

The Texas Beekeepers Association



# Journal



Sept / Oct 2014

[www.texasbeekeepers.org](http://www.texasbeekeepers.org)

Issue 14-5





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# President's Report

*from Blake Shook*



## Splits, Bee Laws & Convention

Fall is finally here! After a somewhat mild summer, the bees seem to be holding up well for most beekeepers in the state. My attention has turned solidly from honey production to winter preparation, and planning for almond pollination next year. We are feeding lots of pollen substitute, and monitoring hive strength and mite levels carefully. For now, the bees look great. We tried making fall splits this year for the first time in several years. Surprisingly, they are doing very well. The first week of September we put 4 frames of brood, 4 frames of honey and a mated queen in each split, and have constantly fed them since. A month later, they are almost as strong as the mother hives they came from! If they continue looking good, we will most likely do this on a regular basis to help combat our normal losses.

So many things are happening within TBA right now that it will be hard to update you on everything in one article. Chris Moore and Chris Doggett are working incessantly to bring together a stellar convention program for all of you. We have more practical beekeeping presentations for all scales of beekeeper than we have ever had before! It is already looking like we will break attendance records once again.

Several board members and volunteers are also working diligently with Mark Dykes on updating bee laws in Texas.

Speaking of laws, we are also carefully looking at the possibility of placing honey under the Cottage Food Bill so small scale beekeepers could sell small amounts of honey without needing a health permit. You will all be updated on all these changes, and have opportunities to provide input before anything is put into place.

We are also thrilled to be working with the Chief Apiary Inspector, Mark Dykes, on having the Bee Informed Partnership come to Texas. For those of you that do not know, the BIP is a team of highly trained technicians who help commercial beekeepers monitor disease and mite levels, recommend treatments, conduct testing, etc. To have this resource available to beekeepers in Texas is a tremendous asset! We will keep you updated on this as the team set up a base in Texas sometime in 2015. We will also have a representative from BIP speaking at our convention this year.

We have several more exciting projects to announce at our convention, and lots of new plans for 2015! Let us know how we can better serve you, and if you are interested in volunteering. We can always use the help!

See all of you soon

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***Look for Details of the 2014 Texas Beekeepers Annual Convention on Pages 6 - 11. We have a great line-up of Speakers from 1pm Friday through Noon on Sunday at the Crowne Plaza - Reliant in Houston. Make this our Most Successful Annual Event Ever!***

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*Cover Picture: Tommy Humphries of Marshall Pottery making the Cookie Jar that Stanford Brantley brings to the TBA Convention Auction every year*



## Vice President's Report

*from Chris Moore*



### WOW, 58 degrees on the morning of the first day of Fall in deep Southeast Texas ?

Depending on when you read this, either I hope to see you or it was good to see you at our Annual Convention in Houston. I know it's going to be good or it was great. I am looking forward to listening to our speakers or after 16 years in Beekeeping, I still learned a lot. Bees are amazing but face many complex issues in today's world.

OK beeks, this time of year hives are generally well populated but, depending on their location, they may not be bringing in nectar or pollen. So you want to make sure they have plenty of stored food, if they don't, start feeding. Otherwise your girls could starve to death.

The other thing is to treat for varroa mites, even if you think you don't have them. If you are chemical free, you can use a thymol based treatment such as Apiguard. Otherwise Apivar is a good miticide strip that works well.

If you are in a humid area, help the bees fight off Small Hive Beetle & stay warm in the winter months by keeping your hives

in one or two boxes depending on the population & feed often rather than leaving excess honey supers on. The more bees you have per cubic inch of bee space, the easier it is for the bees to control the beetles.

As I write this article the Texas Department of Agriculture is allowing imported honey to be sold in the Go Texan Pavilion at the State Fair. I have expressed my disapproval with TDA Administration. Commissioner Todd Staples has recently resigned. I hope that his replacement will make changes in the program to actually promote Texas Agriculture.

Honey prices have gone up again this year. Do not be afraid to raise your prices. If you don't have much local competition you can name your price, within reason. If you do have competition, let them know the market is up and that you both need to raise your prices together. The cost of living & beekeeping is high, most customers will understand the increase.

---

## Director's Report

*from Jim Rowe*

*East Texas, Marshall, North East Texas, Trinity Valley*



In my area, (NE of Dallas), it's been a nice wet beginning to Fall with an extended honey flow so the bees border on being honeybound. As in previous years the bees look good or.....very dead. If I could resolve the question of varied bee performance and longevity my beekeeping life would be much easier. I guess they do not understand my expectations for their activities.

Expectations are usually difficult to meet but easy to make. In general, beekeepers expect healthy bees that produce lots of honey with little or no maintenance. It matters not if you have two hives or several thousand, failed expectations usually have a negative impact, it's then a matter of degree. When you make a living with your bees, expectations "Not Met" can be a very expensive outcome indeed.

Every beekeeper should be aware of the current best practices in beekeeping in order to sustain the performance and production of their bees. Local clubs, TBA, ABF, AHPA and the research community all spend considerable amounts of time and money developing improved beekeeping strategies to sustain and improve the lives of bee colonies. We must be informed and capable of adjusting our beekeeping techniques as the home grown and international threats to the bee industry materialize.

What worked for my grandfather would not work today. That's the reality of the changes to the world we live in. Those who choose to ignore the current reputable data on beekeeping do so at their own risk, (and that of their colonies).

---

*Visit our new website at [www.texasbeekeepers.org](http://www.texasbeekeepers.org)*



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**Texas Beekeepers Association  
Annual Convention  
6th - 9th November 2014**

**Crowne Plaza - Reliant Hotel  
8686 Kirby Drive, Houston, TX 77054  
(713) 748-3221 Crowne Plaza - Reliant Hotel**

**Online booking at**

[https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome\\_gi\\_new&groupID=29890141](https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_gi_new&groupID=29890141)

**Room Rate \$95**

**Call before Monday October 27th**

**Conference from 1pm Friday 7th through Noon on Sunday 9th**

**Dr. Larry Connor - all day Thursday  
Kids Learning About Bees (KLAB) - Friday morning**

## **Texas Honey Queen Auction Fund Raiser**

Most of our TBA Members are aware of how the Texas Honey Queen Program is financed. At the Convention each year, interested members bring beekeeping related items to be auctioned off, with the proceeds providing the funds to keep your Honey Queen Program going. This has proven to be a fun time at the Annual Banquet with many members having the opportunity to contribute to one of the best programs of any state.

Texas has had much success in providing very strong competitors in the selection for the American Honey Queen. It would not be so without your support. Your funds provide the ability for the Texas Honey Queen to travel extensively in Texas promoting honey. Most of our Queens travel 4,000 to 6,000 miles each year in the State of Texas and make presentations nearly every week.

This strong promotional schedule provides a good training ground and the opportunity for many local clubs and individual beekeepers to have first class promotional help with their only cost being the hosting of the Queen.

Your help is needed. With the continued increase in the cost of motor fuel and increased airfares, the travel budget gets tighter. If you are planning to attend the Annual Convention in Houston, November 6th - 9th, please bring a special beekeeping related item to contribute to the auction.

Bring your pocketbook also to bid on an item or two donated by someone else. If you are unable to attend, please send a contribution to the Acting Treasurer, John Talbert, for the Honey Queen Program. It will be very much appreciated.



# Practical Back-Yard Beekeeping

Thursday November 6th - 9 am - 5pm

For Small-Scale (Hobby) and Serious Sideline Beekeepers

DR. LARRY CONNOR, INSTRUCTOR

REGISTRATION \$75 PER PERSON, Includes \$25 credit toward a Wicwas Press book  
Or \$125 per couple (only one book credit)

## PROGRAM

9:00 REGISTRATION

9:15 Setting up and Operating Two hives and a Nucleus: Lessons with Limited Colony Resources

10:30 BREAK

11:00 Selling Bees & Value Added Beekeeping: Reverse Your Cash Flow and Making Money Keeping a Few Bee Colonies

12:15 LUNCH BREAK

1:30 Basic and Not-so Basic Management Techniques For Successful Beekeeping

2:45 BREAK

3:15 Queen Management: Cell production, 48-hour queen cells, ripe queen cells, virgin use, mating queens, queen banks and more

4:30 Wrap-up and evaluations

*Renew your Membership, or Join Us.  
Register for Larry Connor's Seminar and the  
2014 Annual Convention.  
(make sure you are logged in to get membership rates)  
[www.texasbeekeepers.org](http://www.texasbeekeepers.org)*

# 2014 Texas Beekeepers Association Convention Program

## Crowne Plaza Reliant, Houston, TX

### November 6th - 9th, 2014

#### Thursday, November 6, 2014

8:00am - 9:30am	<b>Registration</b> - Shirley Doggett, TBA Membership Coordinator
9:00am - 5:00pm	<b>Practical Backyard Beekeeping</b> - Dr. Larry Connor
11:00am	<b>Executive Committee Meeting</b> - Blake Shook, TBA President

#### Friday, November 7, 2014

7:00am	<b>Executive Committee Breakfast</b> - Blake Shook, TBA President
8:00am - 5:00pm	<b>Registration</b> - Shirley Doggett, TBA Membership Coordinator
9:00am - 2:00pm	<b>Kids Learning About Bees</b> - Melody Seida
1:00pm - 1:15pm	<b>Welcome and TBA Update</b> - Blake Shook, TBA President
1:15pm - 2:00pm	<b>Update on Texas Apiary Inspection Service</b> - Mark Dykes, Chief of Apiary Inspection
2:00pm - 2:45pm	<b>Varroa Mites and Treatment</b> - Lance Wilson, Certified Master Beekeeper
2:45pm - 3:00pm	<b>Break</b>
3:00pm - 4:00pm	<b>Latest Bee Research</b> - Dr. Judy Chen, Research Leader, USDA-ARS Beltsville, MD
4:00pm - 5:00pm	<b>8 Steps to Sustainable Beekeeping</b> - Dr. Larry Connor, Wicwas Press
5:00pm - 6:30pm	<b>Dinner on own</b>
6:30pm	<b>Queen's Quiz Bowl and Queen's Auction with light refreshments</b>

