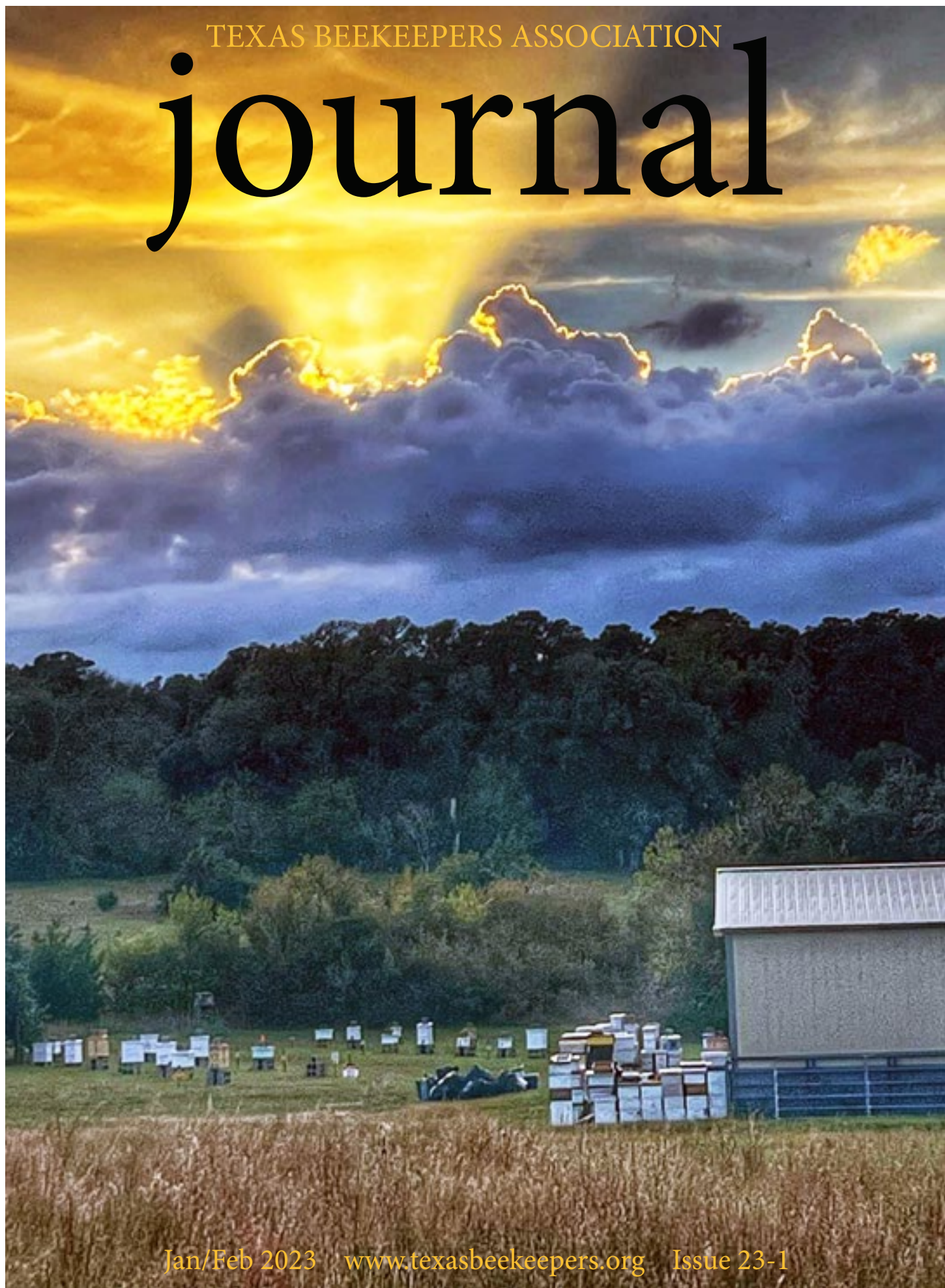


TEXAS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

# journal



Jan/Feb 2023   [www.texasbeekeepers.org](http://www.texasbeekeepers.org)   Issue 23-1





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## The Texas Beekeepers Association Mission Statement

The Texas Beekeepers Association (TBA) promotes the common interests, the betterment of conditions, and the general welfare of beekeeping.

# the president's report



Dodie Stillman  
TBA President

January brings the new year, and a new start.

Many people start the year with resolutions, to do more, or to do better, or even to do less of one thing or another. Have you made any new year's resolutions? Did you include resolutions about your bees or beekeeping practices? I saw some good ones posted this year. I will find all my queens. I will not lose any hive tools. I will keep my smoker lit the entire time. The TBA membership makes resolutions each year, as well. The Executive Committee uses these resolutions to guide our work during the year. We ask all our members to become involved with this process by requesting resolutions about a month before our annual business meeting, but you can use the form on our resolution page on the TBA Website (<https://texasbeekeepers.org/resolutions/>) to submit your suggestions at any time of the year. This is one way you can guide how the TBA works for you.

The membership passed 3 new resolutions this year; TBA will support all Texas colleges and universities with beekeeping programs. TBA will make proactive efforts to collaborate and work with 4-H and FFA organizations to support young beekeepers. Our final resolution is to support initiatives that lead to more honest labeling practices in the honey industry.

With these goals in mind, TBA is supporting a Next Gen Grant request from the University of Texas San Antonio which will focus on facilitating experiential research opportunities for the undergraduate underrepresented and minoritized students at the University of Texas San Antonio. In January, our past president Ashley Ralph and I visited an Austin radio station to showcase the different flavors of Texas

honey. We are excited to reach out to 4-H and FFA organizations to help bring beekeeping into more school curriculums this next year.

Every odd numbered year, from January to May elected legislators meet at the state capitol in the regular session to pass bills. Lawmakers have been filing bills since November 14<sup>th</sup> with over 2,000 filed to date.

We will be tracking bills of interest that may affect the beekeeping industry. Our goal here is to monitor and analyze legislation to make sure it's correct, appropriate, and in the best interest of Texas beekeepers. Of special interest will be any bills that may negatively affect the beekeeping qualification for agricultural valuations.

As in past years, all of the bills we are monitoring as well as any updated information we have can be found on the TBA website.

My big resolution this year is to not stop learning about honey bees. I am constantly learning from other beekeepers. Something I heard from Chris Moore was that if you do leave capped honey on your hives for winter feed, it's a good idea to periodically uncap some of that honey. The bees will then relocate that honey closer to the brood nest. Chris remarked that this is important because he has seen bees starve to death because it was too cold for them to leave their winter cluster to go just 3 inches to retrieve the nearest honey. I was watching the weather and when we had a few warmer days earlier this month, I pulled that outside honey frame and did a little uncapping.

Good luck with all your beekeeping resolutions this year!

*"My big resolution this year is to not stop learning about honey bees."*

# vice president's report



Byron Compton  
TBA Vice President

Wow! I've been a TBA member for several years and attended multiple Summer Clinics and Fall Annual Conventions and thoroughly enjoyed them all. But, until I was elected to the Board in 2021 and began to work the logistics and coordination that goes on behind the scenes that begins months ahead of each event, I had no idea what all was involved. I now have a deep appreciation for all the hard work previous board members put in to make it all come together. Venues, vendors, meals, speakers, transportation, audio/visual, advertising, registration, SWAG Bags, Honey Show, etc., etc., doesn't begin to describe what all is required. And then there are the other activities TBA does that most members never see – like our work with the Texas Legislature on laws impacting beekeeping, our reach to local clubs to help them excel, work with THBEA to further their mission of education, and relationships with other state and national honey and beekeeping organizations. And there are TBA's own initiatives and projects we would like to get traction on – Special Interest Groups, work with 4H and FFA to get more interest in beekeeping in those organizations' activities.

