TEXAS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION IOUITINA

May/June 2023 www.texasbeekeepers.org Issue 23-3



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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

Honey Flow is happening in most of Texas! It's the best time of the year! Not too hot yet, bee populations are increasing and hives are all busy pulling in the nectar. I hope your bees are all busy making honey.

The bees aren't the only ones that are busy right now. I've been at the state capitol a couple of times this year, but as we get closer to the end of this session the capitol is really a buzz of activity! Of the ten bills we have been watching closely, it looks like we made progress on at least one.

HB 4538, the bill to update Chapter 131 of the Agricultural Code, hasn't been updated since 1983. After 40 years, it's time for an update! This bill has



made it through the House and was placed on the Senate local and uncontested calendar on May 23, 2023. However, HB 2329 hasn't fared as well. Representative

Bailes moved to postpone consideration of the bill until 10 a.m. Saturday, March 2, 2024. This bill would have codified the current DSHS position with respect to selling honey and honey comb, but it seems we will have to address this bill again in the next session.

In other good news, as of now, the funding for a Bee Specialist seems to still be on track. For many years, the TBA membership has passed resolutions expressing the need for an apiary extension agent for Texas. Maybe 2023-2024 will be the year this happens.

As the Legislative Session wraps up, the TBA moves into final preparations for the Summer Clinic. Our speakers have been verified, travel arrangements have been made, hotels have been booked, and food has been ordered. Now all we need is a commitment from you! Please register soon if you are planning to attend the 2023 TBA Summer Clinic, this will help us so much with planning. Check out the schedule and speaker bios we have on the TBA website and make your plans soon!!

Please be sure to bring some of your bottled/ labeled honey to the Summer Clinic. Something new we are going to try this year is a honey swap. Trade a bottle of your honey with honey from a fellow beekeeper! Bring a few bottles if the idea of getting honey from around the state sounds like a fun activity to you. The more bottles you bring, the more honey you can trade.

One more reason to bring a labeled bottle of honey is to donate it to the State Fair display. We create a beautiful display of the honey from all over the state each year at the fair. We'd like to give you an opportunity to have your honey displayed. Watch the TBA Facebook page for photos of all the honey display and close ups of all the different bottles of honey. Tell your friends and family to stop by the booth and see if they can spot your label. And know you've done a good deed because all the honey will be donated at the end of the fair to a children's home much like last year's Happy Hill Farm in Granbury, TX.





ACTIVITIES

See our website for tours, tastings, lessons, & events!

BEERGOODS

QUEENS & BEES HONEY & GIFTS



FUN FOR EVERYONE!

WILDFLYER MEAD

WILDFLYE

Enjoy a drink at the tasting room or take a bottle home with you!

STAY ON THE FARM



vice president's report

Byron Compton TBA Vice President

Happy Flow (or however they say it)! Yep, the honey is being packed in this time of year. And this time of year is CLINIC TIME! Our Summer Clinic is upon us. We have some fantastic speakers and panelists covering all sorts of beekeeping topics that range from beginner to commercial. And we have the usual lineup of vendors with everything you need for beekeeping.

A new event we are doing at the clinic is a Meet and Greet on Friday afternoon. This is free and open to all vendors, volunteers, and clinic attendees who wish to attend. TBA is furnishing refreshments. We hope you will join us for this fun and relaxing event. Right after the clinic, we will dive into the Fall Annual Convention to be held in Temple, Texas. We have a fantastic list of possible keynote and session speakers. And we will have a pre-convention workshop – maybe two! There is some exciting developments in honeybee treatments for Varroa mites and the viruses they carry and we hope to provide an expert in that area. Stay tuned!

That's it for this edition... will have more and a wrap up of the clinic in the next edition of the journal!

--Byron Compton TBA Vice President



2023 TBA Summer Clinic

Purchase your THBEA RaffleTickets EARLY!!

4:20-5:00		* * * WRAP	DOOR PRIZES	* * * THBEA	Kattle Drawing * * *		
3:30-4:20	Hives for Heros Q&A Charlie McMasters Annual Management Chari and James Elam	Bacterial diseases of honey bees. Basics, transmission, and diagnostics. Vora Strondow	Removing Bees Ed Horchoff, Steve Butler, Kim Townsend, Charlie Agar	Monitor & Treat for Bee Health, & Grade Colonies for Commercial Beekeepers Justin Russell	Queens: Strategies for Success in a Backyard Apiary Lauren Ward	Healing with Honey and Propolis Carolyn Gibson	Botanical Studies: The Roots of Beehive Success Abram Barker
2:30-3:20	Industry/Legislative Updates Dodie Stillman, Ashley Ralph, Leesa Hyder Managing Mean Bees Tony Andric	Three Years to a "Sustainable Apiary" Charlie Agar	Queen Rearing Discussion Panel Ashley Ralph, Tim Branam	: California Almond : Pollination Justin Russell, Gary Barber	Building a Youth Program at Your Bee Club Q&A Chris Barnes	Does Texan Honeys have Medical Potential? Dr. Ferhat Ozturk	Success at Your Farmer's Market Danessa Yaschuk
1:30-2:20	How To Start a Bee Club Resources Q&A Andy Knight All About Nutrition - Feeding Your Bees Dr. Bob Rogers	Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for Honey Bees Lauren Ward	Requeening: Why and How to Requeen Dodie Stillman	Open Books: What it Takes to Bee Sucessful in the Bee Business John & Skip Talbert	Honey Bee Associated Viruses Dr. Tonya Shepherd	Mead Making: How to, creating flavors, recipes, and more Wildflyer team Ed Murray	Products from the Hive Beth Derr
12:00- 1:20				ΖυΙ			
11:00-11:50	Stan Gore Stan Gore Ten Mistakes Made by First Year Beekeepers Tara Chapman	The many hats a beekeeper wears Ed Horchoff	Commercial: Making the Jump to Commercial Justin Russell, Skip Talbert, Gary Barber	Murder Hornet – They are now in the U.S. Can we Stop them? Ed Erwin	Medicinal Use of Honeybee Products Dr. Ferhat Ozturk	Bee Laws in Texas William Baxter, TAIS Hannah Blackburn	How to Market Your Beekeeping Business Nicole Buergers
10:00-10:50	Rules for Labeling and Selling Honey in Texas Lynne Jones Bee Biology: A Guide To Understanding Your Hive Chari and James Elam	Vertical Splits Randy Oakley	Beekeeper Hacks: Practical Management Practices Discussion Ed Horchoff, Steve Butler	Growth Strategies: Scaled Splits, Acquisitions, Etc. Justin Russell	Honey Bee Lineages Dr. Tonya Shepherd	Ag Valuation & Bee Leases Discussion Panel Gary Barber, Tim Branam, Scott & Sue Untied	Bee Forage Basics: Keys to Sustainable Beekeeping Abram Barker
9:00-9:50	WELCOME &	KEYNOTE	KEYNOTE	Ed Horchoff Keening	bees for the Benedictine Monks at St.	Joseph Abbey	
Location & Topics	TBA BALLROOM Main Bluebonnet Ballroom: Vendors, Demos and Interactive Classes Ballroom 2 Getting Started Series	Ballroom 3: Practical Beekeeping	San Jacinto 1: Panel Discussions	San Jacinto 2: Sideline & Commercial	Yellow Rose 1&2: Special Interest Groups	Yellow Rose 3&4: Special Interest Groups	Yellow Rose 5&6: Special Interest Groups