#### Saturday, November 8, 2014

7:00am	<b>Executive Committee Breakfast</b> - Blake Shook, TBA President
8:00am - 9:45am	<b>Breakout Sessions</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Create and Use Queen Cells</b>, Dr. Juliana Rangel, Honey Bee Lab</li><li>2. <b>Pesticides Wintering in Your Hives</b> - Michele Colopy, Pollinator Stewardship Council</li><li>3. <b>Colony Management</b> - Lance Wilson, Certified Master Beekeeper</li><li>4. <b>Honey Bee Landscaping</b> - Becky Bender, Texas Master Naturalist</li><li>5. <b>Drone Congregation Area, Evaluating Queen Mating</b> - Dr. Larry Connor</li></ol>
9:45am - 10:00am	<b>Break</b>
10:00am - 11:45am	<b>Breakout Sessions</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>The Successful Sideliner</b> - Greg Hannaford, Ozark Bees</li><li>2. <b>Beekeeping 201</b> - Blake Shook, TBA President</li><li>3. <b>Honey Bee Viruses and Viral Diseases</b> - Dr. Judy Chen</li><li>4. <b>Top Bar Hives</b> - Dean Cook</li><li>5. <b>Honey Bee Nutrition</b> - Lance Wilson</li></ol>



# 2014 Texas Beekeepers Association Convention Program

## Crowne Plaza Reliant, Houston, TX

### November 6th - 9th, 2014

#### Saturday, November 8, 2014

12:00pm - 1:00pm	Queen's Luncheon or lunch on your own
1:00pm - 1:30pm	Texas Honey Queen's Report - Hayden Wolf, Texas Honey Queen, Shannon LaGrave, Texas Honey Princess
1:30pm - 2:15pm	Update on Texas A&M Honey Bee Lab - Dr. Juliana Rangel
2:15pm - 3:00pm	Our Work to Protect Pollinators - Michele Colopy, Pollinator Stewardship Council
3:00pm - 3:15pm	Break
3:15pm - 4:00pm	Tech-Transfer Teams - Liana Teigen, Bee Informed Partnership
4:00pm - 5:15pm	TBA Business Meeting - Blake Shook, TBA President
6:30pm	Reception and Awards Banquet Honey and Photographic Awards Dr. John G Thomas Meritorious Service Award President's Award Jim Petty Memorial Award - Texas Beekeeper of the Year Queen's Auction 2015 Texas Honey Queen Coronation

#### Sunday, November 9th, 2014

7:00am	Executive Committee Meeting
8:00am - 9:45am	Breakout Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Truth About Treatment Free Beekeeping for the new Beekeeper - Greg Hannaford, Ozark Bees</li> <li>2. Beekeeping 101 - Zane Baird, Williamson County Area Beekeepers</li> <li>3. Create and Use Queen Cells - Blake Shook, TBA President</li> <li>4. Top Bar Hives - Dean Cook</li> <li>5. Integrated Pest Management - Mark Dykes, TAIS</li> </ul>
9:45am - 10:00am	Break
10:00am - 11:45am	Breakout Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Integrated Pest Management - Mark Dykes, TAIS</li> <li>2. Splitting the Hive - Chris Moore, TBA Vice President</li> <li>3. Making and Selling Nucs - John Talbert, Sabine Creek Honey</li> <li>4. Mosquito Abatement Program can Damage Honey Bees - Michele Colopy</li> <li>5. Bee Landscaping - Becky Bender</li> </ul>

# 2014 Texas Beekeepers Association Convention Registration

Please register for the annual convention on-line at  
[www.texasbeekeepers.org/annual-convention-2014](http://www.texasbeekeepers.org/annual-convention-2014)

*Make Sure you are Logged in to get Membership Rates*

## Registration Form for Mail Registration

*Please list attendees if you register for a Family Membership*

	Register by Nov. 1st	Register at Hotel	#	Total
TBA Member	\$85.00	\$95.00		
*Family Membership	\$120.00	\$135.00		
Non-member	\$110.00	\$150.00		
Practical Backyard Beekeeping - Individual	\$75.00	\$90.00		
Practical Backyard Beekeeping - Couple	\$125.00	\$140.00		
Queen's Luncheon Saturday 8th Nov.	\$25.00	\$35.00		
Annual Banquet - Adult	\$50.00	\$60.00		
Annual Banquet - Child under 18	\$25.00	\$35.00		
<b>Total</b>				

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL REGISTRATION FORM  
AND CHECK PAYABLE TO  
TEXAS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION to:

SHIRLEY DOGGETT  
MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR  
400 COUNTY ROAD 440  
THRALL, TX 76578

\* Family Membership means members who have a family membership and up to 6 children living at the same address



# Queens Luncheon

*Date: 11/8  
Time: Noon*

*Featuring a  
Presentation  
by the 2014  
TX Honey  
Queen and  
Princess*

*Come have lunch with the  
Honey Queens and  
Princesses!*



*Make sure to  
purchase  
your tickets  
in advance!*

**This year attendees will also  
have an opportunity to win one  
of two original paintings by  
the 2014 TBA Honey Queen and  
Princess!**





# KIDS LEARNING ABOUT BEES



Hosted by:

**Texas Beekeepers Association**

*www.texasbeekeepers.org*

**Friday, November 7, 2014**

**10 AM- 2 PM**

**Crowne Plaza - Reliant Hotel**

**8686 Kirby Drive,**

**Houston, Texas 77054**

**This free event is open to school children of all ages, accompanied by an adult, during the Texas Beekeepers Association annual convention.**

**Educational stations will be manned by students and experienced beekeepers.**

**Meet Buzzy Bear and Honey Queens and Princesses from Texas who will escort groups through the 30-45 minute tour of the educational stations which will include:**

- An observation hive of honey bees
- Bee suit, hat, veil, gloves
- Honey extracting equipment
- Bee hive box, smoker, and tools
- Pollination Display
- Informative Posters
- Handouts
- Bee related items and honey for purchase
- Honey Queen display tables
- Meet Buzzy Bear

**Contact Caryl Adams to register**

**Cell (972) 423-0463 Email *downthyme@msn.com***

**For your time slot, please email your name, number in your party, and a contact phone number to *downthyme@msn.com***



*Texas Honey Princess,  
Shannon LaGrave  
Beekeeper*

# Entry Form for Honey and Photo Contest

## By Mail or at Convention

### Competition Entry Form

*One Form Required Per Contest Entry, Bring Entries and Fees to Registration Table at Convention*

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Entry Category (Check All That Apply: \$5.00 Fee Per Honey Entry, \$3.00 Per Photography Entry.  
Only One Entry Per Category)

- ☐ Honey - Extracted Honey \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Honey - "Black Jar" (note below) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Photography - Our Glorious Honey Bee \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

"Black Jar Categories"

Local Blend \_\_\_\_ Local Varietal \_\_\_\_ Non-Local Blend \_\_\_\_ Non-Local Varietal \_\_\_\_ Exotic \_\_\_\_  
Mail to: Shirley Doggett, Membership Coordinator, 400 County Road 440, Thrall, TX 76578

## Texas Beekeepers Association Membership Application

or Join Us at [www.texasbeekeepers.org](http://www.texasbeekeepers.org)

*New / Renewal (circle one)*

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership category:	Century Club	\$100	_____
	Individual	\$ 35	_____
	Family	\$ 50	_____
	Association	\$ 50	_____

Donation:	Honey Bee Research Fund	_____
	Texas Honey Queen Fund	_____
	Legislative Fund	_____
	Stae Fair Honey Booth Fund	_____

Total Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Remit to: Shirley Doggett  
Membership Coordinator, 400 County Road 440, Thrall, TX 76578



## THE BUDS AND THE BEES

### Thinking Outside the (Flower) Box

by Becky Bender, Texas Master Naturalist

Think of a bee flower. Go ahead – picture one in your mind. Was it in a flower pot, a flower bed, a window box or in a field of mass color? Most of us visualize bee flowers at eye level and drenched in bright color. But wait a minute...

When it comes to locating nectar and pollen sources, honey bees rely heavily on their wings and their sense of smell. They locate sources first by scent and then zero-in on their target with their vision. To a honey bee, a favorite flower may be tiny. It may be drab in color to our eye. It may be found anywhere this tiny, marvelous insect can forage. Spreading high or sprawling low. Climbing over or tucked under. Eye-popping obvious or surprisingly inconspicuous.

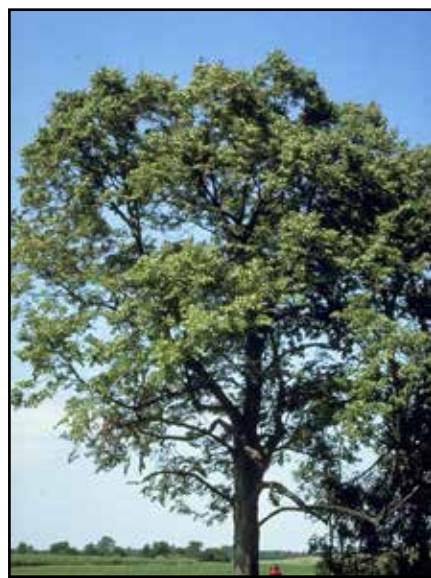
I have a somewhat “tangled, living architectural feature” in my backyard. It’s within direct eyeshot of where friends and family gather on the back deck. It’s a twisted mass of trees, shrubs and vines. Occasionally someone will venture to ask me if perhaps that tree is spreading out too much into my yard, suggesting some sort of conventional grooming strategy. Ah, the teachable moment. I explain what exquisite, though inconspicuous, bee flowers lurk in this mass of vegetation. Some folks get it.

Fall is prime time to plant. So let’s think outside the (flower) box to discover new places to conserve and establish nectar and pollen sources.

### Tree Canopies

Trees contribute to our planet’s healthy ecological balance. They provide cover and food for many animals and birds. But consider the magnitude of bee pollen and nectar that is produced by the height and spread of a tree canopy. Trees also provide our bees with nest sites, honeydew and resin.

