



**Next Meeting: Thursday May 25th**

**May 2017 Newsletter**

**7:00 pm - 8:00 pm Beekeeping 101: Michael Wheeler - "What to Expect in the Hive, Late Spring and Early Summer"**

**Beekeeping 201: Chuck Reburn - "How to make Mead"**

**8:00 pm - 9:00 pm Program: Tanya Phillips - "How to Make Money as a Hobbyist"**

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## **What is Reducing Queen Viability**

**from Laura Colburn**

It's been said that queens used to last for five years, but now beekeepers can expect two years, if they're lucky, and many have begun to requeen every year. Researchers are trying to explain the reduction in queen viability and it is multi-fold.

Research at the Texas Bee Lab at Texas A&M has shown that wax contaminated with mitacides and pesticides reduces the quality and quantity of sperm produced by drones and causes drones to take longer to reach sexual maturity. These mitacides also cause queens to produce pheromones less attractive to workers, which in turn causes them to take less care of their queen. They tend to her less, feed her less, which reduces her ability to lay as many eggs.

Beyond chemical exposure, other factors have also been found to impact queen failure: stress during

transport. The USDA Bee Research Laboratory in Maryland recently conducted real-world testing with queens shipped from California, Georgia, and Hawaii to the lab in Beltsville, MA by USPS Priority Mail or UPS Next Day Delivery in July and September. Researchers found as many as 20% of the mated queens experienced temperature extremes of 46.4 and 105.8. These extremes reduced sperm viability by 50%. (Source: Kim Kaplan, Bee Culture Magazine, February 2016)

To read more about this study on the effects of temperature extremes during transport, visit the scientific journal PLOS One at <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0147220>



# Letter from the President - Jim Colbert

This is a busy time for beekeepers. If you got new packages or NUCs, you have them installed and should be feeding, feeding, and feeding them. If this is your first step into beekeeping you may have some questions. Our meeting this Thursday is a great time to meet and talk to some experienced beekeepers. One thing about beekeepers is that they are passionate about bees and love to talk about beekeeping, so take advantage of it. The TBA annual meeting in June is another great opportunity for both new and experienced beekeepers to add to their skills and knowledge.

On another note, I have been asked several times recently "how many hives should I have"? The short answer is "as many as you want". Most conventional wisdom says at least 2, so that if something happens to one you are not out of business. It also gives you the chance to compare one with the other if you see something you don't understand. Time is probably the biggest constraint on the number of hives you can handle. In addition to time, another consideration is your objective as a beekeeper. If you are strictly looking for honey production as a sideline income, you will need more hives than you will want if you

simply want to interact with the bees, observe their behavior and learn about the fascinating structure of a bee colony. Remember, there is a big difference between just having bees in the back yard and actually keeping bees. Like any kind of livestock, bees need care. If you find yourself needing to do something and not having the time, you either have too many hives or you have too many other hobbies (or work, family, etc.) Many people find that 3 to 5 hives is the top end of a manageable number if you are working full time and have other obligations. If you are retired (or independently wealthy) and want to devote several hours each week to your bees, that number could go up. My suggestion is that you start slow with a couple of hives and add one or two the next year and then re-evaluate. No matter how many hives you have, be sure that you find beekeeping enjoyable and not drudgery. If you start to wish you didn't have to work your bees, it is probably time to cut back on the number of hives you have.

On that note, I am going to work with my bees because I still enjoy it and look forward to opportunity to go the bee yard.

See you Thursday at our meeting.

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## Membership Application

### Williamson County Area Beekeepers Association

Dues \$15.00 per year - Individual or Family Membership

New Member / Renewing Member (circle one)    Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (        ) \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please print, fill out and bring to club meeting or mail with check to Membership  
Shirley Doggett, 400 County Road 440, Thrall, TX 76578



## 2017 Scholarship Recipients



*Sam Bingham of Round Rock, TX*



*Marius Talentino of Dale, TX*



*Carter Selvera of Bertram, TX*



*Dylan Roberts of Georgetown, TX*

# Texas Beekeepers Association

## 2017 Summer Clinic - 9am to 5pm

### June 10th - University of Texas, Arlington

**Keynote Speaker**  
**Randy Oliver**  
*scientificbeekeeping.com*



**Opening Session - 'The Times They Are A Changin''**

**Closing Session - A New Era in Varroa Management**

**Over 40 Classes to Choose From**

**New Beekeepers**  
**(0 - 1 year experience)**

Honey Bee Biology and Behavior  
How to Get Started - Equipment Essentials  
Buying Bees, Installation and Apiary Setup  
Annual Management

**Products of the Hive**

Mead Making  
Apitherapy  
Processing Wax  
Candle Making  
Production of Hive Products  
Harvesting and Utilizing Propolis

**Advanced Topics**

Increase Hive Productivity  
Swarm Capture  
Queen Rearing  
Equipment Workshop  
Varroa Monitoring  
General Management  
Honey Bee Biology and Behavior

Pollination and Pollinators  
10 Best Practices  
Top Bar Beekeeping  
Splitting Hives  
Sales and Marketing  
Nutrition Management  
Honey Extraction  
Autopsy of a Hive

Ag Exemption  
Cut-outs  
Planting Beescapes  
Texas Master Beekeeping Program  
Pest and Brood Disease Management  
Supersedure  
Feeding Basics

**Register On-line Now at [www.texasbeekeepers.org](http://www.texasbeekeepers.org)**  
**\$50 per Adult TBA Member, \$60 for Adult Non-Member, \$25 for Child**  
**or Contact Shirley Doggett at (512) 924-5051, [sdoggett@mindspring.com](mailto:sdoggett@mindspring.com)**  
**University of Texas at Arlington, 300 W First Street, Arlington, TX 76019**  
**E H Hereford University Center**