THE JOURNAL OF THE TEXAS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION | MAY/JUNE 7



ASSOCIATION

Texas Beekeepers Association Presents:

KEEPING BEES FOR SAINT JOSEPH ABBEY

Bees have been a passion of mine for over 20 years, but that passion was never fully realized until I became the lone bee wrangler for a group of Benedictine monks at Saint Joseph Abbey in Southeast Louisiana, about 60 miles north of New Orleans. It was there that I began seeing bees in a different light, a marvel of God's creation.

TEXAS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION SUMMER CLINIC SATURDAY, JUNE 17TH 2023

THE LONE STAR CONVENTION AND EXPO CENTER 9055 AIRPORT RD, CONROE, TX 77303

> REGISTER TODAY AT: www.texasbeekeepers.org



TEXAS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Texas Beekeepers Association Presents:



DR. FERHAT OZTURK

Assistant Professor of Practice at The University of Texas at San Antonio

MEDICINAL USE OF HONEYBEE PRODUCTS

Honey bee products, such as honey, bee pollen, royal jelly, and propolis, have been used for medicinal purposes for thousands of years. These products contain a variety of compounds with potential health benefits, including antioxidants, antibacterial, and antiinflammatory properties. Join us as Dr. Ferhat Ozturk explains how the honeybee products in your kitchen cabinet can help replace some of the products in your medicine cabinet!

TEXAS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION SUMMER CLINIC SATURDAY, JUNE 17TH 2023

THE LONE STAR CONVENTION AND EXPO CENTER 9055 AIRPORT RD, CONROE, TX 77303

> REGISTER TODAY AT: www.texasbeekeepers.org

the texas keeper



Is Synthetic Foundation in Your Future? By Kirk Kirksey

You often hear Beekeepers say, "drawn comb is gold!" and it is easy to see why. Using drawn comb means the bees don't have to start from scratch. The cells are built up, and ready to use for egg laying, larva raising, pupating, pollen storage, and honey making.



Starting with new comb is another story. With brand new foundation, the bees must create usable honey comb by adding wax to pre-formed cell templates. From the bees' point of view, this wax making process is expensive.

A honey bee creates thin scales of wax from glands located on the underside of her abdomen. Young bees mold these wax "flakes" into honeycomb. Each flake is about 3mm wide and 0.1mm thick. Experts estimate a bee must consume 8-10 pounds of honey to produce one pound of wax. The British Bee Keepers Association reckons bees must visit 30 million flowers to produce a pound of beeswax.

With drawn comb bees avoid all this work and can go do other things – like raising brood and making honey.

So, what if a beekeeper could start with comb that is already drawn? The bees would not have to use honey to produce wax to build usable honey comb. Would this give the colony a head start? Would it head off problems we typically see with traditional beeswax foundation like wax moths? Hexacells, a Hungarian company, that produces "drawn foundation" says, "YES."

HEXACELLS

Hexacells (Hexacells.com) manufactures sheets of drawn foundation made from synthetic wax. In the United States their product is marketed as BetterComb and is sold by several beekeeping supply companies.

Ten years ago, Hexacells began experimenting with making drawn comb. They began their experiments using real beeswax. According to the Hexacells web site, "...the results were insufficient since the beeswax quality and quantity is highly inconsistent and the amount available is limited." This is not surprising since the wide variations in the real beeswax quality are well known.

Today Hexacells states their drawn comb product is made with synthetic wax manufactured with food grade materials. "The finished product's behavior is technically identical with that of beeswax. The weight of the product has been reduced and approximately equals that of the natural honeycomb."

You can check out the Hexacell's website for



Hexacells synthetic wax foundation

recommended configuration and use instructions. BetterComb, as sold in the USA, is mounted in cross-wired frames. You can visit https://www. betterbee.com/images/BetterCombInstructions.pdf for mounting instructions. At this writing, one online vendor sells a 10 pack of BetterComb sheets for \$59.95 with discounts for higher volume purchases.

BETTERCOMB IN TEXAS

Rex Johnson's hives are out near Onalaska, Texas in the Lake Livingston area. Rex didn't have a large store of drawn comb when he attended a HiveLife convention and heard about BetterComb. He decided to try it. Today, he uses a mix of BetterComb and natural beeswax comb in his deeps and supers.

Rex has seen his bees "...readily will store nectar/ honey in this [artificial] comb." He says, it worked great in supers and the bees had no problem filling and building out comb and capping it. It got me ahead with production of honey and extracted just fine. "

Rex points out one down side. He feels the synthetic comb works best in the "main hive where it will stay year-round." In storage the comb may warp. In all fairness, warping can be a problem for users of beeswax too.

BUT DOES IT REALLY WORK?

In researching this article, I was surprised to find very little hard research examining the performance and/or characteristics of synthetic wax comb in the field. But beekeepers being beekeepers have "concerns". Here are a few:

"It's Not Beeswax"

True Enough. It's not. Turns out real beeswax is complex, being comprised of 200-300 substances. How these substances affect honey bee behavior and production is not fully understood. Hexacells' formula and ingredients are a closely held company secret which begs the question. Could the use of synthetic wax be a fast track to those dreaded unintended consequences?

"Poison in the Wax"

Honey"

Natural bees wax in a beehive absorbs a lot of nasty stuff. Ironically research has shown many of the pesticides detected in beeswax are coumaphos, chlorfenvinphos, fluvalinate and acrinathrin – chemicals used by beekeepers to control varroa. We know traces of these chemicals can end up in honey. Will/could synthetic wax make this problem worse? Can synthetic wax create chemical reactions inside the hive as environmental factors change? "Synthetic Wax Could Result in Less Harvestable

Since the bees don't need as much honey to

build out comb, shouldn't this result in more honey for the beekeeper? Maybe. Maybe not. This hypothesis, as far as I know, has yet to be tested.

"Bad News for Beeswax Users"

For those who harvest beeswax (and buy related gadgets) for commercial reason, synthetic beeswax may cut into profits. Even worse, candles, lip balm, etc., made from the synthetic stuff may be unacceptable.

