, cool smoke generated when the smoker is first lit. "Hot smoke'

is more likely when (a) a small smoker is used, (b) the smoker is not sufficiently full of fuel, and (c) the column of fuel is too porous,” states the author.

Although the author’s preference is pure pine shavings made for animal bedding or shredded pine needles, he acknowledges that there are many other smoker fuels: oil-soaked rags, shredded paper, burlap bags (care needs to be taken that the bags did not hold seeds treated with a pesticide), shredded bark, rolled cardboard, dried animal dung, wood pellets, dried leaves and grass, chipped wood from tree trimmers, compressed cotton, and even cigarettes.

Dr. Gary tells of conducting an experiment to see if smoke affected the foraging activity of bees. Ten colonies were smoked heavily, more than was usually necessary to control defensive behavior during a normal hive inspection, and an additional ten hives were not smoked. He determined that the bees in the smoked hives quickly returned to their normal foraging activity whereas the colonies not smoked exhibited defensive behavior and he concluded that the defensive behavior was more disruptive.

“The best you can do now is to make sure the smoke you generate is dense, white, and cool—whatever your choice of smoker fuel. And don’t forget this important tip—introduce the smoke **inside** the hive entrance, then wait at least three minutes before you open the hive. You’ll be surprised how much this minimizes the sting,” states Dr. Gary.

August Recipe

You would like to barbecue some chicken for your Labor Day celebration but it’s too hot to fire up the grill outdoors? How about baking it in the oven so you can stay inside in the cool air conditioning?

Oven-Barbecued Chicken

1 3-pound cut-up fryer	1 Tbsp. paprika
¼ cup melted butter	½ cup mayonnaise
2 Tbsp. honey	½ cup hot catsup
1 Tbsp. lemon juice	

Season chicken as desired. Combine remaining ingredients in baking pan. Arrange chicken in a single layer. Turn once to coat. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes to 1 hour or until tender, basting every 15 minutes.

Yield: 5 to 6 servings

from the Texas Agricultural Extension Service

July Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Tuesday, July 26, 2011
Meeting Time: 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
President: Gary Bible
Program Chair: Jimmie Oakley
Treasurer: Kenneth Miller
Secretary: Reagan Rozales
Web Master/Librarian: Hem Ramachandra

- 1. Beekeeping 101 Class** – Chris Doggett and Jimmy Oakley
Discussed “My Hive This Month” and “Diseases and Pests of Honeybees”. The club members watched a movie: “Vanishing of the Bees”.
To learn about helping honeybees, go to <http://www.vanishingbees.com/>
- 2. Business Meeting**
 - a.) Treasury Report** – Kenneth Miller
Report given: \$2,695 for balance.
 - b.) Meeting Attendance Report** – Gary Bible
Approximately 90 people attended the meeting.
 - c.) Introduce Guests** – Gary Bible
3 new guests attended the July meeting.
 - d.) Equipment Needs/Sales** – Gary Bible
No equipment or sales report given.
 - e.) Date for Next WCABA Meeting** – Gary Bible
Tuesday, August 23, 2011 is date for next meeting. An ice cream social will be held. Members are requested to bring ice cream or toppings.
 - f.) Door Prizes** – Gary Bible
Door prizes awarded to attendees.
 - g.) Miscellaneous** – Frank Hunt
Discussed a new way to put powered sugar on hives. Powered sugar helps remove mites from the bees.
- 3. Meeting adjourned.**

Next month will be September, “**National Honey Month**”, so if you have been fortunate enough to be able to extract honey this year be sure to bring some (in a 2lb jar) to be judged and send to the Texas State Fair in Dallas September 23rd to October 16th, 2011. Last year we had eighteen entries. We will try to have the appropriate jars available for judging and showing the honey.



See Jimmie Oakley at the August meeting to secure a jar to put your honey in for judging. And don't forget your sample jar (baby food size is enough) for the Taster's Choice Contest. First, second and third place ribbons will be awarded again just for bragging rights.

Visit Our New Website!

Oakley Family Apiaries

Live
Honeybee Removal & Relocation

www.LiveHoneyBeeRemoval.com
- Call for Answers and Estimates -
(512) 981-9216

Swarms
Bees in Structures
Beekeepers@LiveHoneyBeeRemoval.com

Bee Trees
Pure Raw Honey

**Randy Oakley
Caleb Oakley**

"Beekeepers Caring for Bees"

**Williamson Co. Area
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