It’s hard to miss the colorful blooms on landscape trees such as Magnolia, Redbud, Crepe Myrtle, Mimosa and Tulip-Poplar. I see these trees in Texas honey analyses and sometimes they contribute a hefty portion to the honey crop. Texas Persimmon, Black Willow and Linden or Basswood have less obvious blooms but can contribute significantly to a honey crop. However, Texas has many other trees that may benefit our honey bees by providing smaller quantities of nectar, spring pollen or sheltering nectar-rich vines and shrubs. Some of these trees are Elms (Ulmus), Ash (Fraxinus), Prickly Ash (Zanthoxylum), Oak (Quercus), Mulberry (Morus), Cottonwood (Populus), Sweetgum (Liquidambar) and Pecan/Hickory (Carya).



*Linden or Basswood Tree*

### Linden or Basswood (*Tilia americana* var. *caroliniana*)

Nicknamed “Bee-Tree”, the Linden is known as an excellent source of nectar for making a rather strong-flavored honey. Once extensive in Texas, the Linden tree is now limited to east Texas and about 7-8 counties in Central Texas. Texas landscape author and radio host, Howard Garrett, has suggested that this tree would be a good one to re-establish in Texas.

The Linden is a fairly fast-growing tree and easy to grow in most soils that get a moderate to average amount of moisture. It grows rapidly without much fertilization and tends to sprout at the base forming clumps of trees. This deciduous tree can grow 40-80 feet tall with a 25-35 foot spread. It blooms in spring and summer with drooping clusters of small, inconspicuous fragrant white flowers.

### Understory Trees and Shrubs

Now here’s an underutilized piece of honeybee real estate if ever there was one: the ground beneath the canopy of a tree. While some trees are too dense to support much growth below it, many trees provide just the right mix of shade and light to shelter a wealth of diverse bee forage. Understory shrubs and



small trees can suppress weeds and replace grass which is typically useless to bees. In addition, trees provide the perfect architecture for climbing, twisting vines. Not only our bees, but birds and other wildlife benefit by the berries often produced by understory shrubs, small trees and vines.

Even if you have a tree that's not particularly attractive to bees, you may consider planting or conserving what's growing beneath it. Here are some native Texas shrubs and small trees that benefit bees and thrive beautifully under the dappled shade or partly sunny edge of a tree: Elbow bush/Spring herald (*Forestiera pubescens*), Carolina buckthorn (*Frangula caroliniana*), Rough-leaved dogwood (*Cornus drummondii*), Rock rose (*Pavonia lasiopetala*) and Aromatic sumac (*Rhus aromatica*).



*Aromatic Sumac in Landscape (foreground)*



*Flowers of Aromatic Sumac*

## Aromatic Sumac (*Rhus aromatica*)

Low growing, pollen and nectar-producing Sumacs are very attractive planted beneath trees where they serve as a lovely landscape feature and weed barrier. I commonly see Sumacs in our Texas honey analyses. A perennial shrub, the Aromatic sumac reaches a height of 3 feet and taller and spreads over 4-6 feet. It blooms in spring before its foliage appears, and my bees always find it even when the tiny flowers are barely visible to my eye. This Sumac grows throughout different regions of Texas, thriving in dry, moist or rocky soils and in sun, part-shade or shade. A host plant for the Red-banded hairstreak butterfly, Aromatic sumac also provides berries for birds in the fall and supports native bees. As if that wasn't a big enough job for one plant, it displays outstanding yellow, orange and red color in the fall. All Sumacs will spread underground creating larger areas so give them ample space.

I was walking through my backyard this week with a friend, discussing various plants. As we strolled past my "tangled, living architectural feature" of bee vegetation, he looked up into the tree canopies and around at the understory shrubs and asked me, "Aren't these the trees your bees like because of the Rattan vines twisted in them and the wild roses and Dogwood growing underneath?" **Yes! He gets it!**

Fall is the best season to plant. So think outside the (flower) box this year when establishing or protecting bee forage.



*Understory of Diverse Bee Forage*

Your questions, comments or photos are welcomed. Please send to Becky Bender at [RBenderRN@aol.com](mailto:RBenderRN@aol.com). More information on bee plants may be found on Becky's website: [www.BudsAndTheBees.com](http://www.BudsAndTheBees.com).

# Greetings from Dr. Juliana Rangel at Texas A&M University

*Assistant Professor of Apiculture, Department of Entomology, Texas A&M University*

Howdy TBA members!

This fall has been filled with incredible good news. To start, our two new graduate students have officially joined the laboratory and are now taking courses and starting to work on research. Elizabeth Walsh was an NSF Research For Undergraduates fellow in my laboratory last summer, working on a project on the attractiveness of honey bee queens based on whether they were reared in a miticide-free or a miticide-laden beeswax environment. Liz got so excited with the prospects of continuing to make a difference in apiculture, that she joined our lab this fall and will be working on similar projects related to the effects of pesticides on queen reproductive quality.



*PhD Student  
Elizabeth Walsh  
from Wisconsin  
8 year beekeeper*

We also welcomed Pierre Lau, who did his undergraduate studies at the University of California, San Diego, and has worked with honey bees for over 3 years in projects ranging from pollination of watermelon to the effects of Nosema infections on learning and water collection, both in the US and in Thailand. Pierre is now working on a Master's project involving the identification of floral sources foraged by honey bees in urban and suburban environments in California, Michigan, Florida and Texas. Along with Adrian Fisher, these three studious folks



*Master's Student  
Pierre Lau  
from California  
4 year beekeeper*

would be glad to take invitations for bee talks at various nearby beekeeping organizations, so keep them in mind if you're looking for a speaker for your upcoming meetings!

A couple of weeks ago I received some AMAZING news: In collaboration with co-PI Nancy Ing, I was awarded a 3-year \$0.5 million grant by the USDA-NIFA to investigate the factors that influence fertility in honey bee queens and drones. This is an honor because there were only 7 of such grants awarded this year and because this was our first application to this program ever! So be on the lookout for many great projects coming out of our lab in the years to come!!!

I also want to share with you some of the impacts that our presence at Texas A&M makes on students. On 26 September our students gave a wonderful tour of the Riverside Bee Lab to the Hillel Jewish Student Organization of TAMU, in celebration of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. Traditionally during Rosh Hashanah, people eat symbolic foods such as apples dipped in honey to evoke a "sweet new year." Participants received a few bee-talks by Adrian, Pierre, and Liz, and were able to taste different honeys to make their new year a sweet one. Their coordinator, Ms. Veronica Beskin wrote afterwards: "Thank you for providing an educational and truly unique way for us to bring in the new year. :)" We are delighted that diverse organizations in our community can take advantage of the great resources available at our bee research facility."



*Hillel Jewish Student Organization of  
Texas A&M University*





*Hillel Jewish Student Organization  
in celebration of Rosh Hashanah*

Lastly I want to remind you that we are working on the development of a Tech Transfer Team (TTT) in Texas, which will be organized and partially funded by grants received by the Bee Informed Partnership (BIP), led by Dr. Dennis vanEngelsdorp from the University of Maryland. I encourage you to visit their website at <http://beeinformed.org/team-2/tech-transfer-teams/>. The Texas TTT will be looking for one to two beekeepers to manage the team, so be on the lookout for job advertisements coming up sometime around February 2015. One of the TTT leaders will be attending and presenting at this year's TBA convention in Houston, so you will have plenty of opportunities to ask questions regarding requirements for participation.

I wrote this last time, but here goes another pitch for a project that, now thanks to the funding received by the USDA-NIFA grant, will become a reality this spring: Along with the Texas Apiary Inspection Service, we hope to identify commercial beekeepers that want to participate in the TX TTT, which we hope to launch in 2015. And as part of this process of "shopping" for interested participants, I want to bring to your attention one study that we want to conduct in the Spring of 2015 for which we need your help, as follows:

We are looking for queen producers at the sideline and commercial level in Texas (and potentially other regions in the country) that are willing to participate in a pilot study conducted in the laboratory of Dr. Juliana Rangel, Assistant Professor of Apiculture at Texas A&M University in College Station, TX. In general terms, the study will be looking at the reproductive quality of mated queens from their operation from the first "catch" of mated queens in early spring, through several stages of the "catching" process, all the way to the final batch of mated queens that they sell to the public. We are looking for at least 10 queen breeders/producers that will be able to supply us with at least 10 naturally mated queens "per catch", along with a 3inX3in patch of sealed brood from that specific queen that can be kept in dry ice (for queen mating frequency analysis) that they can send to us while the queens are still alive in cages with a few attendants and food.

Our plan is to collect data on the reproductive quality of the queens from each operation at the beginning of the queen-rearing season (March), throughout the most productive months (April-June) and through the end of their stay in TX (if they are migratory beekeepers that later stop their queen-rearing operation and move to other states for honey production and/or pollination services).

The type of questions we want to address are:

- What is the reproductive quality of the queens in your operation?
- How well mated are your queens?
- What is the sperm viability of your queens?
- Are there differences in queen quality in your operation depending on when the queens mated? (March vs. July for example)

Using molecular and laboratory techniques, the type of information that we are hoping to collect from each queen (and their sealed brood) is the following:

- Mating frequency (number of drones each queen mated with, which is obtained from the sealed brood provided along with the queen)
- Sperm counts (# sperm in spermatheca)
- Sperm viability (proportion of sperm that is alive in spermatheca)
- Ovariole number
- Fat body content
- # of queens that you produce per batch
- # of colonies in the mating yard, and # of colonies for drone sources
- Rough location of operation to try to get weather data
- Exact date of grafting and catch
- Other data depending on budget and state of queens

By volunteering to participate in this study and provide us with the queens in at least 4 "catches or batches" in the 2015 season, in return, our laboratory will cover the costs of the molecular analyses and each participant will receive a "bill of health" of your queens in Fall 2015 with the above information. Your identity and location will be recorded but will be kept anonymous, and we will conduct the study blindly, so that the person conducting the analyses does not know whose queens he/she is working with until the results are given. This will be confidential but if requested, you will be able to see the equally anonymous results from other queen breeders in your area. We hope to identify and have the commitment of volunteers by the end of this year so that we can create an operating budget and get all the supplies acquired to start the data collection process as soon as possible.