So, my point for this edition of the journal is to ask

YOU to get involved in some TBA activity or area of interest. You can volunteer to work on committees where you have an interest or expertise. A short list of committees includes: events, finance, vendors, clinic, convention, legislative, membership, merchandise, grants, communications, audit, Honey Queens, Club Liaison, volunteers (yes, you can volunteer on the committee to solicit and organize volunteers for events and other committees), strategic partnerships – and if you have an idea for a committee we don't have, we can surely start one! You can devote as much or little time as you can afford. I guarantee you will be rewarded for your efforts. At the very least you will learn more about TBA and our work.

If you wish to know more about ways you can contribute, please reach out to me or any other TBA Director and we will be happy to find you a spot that fits your available time and interests.

Now, for upcoming events in 2023, we are ramping up our planning for the Summer Clinic to be held in Conroe on June 17<sup>th</sup>. Watch your email and the TBA webpage for details.

Yours in Beekeeping,  
Byron Compton

TBA Summer Clinic is coming soon!

June 17th, 2023  
Conroe, Tx



# hive life '23



By Andy Knight

TBA Director

The Hive Life conference was held in Sevierville, Tennessee on January 5, 6 & 7. The event is put on and hosted by Kaymon Reynolds of Tennessee Bees. Kaymon is also a very well recognized Youtuber and known for his extremely practical beekeeping practices that he shares with all. Kaymon was a speaker and panel participant at the TBA 2022 Convention. The Hive Life Conference also included other individuals who share their knowledge of beekeeping and have a large Youtube and online presence. These speakers are from across the globe Bob Binnie, Frederick Dunn, Paul Kelly (CA), Ian Stepler (CA), and Richard Noel (Fr) to name a few.

The event was attended by ~1800 beekeepers and ~300 vendors. Vendors and attendees came from across the globe to attend. The vendor exhibit hall had everything you would expect at a bee store, plus so much more. Innovative solutions for helping the bees and the beekeeper were very visible and available for purchase.

Texas was very well represented in attendance as either attendee's or exhibitors with folks from Rose Bee's, Bee Someone Honey, Magnolia Honey Farm, Budz Bee Farm, Magnolia Bee & Supply, Matt Thomas Montgomery County Beekeepers Club President, The Bee Supply, Charlie McMaster, Stan Gore, The Everything Bee Vacuum and many more!



*Kaymon Reynolds and Gavin*

The Hive Life conference has a sponsorship for youth, and Gavin from Bee Someone Honey was accepted in this program. Gavin had an opportunity to visit with Kaymon and provided him with a mug that has one of his bee personas that he has created. Funding for the youth program is provided by a silent auction held at the conference where 100% of the proceeds go to the program for the next year attendees.





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“When this product (SuperDFM) came out, everyone was asking me my thoughts. As an Ohio apiary inspector, club president, director in OSBA, **I always look for the science and results from multiple people before I give any advice.**

Years now, since speaking, seeing, and working test trials in multiple apiaries, **I can positively recommend this product.** This is not snake oil but helps the bees with overall health, light viral loads because healthy bees can beat viral loads better than sick bees.

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**Jamie Walters**  
Ohio Apiary Inspector

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# drifting in urban beekeeping

By Gwendolyn Reed

Last year, Austin became a Bee City USA affiliate. The central Texas city is home to countless beekeepers and native bee colonies, and many big cities are following suit as they incorporate beekeeping to support pollinator populations and sustain local agriculture. However, as the city landscape is changing, the behavior of bees may be changing too.

For example, many urban beekeepers have noticed a phenomenon described as drifting.

“Bees can do what’s called drift,” Brandon Fehrenkamp, owner of Austin Bees, said. “They end up going into the wrong hive, because all of them look the same. They can’t count like, ‘okay, I’m three from the right or four from the left,’ or whatever.”

Drifting occurs when bees from one colony enter the wrong hive, typically because they mistake the hive for their own. This generally

happens when multiple hives are nearly identical and in close proximity, making it difficult for the bees to differentiate between them. Additionally, drifting can be caused by wind currents pushing the bees in one direction.

“Drifting between hives is usually seen in urban environments, because people space their hives so closely together,” Ian Horvath of The Honey Bee Society said. “In a managed apiary, bees are much closer than they would be in the wild. If there’s one hive per mile, let’s say, drifting is not a problem. But in your backyard, you have two hives that are maybe six inches apart and they both look the same. It’s hard for them to distinguish between which hive is theirs.”

Drifting among beehives poses many threats to the colonies. Over long periods of time, colony populations become disproportionate. For example, the first hive in a row could become notably weak while the hive at the end grows excessively strong and populated, as all the bees drift into it. Moreover,

drifting intermingles colony populations within an apiary and thus can spread diseases that would otherwise remain confined to a single hive.

One of the biggest culprits of drifting is uniform, indistinguishable hives. Beekeepers should prevent this phenomenon by making their hives discernable, decorating them with numbers, symbols, varying colors, painted designs, etc.

“The fix is that you put some kind of paint on the entrance, or a big label,” Fehrenkamp said. “Something that’s different. I mean, you can’t just

write five on it; you have to put something they would see.”

Additionally, keeping separate hives a minimum distance of three feet apart prevents bees’ disorientation. To address drifting caused by wind currents, beekeepers can arrange hives in a sort of “L” shape to counteract the draft.

Drifting between hives is much more common in urban environments. In the wild, the average hive density is about 2.5 colonies per square mile. This makes for plenty of space between hives. Urban beekeeping compounds the risk of drifting, as you have various similar hives in closer proximity.

Urban beekeeping in places like Austin is becoming



*Austin Beekeeper Glenn Maxey*



increasingly popular for a myriad of reasons. Also known as backyard beekeeping or hobby or small scale beekeeping, it is the practice of keeping bees in areas of towns or cities. Austin's infrastructure has actually made beekeeping more accessible, with hives being kept on rooftops, backyards and buildings alike.

A recent study deemed Austin the No.2 fastest-growing city in the U.S. In this modern-day boomtown, we must consider the pollinators living in this environment. Will rapid development leave the bees disoriented as they try to navigate this ever-changing urban environment? With seemingly uniform office buildings, apartment complexes, skyscrapers and construction sites throughout our city, are we creating a dangerously ideal environment for drifting within urban beehives?

Moreover, this constant construction further complicates bees' navigation of the city, with routes and locations changing daily.

"It's like a routine," Michelle Boerst of the Texas Beekeeping Association said. "I drive the same way to work every day, but if someone asked me 'can you go a different way to work?' I'd get lost. I know where my work is, but I don't know how to get there if I come at it from a different direction. So in swarm mode, the bees just get confused. They're homeless."

Some studies show that urban bees survive longer, produce more honey and are healthier than rural bees. Others, however, claim that rural environments are more ideal due to the abundance of flowering plants and therefore endless pollination opportunities. Additionally, bees kept rurally help to support neighboring farms and operations that benefit from pollinators.

Michelle Boerst has several successful rooftop hives.

"We have beehives on hotel roofs; we've had three to four hives there for two years," Boerst said. "There's never been an issue; there's lots of flowers in town and food for them. They're some of my healthiest hives."

One of the biggest factors in determining a healthy hive is available resources. An urban hive with enough nearby flora could make for a successful location, whereas even a lush rural area could result in a deprived hive if there are too many competing pollinators in the area.

"I think what is often lost when teaching people about beekeeping is how it's impacting pollinators that are not honeybees in your area," Horvath said. "Especially in the south, there's a ton of native bees that compete for the same floral resources. Beekeepers need to consider the load on the land and how that stresses other pollinators. Honeybees are not the only bees out there."