"Disclosure to Customers"

Many people buying honey and beeswax wares are seeking "natural" products. Should beekeepers selling honey and beeswax goods let customers know human-made wax was used inside the hive?

BOTTOM LINE

Like so many questions in beekeeping, the final choice boils down to the beekeeper's personal situation and judgement. If you are seriously considering synthetic comb, I would suggest following Rex Johnson's lead. Assess your situation. Do your research. Do not convert everything at once. Take careful note of how things go. Let the rest of us know what you learn.



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Pesticide and trace element residues in honey and beeswax combs from Israel in association with human risk assessment and honey adulteration, Food Chemistry, Volume 299, 2019,

the brantley column

S. S. Brantley 2016 Life Member Texas Beekeepers Association 2017 Life Member Louisiana Beekeepers Association

The honey bee of June is in a frenzy to get the available nectar from sources in the field to the hive. She is focused on storing that nectar and turning it into winter's food supply. Little does she realize the beekeepers are watching the process to see when their "summer production" is ready to be removed.

By the last of June, as a general rule the nectar flow is over in my part of East Texas. It could be a little sooner or a little later in your area. There may be some late forage available from Sumac and Horsemint, even into July.

The big freeze severely damaged the Chinese Tallow in my area. Some thirty-foot trees that appeared to be dead all the away to the top have begun to very slowly put out new leaves. I am waiting to see if there will be enough blossoms to produce any nectar at all.

If you have followed my suggestions, your colonies should be ready to produce honey. I have tried to suggest you feed the swarm you caught at least a gallon of sugar syrup when you got them hived. I know, they leave home loaded with honey but that will not result in the foundation or drawn comb being excitedly extended by all the wax-producing bees in the swarm. Supplemental sugar syrup fuels the wax building process.

When you are ready to harvest your honey in late June or July, it is usually a warm and dry day in Texas by then. Warm and dry conditions will result in a honey that should easily spin out of the frames. Over the last several years, I have positioned a "trouble light" with a 100 watt bulb under my extractor to warm the lower part of the tub. This seems to help by thinning the honey and making it flow faster from the extractor. I would not recommend using a heat lamp for fear of overheating the metal of the extractor and causing the honey to bubble before it could run out of the spigot.

Humidity and extended rainy conditions may affect the bees ability to dry the honey enough to safely cap. Under nearly all conditions the honey bee will not cap "wet" honey. Uncapped frames of honey should be left in the hive and not extracted. Extracting and bottling uncapped honey can result in the honey fermenting inside the bottles.

When ready to extract, select only frames of completely capped honey. In the event the frame is not all white caps, you can easily determine if the honey is dry enough to extract. Hold the frame of honey with the top bar toward the ground, grasping it firmly with both hands. Give a sharp jerk downward. If the honey (nectar) rains out on the ground or work surface, then nectar is not cured and should be returned to the hive for continued drying.

Determine the best method for you when it comes to getting the bees out of the supers. If you smoke them out, your honey may have a smoky smell and taste. I only tried that one time in my early beekeeping days! You could brush each frame free of bees but at the risk of agitating the bees. A fume board with fumigant applied does a good job if the board is painted black and you have 90 degree sunshine to help activate the fumigant. A triangular bee escape works well by placing it under the supers you plan to remove. This method requires two trips to the beeyard as it usually takes 24 hours for most of the bees to leave the super through the bee escape hole.

My favorite method is a gasoline powered leaf blower to blow the bees off the frames. My blower is modified to shorten the air tube to about 16 inches. I turn the nozzle in an up-and-down attitude to help direct the air between the selected frames instead of hitting two or three frames at a time. I don't have to worry about blowing the queen away from the colony as she is confined to the brood chamber under the excluder. I like to remove the super and place it on the ground about 5-10 feet in front of the landing board. Stand the super on one edge with the frames running vertically and the top bars pointed away from the hive. Direct the air from the blower between the frames, blowing the bees from the top bar to the bottom bar and toward the landing board. The bees blown from the frames will find their way back into the hive.

TAIS update

Bill Baxter Chief Apiary Inspector, Texas Apiary Inspection Service

Greetings to Texas beekeepers from TAIS

It was a strange spring for beekeeping, early spring was wet and cold. Any nectar was late in showing up. A lot of commercial beekeepers had trouble getting their bees back from California, so the time frame f o r requeening and splitting colonies got reduced to a tight window. Most of our migratory beekeepers are heading home by now. That SE TX piney wood humidity makes them long for the Dakota prairies. If you've ever been around the Scandinavian blood beekeepers most are a laconic bunch. It's Yep, you betcha' then back to the beeyard.

Our next testing for our Texas Master Beekeeping Program will be in Conroe on June 16, the day prior to the TBA Summer Clinic. Registration will open soon. Check the web <u>https://masterbeekeeper.tamu.edu</u>. I encourage all to attend the summer clinic. Even if you attend the state convention in the fall there are always new things to learn.

Our office has a rare and wonderful library of historical beekeeping literature which includes issues of "The Southland Queen" a great early Texas beekeeping journal. From the June 1903 issue I give credit to Mr. L B Smith, though I don't suppose he is around to acknowledge accolades.

Introducing Queens—I don't know that I have anything new or valuable to offer on this subject to the veterans in our ranks, as they most have their own plans of accomplishing this, and of course their best plans, but for the novice a few words from one that has had 22 years' experience in the apiary may be of value to them. I am not going to deal so much in the best way or plan to accomplish this as I am in the condition the bees must be in for best results. Most any plan will work in warm weather when the bees are gathering honey freely and the queens are doing their best at egglaying. At such times I often introduce them by picking out the comb the queen is on and caging her and putting another directly on the comb from which she was removed. I am talking about laying queens taken direct from nuclei in the yard where you wish to use them. It is more difficult to introduce queens sent through the mail. Say you have a colony whose queen has just started to lay, and for any cause you wish to remove her, this colony is more apt to receive a queen under like circumstances than they are one a year old. They are more willing to accept a queen near their mother's age than a young queen that has just started laying. I believe this fact would pay the beginner to ascertain the age of the queens he buys and introduce them to colonies with queens near their own age. Another big mistake many beginners make is in dequeening their colonies several days before they receive their new queen. This is a bad practice. For best results the old queen should not be removed until the new queen is ready to put in the hive. I often cage the new queen in the hive while the old queen is at large doing duty in the hive and remove the old queen a day or two later when I find time, and arrange the cage so the bees can liberate the new queen in a few hours. The worst time I have found to introduce a queen is late in the fall after the bees have about stopped feeding the queen and she has stopped laying. They don't seem to care much for a queen at such times, and will often refuse to accept one for days at a time.