That is all for now. If you want more information about our research, please do not hesitate to email me at [jrangel@tamu.edu](mailto:jrangel@tamu.edu).

I wish you a happy and productive honey season. In the meantime I hope you keep doing your varroa counts!!

Keep being awesome!





## The Brantley Column

*from S. S. Brantley*  
*East Texas Beekeepers Association*

I have heard several reports of golf ball sized gatherings of bees hanging from the edge of the telescoping cover or from the edge of the bottom board between the hive supports. A close inspection will show a small queen with the group of bees. She will usually be short and have a wedge shape and be easily identifiable as a queen. So, what is going on?

I believe for some reason the hive feels threatened and has produced several queens. The excess queens issued from the hive and attempted to mate. At this time of the year, there are limited numbers of drones for mating. The queens return to the hive poorly mated or even unmated and are reluctant to enter. They find a protected place to rest, usually hanging on the edge of an overhang, such as the Outer Cover or the Bottom Board. Other bees cluster around the queen, giving the impression of a small swarm. The beekeeper finds this cluster of bees and wonders what is happening. Is it possible to capture this small cluster and start a new a hive?

I would not say it is impossible but the odds are against success, even if you placed them in a two-framed nuc on drawn comb. These small clusters of a hundred or so bees would require lots of care and feeding in order to survive. The queens mated status is uncertain and may not be able to sustain the hive. Additionally, this late in the season, even in the best of circumstances, the hive will probably not increase sufficiently to survive the winter.

Late September into October is a time of transition for our hives. Even though some of our days still feel like summer, the calendar says we have already passed the first day of Autumn. We are seeing the first cooling trends and the emergence of fall foliage. Our bees certainly understand that the shortening daylight hours and cooling temps are telling them to start preparing for the coming winter. It is also time for the beekeeper to shift thoughts and actions into helping our bees prepare for winter. Take a look at the activity on your landing boards. You may see newly hatched bees making orientation flights. These are the new crop of field bees that will be working the fall forage to build up hive stores. The bees that the hive is producing now are also the "wintering bees" that will survive the winter and emerge in the spring to gather the first pollen and nectar that will allow

the queen to produce the next year's bees. If we want to see hives emerge from winter happy, healthy and ready to explode with new life, we need to ensure that the bees of October have every chance to succeed in their tasks.

Observe the vegetation in your area. Most of East Texas promises to have an abundant fall bloom. The cooler and wetter summer has most of the roadsides and fields already showing goldenrod, milkweed and asters, all important forage plants. These forage sources should last until the first frosts arrive. You should see bees bringing in pollen and nectar when you are watching your landing boards. If you do not see a good crop of fall flowers or do not see bees bringing in pollen, you may need to think about supplemental feeding with sugar syrup.

If you do not have an entrance reducer installed, now is a good time to add it, using the larger entrance. The entrance reducer will help the bees defend the hive against robbing, beetles and mice. As the weather becomes cooler, we will turn the entrance reducer to the small or "winter" entrance. I have already noticed some of my hives without entrance reducers were building propolis to narrow the entrance. I cleaned out the propolis and added entrance reducers to those hives.

As we move closer to the colder weather, we will need to evaluate the amount of stores in our hives. Ideally, a hive should have a full super of honey and several frames of pollen in the brood chamber as we head into winter. We have talked about using the "two-finger lift" to estimate stores by feeling the hive weight. Typically, we talked about lifting the hive from the back. Beekeepers use many different methods to support their hives -- hive stands, landscape timbers, railroad ties, cinder blocks and even things you and I might never consider.

It is not always practical to perform the two-finger lift from the rear of the hive. Find the lifting place that works best for your hives, front, back, side, doesn't matter. Just be sure to always lift the hive in the same manner each time so you can compare the change in weight. If you are not familiar with weight of a full or empty hive, do some field practice. Test your hive with a two-finger lift, then look inside to see how much honey and pollen is stored. Repeat the process a few times and educate your two-finger lifter!





## 2014 Texas Honey Princess Shannon LaGrave

### Varroa Mites and Hive Beetles

#### Varroa Mites

Varroa Mites are an unwelcome visitor at any party. They are one of the largest parasites in regard to their host the Honey Bee. Their size would be like having a grapefruit attached to your abdomen. They are an ecto-parasite meaning they attach to the outside of the bee's body.

Bees are made up of hard plates because of their exoskeleton. The Varroa mite is incapable of penetrating these hard platelets. The Varroa mites have to find the crevices between the plates to attach where they feed on the hemolymph.

Hemolymph is what a bee's blood is called and is pale yellow or clear. It is about 90% water and is used to feed the nutrients to a bee's body. It is different from a mammal's blood because it does not distribute oxygen. Oxygen is taken in to a bee through a series of tracheal tubes. There is no clotting factor so if a bee is injured it will usually die of dehydration.

Back to Varroa Mites: to reproduce, the Varroa mites go to the brood cells before they are capped. The mite can smell the pheromone that is given off when the brood is about to be capped. Anyhow, the mite hides under the royal jelly using a little straw tube to breathe. After capping, the Varroa eggs are laid on the pupae.

They were first discovered in 1987 in the United States. The Varroa was originally a parasite of *Apis Serrana*, the large Asian bee, and was transferred to *Apis Mellifera* secondarily. Deformed Wing Virus is uniquely carried by Varroa mites and the Mite is considered one of the top parasites to Honey Bees globally.

#### Hive Beetles

A Hive Beetle is a family member of the Nitidulidae and they are native to Africa. They cannot build up large numbers in Africa because the African Bees have a propensity to swarm and will simply fly away from the infestation. Even though the hive beetles can fly with the swarm, they are unable to take the larvae, thus keeping the numbers down.

Hive Beetles were not noticed in America until the 1990's when they were found in Florida, South Carolina and Georgia. They are found all over the United States and have been found in Australia as well. The Hive Beetle can live and reproduce on rotten fruit and tree sap; however it will actively seek out the warm well-stocked hive of the Honey bee.

As an intruder, they will lay eggs in any crack or crevice and when they are short on space will chew open capped cells and lay eggs on the developing brood. Once hatched the larvae will rampage through the hive eating everything they can in large quantities. After 7-14 days they crawl outside the hive, drop to the ground, burrow in and pupate on the ground. They prefer warm moist dirt. After they pupate in the ground they crawl back into the hive, unless they are caught by a bee. If a bee catches them they will chase them into a crevice or other tight space and post guards keeping them there, even propolis a little jail cell for them. Presumably, the bees would starve them to death or kill them once they got into reach. The Hive beetle and the Bee do not operate on that manner. The Hive beetle when hungry will simply massage the mouth parts of the Honey Bee jailer and the Bee will feed it until it has had it's fill and returns to being imprisoned.

The Hive Beetle, as a pest found around the world, is most prevalent in tropical regions because of the moist climate. It is thought that they came here in shipments of fruit and their spread through the United States has been most rapid even invading the Hawaiian Islands seemingly in the blink of an eye. Whenever a pest, like these mentioned, is dropped into a wild population the numbers always drop drastically. Even so, bees develop defenses against them and slowly will build up to their previous strength, often without the help of mankind. It is wonderful to see the amazing abilities of the Bees to adapt and grow stronger for having come up against these pests.

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*The Texas Honey Queen and Princess, supported by our Associations' Honey Queens and Princesses, led by Honey Queen Chair, Rachael Seida, will be at our Annual Convention, November 6th through November 9th.  
Please visit [www.texasbeekeepers.org](http://www.texasbeekeepers.org) and register to join them in Houston*



## 2014 Texas Honey Queen Hayden Wolf

Happy Fall Texas Beekeepers!

September has been one of the busiest months yet for me as I've been gone on honey promotions for two weeks straight and had another week full of promotions right after I came back! You can look at my promotions chart at the end of this article to see where I've been. One of the places I had the opportunity to travel to was Lubbock, TX. There is currently no beekeepers club out there and there are only a few beekeepers so I was excited to teach about bees in an area where there is little knowledge of them. I was surprised at how many people that I spoke to, who were interested in getting into beekeeping. I also had the opportunity to work with one beekeeper there who provided me with bee equipment for my talks, and was able to talk with him and encourage him about starting a beekeepers club there.

In light of it being National Honey Month I thought you would all enjoy learning something new about honey!

I read a fascinating article this month from ABJ (American Bee Journal) Extra entitled "Bacteria from Bees Possible Alternative to Antibiotics". The article was about a study that was done by Lund University in Sweden. The study identified 13 lactic acid bacteria found in fresh honey from bees honey stomachs. The lactic acid bacteria is used in the making of honey and has many antimicrobial compounds. As I wrote in last month's article, they are also used in the making of bee bread. In a laboratory study, they tested the lactic acid bacteria's effects on methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and Vancomycin-resistant *Enterococcus* (VRE), among others and found that it was effective against all of them. In an interview about the study, PhD student, Eile Butler of Lund University said "These lactic acid bacteria are able to inhibit chronic wound pathogens as well as antibiotic resistant pathogens, such as MRSA and VRE."

Although the human bacteria tests have only been performed in a lab, a similar test was done using horses. The lactic acid bacteria was mixed with honey and used directly on 10 horses with persistent wounds. They had previously tried everything they could on the horses, every kind of steroid and antibiotic and had no success until they used the lactic acid bacteria and honey which cleared every wound right up!

The researchers wrote that these bacteria represent "one of the greatest symbiotic flora ever found in a single organism"; they protect all honey bee species from the various microbial effects they encounter while foraging.

"Antibiotics are mostly one active substance, effective against only a narrow spectrum of bacteria," lead author and University of Lund microbiologist Tobias Olofsson says in a press-release. "When used alive, these 13 lactic acid bacteria produce the right kind of antimicrobial compounds as needed, depending on the threat. It seems to have worked well for millions of years of protecting bees' health and honey against other harmful microorganisms. However, since store-bought honey doesn't contain the living lactic acid bacteria, many of its unique properties have been lost in recent times."

In thinking about the article I wrote last month, it would be interesting to know what "environmental factors" might inhibit or change the probiotic profile of honey.