Beekeepers must be aware of the presence of other pollinators. Honeybees can put pressure on native pollinators as they compete for resources. This can occur in any environment, whether a rural environment with an unusually dense pollinator population, or an urban area with more bees than flowers to pollinate.

There is also an issue with construction. As trees are torn down, so are natural beehives, causing swarms. As new infrastructure is in the works, bees

lack food and water sources.

“In development, they’re knocking down trees and bees are just everywhere,” Boerst said. “With all this new construction, there’s not a lot of flowers that are planted because people haven’t quite moved in; they don’t have their landscaping done. And so there’s a little bit of a dearth there. They don’t have anything to eat, and they’re kind of lost.”

As a beekeeper, being aware of the relationship between your hives and their bees with the

surrounding environment makes all the difference.

Whether urban or rural, a successful beehive is dependent on countless variables. However, much of a colony’s health falls on the shoulders of the practitioner. Awareness of our ecology and available resources does wonders when it comes to responsibly caring for a hive. Beekeeping provides us the opportunity to be in tune with our surroundings as we adapt to inevitable environmental changes.

# TBA treasurer position

opening

## Bookkeeper Duties

- \* Record all transactions in Quickbooks Online
- \* Make cash disbursements and ensure expenditures are approved
- \* Reconcile bank and credit card accounts
- \* Prepare quarterly sales tax returns

## Treasurer Duties

- \* Attend (somewhat monthly) Board meetings via Zoom
- \* Prepare financial statements for Board (fund accounting)
- \* Monitor budgeted vs actual expenses and record changes to the budget
- \* Monitor overall current and future cash flow requirements
- \* Accumulate data regarding description and FMV of all cash and noncash donations and ensure the IRS required charitable acknowledgements are sent to donors.
- \* Monitor organization’s activities so they remain in line with IRS requirements for tax exempt entities.
- \* Prepare annual Form 1096/1099’s to nonemployee contractors
- \* Work with external CPA for annual Form 990 filings





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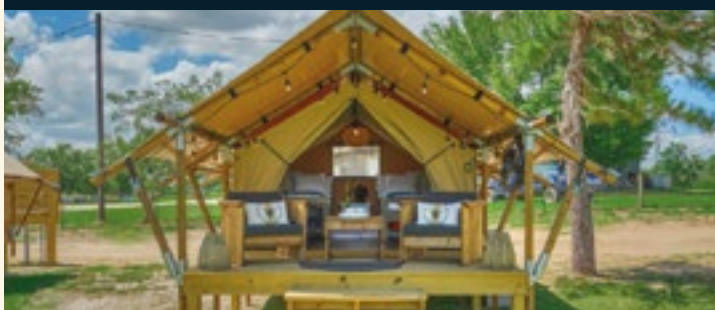


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## STAY ON THE FARM



# the brantley column



S. S. Brantley

2016 Life Member Texas Beekeepers Association

2017 Life Member Louisiana Beekeepers Association

The first disaster of the 2023 bee season has already taken shape and, as I write this in mid-December, you may not even be aware of what is coming. In my home town of Jefferson, we had a week of 70 -80 degree weather. Daytime temperatures in Shreveport Louisiana, 60 miles east on I-20, reported a new all-time high of 80 degrees. So where is all of this going? I have several colonies on a friend's farm near Lake of the Pines. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of December, he advised me that all of the buds on his oak trees were beginning to swell and show that light green tint that occurs just before the leaves appear. Now the weather forecast is calling for temperatures to fall into the teens or below just before Christmas. All of those tender buds will be frozen. This will cause a delay in those trees going through the process to again produce new buds, tassels, and the 2023 crop of leaves.

Pull on your working boots and get ready for the new year. If you have been in the program for a year or more, think about what you were "not ready" for last spring. You have only about a month to ensure that you have all of the needed wooden ware and supplies. Plan, as best you can, to prevent the "I don't have another box to hive this swarm".

I live inside the city limits and often see my bees on the landing board carrying fresh pollen from the Garden Club member's flowers growing in pots and window boxes after naturally blooming plants have gone into winter rest. And that rotten little dandelion scattered across urban lawns does a pretty good job of producing a good quality pollen. In a few weeks, they will be carrying pollen from the natural early bloomers like Elm, Maple, and Wild Plum. Each will have a different color to their pollen. An interesting Internet project for a cold winter's day would be to research the different early pollens available in your area and learn to recognize them from the different colors being carried by your bees.

Are you a novice beekeeper or thinking about

becoming a beekeeper? One of the first things to think about is how to obtain bees to start or expand your apiary. One source is the MannLake store in Marshall, Texas. MannLake will sell Nucs from various bee breeders. So you say, "What is a Nuc?" A Nuc is usually a four or five frame "starter" box of bees that is well on the way to becoming a full hive of active honey bees. The Nuc contains an active queen, brood and enough bees to allow the hive to expand. The contents of the Nuc box can be transferred to a regular 8 or 10 frame hive box and allowed to expand to a full colony.

I always encourage new beekeepers to purchase and study some the good books about basic beekeeping. Some to choose from include Beekeeping for Dummies, Backyard Beekeeping, Bee-Sentials, Beecabulary Essentials, ABC-XYZ of Bee Culture, The Hive and the Honey Bee. Many are available through Amazon. Follow up by joining a local bee club and taking a beekeeper training class offered in your area. Participating in a local club gives you access to a group of seasoned beekeepers willing to share their knowledge and experiences. It is a place to ask questions and get help about the equipment, methods and practices need to become a successful beekeeper.

If you already have bee colonies, you can begin inspecting the brood nest in January. Pick a sunny day with a temperature of at least 60 and little or no wind. Do not keep the hive open any longer than necessary. The queen is probably not laying a lot of eggs and will be relatively light and may be inclined to fly off the frame into the wild blue yonder. Check to make sure there are still stores of honey and pollen available in the hive. If needed, you can add a small amount of dry pollen substitute or a small piece of pollen patty. Do not use a big piece of patty or pile of dry supplement. Add only the amount your bees can eat in a week or two. You can also add some 1:1 sugar syrup. The sugar syrup is to make the queen think a nectar flow is about to begin and encourage her to produce more brood.



young beekeepers needed

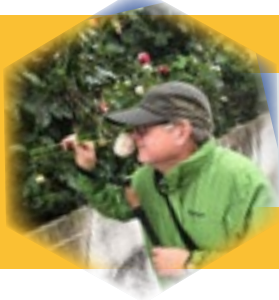
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# the texas keeper



## An Interview with Stan Gore

By Kirk Kirksey



Stan and Bev Gore

Stan Gore didn't like what he was seeing online. Stan, a successful beekeeper from Brenham, saw folks on social media beekeeping pages "... *being ridiculed, demeaned, called names, etc.*" Stan knew this kind of behavior was especially harmful to new beekeepers whose confidence can understandably be a bit shaky. He also believed this kind of online intimidation contributes to a high number (Stan estimates 80%) of new beekeepers throwing in the towel after three years. I think it is safe to say, Stan was fed up and took action.

Stan Gore wanted to change the online beekeeping experience for the better. Three years ago he started the "Texas Friendly Beekeepers" (TFB) Facebook page. The content is for "Beekeepers"; the emphasis is on "Friendly". Stan set out to create a "safe, friendly place to hang out and talk bees." TFB's goals and code of conduct are clear; "Our goals are to educate, equip, and encourage new and seasoned beekeepers. We don't allow any trash talking or 'me monsters' on the page. Humility is part of the rules."

Like 8,000 other beekeepers I am a TFB follower. I started as a lurker because, like Stan, I had seen too many online rants, insults, and nastiness. I was pleasantly surprised. Stan, his wife Bev, and the team of TFB moderators do a great job of filtering out all-too-common online ugliness. Enforcing polite behavior is not popular with everyone. But it's worth

it. TFB is an inviting online destination for learning without insults or intimidation.