Take note this is 1903 advice from Texas beekeeping.

Our website txbeeinspection.tamu.edu email <u>tais@tamu.edu</u> phone (979) 324-3745 Holler if we can help ya Bill

happy herbalist



the

Homemade Lotions using Beeswax and Honey By Carolyn Gibson



Handmade lotion is much more complicated than other homemade products.

When making handmade lotions and creams, you have 3 concerns.

The fat in the lotions will go rancid. You add antioxidants such as vitamin E. You choose oils and fats that have a longer shelf life, such as Coconut oil or Jojoba.

If you are making a lotion, you are adding water to the mix. Water grows bacteria, viruses, and fungus. You will either add a preservative to prevent bacterial growth, or keep your lotion refrigerated and use it up in one week.

Lotions have varying amounts of water or water products. These need a preservative and an antioxidant.

Oil and water do not mix so it is a challenge to incorporate these 2 together and keep them from separating.

The only option for guaranteed results is to use emulsifying wax. Emulsifying wax can be made from either plants or petroleum. You will have to know your resource. There are many other recipes that might use Borax, Soda or Lanolin, but they eventually separate.

Another ingredient to add to your lotion is stearic acid. This is a thickener and an emulsifier. This comes from plants, usually from palms.

The beeswax is not being used as an emulsifier. It is being added as a thickener.

The most common preservatives available for homemade lotions are Germaben II or Optiphen Plus.

Germaben II contains parabens and formaldehyde. Optiphen Plus is paraben and formaldehyde free. Easy choice. You may find Optiphen Plus under the name of Sorbic Acid +2PF.

Your next choice is the oil. I prefer Grapeseed oil. It is light, has good penetration and does not feel greasy. I like to add a small amount Coconut oil for its many benefits. Too much Coconut oil is heavy, does not penetrate well and leaves a greasy feeling. I infuse my oil with herbs, but you can certainly use plain oil.

Equipment Needed:

2 heat proof containers such as Pyrex measuring glass, or wide mouth canning jars, and an additional jar for mixing, a large skillet or 2 double boilers, a stick blender, long handled spoons, or spatulas.



Most lotions recipes are broken into groups or phases:

Oil Phase: the waxes and oil

Water Phase: water or water-based additions such as hydrosol or aloe vera gel, or herb teas, honey, propolis tincture or other tinctures and glycerin

Cooling down Phase: Preservatives and essential oils or fragrances

All ingredients are weighed and placed into groups according to their phase.

Small Lotion Ingredients:

Oil Phase 18 gms Grapeseed oil 9 gms of Coconut oil 3 gms beeswax 4 gms stearic acid 12 gms emulsifying wax 3 gms Vitamin E

Water Phase

177 gms of distilled water just boiled or herb tea of your choice, or Aloe Vera Juice, or a hydrosol

1/2 teaspoon of honey

Optional, ½ teaspoon of glycerin, I infuse my glycerin with herbs or a teaspoon propolis tincture.

Cool Down Phase

3 gms Optiphen Plus Up to 3 gms of essential oil or fragrance Makes 8-9 oz.

Measure the honey and place with the water phase ingredients. Leave your bottle of glycerin next to the honey and optional propolis tincture.

Prepare the water bath:

- 1. Place the large skillet on the burner; add a couple inches of water. A trivet will prevent glass containers from cracking. Or set up 2 small pans of water to use as a double boiler.
- 2. Place the water phase container and the oil phase container into the water. Set the temperature to low. Add the water or herb tea or aloe vera juice to the water phase container.
- 3. Add all the oil phase ingredients except the Vitamin E into the oil phase container.
- 4. Stir occasionally as the oils melt. This may take 10 minutes. After all the beeswax has melted stir in the Vitamin E.

- 5. While the oil is melting, monitor your water or herb tea, once the water reaches 110°f remove it from the water bath and stir in the honey and optional glycerin and propolis until completely dissolved. It should stay warm while your oil is melting. If it gets below 100°f set it back inside of the water bath.
- 6. Once the oil ingredients are melted, pour the water phase ingredients into the oil phase container with the melted oils and waxes. The oil phase container is still in the water bath
- 7. Keep the oil phase container in the water bath as you stir it completely.
- 8. Place a paper towel and the mixing jar on your work surface.
- 9. Pour the lotion mix into the mixing jar.
- 10. Set aside the oil phase container for future use.
- 11. Mix with the stick blender for 15 seconds.
- 12. Remove the stick blender and place on the paper towel.
- 13. Use a long handle spoon or spatula to stir the lotion mix for 2 minutes to remove air bubbles.
- 14. Cool Down Phase
- 15. Pour a small amount of the lotion mixture into the oil phase container.
- 16. Pour the Optiphen preservative into the mixture.
- 17. Blend with the stick blender for 15 seconds.
- Pour the lotion back into the mixing jar and use a long-handled spoon or spatula and stir together for 2 minutes to remove air bubbles.
- 19. Pour a small amount of lotion into the oil phase container, add essential oils or fragrance and stick blend for 15 seconds.
- 20. Pour back into the mixing container and use a spatula or long handled spoon and stir for 2 minutes to remove any air bubbles.
- 21. At this point your lotion is still thin. Use a funnel to pour into container. This lotion thickens as you work. If you take too much time it will become difficult to pour into your container. In that case pour it into a pretty jar.
- 22. Let completely cool before capping.

I know this sounds complicated. If you see it on my YOUTUBE video, you will understand it.

@CarolynGibsonHerbalist https://youtu.be/K1az8DJmgzg



2023 TBA Summer Clinic June 17th, 2023 Conroe, TX

Networking Event

Join us Friday evening, June 16th from 3 pm to 7 pm. See your friends, meet vendors and talk one-on-one with the Clinic Speakers. You can even grab your registration packet early! Drinks and light snacks included.

Join us!



TBA treasurer position

opening

contact Leesa Hyder at execsec@texasbeekeepers.org if interested

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 FMW 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

honeybee factoid article



OUCH! By Kirk Kirksey

HONEY BEE VENOM CONFIDENTIAL

We are beekeepers and we get stung. We know the particulars all too well. Worker bees can only sting once; their stinger is barbed and stays in our skin when the bee flies away to die. Connected to the barbed stinger is a small bit of throbbing bee muscle. This leftbehind bit of bee muscle acts like a hypodermic needle by injecting a tiny drop of toxin (about one millionth of a gram) just under our skin. It hurts. We don't like it.

This drop of poison is Honey Bee Venom (HBV). One would think a barbed stinger is bad enough, but it's the venom that stings like the Dickens and causes the swelling. Pain and swelling aside, HBV is a complicated compound that can cure as well as kill.



DID HONEY BEE VENOM KILL A PHAROH OR CURE ARTHRITIS?