The State Fair of Texas is going on now so if you go to the fair be sure to stop by the TBA booth (they have an amazing honey display and an observation hive) or volunteer to work at the booth. Booth work is a great opportunity to freshen up on your bee facts and teach others about bees; it's a wonderful experience and I would recommend it to every beekeeper. All 8 of the Honey Queens from around Texas will be at the fair October 18th-20th doing cooking demonstrations with honey and working the booth. Come by and get some delicious recipes and samples!

Also, don't forget to register for the TBA Convention held in Houston November 7th-9th. It will be here before you know it so go to [texasbeekeepers.org](http://texasbeekeepers.org) today to register. I hope to see many of you there!

The Texas Honey Queen Program's Twitter now has just over 100 followers! One of my goals this year was to have 150 followers on twitter by the end of my reign. So if you are on twitter please follow us @TxHoneyQandP! If you have an event that you would like either Princess Shannon or myself to come to, contact Texas Honey Queen Chair, Rachael Seida at: [texashoneyqueenchair@gmail.com](mailto:texashoneyqueenchair@gmail.com) or 214-578-3477.

Blessings to you all!



<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Number of People Reached</b>	<b>Notes</b>
7/24/14	Texas Homeschool Coalition Field Trip	The Woodlands, TX	Bee Talk	60	Did 2 presentations w/ a local beekeeper
7/24/14	Central Texas Beekeepers Association Mtg.	Brenham, TX	Bee Meeting	100+	Gave report & crowned the Central Texas Honey Queen!
7/28/14	Big Sandy Rotary Club	Big Sandy, TX	Civic Meeting	22	General bee talk, met Mayor of Big Sandy
8/7/14	East Texas Beekeepers Association Mtg.	Whitehouse, TX	Bee Meeting	90	Attended and gave a report
8/19/14	Gilmer Rotary Club	Gilmer, TX	Civic Meeting	35	General bee talk
8/27/14	The Journal	Big Sandy, Hawkins, Fouke, Harmony, Holley Lake, Pritchett, Winona	Newspaper Article	12,000	Article on my program @ the Gilmer Rotary
9/9/14	Sun City Farmers Market	Georgetown, TX	Booth Work	150	sold honey, spoke with all the vendors and general public
9/9/14	Lost Pines Garden Club	Bastrop, TX	Garden Club	21	Gave a power point on bees and gardening
9/10/14	Texas Department of Agriculture	Austin, TX	Lobbying efforts & promoting National Honey Month		Met with the Director of Communications for the TDA
9/10/14	texasagriculture.gov	Texas	Online		Picture and short sentence on the Front Page of the TDA website!
9/12-14/14	Mid-Year Honey Queen Recap	Dallas, TX			Shannon and I prepared for the end of our term, finishing goals, projects, etc.
9/15/14	Rising Scholars Day Care	Conroe, TX	Bee Talk	43	2 presentations to 3year olds-5 <sup>th</sup> graders
9/15/14	Montgomery County Beekeepers Association Mtg.	Conroe, TX	Bee Meeting	100	Gave power point on Neonicotinoids and Bees
9/18/14	Lubbock Christian School	Lubbock, TX	Bee Talk	80	1 talk to the elementary kids
9/18/14	Sundown Elementary School	Sundown, TX	Bee Talk	250	2 talks to k-5 <sup>th</sup> grade
9/19/14	Local Homeschool Group and others	Lubbock, TX	Bee Talk & Cooking Demo	125	1hr program attended by all ages
9/20/14	Panhandle South Plains Fair	Lubbock, TX	Booth Work	Spoke to 260	Manned the bee booth and visited and spoke with other vendors
9/21/14	South Plains Bible Chapel Sunday School group	Lubbock, TX	Kids Sunday School Group	9	Talked about bees, and answered questions
9/24/14	East Texas State Fair	Tyler, TX	Booth Work	225	Worked with ETBA Honey Princess and spoke w/ kids and adults, sold honey.



# Chief of Apiary Inspection - Texas Apiary Inspection Service

*from Mark Dykes*

Greeting from the Texas Apiary Inspection Service. I don't know about you but it felt like that summer flew by. Hopefully we are all looking forward to winter and preparing our bees for what is predicted to be a relatively mild one (we will see about that). Things are still buzzing over here at TAIS. We welcomed our new inspector, Mary Reed, to TAIS in August. She is settling in and already out helping with inspections. Please make sure to give her a warm welcome when you see her at the annual meeting in November.

We have some exciting news to announce about an upcoming program. TAIS, in association with Juliana Rangel's Honey Bee Lab, AgriLife Extension and Texas Beekeepers Association, are pleased to announce the formation of the Texas Master Beekeeper Program (TXMBP)! The TXMBP will be open to all beekeepers of any experience level. The only qualification is to be a beekeeper for one year and have the willingness to learn and become a more knowledgeable beekeeper. Our program will be modeled after the well-established Florida Master Beekeeper Program. The Master Beekeeper Program will have 4 levels to advance through: Apprentice Beekeeper, Advanced Beekeeper, Master Beekeeper and Master Craftsman Beekeeper. Each of these levels are designed to test your knowledge and help you expand as a beekeeper. The board of directors for the TXMBP will be meeting over the winter months to set up the infrastructure and hope to have the program requirements online by the first part of 2015 with the first round of testing slated for Spring 2015. But beekeepers don't have to wait to start studying for the Apprentice level. Please follow this link and download the requirements for the Apprentice level test, including the reading list: <http://entnemdept.ifas.ufl.edu/honeybee/extension/MBP%202014/IN84700.pdf>



One key feature of this program is public service credits. After you attain Apprentice Beekeeper level you will be required to earn public service credits to advance to the next level. These credits can be earned by presenting to non-beekeeping groups such as garden clubs, scouting organizations, schools, 4H, FFA, and anyone else interested in learning about honey bees. Through these public service credits you, as a beekeeper, will help educate the general public and probably start a few of the people you meet on the road to becoming beekeepers themselves. In Florida the MBP has reached over 3 million people and I'm confident we can beat that number here in Texas! So if you are interested in receiving more information about the Texas Master Beekeeper Program please email me at [mark.dykes@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:mark.dykes@ag.tamu.edu) and I will add your name to the mailing list.

Well I hope everyone has a good fall and make sure to check your bees and start getting them ready for winter. We will see everyone at the TBA meeting in Houston in November.

As always, keep on keeping bees!

**Texas Apiary Inspection Service is in the process of updating our website and is in need of pictures. Specifically we need pictures of honey bee pests and pathogens (varroa mite, small hive beetle, deformed wing virus, and others), native Texas bee species, non-bee species (such as wasp and robber fly), beekeeping activities, and wild flowers. If a member is interested in sending in pictures they can send them to me at: [mark.dykes@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:mark.dykes@ag.tamu.edu) Please include in the email your full name (so we can give you credit for the picture) and permission for us to post the picture on our website. We appreciate any submissions and will contact you if your picture is selected for the website. Thank you in advance for your help!**

*Dr. Juliana Rangel and Mark Dykes will both be presenting at the  
2014 Texas Beekeepers Annual Convention in Houston.*

*Please go to*

[www.texasbeekeepers.org/annual-convention-2014](http://www.texasbeekeepers.org/annual-convention-2014)



## Texas Honey Queen Chair Rachael Seida

Dear Texas Beekeepers,

Thank God for the rain and cooler weather!

In the last few months, Hayden and Shannon have enjoyed the hospitality of many of the local bee clubs and associations around the state. We would like to sincerely thank those that have reached out and extended the hand of friendship! Every club has been wonderfully welcoming!

We are gearing up for the State Fair of Texas! For those new to the program, every fall TBA invites all the Honey Queens and Princesses from around the state to come participate in activities like school presentations, cooking demos, and media interviews. This year our representatives will be there during the last weekend of the Fair. Feel free to come out and see our amazing spokespersons in action on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, October 17, 18, and 19. Our 2014 Texas Honey Queen and Princess will be cooking with other honey queens and princesses from around the state! What a delicious and sweet 3-day event! We look forward to seeing you there.

Also make sure to prepare your donation of honey for the Texas Beekeepers booth at the State Fair of Texas and get it to John Talbert and schedule a day or several days with John to work the booth. Beekeepers love to talk bees, and the TBA booth is a great opportunity to do that with the public. Plus, you will get free entrance and parking for the State Fair in return for your volunteer time.

Also, the TBA Convention is coming up here before you know it! And this year we are packing in more than ever! Don't forget to get your tickets for the Queen's Luncheon (this year 2 lucky attendees at the Luncheon will win an original painting from Hayden and Shannon!), and for the Banquet to see who will be selected to represent us next year!

Finally, our social media outreach is better than ever! Check us out on Facebook and Twitter – and I also have for you, a map of where our Twitter “followers” are located!

We look forward to seeing all of you soon.



*Map showing location of Honey Queen followers on Twitter*

## Pictures from the Honey Queen and Princess Year



*Shannon LaGrave at a Bee Talk*



*Shannon at Collin County Hobby Beekeepers Association, General Meeting*



*Shannon with 2014 American Honey Queen, Susannah Austin, Elaine and Ed Michalik*



*Hayden with Central Texas Beekeepers Association Honey Queen, Caroline Booser*



*Hayden with Texas Dept. of Agriculture Director of Communications, Bryan Black*



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## Central Texas Beekeepers Crowns a Honey Queen

Caroline Boozer is currently serving as the Central Texas Honey Queen. As a high school senior, Caroline is also currently enrolled in a dual credit program with Liberty University. She has been involved in Beekeeping for over a year and a half and has completed the Central Texas Apprentice Program. She is active in all aspects of maintaining her bees and enjoys being a spokesperson for the industry.

Caroline is also active in National Charity League and her church having volunteered over 200 hours. She has traveled across the country with TeenPact Leadership Schools, a Christian student leadership and political training organization. In her spare time, Caroline has earned a first degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do and is competing in this year's National Tournament.

Other interests include having participated on the high school golf team, a top performance choir, musical theater, photography, and playing the ukulele. She has earned numerous awards in high school.