There is plenty to like about TFB, but my favorite features are the "Goobers" – beekeepers honestly describing their own mistakes. I can relate as I have made most of the Goober mistakes (and many more) myself. TFB Goobers create a comfortable, realistic vehicle for teaching and learning. What's more, Goobers lend much needed honesty that many other social media sites are too scared (or perhaps too psychologically insecure) to reveal. By the way, Stan's self-appointed title is "Chief Goober".

I had the privilege of interviewing Stan for this first "Texas Keeper" column. Here are the highlights.

### GORE ON GORE

*"Grandad was a beekeeper. Worked hives in Montana, where I lived for over 20 years.*

*Currently work over 120 of my own hives, in 4 different counties. I also graft and make a few queens. Owner of Texas Honey Bee Rescue, where I help folks with a variety of their bee issues. I rescue bees, capture swarms, forced absconds. I then put the bees in a box and nurture them. Part of the end goal in this process is to mentor/train new beekeepers in order to keep the bees alive. The overall goal is to decrease the 80% number of new beekeepers who give up after 3 years of beekeeping.*

*I am on the Board Of Advisors for Central Texas Beekeepers Bee Club where we meet once a month and have the largest bee school in Texas in Brenham every spring. I am also on the Board of Advisors for Hives For Heroes. We save bees and save vets by connecting veterans to mentors in their local areas to provide purpose and healthy relationships throughout the US."*

### GORE ON TFB STYLE

*"If you note, there are no experts designated on Texas Friendly Beekeepers. The reason is there is no such thing. We are "all" still learning, and on TFB we*



find no reason to promote self-elevation. Pride is an ugly thing. TFB is a place where we educate, equip and encourage each other in kindness. That is big piece of our core values, and we will never waiver from that. Never dreamed it would be over 8,000 members. I think that affirms people overall like being treated with kindness. I truly believe it is the kindness that initially draws people and keeps them engaged. With that said, sure, there is opposition to what we do. We expect that. There are some who want to beat their chest and bully people and they seem to want to portray that they know it all. We just don't allow it. If you can't come in humility and kindness, please go somewhere else. As mentioned earlier, TFB is a private page. It may not seem friendly to some, but this vetting protects our members. "

"We have a long list of folks who don't agree with us not letting them rant on with how smart they are and it's their way or the highway attitude. We do not aim to make everyone happy on TFB, but we will eliminate the ones who do not follow the rules."

#### GORE ON GOOBERS

"The whole Goober thing came into play when a bunch of us started posting the mistakes, aka "Goobers," we all make as beekeepers. ALL...So it kind of caught on. Folks seem to like it. Instead of boasting in "how great I am and I know the perfect way to do things," we boast in our Goobers. FUN STUFF... Boasting in our mistakes helps to teach others and also frees folks to be more willing to share more. So we all can learn. We all make Goobers and that makes us all a bunch of Goobers. And I... am the Chief Goober."

#### Stan's "3 Things..."



#### GORE ON "FRIENDLY"

"When you think about it, you can choose to be friendly. Or you can choose to be an arrogant, know-it-all jerk, who is pretty much all about themselves. The folks who seem to have to elevate themselves at every turn. Friendly is the right way to be, and for the most part - it's a Texas thing. Most of us were raised to treat each other in kindness, to help people without elevating ourselves. I am a follower of Christ and for me, I am called to a purpose. Beekeeping to me is not a hobby, it is a calling. Many of us are called to this amazing thing called beekeeping. One thing I am not called to be is arrogant, unkind, and to bully folks. Those are the things we come against."

#### GORE ON TFB SUCCESS

"TFB gives folks a comfortable, safe place to come to hang out, to learn and share how we each manage bees. It's like family to me. The community formed no doubt helps people. There are many excellent, well seasoned, humble beekeepers on TFB that would give the shirt off their back to help folks. I learn things every day. Thanks to our amazing moderators - Wes Brown, Earnie Welch, Robert Peebles, and my wife Bev - we all do the best we can to keep TFB between the lines."

#### GORE ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT

"Keep it simple. Let everything you do in beekeeping have a purpose. Be kind and be humble. Don't be afraid to try things on your own - Experience is a great teacher. Make a wide circle around arrogant, know-it-all beekeepers. Give, instead of take. Keep your trophies and awards on your shelf at home and not in your conversations. Never waiver from the 3 things bees must have and KEEP LEARNING."

If you've been burned by online beekeeping know-it-alls, intimidation, or cyber nastiness (or even if you haven't) -- take heart. Stan Gore created a place just for you. Head on over to the Texas Friendly Beekeepers Face book page to experience pain-free learning and a lot of fun as well. When you get there, say hello to the Chief Goober for me.

# the happy herbalist



## Homemade Menthol Chest Rub

By Carolyn Gibson

We all grew up with Vick's Salve or some other kind of menthol chest rub. Commercially made menthol chest rubs are made from some sort of menthol and petroleum. Menthol crystals are used for that intense menthol aroma along with camphor and other essential oils.

Good news! You can make a menthol chest rub without petroleum using castor oil, beeswax, and menthol crystals and optionally adding more essential oils.

Castor oil is a very thick oil, has its own healing properties and has many followers, including Edgar Cayce fans. It has a long shelf life, but it is much harder to wash off your equipment.

Castor Oil combined with beeswax, makes a non-petroleum jelly.

About Menthol Crystals:

Menthol crystals are made with the essential oil of corn mint. The essential oil is frozen at -22 degrees which turns it into crystals.

Menthol crystals are very cool and are used in everything from mouthwash to pain-relieving gels, shampoos, and throat sprays.



*Menthol crystals*

Menthol Crystals will dissolve into water or oil and melt at 111.2 degrees f. I use 112°f. because 111.2 degrees is hard to distinguish on a thermometer.

When mixing castor oil with melted beeswax the castor oil will have to be heated in a separate containers. You cannot add cold castor oil to the melted beeswax. You cannot melt them together.

If you start your project early enough, (at least an hour ahead of time) you can put your castor oil in a yogurt maker and keep it warm until ready to mix with the melted beeswax.

### Castor Oil Chest Rub

90 grams of castor oil (about 3 ¼ ounces)

9 grams of beeswax (about 1 ½ tablespoons)

1 gram of Vitamin E

13 grams of menthol crystals

2 pots

Optional: for a stronger salve add 15 drops of my Sinus Blend. Skip this if you plan to use this for small children.

My Sinus Blend:

Equal amount of the essential oils of lavender, peppermint, and eucalyptus

1. Heat the castor oil in the smaller pot and keep warm. Usually turning off the heat and leaving it sitting over the double boiler with hot water will keep it warm.

2. Melt the beeswax in the larger container.

3. Remove from heat.

4. Wisk in the warm castor oil.

5. Use a thermometer to make sure the combination is at least 112 degrees f. Place back on the double boiler if you need to bring the heat back up.

6. Stir in the menthol crystals. Stir for 2 minutes.





## *Your homemade Menthol Chest Rub has more benefits than just the Cold or Flu!*

7. Stir in the Vitamin E
8. Stir in the optional essential oil blend.
9. Pour into a container. Let completely cool before capping and labeling.

I apologize to all who bought my book “Handmade From the Hive.” The recipe in the books has a typo, calling for 3 grams of Menthol Crystals instead of 13.

If you do not have access to menthol crystals, you can use this recipe and increase my Sinus Blend to 1 teaspoon instead of 15 drops.

This recipe can easily be made into a Vapor Stick by increasing the beeswax to 18 grams and pouring it into a tube or deodorant container.

Of course, you can also just use olive oil instead of Castor oil and avoid having to use 2 pans.

Your homemade Menthol Chest Rub has more

benefits than just the Cold or Flu!