We know a honey bee sting can cause symptoms ranging from minor pain and swelling to dangerous allergic reactions. In the most severe cases, a honey bee sting can trigger anaphylaxis, a condition causing severe respiratory and cardiac distress, and even death.

It's HBV that does the dirty work. In 1989 a report was published claiming the Egyptian pharaoh Menes probably died of an anaphylactic reaction caused by an insect sting. In truth we don't know if the culprit was a mosquito, wasp, honey bee, or something else. We do know the ancient Egyptians were avid beekeepers and so there were probably lots of bees buzzing around. Today between 5 to 7% of Americans are hypersensitive to insect stings with about 60 deaths a year attributed to sting induced anaphylactic shock. Death by bee sting is a scary thought, but there is another side to the HBV coin.

Two thousand years ago in ancient Greece Hippocrates, the father of medicine, noticed Greek beekeepers didn't have many problems with their joints. He began treating rheumatism and arthritis with HBV delivered via bee stings. Using HBV to treat joint disorders is still practiced today. What's more, scientists are investigating the use of HBV for treating a variety of diseases and health-related conditions. Results are promising.

WHAT'S IN HBV?

Flashing back to my days in high school chemistry class, HBV would have been my worst nightmare. It's a complex blend of hard-to-pronounce enzymes, peptides, and proteins. The function of these chemicals and their interactions is not fully understood. Here is some of what we do know.

Two glands in the Honey Bee's stinging anatomy produce HBV. Venom production increases during the first weeks of a honey bee's life, then reaches maximum output in guard bees and foragers. As foragers age, venom production drops off. Venom production for the honey bee queen is highest when she is born. This prepares her to fight and kill her competitors.

Most of HBV (40%-60%) is a chemical called melittin – a peptide comprised of 26 amino acids. Melittin's main action in a honey bee sting is

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straightforward; it causes pain and destroys tissue immediately around the sting site. It can also cause a minor allergic response. More serious reactions, like anaphylactic shock, are usually brought on by other HBV chemicals.

(Anaphylactic shock can kill. The condition must be urgently treated with a shot of epinephrin. Is there an EpiPen in your beekeeper's tool kit?)

HBV - MIRACLE MEDICINE?

The use of HBV in medicine has been around for thousands of years. After Hippocrates (mentioned earlier), came Claudius Galenus (129-200 ACE), a Greek physician in Rome, who used bee stings to treat baldness. For hundreds of years, Chinese medicine used HBV to battle diseases using an approach called "the evil must be driven out" – the theory being evil spirits hate bee stings too.

Philip Terc, an Austrian physician, is credited with ushering in the modern era of medicinal bee stings when he published a study entitled "Report About a Peculiar Connection Between the Beestings and Rheumatism" in 1888.

Terc (and Hippocrates) were definitely on to something. Some studies suggest melittin, when given in proper doses, can have some impressive medical benefits including antiviral/anti-bacterial properties; anti-inflammatory; pain relief; and anti-cancer traits. One study with humans showed HBV to be an effective treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis. This study concluded: "Bee-venom acupuncture therapy for RA patients is safe and effective, worthy of popularization and application in clinical practice."

Now for a bit of irony. Purified HBV shots administered in small doses under the skin is an FDA approved treatment shown to reduce the intensity of reactions in people who have severe allergies to bee stings. NOTE: This should NOT be interpreted as getting stung a lot reduces one's chances of developing a bee sting allergy or having an allergic reaction.

The study of the medicinal value of HBV marches on. Researchers continue to exam HBV effectiveness for Parkinson's Disease, fibromyalgia, Lyme's Disease, post stroke joint pain, and more. HBV has also been seriously studied for treatment of Covid-19. Seems all those peptides have some nifty virus fighting potential.





HOW DO THEY GET IT?

Right about now you're probably asking yourself, "How the heck do they get honey bee venom?". Good question. HBV is harvested using electricity. Special bottom boards in hives are wired to deliver a mild electric current. The charge causes the bees to extend their stingers and drop a dab of venom. These venom droplets are harvested and are processed into liquid serums for injection. No bees are killed. Harvested HBV can also be dried and powdered for use in creams, lotions, capsules, and other products.

WANT A DOSE?

In the old days, people got their HBV treatment by sticking a hand in a box full of angry bees. With the Hand-in-the-Box-of-Bees method controlling the HBV dose was impossible. We don't know how many people died of allergic reactions vs how many people found relief.

Today bee stings might still be used to deliver HBV to patients, but the modern process is safer and much less painful. Most methods today inject HBV one sting at a time. A single bee is held with tweezers and forced to sting the patient. This technique better controls the venom dose and reduces to chance of a severe allergic reaction.

For traditional hypodermic injections, purified bee venom is used. The venom purification process filters crude HBV to remove contaminants. The result in 99% pure HBV. This purified HBV can be used as a serum or liquid and can also be converted into a powder. Lotions and homeopathic remedies using HBV are available for a variety of applications. Many are in capsules and lotions sold for joint pain relief. At this writing one web site is advertising a formula of bee venom and glucosamine for "joint health and mobility". A jar of 90 capsules cost \$59.95. HBV is also used in skin creams, wrinkle removers, and other beauty products. Got neck or muscle pain? Check out a set of Bee Venom Pain Relief patches on the Walmart web site.

Honey Bee Venom can be a double-edged sword. HBV from bee stings can cause pain, swelling, irritation, and even life-threatening allergic reactions. On the other hand, science continues to explore the untapped potential of HBV for use in modern pharmaceuticals and treatments.

I know HBV is amazing. But I still hate getting stung.

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youth education



2023 THBEA Grant Awardees By Jerry Maxwell

I just want to introduce the winners of the THBEA Youth Education Grant for 2023. There were five organizations selected this year. Each of the organizations were awarded a grant ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,000. The purpose of the grant money is to be used to help these organizations to establish a new youth program for beekeeping. Historically, this grant was only available to TBA affiliated clubs. However, this year Texas public schools, FFA programs, and 4-H clubs were also allowed to apply. Texas Dept of Education recently established a new curriculum to teach high school students about the science of beekeeping.

Part of the THBEA's mission is to teach the importance of bees as pollinators and their role in our food supply. We also want to create an interest in the profession of beekeeping and help strengthen beekeeper skills through education programs. This grant helps to accomplish this mission.

As a condition of the grant, these organizations have

agreed to a strict set of standards. Among these are to have a sponsor who will be responsible for program oversight. They are to have a schedule of instruction covering at least a nine-month period and use experienced beekeepers as instructors/mentors. They will have instruction in basic beekeeping methods using written materials and/or published books. They will provide instruction in honeybee biology. And, most importantly they will provide an opportunity for their youth participants to share their knowledge with other youths interested in beekeeping.