Caroline aspires to become a lawyer and is currently pursuing an International Business degree.





# BEGINNERS' BOX

*from Cameron Crane, Liberty County Beekeepers*

Greetings to those pursuing learning more about beekeeping.

As I'm writing, we are still in the heat of summer. Our first cool front is scheduled to be here soon. By the time you read this, we should be well into the fall honey flow as the asters and goldenrod are in bloom. In this installment of the Beeginners' Box, I'm going to cover the three I's: Inventories, Information and Involvement.

## INVENTORIES

Are about recordkeeping. Beekeeping has been described as a skill, and it has also been called an art or craft. Whichever approach you take to beekeeping puts you on a path. Are you mapping out that path? Keeping good records helps you understand where you have been and where you and your bees are now. The hive grows, flows and adapts to the seasons. Every area has its own details of which plants are going to bloom at what time. Knowing when the major and minor nectar flows of your area occur helps you anticipate the needs of your bees. Since you know when the flows are about to happen, you should also know when you need to have supers ready to add to the hive.

If you have more than one or two hives, you should be keeping records on how fast did each colony build, when supers were added, how many boxes were harvested, and how full the frames were on a certain date. This is some of the information you will need to manage your hives effectively. At each inspection, you should note how many hive beetles you saw, the activity in front of the hive, were the bees bringing in pollen, did you see nectar being stored, how aggressive were the bees and what did the brood patterns look like. Being in the Houston area and having to deal with aggressive bees from removals and swarms, I keep up with the "meanness" of my hives so I know which ones I want to re-queen. All this information helps anticipate the current needs of the hive and will help with your choices in the following year. Find a system that works for you. I've heard some people place a brick on the top cover, and the placement has a coded meaning.

Last year, I used the Hive Tracks System found at [www.hivettracks.com](http://www.hivettracks.com). Hive Tracks is a great tool for keeping inventory. However, I'm not keen on texting on my phone, so using the phone app to take notes in the field wasn't for me. I then made notes on printed Hive Tracks inspection sheets and updated my notes when I got home. I found that as my number of hives increased that I wasn't making the time to sit at the computer to do updates on my hives. So, if you have less than 10 hives, I'd recommend taking a look at Hive Tracks.

I've also tried a note pad and a clip board when visiting my hives and found I didn't like fooling with paper and pen in the bee yard. This year, I changed out most of my traditional top covers for garden top covers and kept a Sharpie in my smoker/hive tool kit. I made notes about the hive on the top cover. Each visit, I also took photos of the hives before I started and after I finished. When I saw bees working flowers, I took a picture. I saved the pictures on my computer in a beekeeping folder by dates. I've referred back to my photo inventory often, and that's what works for me.

As you start the next year of beekeeping, you will have decisions to make. Your records should give you direction and help you plan.

## INFORMATION

Is about learning. There are many places to find information and ways to build your knowledge about bees and beekeeping. Books, bee schools, seminars, clinics, pod-casts, the Internet, beekeeping clubs, mentors and conventions are just a few avenues. When I first got interested in beekeeping, I thought all I'd need were a couple of good books; and then, I'd know all about beekeeping. Now, I know I'll always be learning.

I've read quite a few books, and I can't say any of them were bad books. I've learned something from each one. The two books that stand out most in my mind are "Beekeeping for Dummies" and Reverend Langstroth's book, "Langstroth's Hive and the Honeybee." I'd never read a "for dummies" book and dislike the whole title idea, but I got it for next to nothing included in a purchase of several other books. I won't say it was the best; but it surprised me. For a beginner, it had a lot of good information and was fairly well organized. I'd also gotten a hard copy of "Langstroth's Hive and the Honeybee", 4th edition published in 1878. I read into it some but found it a hard read. Then last winter, I found the audio book of the "Langstroth's Hive and the Honeybee", burned it onto a CD and put it in the car. After a while, I got used to the reader being VERY dry and have listened to it twice. Langstroth's book is not a good book for beginners in that we now know so much about the bees that was unknown in Langstroth's time; the mid to late 1800's. For example, Langstroth thought some bees were born to be nurses and others were born to be foragers. However, I did appreciate his perspective on using sugar water to calm the bees instead of smoking them, as well as his advice on keeping hives dry and well ventilated.

Mentoring is a great way to learn more. I've been mentoring a few new beekeepers; and even though I'm mostly teaching them, I'm also learning a lot from them. The questions they ask make me stop and think. I also learn from the mistakes they make. If you've been beekeeping more than a year or two, you can help someone just starting; and new Texas beekeepers do need mentors.

Beekeeping schools, seminars and conventions are a great place to learn about beekeeping. The Texas Beekeepers Association Annual Convention brings in speakers from across the country and is a wonderful opportunity to learn. This year, make the time and plan on attending. There is a lot of information on the TBA Annual Convention 2014 in this and the last TBA Journal. You can even register on line this year!

## INVOLVEMENT

Being involved with other beekeepers builds your knowledge and establishes a network with seasoned beekeepers who can help you with problems. The connections you make being involved can really pay off when you get in a bind or need some help. We had a

new member come into Liberty County Beekeepers who jumped in to help at one of our demos, and she was a big help getting displays set-up and providing refreshments. A week or so later when she had problems with her hives, she called me. I was more motivated to help because I knew who she was and remembered what a big help she had been at our Honey Harvest Day Demo.

Set aside time to attend a local, monthly beekeepers' meeting, but get involved. Don't be afraid to ask questions. The people I see getting the most out of meetings are those that get there early and listen in on what other beekeepers, just standing around, are talking about. I see many new beekeepers come to a meeting, sit down, get a little out of the program and leave. Many of those stop coming after a couple months because they don't feel like they are learning enough for the time they invest in attending. Local beekeepers are your best source for information on what is happening in your area. Network with people so you have someone who can answer your questions and help you.

Keep in mind local beekeeping associations and clubs are non-profit groups, and they need help keeping the organization running. You don't have to be an expert in beekeeping to hold an office. You just need to be committed for the term of the office and committed to do the work of the position. Serving your local association is one of the best ways to connect with other beekeepers. Also, you do not need to hold an office to serve. Most beekeeping associations and clubs need volunteers throughout the year to help at events like, the Texas State Fair, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Boy Scout Fairs and so on. Outreach volunteers are also needed to give programs at local schools, garden clubs, and civic groups like a local rotary club. Attend or help with any beekeeping schools or classes in your area. Last spring, a group about 50 miles away from my hometown was having a Beekeeping 101 class and needed people to set-up. I volunteered and got to stay for the class. Even though I thought I was past Beekeeping 101, I was still surprised by several little things I learned from the teacher.

Don't forget! The TBA Annual Conference 2014 will be held in Houston, November 6th through the 9th, and Remember: Beekeeping is about Making Choices.

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# Are Bees Back Up on Their Knees?

*from Noah Wilson-Rich who is the founder and chief scientific officer of the Best Bees Company, and the author of "The Bee: A Natural History." from The New York Times*  
September 24, 2014

In 2006, beekeepers in Pennsylvania's apple country noticed the first sign of many bad things to come. Once thriving beehives were suddenly empty, devoid of nearly all worker bees, but with an apparently healthy, if lonely, queen remaining in place. Over a period of just three months, tens of thousands of honey bees were totally gone. Multiply this across millions of beehives in millions of apiaries in the more than 22 states that were soon affected, and suddenly we faced a huge, tragic mystery. Up to 24 percent of American apiaries were experiencing colony collapse disorder (C.C.D.).

Despite the new name for this phenomenon, C.C.D. is not an isolated or unprecedented event. Unexplained mass bee die-offs have occurred throughout recorded history, including some as far back as the years 950, 992 and 1443, when Ireland's beekeepers noted remarkably high mortality events. Reports from the Cache Valley in Utah in 1903 described thousands of dead hives; around the same time, the Isle of Wight in England faced a near total loss of honey bees.

I became a beekeeper in 2005. When C.C.D. started, I was studying how social animals like honeybees resisted disease. We still don't really know why C.C.D. was happening, but it looks as if we are turning the corner: Scientists I've spoken to in both academia and government have strong reason to believe that C.C.D. is essentially over. This finding is based on data from the past three years — or perhaps, more accurately, the lack thereof. There have been no conclusively documented cases of C.C.D. in the strict sense. Perhaps C.C.D. will one day seem like yet another blip on the millennium-plus timeline of unexplained bee die-offs. Luckily, the dauntless efforts of beekeepers have brought bee populations back each time.

While this is undoubtedly good news, we cannot let it blind us to a hard truth. Bees are still dying; it's just that we're finding the dead bodies now, whereas with C.C.D., they were vanishing. Bees are still threatened by at least three major enemies: diseases, chemicals (pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, etc.) and habitat loss.

C.C.D. changed my own career trajectory as I moved away from basic science into applied research, assisting other beekeepers by bringing bee science to the public. Specialists have been talking among themselves about the waning of C.C.D., but have not articulated this to the community at large.

C.C.D. created momentum for the greater cause of bee health, of acknowledging the importance of pollinators. We cannot lose this momentum now. Honey bees pollinate more than 100 fruit and vegetable crops that we rely on for food. According to the entomologist Nicholas W. Calderone at Cornell, bees contribute more than \$15 billion annually to the economy in the United States alone, and that number soars past \$100 billion globally.

And yet we are still losing 30 percent of bees annually in the United States. While this figure is startling, these losses differ from C.C.D. because they appear to have stabilized to a relatively

predictable level. The danger to bees no longer seems to be increasing.

Like those of most beekeepers, my own honey bee hive losses typically happen in winter. As spring turns to summer, my beekeeping team identifies the largest hives and then splits them into two or more to make up for winter's losses. As for the farmers who need these bees for pollination, the high annual loss rates have forced them to increasingly rely on migratory beekeeping operations, renting bees instead of owning them, which increases the cost of their growing operations. These higher fees, naturally, are passed on to the consumer. The constant churn of moving rented beehives can't be good for the bees either.

The reliance of farmers on migratory beekeeping operations has increased exponentially since their inception around the 1950s. Most honey bee hives today live on flatbed trucks rather than in permanent apiaries. Our future of living with bees has got to be smarter than this.