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# TAIS update



**Taylor Powell**

Chief Apiary Inspector, Texas Apiary Inspection Service

Greetings from the Texas Apiary Inspection Service!

I hope your year is off to a great start and your bees are starting to bring in a little pollen. While we aren't out of winter yet, I'm interested to see how many more days we'll see temperatures at, or below, freezing. I've been noticing drones in most of the colonies I've been inspecting, so I am hopeful that we will see better queen mating than last year.

The Texas Apiary Inspection Service has hit the ground running starting with our trip to the American Bee Federation Conference which ran in tandem with the Apiary Inspectors of American Conference, American Bee Research Conference, and the American Association of Professional Apiculturists Convention in Florida. We had a great time networking with inspectors, researchers, and beekeepers from all across the United States. There was a lot to take away from the event and I'm hopeful that we will be able to utilize new research and

information to support Texas beekeepers.

I was also excited to hear about the American Foulbrood Vaccination shortly after we returned from Florida. The AFB vaccination, produced by Dalan Animal Health, Inc., serves to vaccinate the queen bee through ingestion of queen candy inoculated with inactivated bacteria. The subsequent maternal immunity is stored in the queen's ovaries and passed on to her offspring through a process known as transgenerational immune priming (TGIP). According to Dalan representatives, this vaccination will be available to beekeepers in Texas following the completion of additional field trials in the Spring so I will be interested to see how things go.

In the meantime, our inspectors are gearing up for spring inspections as we anticipate the arrival of bees returning from almond pollination. We are also getting things finalized for queen breeder inspections, picking

up some more national survey samples, and preparing for the Spring Master Beekeeper Testing in Brenham, TX on March 31<sup>st</sup>.

We recently conducted our first ever Master Craftsman testing and are elated to announce that Michelle Boerst is our first Master Craftsmen level beekeeper! Congratulations Michelle! We are incredibly proud of all the hard work she's put into this program, and we look forward to seeing the continuing contributions she brings to the Board of Directors! With that being said, I hope we will have at least a few more participants who are going to achieve the Master Craftsman level in the next few months, so keep an ear open for our new Texas Master Beekeeper Program superheroes!

Whew! This year is off to a great start. As always, if you have any honey bee health concerns, give our office a shout. We hope to serve as a resource for Texas beekeepers so we're happy to help however we can.

Happy beekeeping y'all!



**Texas Apiary  
Inspection Service**

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE RESEARCH



# honeybee factoid article

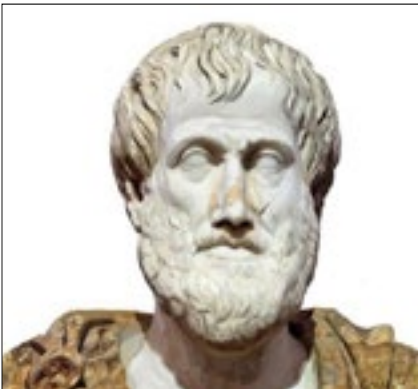


A Cultural History of the Honey Bee Queen  
By Kirk Kirksey

For thousands of years, beekeepers have known there was a special bee in every colony. For most of those years, the role of this peculiar creature was the subject of unfounded speculation. If we follow the story of the honey bee queen through the ages one thing is clear – cultural bias is a hard act to follow. Her story begins in ancient Greece.

## ARISTOTLE

Ancient Greeks knew a lot about beekeeping. For example, they knew that a honeybee would only visit one species of blossom on a foraging flight. Modern scientists, using miniature tracking technology, have proven this behavior and call it “Flower Constancy”.



In around 350 BCE, the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384 BCE – 322 BCE) set out to write down everything known about the animal kingdom in a book he called “*Historia animalium*” (History of Animals). In his book (considered by the way the first work of zoology), Aristotle stated the honey bee colony was a model of Greek culture and politics. He called the workers slaves. According to Aristotle, these slaves were ruled over by a male monarch – a king, not a queen – because in Ancient Greece a ruling female was unthinkable.

Aristotle knew the honey bee “King” was the largest bee in the colony. He knew Kings must be born in larger wax cells than “Slaves”, and that these “King” cells hung vertically off the face of the comb. This king bee ruled all aspects of the colony and could order inhabitants to swarm

According to Aristotle, some beekeepers thought

larvae were plucked from blossoms, then flown back to the hive to mature. Aristotle wasn’t buying it. He believed procreation happened inside the home (hive) just as it did in ancient Greek society. That is, the superior male (the “King” honey bee) would decide when, where, and how mating would occur.

Aristotle’s ideas dominated Western thought for hundreds of years. In 1558 something seriously started to rock the boat.

## HISTORICAL COINCIDENCE? I THINK NOT

Queen Elizabeth I (1533 – 1603) ascended the throne of England on 17 November 1558 and ruled for 45 years. Her rivals continually underestimated her. Under her leadership, England was united and became a global force. Elizabeth continually shocked a male dominated world by proving a woman could lead a small island country to greatness. Her example and strength may have opened minds about many things including the possibility that Aristotle’s honey bee “King” could be female. Details are muddy, but two sources, one Spanish and one English, claim to have been the first to discover the “King” bee’s true gender. Both men lived during Elizabeth’s reign and both saw what a woman leader could do.

Many sources cite Charles Butler, English naturalist and beekeeper, as the first person to correctly peg the King as a Queen in his book *The Feminine Monarchie* (1609). Not true. In 1586 (23 years before Butler) a Spanish Beekeeper – Luis Mendez Torres – identified the true gender of the queen bee in a small handbook for Spanish beekeepers called *Of a Beehives*.

Being a noted scientist, Butler’s book got a lot of attention. Sadly, Torres’s handbook was not widely circulated and faded into obscurity. Still, there is no denying – both Torres and Butler nailed the honey bee queen’s gender. We have to ask ourselves (as several other observers have done) did the rule of Queen Elizabeth free minds to consider the power of the female? We will never know. But one thing is for

sure – Aristotle’s views were loosing steam. A Dutch biologist would settle the question once and for all.

#### NOT SO FAST

Many contemporaries didn’t buy into Butler and Torres’s conclusions about the honey bee queen. After all, old ideas die hard. The ancient Greek influence on the Western mindset, politics, and education system was still going strong. Cultural bias concerning female power and influence remained alive and well.

By the mid 1600s a brilliant Dutch biologist named, Jan Swammerdam (1637 – 1680), used dissection, a single lens microscope, and other



scientific techniques to explore the nature of insects – and specifically the anatomy of the honey bee queen. His dissections revealed the queen bee’s ovaries. Inside the ovaries, Swammerdam found eggs! The question about honey bee queen’s gender was settled once and for all.

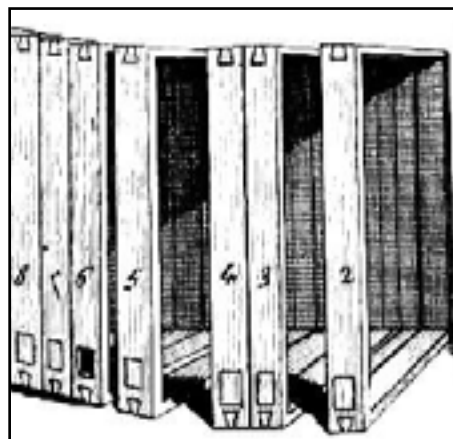
There was one more BIG question.