In addition, the granted organizations will report twice in 2023 on the accomplishments of their youth program. These reports may be published in the TBA Journal. I am hoping that some of the youth participants will also write an article for the TBA Journal talking about their experiences as a new beekeeper.

We are so excited to see these new programs being launched! We will keep you posted on their progress.

The awardee organizations are:

Blanco County Beekeepers Association Comal County Beekeepers Association Dripping Springs High School Huckabay ISD Wortham ISD FFA/Ag Science Dept



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therangel

report



Dr. Juliana Rangel

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

Dear TBA members,

It's getting hot in here! Oh my goodness, it's starting to get really hot at the RELLIS bee lab, but that won't deter our members from being busy bees doing a lot of cool work. Let me tell you about some of our recent events and accomplishments.

First, I am very proud to announce that three Rangel Lab students earned awards at this year's joint meeting of the <u>Entomological Society of America</u>'s Southwestern and Nortcentral Branches in Oklahoma City, OK.

1) Ph. D. Candidate Myra Dickey got 3rd place in the graduate student oral competition

2) Sydney Martinez got 1st place in the undergraduate poster competition

3) Sarah Jendresky got 2nd place in the undergraduate poster competition

CONGRATULATIONS!!!!

https://www.entsoc.org/memb.../branches/southwestern/meeting

On 28 and 29 April, I was this year's invited instructor at the University of Tennessee Knoxville's master Beekeeper Program's advanced class in queen rearing, organized by Dr. Jennifer Tsuruda. She wrote: "Royalty was made at the TN Master Beekeeping Program Advanced Class in Knoxville last week! Check out these photos from the class co-taught by Dr. Tsuruda and Dr. Juliana Rangel (Texas A&M University Apiculture). Buzzed to learn more about beekeeping? The schedule for the Basic Classes has just been released and an additional Advanced Class (nutrition/forage) has been added. Registration will open soon so head over to https://tiny.utk.edu/apiculture and start planning!

The next session of the At Home Beekeeping Series will be on Tuesday, 27 June, from 6:30-7:30 PM CT. The speaker will be our own Dr. Liz Walsh, who is now a Research Entomologist with the USDA-ARS Bee Lab in Baton Rouge, LA. Her topic will be "Hangry Bees: How an environmental stimulus can impact colony temperament." Please help us out by sharing this info on your social media sites and sending the flyer to your partners and local beekeeping associations. Here is the link to the event on Facebook here: <u>https:// fb.me/e/1T70m8iEG</u>. The event is also available on the Lawrence Co. Extension local page: <u>https://www. facebook.com/LawrenceCountyextension</u>. Feel free to re-share this post from our site or create your own post with the jpgs attached. Information for the entire series can be found here: <u>https://www.aces.edu/.../bees.../</u> <u>at-home-beekeeping-series/</u>.

Also, our latest paper just came out! Congratulations to all collaborators who contributed to our newest paper on the effects on the gut microbiome and gene expression when fed a diet containing pollen substitutes. "The microbiome and gene expression ofhoney bee workers are affected by a dietcontaining pollen substitutes." By J. Elijah PowellID, Pierre Lau, Juliana Rangel, Ryan Arnott, Tyler De Jong, Nancy A. Moran.

Abstract:

Pollen is the primary source of dietary protein for honey bees. It also includes complex polysaccharides in its outer coat, which are largely indigestible by bees but can be metabolized by bacterial species within the gut microbiota. During periods of reduced availability of floral pollen, supplemental protein sources are frequently provided to managed honey bee colonies. The crude proteins in these supplemental feeds are typically byproducts from food manufacturing processes and are rarely derived from pollen. Our experiments on the impact of different diets showed that a simplified pollen-free diet formulated to resemble the macronutrient profile of a monofloral pollen source resulted in larger microbial communities with reduced diversity, reduced evenness, and reduced levels of potentially beneficial hive-associated bacteria. Furthermore, the pollen-free diet sharply reduced the expression

of genes central to honey bee development. In subsequent experiments, we showed that these shifts in gene expression may be linked to colonization by the gut microbiome. Lastly, we demonstrated that for bees inoculated with a defined gut microbiota, those raised on an artificial diet were less able to suppress infection from a bacterial pathogen than those that were fed natural pollen. Our findings demonstrate that a pollen-free diet significantly impacts the gut microbiota and gene expression of honey bees, indicating the importance of natural pollen as a primary protein source.

Full access to the paper (free to download): <u>https://journals.plos.org/plosone/arti-</u> <u>cle?id=10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0286070&fbclid=I-</u> <u>wAR3O66orOhSPpTv0hPgrBE7dRfcuilboTIO-</u> <u>KvKMINlbFvPSQc-h4H1c1cmM</u>

Our lab will once again participate at this year's Texas Beekeepers Association's Summer Clinic on Saturday, 17 June 2023 in Conroe, TX. Dr. Tonya Shepherd will be speaking about bee-associated viruses. We will have a booth where you will get a chance to meet our new and returning students, and we will have lots of honeys from all over the world available for tasting. Come and say hi!!

Finally, I will be one of the keynote speakers at the Virginia State Beekeepers Association Summer Conference on 10 and 11 June (<u>https://www.virginiabee-keepers.org/details-event</u>) and at the North Carolina State Beekeepers Association Summer Conference on 13-15 July (<u>https://www.ncbeekeepers.org/calendar/state-meetings/2023-summer-meeting</u>). I will report back on how the meeting went on my next column!

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 <u>https://www.facebook.com/</u> <u>TAMUhoneybeelab.</u> We broke the 5,500 follower mark (and counting) from around the world!

Sincerely yours, Juliana Rangel

Also, from AgriLife Today:

Via AgriLife Today: "Bee-vival? Is Texas' bee population rebounding?"

https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2023/05/22/bee-vival-is-texas-bee-population-rebounding/?fbclid=IwAR2nb2DxgBR9yvRijyHZOcbhYqdWaxxp1F2bwpd-4KT_c9hPxTUj2Ez5II-A

Beneficial pollinators could be making a comeback

after years of myriad challenges

While Texas bee populations have declined due to drought and other harsh weather conditions over recent years, they seem to be in good shape for a late spring and early summer recovery, said Texas A&M AgriLife entomologists.

Entomologist say Texas bee populations are in good shape for recovery. Texas honey bee populations seem to be bouncing back after a variety of environmental challenges over the past few years.

"There was a 14% drop in honey production in 2021, and while there's no data about 2022 as yet, one can assume production was affected for a couple of reasons," said Molly Keck, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service entomologist for Bexar County. "The two main reasons were that there was not enough forage in some areas of the state due to drought as well as the fact that honeybees don't go out and forage when temperatures are too high."