To make our pollination practices efficient once again, we need to pay attention to the data. Just last year, Jeffery S. Pettis of the United States Department of Agriculture and his colleagues published data indicating that honey bees appeared to be getting credit from farmers for work that other bee species were actually doing. We continue to get crops of blueberries, cranberries, cucumbers, watermelons and pumpkins, but honey bee hives in those fields are not filled with pollen from those crops.

If honeybees aren't pollinating them, then what is? The answer most likely lies with the lesser-known 20,000 or so related species of bee. These other bee species could be affected by factors that caused C.C.D. or other honey bee diseases; we just don't know. We need more research into these other pollinator species in order to make our agricultural system more efficient, increase crop yields, reduce food costs for the consumer, and get those honey bees off flatbed trucks.

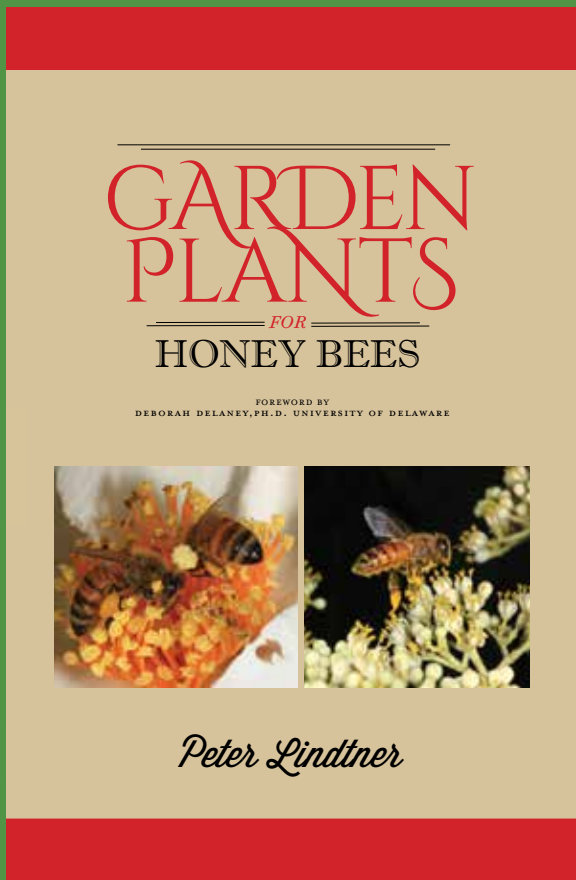
Behavioral economics can help us find solutions to the agricultural efficiency challenge by creating financial incentives for bee-friendly farming practices. Outdated monoculture farming subsidies like those that go to corn growers should be diverted to farmers and growers who are planting a diversity of crops, including wildflowers. Federal tax incentives should go to farmers, beekeepers and everyday citizens who opt for permanent pollinator sources.

Bees are not the only ones that would benefit from these policy changes; many farmers would see an increase in sustainability and profitability. It's a Band-Aid solution, but it can work.

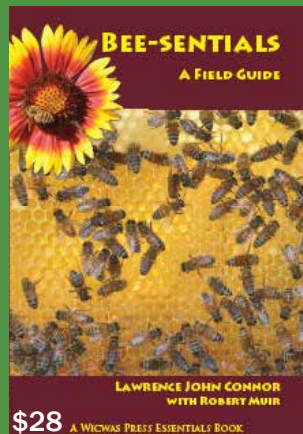
The future of bees — all bees, not just honey bees — remains obscure. But it isn't just government policy that needs to change. To make the natural world after C.C.D. a better place, we all need to start doing things differently.



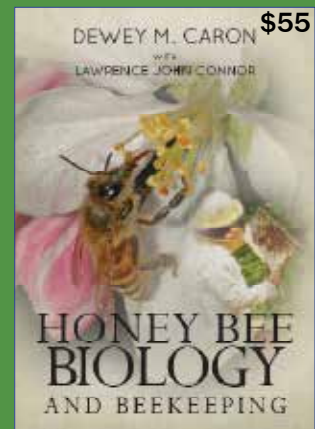
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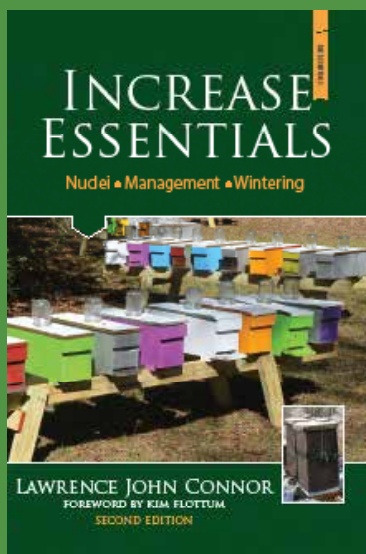
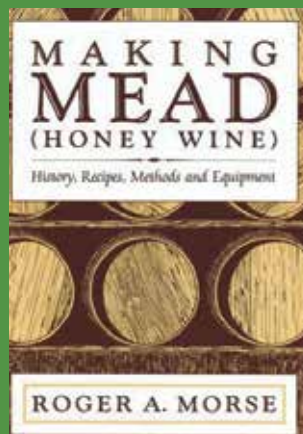
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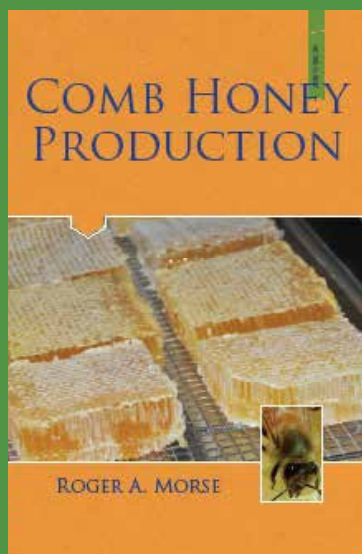
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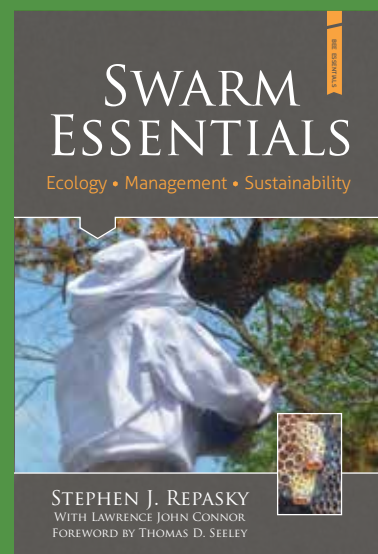
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# Listing of Local Beekeepers' Associations in Texas with TBA Delegate and Regular Meeting Information Shown for Each

Please forward any changes and/or additions to  
John J. Talbert, Executive Secretary, [john@sabinecreekhoney.com](mailto:john@sabinecreekhoney.com)

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## **Alamo Area Beekeepers Association**

Edward Priest - (210) 722-7380  
[edward\\_p@sbcglobal.net](mailto:edward_p@sbcglobal.net)  
9570 Maidenstone - San Antonio, TX 78250  
**Meetings:** 3rd Tuesday on odd # months; at  
Helotes Ind. Baptist Church  
15335 Bandera Rd., Helotes @ 7 pm

## **Austin Area Beekeepers Association**

Lance Wilson - (512) 619-3700  
[lw@ausapts.com](mailto:lw@ausapts.com)  
8701 North Mopac Expressway #150, Austin TX 78759  
[www.meetup.com/Austin-Urban-Beekeeping/](http://www.meetup.com/Austin-Urban-Beekeeping/).  
**Meeting:** 3rd Monday of each month  
Old Quarry Library, 7051 Village Center Dr., Austin TX 78731 @ 7pm

## **Brazoria County Beekeepers Association**

Larry Hoehne - (979) 848-8780 or (979) 236-1385  
233 Crestwood, Clute TX 77531  
[bcbassociation@gmail.com](mailto:bcbassociation@gmail.com)  
[www.brazoria-county-beekeepers-association.com](http://www.brazoria-county-beekeepers-association.com)  
**Meetings:** 2nd Monday of each month at 7pm;  
Brazoria County Extension Office  
21017 County Road 171, Angleton TX 77515

## **Brazos Valley Beekeepers Association**

Chris Barnes - (979) 220-0004  
[info@bvbeeks.org](mailto:info@bvbeeks.org)  
5105 Wallis Rd., Bryan, TX 77808  
**Meetings:** 3rd. Tuesday of each month at 7pm

## **Caddo Trace Beekeepers Association**

Roger Farr - (979) 436-5310  
6073 Farm Road 2348, Mount Pleasant, TX 75455  
[rdfarr@gmail.com](mailto:rdfarr@gmail.com)  
**Meetings:** 2nd Monday of each month at 7pm  
Titus County Agrilife Extension Bldg, 1708 Industrial Rd.,  
Mount Pleasant, TX 75455

## **Central Texas Beekeepers Association**

Michael Kelling - (979) 277-0411  
[CentralTexasBeekeepers@gmail.com](mailto:CentralTexasBeekeepers@gmail.com)  
[www.centraltexasbeekeepers.org](http://www.centraltexasbeekeepers.org)  
1997 Tonckawa Hills Ln - Brenham, TX 77833  
**Meetings:** Monthly on the 4th Thursday  
(except November and December) at the  
Washington County Fairgrounds  
Brenham @ 7 pm

## **Coastal Bend Beekeepers Association**

Pete Hartje - (361) 229-0512  
[phartje@juno.com](mailto:phartje@juno.com)  
1330 Whispering Sands, Port Aransas, TX 78373  
**Meetings:** First Thursday of each month at 6:30pm;  
City of Corpus Garden Senior Center  
5325 Greely Dr., Corpus Christi, TX 78412

## **Collin County Hobby Beekeepers Assn.**

John J. Talbert - (214) 532-9241  
[john@sabinecreekhoney.com](mailto:john@sabinecreekhoney.com)  
P O Box 6 - Josephine, TX 75164  
[www.ccbba.org](http://www.ccbba.org)  
**Meetings:** 2nd Monday of each month;  
Heard Craig Hall, 306 N. Church St,  
McKinney @ 6:30 pm