#### BLIND MAN’S BLUFF

Even after Swammerdam finally proved the honey bee queen’s gender, the mechanics of honey bee mating remained a mystery. In lieu of sensible answers some pretty fantastic theories were put forth. Ancient Greek beekeepers thought worker bees plucked larvae from blossoms. Years later beekeepers thought odors from male bees impregnated worker bees inside the hive. Whatever the mechanics, honey bee procreation was believed to occur strictly inside the hive. A blind Swiss scientist found the answer

In his childhood, Francois Huber (1750 – 1831) suffered incurable blindness. His affliction could not curb Huber’s curiosity about honey bee biology. With the assistance of his dedicated wife and devoted assistant - François Burnens – Huber built observation hives that provided a window into honey bee behavior.

By isolating the queen and drones, Huber discovered the honey bee queen mated outside the hive. He noticed that if the mated queen was not allowed back into the hive, no offspring were



produced. Huber ultimately found that successful rearing of honey bee brood must happen inside the hive, and requires the colony’s population to follow a strict division of labor. Today scientists call this division of honey bee labor *Polyethism*.

Our understanding of the honey bee queen has come a long way in 2,000 years, but we can’t stop here. There is still plenty we don’t know about the honey bee queen – not to mention lots of other beekeeping mysteries to uncover. Dr. Tom Seeley, renowned honey bee biologist from Cornell University, estimates “... that the fraction of the biology of the honey bee that anybody has examined carefully - enough that we have a good level of understanding - is less than 50%.” There is a lot more to learn.

So, the moral of the honey bee queen story is ... If we keep an open mind and don’t let our own pre-conceptions get the best of us, beekeeping will remain a journey of discovery and amazement for years to come.

#### SOURCES:

Aristotle. *The History of Animals*. [http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/history\\_anim.html](http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/history_anim.html)

NOTE: The honey bee description is in Book IV Chapter 40. This chapter is not shown(?) in the online version. To get Chapter 40, download the Text Only version.

Butler, Charles. *The Feminine Monarchie*. Mytholmroyd, England. Northern Bee Books. 2017.

Huber, Francois. *Huber’s New Observation Upon Bees. Vol I:II Bicentennial Edition 1814-2014*. Nehawka, Nebraska. X-Starr Publishing Company. 2012-2014.

Kritsky, Gene. *The Tears of Re; Beekeeping in Ancient Egypt*. New York City, USA. Oxford University Press. 2015.



# the rangel

## report



Dr. Juliana Rangel

Assistant Professor of Apiculture - Dept of Entomology  
Texas A&M University

Dear TBA members,

It is now 2023 and we have a huge amount of activity and research to look forward to this year. Our program is gearing up for the upcoming field season, and we cannot wait for the weather to be more stable so that we can go out and play with our bees! Here is the latest update from our front.

On 9 December I was invited to present via zoom to the Saskatchewan Beekeepers Development Commission in Alberta, Canada. My talk was titled "Effects of Exposure to Agrochemicals During Development on the Reproductive Health of Honey Bee Queens and Drones." More information about the SBDC and the event can be found at <https://saskbeekeepers.com/event/saskatchewan-bee-one-health-plan/>

On 13 December I was the keynote speaker (again remotely) to the NY Bee Wellness organization (<https://nybeewellness.org>). The NY Bee Wellness is a non-membership organization whose mission is to educate new, beginning, and small-scale beekeepers, and others interested in honey bees and beekeeping, in honey bee disease recognition, and to provide services and information for beekeepers and the general public on maintaining healthy honey bee colonies in New York and the surrounding region. My talk, "Queen Management Essentials" was very well received.

We wrapped 2022 with a wonderful end-of-year gathering of all lab members. We had some great food, drinks, and good company, and celebrated all of our accomplishments and hard work (see photo below).

We then started 2023 right away by attending the American Bee Research Conference (which is organized by the American Association of Professional

Apiculturists, or AAPA), and the American Beekeeping Federation Convention on 5-8 January in Jacksonville, FL. As always, it was great to catch up with colleagues and to sit in on very interesting and informative talks. Be on the lookout for a digital version of all the conference proceedings, so that you can read about all the cutting-edge research that is being done around the country regarding honey bee biology. For more information about the AAPA visit <https://aapa.cyberbee.net>

The next session in the At Home Beekeeping Series will be on Tuesday, 31 January 2023, from 6:30-7:30 PM CST. Our speaker this month will be Dr. Cameron Jack from the University of Florida, who will be talking about "Seasonal Efficacy of Varroa Treatments." There are monthly speakers lined up, so please help us out by sharing this info on your social media sites and sending the flyer to your partners and local beekeeping associations. Watch via Zoom Webinar at: <https://auburn.zoom.us/j/904522838>

or Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/LawrenceCountyextension/> More information for the entire series can be found here: <https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/bees-pollinators/at-home-beekeeping-series/>

That is all for now. As always, for up-to-date information regarding our program, or for new and interesting posts regarding bees and beekeeping, please visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TAMUhoneybeelab>.

Sincerely yours,  
Juliana Rangel



*Famous honey bee scientists at the ABRC: From left to right, Dr. Dewey Caron, Dr. Marla Spivak, and Dr. Jennifer Berry.*



*Members of the Rangel lab (past and present) presenting their work at the American Bee Research Conference (ABRC) this year in Jacksonville, FL.*



*Rangel Lab members during our 2022 end-of-year gathering. From left to right: Dr. Rangel, Audrey Poore, Bryce Ortiz, Jordan Twombly Ellis, Keegan Nichols, Myra Dickey, Matt, Sydney Martinez, Dr. Tonya Shepherd, and Sami Varela. Sami (bottom center) is always photo bombing!*

*Other honey bee scientists at the ABRC: From left to right, Dr. Rangel, Dr. Selina Bruckner, and Dr. Jennifer Tsuruda.*





# At Home Beekeeping Webinar

## Distance Learning for Beekeepers



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**All are welcome!! Join us for this free event!!**

- Jan. 31: Seasonal efficacy of Varroa treatments, *with C. Jack (UFL)*
- Feb. 28: Grafting is a simple technique, but why is it so difficult for many of us?, *with E. Amiri (MSU)*
- March 28: BMPs from BIP: The National Loss and Mgt. Survey, *with G. Williams (AU)*
- April 25: Supplemental feeding and disease control, *with L. Bartlett (UGA)*

**Last Tuesday of the month**

**6:30 – 7:30 pm  
Central Time**

Watch via Zoom Webinar

<https://auburn.zoom.us/j/904522838>

or Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/LawrenceCountyextension/>

**Questions? Email Allyson Shabel [ams0137@aces.edu](mailto:ams0137@aces.edu)**

Our institutions are equal opportunity educators and employers. Everyone is welcome! Please let us know if you have accessibility needs.



The Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation will begin conducting eradication activities in and around production cotton fields, beginning December 19, 2022. All cotton fields will be mapped, and treatment will begin during the 2023 cotton growing season. Field entry and treatment is expected to last until all cotton is harvested in the eradication zones.

The eradication zones include the following ten counties in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV): Brooks, Cameron, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Kenedy, Maverick, Starr, Webb, Willacy, and Zapata.

To mitigate risk, all beekeepers should notify the Foundation of beehive locations near cotton fields. The Foundation will monitor treatments in these locations where bees are present to ensure the security of hives and will notify you prior to Foundation chemical treatments upon your request, so that steps may be taken to protect the safety of the hives.

For more information regarding this program and to notify the Foundation of hive locations, please call the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation at 1-800-687-1212.

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# selling your first nuc



Roger and Sue Farr

Caddo Trace Beekeeping Association Master Level  
Beekeeper - Texas Master Beekeeper Program (Roger)

## “The Continuing Journey of Two Ninth-Year Small-Scale Beekeepers”

*Pictures are by the authors unless otherwise indicated.*

February means that Texas beekeepers are thinking about splitting their colonies. We plan to split our colonies in March and prepare them to sell in April or May (or June). That, like everything else Texan, depends upon the weather. We started our beekeeping adventure in 2014 with three nucs and a very patient mentor, Jesse.