Keck said lack of foraging and nectar-producing resources means less food brought back into the hive to be turned into honey. "Areas where there are abundant nectar and pollen sources, along with other good conditions, are where honeybees will do best," she said. Keck said while honey production is important, the most vital aspect of having adequate bee populations is their role as pollinators, particularly for agricultural crops.

Bees have taken a beating

Texas Beekeepers Association president Dodie Stillman said Texas beekeepers were faced with "Snowmageddon," a term applied to Winter Storm Uri in early 2021, which brought freezing temperatures, ice and snow for about three weeks. The Bee Informed Partnership's colony loss report showed Texas had an annual loss of 33.9% in honeybee population from April 2021 to April 2022. And Texas beekeeper quarterly data for April to June 2022 showed honeybee colony losses much higher than the acceptable loss of 13% to 17%. Additionally, a U.S. Department of Agriculture report on honeybee colonies nationwide found that from April to June of 2022, 45.2% of colonies were affected by varroa mites.

ing/?fbclid=I-
dWaxxp1F2bwpd-Because small-scale beekeeper operations are most-
ly stationary, they are at the mercy of local weather
conditions. "Small-scale beekeepers lost a significant
number of bees during the past few years, and it has
taken a while for them to come back," Stillman said.THE JOURNAL OF THE TEXAS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION | MAY/JUNE25

"Small-scale beekeepers are mostly stationary, so if the local weather is harsh or doesn't allow for the production of nectar-bearing flowers, bees will produce less honey." Fortunately, Stillman said, beekeepers in Texas and elsewhere regularly split their bee colonies to create more of them, which has helped in the overall recovery.

Juliana Rangel, Ph.D., Texas A&M AgriLife Research honeybee scientist in the Department of Entomology, Bryan-College Station, said the extended winter snows in 2021 were followed by extensive drought throughout the state last year, further exacerbating losses. "Even earlier this year, we had some strange winter-spring weather that was unusually wet, which kept many colonies in this part of our state inactive or unable to forage," Rangel said.

Reason to bee optimistic

Stillman said while beekeepers are always worried about the weather, things are already looking positive for 2023. "If the bee populations get sufficient rain at the right times – and not too much to make the nectar fall out of flowers – they should be in much better shape this year than in previous years," she said. Rangel said it's very possible that by late spring or early summer there could be a significant increase in bee populations and activity — if milder weather prevails. "We are already seeing a proliferation of the types of wildflowers bees prefer for gathering their nectar," she said. Some of the wildflowers bees prefer include horse mint, Indian paintbrush and almond verbena.

Rangel also said the number of bee colonies in the U.S. has been edging upward by about 1% annually, and that trend applies to Texas colonies as well. "If you combine that increase with the amount of floriation and good local weather patterns, we may get a good flow and see a spike in nectar production in late spring and summer," she said.

About honey production

Rangel said Texas typically ranks sixth among states for honey production – after North and South Dakota, California, Florida and Minnesota. The recent rains have brought a massive floriation that has the potential to greatly boost bee populations and honey production later this spring and early summer.

Bee populations have been lifted by the numerous wildflowers sprouting and floriating after recent rains. "Bee populations in Central Texas are growing, and some bees are already in 'honey flow,' which means they are bringing back enough nectar to store and feed to their young," Stillman said.

Steven Klose, Ph.D., professor and AgriLife Extension economist in Texas A&M's Department of Agricultural Economics, said a challenge for small-scale beekeepers is the business of competing in a market where honey is produced on a large scale and readily available. "Similar to other commodity product markets, small-scale honey producers may struggle to compete from a cost-efficiency standpoint," Klose said. "Therefore, they need to find a way to differentiate their product to attract a premium price. Niche market opportunities may come from simply being 'locally sourced' or being produced from a unique nectar source."

Bees in agriculture

Along with their role in honey production, bees are responsible for pollinating 75% of the world's flowering plants and 35% of the world's crops. In particular, honeybees are the most common pollinator and an important bee to domestic agriculture. It is estimated that the honeybee's annual contribution to the U.S. economy is at least \$15 billion. More than 90 different crops-about one-third of total crop production in the U.S.-depend on bees for their survival. Bees also pollinate crops that feed cattle, such as clover and alfalfa, making them very important to both the beef cattle and dairy industries. "Texas is one of the preferred states for many commercial pollinators who hold bees here in winter and then take them to other states for pollination services as early as February and throughout the year," Rangel said.





Rangel lab busy bees at work!! Top to bottom: DVM student Madison Rowe, Ph D student Keegan Nichols, Ph D candidate Myra Dickey, Ph D candidate Jordan Twombly Ellis, and Research Associate, Dr Tonya Shepherd.



Day 2 of the <u>Entomology and Plant Pathology - University of Tennessee</u>'s advanced Master Beekeeper Program course on queen rearing in Knoxville, TN!



Ph. D. Candidate Myra Dickey got 3rd place in the graduate student oral competition at the Southwestern Branch (SWB) meeting of the Entomological Society of America (ESA) in Oklahoma City, OK. Our other student McKaela Whilden accepted the award on Myra's behalf.



Sydney Martinez got 1st place in the undergraduate poster competition at the SWB meeting of the ESA



Sarah Jendresky got 2nd place in the undergraduate poster competition at the SWB meeting of the ESA



We're offering beekeepers the chance to attend virtual meetings from the comfort of one's own home using a computer or mobile device. Speakers include university researchers and extension specialists from across the SE US as well as USDA ARS researchers. Each event will bring participants up to date on timely beekeeping topics with time for Q & A included.

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

- May 30: Water Foraging, with T. Webster (KSU)
- June 27: Hangry Bees: How an environmental stimulus can impact colony
- temperament, with E. Walsh (USDA-ARS)

July 25: TBD

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

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local club news

BLANCO COUNTY



\$50K in bee sales rocks club By Teri Albright

Two years ago, this month, the Blanco County Beekeepers Association was created. As a relatively new beekeeper hobbyist, I had been attending Hays County's club meetings, but wondered if there would be a need for an official group in my county. I did discover later that a small group of beekeepers had been meeting informally on Friday afternoons during Covid at Real Ale Brewery's beer garden to share a beverage and talk bees.So, I started a Facebook page, and had a surprising and robust response. I put the word out about the FB page on

other bee club FB pages and placed an announcement in the community section of our local paper. Within a few weeks, over 50 people had "followed" the FB page and we decided to have our first meeting on the patio of Josie's Café in Blanco, Texas. About a dozen people showed up that night, and it seemed apparent that all there wanted to make a club work.