## **Concho Valley Beekeepers Association**

Mark F Hedley - (325) 463-5319  
8247 FM 502, Rochelle, TX 76872  
[mark@spiralbornapiary.com](mailto:mark@spiralbornapiary.com)  
**Meetings:** 3rd Tuesday of each month Jan-Nov  
Texas A&M Research and Extension Center  
7887 US Hwy 87 N, San Angelo @ 7:30 pm

## **Dino-Beekeepers Association**

Lee Burough - (817) 964-0238  
[dino-beeclub@botmail.com](mailto:dino-beeclub@botmail.com)  
[www.dinobee.com](http://www.dinobee.com)  
**Meetings:** 2nd Tuesday of month  
Glen Rose Citizens Center  
209 SW Barnard St, Glen Rose, TX 76043

## **East Texas Beekeepers Association**

Richard Counts - (903) 566-6789  
[dickcounts@bigplanet.com](mailto:dickcounts@bigplanet.com)  
16239 Audrey Lane - Arp, TX 75750  
[www.etba.info](http://www.etba.info)  
**Meetings:** 1st Thursday of each month;  
Whitehouse United Methodist Church,  
405 West Main (Hwy 346), Whitehouse @ 6:45 pm

## **Fayette County Beekeepers Association**

Karolyn Mau - (979) 733-4022  
[k2isqueenbee@gmail.com](mailto:k2isqueenbee@gmail.com)  
**Meetings:** First Saturday of the month, Feb, April,  
June, August, October and December  
Fayette County Agriculture Building  
240 Svoboda Lane, La Grange, TX 78945

## **Fort Bend Beekeepers Association**

1402 Band Road, Rosenberg, TX 77471  
(281) 633-7029 (during office hours)  
Jeff McMullan - Secretary - Treasurer  
(281) 980-2363 (home): (281) 615-5346 (cell)  
[jeffmcmullan@comcast.net](mailto:jeffmcmullan@comcast.net)  
**Meetings:** 2nd Tuesday of each month (except  
December) in the Fort Bend County  
Bud O'Shieles Community Center  
1330 Band Road, Rosenberg, TX 77471

## **Harris County Beekeepers Association**

Cameron Crane - (409) 658-3800  
[info@harriscountybeekeepers.org](mailto:info@harriscountybeekeepers.org)  
2300 Belvedere Dr., Baytown, TX 77520  
[www.harriscountybeekeepers.org](http://www.harriscountybeekeepers.org)  
**Meetings:** 4th Tuesday of each month  
Golden Acres Center - 5001 Oak Avenue  
Pasadena @ 7 pm



# Local Beekeepers' Associations in Texas

## Heart of Texas Beekeepers Association

Gary Bowles - (254) 214-4514

[gbowles@peoplepc.com](mailto:gbowles@peoplepc.com)

**Meetings:** 4th Tuesday of each month  
(except December) at Vegas Buffet,  
505 N. Valley Mills Dr., Waco, TX 76710  
Dinner at 6 pm, Meeting at 7 pm

## Houston Beekeepers Association

Rita Willhite - (832) 654-7317

[rr.willhite@yahoo.com](mailto:rr.willhite@yahoo.com)

7806 Braeburn Valley Dr. - Houston, TX 77074

[www.houstonbeekeepers.org](http://www.houstonbeekeepers.org)

**Meetings:** 3rd Tuesday of each month; Bayland  
Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St.  
Houston @ 7:30 pm

## Liberty County Beekeepers Association

Cameron Crane - (409) 658-3800

[info@libertycountybeekeepers.org](mailto:info@libertycountybeekeepers.org)

2300 Belevedere Dr., Baytown, TX 77520

[www.libertycountybeekeepers.org](http://www.libertycountybeekeepers.org)

**Meetings:** 1st Tuesday of each month at 7pm  
Business meeting at 6:30pm  
Liberty Agrilife Extension Office  
501 Palmer Avenue, Liberty TX

## Marshall Beekeeping Association

Beth Derr - (936) 591-2399

[derrbe@netscape.net](mailto:derrbe@netscape.net)

210 Meadowlark Dr. Jefferson, TX 75657

**Meetings:** 2nd Thursday of each month at 5:30 pm  
Centrall Marshall Fire Station  
601 S Grove St., Marshall, TX 75670

## Metro Beekeepers Association

Roger Evaritt, President

[evarttrog@yahoo.com](mailto:evarttrog@yahoo.com)

[www.metrobeekeepers.net](http://www.metrobeekeepers.net)

344 NW King St., Burleson, TX 76028

**Meetings:** 2nd Monday of each month; Cana Baptist Church,  
2309 East Renfro St. TX 76028 @ 6:30 pm

## Montgomery County Beekeepers Assn.

John Hicks - (936) 756-9708

[johnhicks12003@yahoo.com](mailto:johnhicks12003@yahoo.com)

[www.mocobees.com](http://www.mocobees.com)

**Meetings:** 3rd Monday of each month at  
Montgomery County Extension Office @ 7 pm

## Northeast Texas Beekeepers Association

J.B. (Jim) Lathem - (903) 896-7100

[netba1@aol.com](mailto:netba1@aol.com)

PO Box 777, Wills Point, TX 75169

**Meetings:** 2nd Tuesday of each month; @ 6:45 pm  
Russell Memorial United Methodist Church  
Deen Building, Classroom 2  
201 South 4th Street (Farm Road 47), Wills Point, TX 75169

## Pineywoods Beekeepers Association

Terry McFall - (409) 384-3626

[tdmcfall@hotmail.com](mailto:tdmcfall@hotmail.com)

1700 FM 252, Jasper, TX 75951

**Meetings:** 2nd Thursday of each month  
Chamber of Commerce Building,  
1615 S Chestnut, Lufkin @ 7:00 pm

## Red River Valley Beekeepers Assn.

Doug Hill

1701 Fairfax

Wichita Falls, TX 76301

**Meetings:** 3rd Tuesday of each month  
(except December) Bolin Science Hall, Room 209  
Midwestern St. University  
Wichita Falls @ 7 pm

## Rio Grande Valley Beekeepers Assn.

Billy Wright - (956) 464-5042

Route 5, Box 74 - Donna, TX 78537

**Meetings:** 3rd Tuesday of each month;  
TAMU Res. and Ext. Center, 2401 E. Highway 83  
Weslaco @ 7:30 pm

## Travis County Beekeepers Assn.

Tanya Phillips - (512) 560-3732

[info@traviscountybeekeepers.org](mailto:info@traviscountybeekeepers.org)

9874 Wier Loop Circle, Austin, TX 78736

[www.traviscountybeekeepers.org](http://www.traviscountybeekeepers.org)

**Meetings:** Last Tuesday of the month at 7pm  
Twin Oaks Library, 1800 S 5th St., Austin, TX 78704

## Trinity Valley Beekeepers Association

Alan Eynon - (972) 231-5702, Ext. 104

[abees@swbell.net](mailto:abees@swbell.net)

9702 Vinewood Drive - Dallas, TX 75228

[www.tvbees.org](http://www.tvbees.org)

**Meetings:** 2nd Tuesday of each month  
(except August), Continuing Education Center,  
C.C. Young Facility, 4847 West Lawther Dr.,  
Dallas, TX 75214 @ 7 - 9 pm

## Walker County Area Beekeepers Assn.

Steve Kelley - (936) 435-2426

[shortmd@msn.com](mailto:shortmd@msn.com)

102 Tam Road, Huntsville, TX 77320

**Meetings:** Last Thursday of each month  
at Walker County Extension Office, #1 Tam Rd.  
Huntsville @ 7 pm

## Williamson County Area Beekeepers Assn.

Jimmie Oakley - (512) 388-3630

[jimmie.oakley@gmail.com](mailto:jimmie.oakley@gmail.com) - [www.wcaba.org](http://www.wcaba.org)

425 Sapphire Lane, Jarrell, TX 76537

**Meetings:** 4th Thursday of each month  
(except December) 1st United Methodist Church -  
McKinney Ministry Center, 410 E University Ave.  
Georgetown, TX 78626 @ 7 pm

# Snøhetta-Designed Hives Make Urban Bee Farming Beautiful in Oslo

*from [www.fastcodesign.com](http://www.fastcodesign.com)*

This spring, 160,000 residents moved into the latest luxury complex in Oslo by the world-renown architecture firm Snøhetta. Unlike in most luxury homes, though, these residents were expected to build their own interiors. Fortunately, they're known for being pretty industrious: They're honey bees.

Vulkan Beehive is a rooftop bee colony in the middle of the city, designed to make Oslo a little more hospitable to flying insect friends. Snøhetta's wooden beehives (honey-colored, of course) take the shape of a honeycomb as inspiration, a clever mirroring of the structure the bees will create inside.

The hives were built on the roof of Mathallen, an upscale food market that opened two years ago as part of a larger revitalization effort for a once-industrial neighborhood on the banks of the Akerselva river in central Oslo. The food hall sells local goods, including honey, creating a symbolic link between food production and supply. (Though beekeeper Heier Du Rietz doesn't specify whether Vulkan Honey will be sold in Mathallen.)

The space is also optimal for urban beekeeping. Located directly next to a river and several parks, there's plenty of pollen and fresh water available. You can track the daily progress of one of the hives, based on the weight of the honey, on the beekeeper's site.

Healthy bee populations are critical for the ecosystem, and they have a profound effect on our food supply. Bees pollinate an estimated 71 of the world's 100 leading crop species. For years, bee populations in the U.S. and parts of Europe have rapidly been declining, and scientists aren't quite sure why. Building beautiful beehives probably won't solve the problem, but they do provide a visible symbol for the city's desire to cultivate bee habitats.



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## 4-H Beekeeping Essay Competition

**We now have information about the 4-H Beekeeping Essay Competition for this year.**

**Emails will be going out to our Associations in the next two weeks.**

**This year's essay topic is**

**"Reducing the Usage of Bee-Killing Pesticides in my Community"**

**Essays are due on or before January 9th., 2015**

**The Texas winner will go on to the national contest.**

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