By 2017 we were learning to raise our own queens to increase our own apiary. We sold our first nucleus colonies to third-party customers in 2018. We are an all-medium frame operation, so we're really selling only to small-scale beekeepers. Along the way we've learned a few things about our bees, making nucs, and ourselves. The process of making and selling nucs involves a whole

lot more than shoving a few frames of bees and resources into a box, adding a queen to the mix, driving

ahead.

First, ask yourself, “Why?” Know why, and you can make better

decisions. Nuc-selling might even be rewarding:

- Making increase – Grow your apiary utilizing your own bee stock and self-raised queens
- Making money – You'll probably need to sell more than a few nucs to even cover costs, even labor at \$0
- Making friends – This is our reason; we seek new friends



through muddy pastures, and saying to scared new beekeepers, “Here you go! Have fun! We wish you well.”

No, there's a whole lot more to selling your first nuc. Start by asking yourself questions, and record your answers for those discouraging, exciting, confusing, and frustrating nuc-raising days

and desire to help others become better beekeepers

Second, ask yourself, “What is my queen source?” You have several choices, in order of increasing input:

- Make a walkaway split – allow the bees to make their own emergency queen from a worker cell
- Utilize found swarm cells –



requires diligence and skill

- Learn to intentionally raise your own queens – via grafting (traditional) or a non-grafting method (Nicot, as pictured)
- Purchase – queen cells, virgin queens, and mated queens may be available from a reputable queen breeder

Third, ask yourself, “How strong are my colonies?” Determine the number of strong, queen-right, colonies you are willing to dedicate to providing resources for your nucs. Some options, if you have:

- 1 to 3 colonies – make increase for yourself and learn the mechanics of putting together and growing a nucleus colony; put off your nuc sales for another year
- 4 to 6 colonies – make 1-3 nucs for sale to learn the ropes of also keeping your own colonies thriving
- 6 to 12 colonies – make 1 nuc from each colony for sale
- 13 or more colonies – make 1 or 2 nucs out of each colony for sale

Fourth, ask yourself, “What is required to comply with Texas bee laws?” If you plan to sell nucleus colonies in Texas, you must provide either:

- a health inspection certificate issued by the Texas Apiary Inspection

Service, or

- a signed self-affidavit stating that the nucleus colony is free from American Foulbrood disease.

You must also supply an intra-state transportation permit to move colonies across county lines.

Fifth, ask yourself, “Who will buy my nucs?” Many first-time nuc sellers sell directly to NewBees in local bee associations or to attendees at local bee associations’ yearly introduction to beekeeping classes. It is important that you set an independent, reasonable, and non-negotiable price for your nucs, while not discussing your price with other competitors. Collectively setting prices or making agreements on price



between competitors is called “price-fixing” and is a violation of the Federal Sherman Act. You may look at advertisements in the American Bee Journal or other publications to get an idea of the market price in your area. Lastly, ask yourself, “What will I give customers in return for their money?” Veteran nuc sellers

sometimes offer these:

- List of contents – a printed list of what will be in their box; ours would include a new queen, 4-6 frames of her brood, 2 frames of pollen, 2 frames of honey/nectar, and 0-2 frames of drawn comb, total 10 medium frames)
- Delivery day agreement – a commitment to a mutually convenient timely on-site visit to install the bees and frames from your equipment to theirs
- Welcome-to-beekeeping-gift – hive tool or other useful beekeeping tool; we give a hooked hive tool
- Free first inspection – offer to assist with their first

inspection after the initial installation

- Friendship –offer low-key and appropriate friendship
- Honey extraction – Offer to allow them to extract their honey, if they harvest any, in your equipment We do not offer guarantees with our bees. Ownership shifts when frames of bees and resources change hands from our equipment

to theirs. If there is an obvious problem during our first inspection visit, then we make it right. Our sales price includes the cost of the ten wooden frames and foundation we provide. We do not exchange their new frames for our resource-filled old frames.

When you have reasonable answers to each of the questions above, you

are probably ready to consider selling your first nucs. Remember that a nuc order is a commitment from you to sell and from them to buy. You may have to sacrifice a production colony, as we did, when one of the developing nucs unexpectedly failed. One other year, we had three disastrous

queen-raising adventures in a row. We had to purchase queen cells or mated queens from another source, wait for queens to lay, and build up the nucs. Selling nucs is not for the fainthearted!

We are in beekeeping and nuc sales for the new beekeepers, for the friendships formed over an open

hive of bees or in drinking coffee after an inspection. The proceeds from sales sometimes pays for the equipment and supplies.

We'd love to hear about your beekeeping journey!

Roger and Sue Farr (979.436.5310, rdfarr@gmail.com)



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# local clubs

with TBA delegate and contact info

## **Alamo Area Beekeepers Association**

Rick Fink - (210) 872-4569  
president@alamobees.org  
www.alamobees.org

## **Austin Area Beekeepers Association**

Lester Wetherell - (512) 758-0818  
austinareabeekeepers@gmail.com

facebook.com/groups/Austin/AreaBeekeeperAssociation

## **Bastrop County - Elgin Area Beekeepers Association**

Joseph Hakkinen - (713) 408-1260  
president@elginareabeekeepers.org

## **Bees in the East Club**

Mark de Kiewiet (210) 863-8024  
beesintheeast@att.net

## **Bell/Coryell Beekeepers Association**

Charles McMaster (703) 624-1337  
bellcoryellbeeclub@gmail.com

## **Big Country Beekeepers Association**

Ken Hobbs - (325) 665-4045  
paniolobee@icloud.com

**Meetings:** 3rd Tuesday of each month except December at 6:30pm  
1502 South Treadway Blvd, Suite B  
Abilene

## **Blanco County Beekeepers Association**

Teri Albright - (512) 636-9900  
blancocountybeekeepers@gmail.com

## **Brazoria County Beekeepers Association**

Steve Brackmann - (832) 884-6141  
stevenbrackmann@yahoo.com  
bcba@brazoria-county-beekeepers-association.com  
www.brazoria-county-beekeepers-association.com

## **Brazos Valley Beekeepers Association**

Nathan Krueger - (979) 324-1160  
info@bvbeeks.org  
www.bvbeeks.org

## **Caddo Trace Beekeepers Association**

Terry Wright - (903) 856-8005  
tcwright7021@yahoo.com

## **Caprock Beekeepers Association**

Victoria Watts - (806) 392-2355  
mystique175@att.net

## **Central Texas Beekeepers Association**

Michael Kelling - (979) 277-0411  
CentralTexasBeekeepers@gmail.com  
www.centraltexasbeekeepers.org

## **Chisholm Trail Beekeepers**

Scott Zirger (682) 385-0008 or (510) 301-5796 (cell)  
scott@zirger.us or chisholm-trail-beekeepers@googlegroups.com

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

John (Skip) Talbert (706) 761-7893  
president@cchba.org  
www.cchba.org

## **Colorado County Beekeepers Association**

David Behlen (832) 230-5740  
coloradocountybeekeepers@gmail.com

## **Comal County Beekeepers Association**

James Cobarruvias (210) 858-9011  
jcobarruvias@att.net

## **Concho Valley Beekeepers Association**

Rex Moody - (325) 650-6360  
cvbeekeeper@gmail.com

## **Deep East Texas Beekeepers Association**

Ellen Reeder - (337) 499-6826  
ellenswartz@sbcglobal.net

## **Denton County Beekeepers Association**

Shane Jordan  
board@dentonbees.com  
www.dentonbees.com

## **Dino-Beekeepers Association**

Chip Hough (817) 559-0564  
dino-beeclub@hotmail.com  
www.dino-bee.com

## **East Texas Beekeepers Association**

Richard Counts - (903) 566-6789  
dick.counts4450@gmail.com  
www.etba.info

## **Elm Fork Beekeepers Association**

Jan Hodson - (940) 637-2702  
janrhodson@gmail.com

## **Fayette County Beekeepers Association**

Bruce Ford  
(713) 818-7348  
rosscreekhoneybees@gmail.com

## **Fort Bend Beekeepers Association**

Lynne Jones - (713) 304-8880  
info@fortbendbeekeepers.org

## **Harris County Beekeepers Association**

Jim Orr - (713) 213-7080  
rjfarmandapiary@gmail.com  
www.harriscountybeekeepers.org

## **Hays County Beekeepers Association**

Nathalie Misserey (512) 699-0605  
hayscountyba@gmail.com

## **Heart of Texas Beekeepers Association**

Gary Bowles (254) 214-4514  
gm.bowles@yahoo.com



**Henderson County Beekeepers Association**

Kathi Murphy-Boley (972) 467-5092  
*kdbmurphy@gmail.com*

**Hill County Beekeepers Association**

Robin Sliva - (254) 205-0534

**Hopkins County Beekeepers Association**

Jon Dalzell - Secretary, (214) 395-1730  
*dalzelljon@aol.com*

**Houston Beekeepers Association**

Sandi Murray (713) 594-9273  
*info@houstonbeekeepers.org*  
*www.houstonbeekeepers.org*

**Houston Natural Beekeepers Association**

Dean Cook  
*houstonnaturalbeekeepers@gmail.com*

**Johnson County Beekeepers Association**

Bruce Watts, Jr. - (817) 992-2294  
*bruce.jr@sbcglobal.net*

**Kaufman Area Beekeepers Association**

John Guthrie - (214) 686-8585  
*kaufmanbeekeepers@gmail.com*

**Lamar County Beekeepers Association**

Randall Childres - (903) 249-9105  
*lamarcobra@gmail.com*

**Longview Beekeepers Association**

Myra Smith (903) 639-2910

**Magnolia SWARM Beekeepers**

Andy Knight - (281) 305-4072  
*magnoliaswarm@gmail.com*  
*http://www.magnoliaswarm.org*

**Marshall Beekeeping Association**

Beth Derr - (936) 591-2399  
*marshallbeekeeping@gmail.com*

**Montgomery County Beekeepers Assn.**

Andy Knight - (281) 305-4072  
*mocobees@gmail.com*  
*www.mocobees.com*

**Northeast Texas Beekeepers Association**

Rebecca Vaughan - (972) 841-3751  
*contactnetba@gmail.com*

**Palo Duro Bee Club**

Paige Nester - (806) 678-8048  
*nesterpaige@gmail.com*

**Pineywoods Beekeepers Association**

Terry McFall - (409) 289-7387  
*tdmcfall@hotmail.com*

**Red River Valley Beekeepers Assn.**

Larry Roderick (940) 237-2814  
*roderickwaterwells@gmail.com*

**Rusk County Beekeepers Association**

John Stewart - (903) 842-4433  
*jes.stewart@gmail.com*

**San Jacinto County Beekeepers**

Andy Knight - (281) 305-4072  
*sanjacbeekeepers@gmail.com* *https://www.facebook.com/SanJacintoCountyBeekeepers*

**San Marcos Area Bee Wranglers**

Gay Fraser (512) 264-2021  
*smabeeWranglers@gmail.com*

**Temple Area Beekeepers Association**

Jim Billings (254) 760-2053  
*holly21351@aol.com*

**Texarkana Beekeepers Association**

Sarah Clinesmith - (903) 277-2145  
*sarahaddie@aol.com*

**Texas Hill Country Beekeepers Association**

Linda Williams - (830) 688-0560  
*texashillcountrybeekeepers@gmail.com*  
*facebook.com/TXHillCountryBKAssn/*

**Travis County Beekeepers Assn.**

Tanya Phillips - (512) 560-3732  
*traviscountybeekeepers@gmail.com*  
*www.TravisCountyBeekeepers.org*  
*https://www.facebook.com/groups/TravisBeeks/*

**Tri County Beekeepers Association**

Erin Davis - (903) 389-3436  
*erin.davis@ag.tamu.edu*

**Tyler County Bee Club**

Scott Martin - (409) 283-4507  
*tcbclub16@gmail.com*

**Walker County Area Beekeepers Assn.**

Larry Fuchs - (936) 661-0633  
*walkercountybeekeepers@gmail.com*

**Williamson County Area Beekeepers Assn.**

Gillian Mattinson - (512) 961-9955  
*gillmatties@gmail.com* *www.wcaba.org*

**Wise Texas Bee Club**

Donny Johns - (817) 939-3249  
*info@wisetexasbeeclub.com*

**Wood County Beekeepers Association**

Bill Zimmer - (469) 222-3901  
*woodcountybeekeepers@gmail.com*

Please forward any changes or additions to  
 Leesa Hyder at [execsecretary@texasbeekeepers.org](mailto:execsecretary@texasbeekeepers.org)

For Club Meeting info, view club location map on [texasbeekeepers.org](http://texasbeekeepers.org)

we need your

# help

with the Journal

Do you want to help with this journal?

Contact Michelle Boerst

[publications@texasbeekeepers.org](mailto:publications@texasbeekeepers.org)

Help can include:

- Obtaining suitable articles
- Working with Adobe products to format articles
- Other editorial activities as needed

club info

# changed?

New Officers for 2023?

Meeting time/location changed?

Send all club updates to Leesa Hyder at [execsecretary@texasbeekeepers.org](mailto:execsecretary@texasbeekeepers.org)

join us or renew your

# membership

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

If you change your address or email, please contact Shirley Doggett

at [membership@texasbeekeepers.org](mailto:membership@texasbeekeepers.org) or call (512) 924-5051



# directors

at-large

## Director 1



Charles McMaster  
charles.mcmaster@texasbeekeepers.org  
(703) 624-1337

## Director 2



Barbi Rose  
barbi.rose@texasbeekeepers.org  
(512) 799-0616

## Director 3



Jake Moore  
jake.moore@texasbeekeepers.org  
(409) 790-5885

## Director 4



Monica Siwiak  
monica.siwiak@texasbeekeepers.org  
(281) 627-7700

## Director 5



Gary Barber  
gary.barber@texasbeekeepers.org  
(972) 768-5505

## Director 6



Andy Knight  
andy.knight@texasbeekeepers.org  
(281) 305-4072

# Texas Beekeepers Association

Michelle Boerst  
409 S. Magnolia St.  
Aubrey, TX 76227

[publications@texasbeekeepers.org](mailto:publications@texasbeekeepers.org)

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## Texas Beekeepers Association Officers - 2023

President  
Dodie Stillman  
[president@texasbeekeepers.org](mailto:president@texasbeekeepers.org)  
(512) 560-7550

Vice-President  
Byron Compton  
[vp@texasbeekeepers.org](mailto:vp@texasbeekeepers.org)  
(512) 560-7550

Past President  
Ashley Ralph  
[pastpresident@texasbeekeepers.org](mailto:pastpresident@texasbeekeepers.org)  
(979) 777-2529

Executive Secretary  
Leesa Hyder  
[execsec@texasbeekeepers.org](mailto:execsec@texasbeekeepers.org)  
(281) 460-0344

Publications Director  
Michelle Boerst  
[publications@texasbeekeepers.org](mailto:publications@texasbeekeepers.org)  
(940) 231-6831



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Membership Director  
Shirley Doggett  
[sdoggett@mindspring.com](mailto:sdoggett@mindspring.com)  
400 County Road 440, Thrall, TX 76578  
(512) 924-5051

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## Photo credits

Front cover: Stan Gore, Texas Friendly Beekeepers

Rear cover: swarm trap

Tara Randle