I was in my 3rd year of

beekeeping at that point and wanted to emulate my experiences with Austin Area Beekeepers and Hays County Beekeepers clubs by bringing experienced beekeepers to share their wealth of knowledge with us. The first year we met in the JP "courtroom" of the Blanco County annex. We occasionally got displaced from it when elections were being held, so the hunt for a more consistent location led us to Blanco United Methodist Church offering us their social and activity room where we have been ever since.

My goal for our first year was member growth and regular meetings. During the first year, I met James Cobarruvias, president of the Comal County Beekeepers Association, another small and relatively new club. We decided to advertise our meetings to each other's members, and co-host booths and other activities to increase our numbers. I had a friend

create our BCBA logo and had it printed on t-shirts to promote our club in the community, and BCBA identity among our members. We don't charge dues yet, but I often joke that if someone joins for \$20, they get a "free" t-shirt!

From the dozen people who met in June 2021, we have grown now to 135 people on our regular email list, and almost 400 people following our Facebook page. The last several of our meetings have found us with standing room only in the activity center, so I have a feeling the club is going to need to find its next

community conch shell to move into.

Second year focus of the club, for me, was to start to interact with our community. We have had information tents at local nurseries and dance hall fundraisers, at farmers markets with our new observation hive, and given talks in regional school classrooms.

As we enter our third year as a club, my final start-up

goal is to offer education about beekeeping, and how to encourage pollinator-friendly habitat. We applied for, and were awarded, a Texas Honey Bee Education Association grant and will see our first class of the Blanco County Youth Beekeepers program in the very near future. We have enlisted help from our local public library for classroom space, and a well-loved very large local flower farm, the Arnosky Family "Blue Barn," for space to set up a teaching apiary for this and future classes.

About 6 months ago, James and I were musing on more co-club activities, and what we could do that would help the obvious growing number of beekeepers. We decided we might provide a service by taking orders for nucs to receive in spring 2023 and arranging to have local pick-up. Most beekeepers were driving anywhere from an hour to three hours to get bees each year. We contacted several bee suppliers and chose Blake Shook and Desert Creek Bulk Bees to help us with the project. This also meant that BCBA needed to put on its big-club britches and appoint someone as treasurer and get a real bank account!

To get the first bulk discount price, we would have to have a minimum of 96 nuc orders. We decided to take that initial discounted price and add a profit margin amount for the clubs, and that would be our price for a nuc, to be paid in full up front. The first half of the total payment to Desert Creek was due February 1 so we advertised a savings of \$25 if orders were made by then, after which the price would be \$225.

I remember James and I looking at each other somewhat nervously and asking ourselves what would happen if we took money from folks but didn't reach the 96 orders necessary to get bulk pricing. We made a beek pinky promise that he and I would buy however many nucs we would need to make up the difference between actual nuc orders and that 96 nucs goal. We sent out word by email lists and Facebook pages, and at our December club meetings, about the sale. For the next 2 weeks, it was crickets. James and our nuc sale Treasurer, Suzanne Adkinson, placed some initial personal orders just to make sure our PayPal and CashApp payment routes were going to work. We were really thinking we had chosen a project that might come back to sting us in the rear. Then, as if our members just needed to get the holidays behind them, a few orders came in after the first of January. First 1 or 2 orders per day, then 5 or 6 per day. I would receive the order and bank the money, and would then pass the information about buyer, contact info, and number of nucs ordered to Suzanne who was the queen bee of "The List". She, in turn, would send a detailed receipt to each buyer by email. Each day we would check our total. 20, then 25, then 35, then 50! It got challenging to keep up with our circle of communication between buyer, banker, treasurer, and emailer on a timely basis as the daily orders continued to grow, but we did it. The closer we got to the minimum orders needed, the more relief we felt... and then we hit that holy grail of 96! Yay for us.... and the orders kept coming. They were not only coming from our club members, but from people dozens of miles away, from San Antonio, Kendalia, and Boerne, Marble Falls, and Fredericksburg. The next bulk price break didn't happen until we got to 200, and we didn't even consider for a minute that was within our reach the first year of this Nuc Sale fundraiser, but when we hit 175 orders by mid-February, we started hoping. If we did get to that next price break, the clubs would make an additional \$10/nuc profit on the entire order. And we made it to 200. And 225. And 250. We had

given a deadline of March 10 as the last day to order nucs. Still more orders were coming in. We hit 261 when we had to close the orders so we could finalize our payment with Desert Creek.

We chose my place as the pickup spot for nuc pickup since I was 5 miles from Blanco and had a large circle driveway. With a dozen or so volunteers from both clubs, we met the delivery truck at 5 am on April 29, and unloaded our 261 boxes of bees. Several of our group put tape over both doors on every one of the 261 nucs to ensure we didn't have any accidental mass escapees on the way home!

At 7:00 am sharp the first of nearly 50 expected vehicles rolled in through the gate. Our volunteers at the gate gave them driving/picking up format, Suzanne checked off names on The List and handed out colored sticky notes with their name and #of nucs paid for, and more volunteers took the note, and loaded up the appropriate number of nucs into the back of each vehicle. We had enough volunteers that we were taking the order notes and loading nucs in 2 or 3 vehicles at a time when we hit our busiest. We had offered \$5 mesh laundry bags (bought in bulk from The Dollar Store) to be placed around the nucs, if people requested at the time of pickup, so that was often included in the process. (An additional service we offered for fundraising was delivery and installation/instruction for people who either couldn't make it to the nuc pickup during those hours or were new and just wanted that help and education.) Most of our members arrived in their protective gear and many jumped out of the car to help load their own bees or offer to help with the steady stream of cars and trucks. The feeling of excitement and "we-got-this" was readily apparent, and smiles were on everyone's faces. The new bee owners then continued around the circle, waiving to the gate volunteers along the way. By 10:30 am all the nucs had been picked up.

I do have to appreciate the wonderous thing it is a little bee can do for bringing together this many people who genuinely respect and enjoy each other, and love what they are doing with beekeeping; that, and the fact that we could have come from a dozen people on a café patio to grants and bee schools and a 261-nuc sale in less than 2 years. Year 3 is yet to bee but I am confident we will continue to grow as a club and support each other individually as beekeepers. I can honestly say I never saw this coming! Special thanks to our BEE-utiful group of volunteers: James Cobarruvias, Suzanne Adkinson, Mark and Robin Breeding, Caroline and Stuart Broderick, Claire and Andrew Buck, Coral Bucy, Laurie and Mike Hampton, Veronica Hawk, Lori Rathburn, and Si Vance

in beekeeping for the beekeepers



Roger and Sue Farr

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

"The Continuing Journey of Two Ninth-Year Small-Scale Beekeepers"

This article originally appeared in the May 2017 TBA Journal. We've updated it for our six additional years of helping new beekeepers, "NewBees,", get off to a good start. Please enjoy (Roger and Sue)



We are in the bee business for the beekeepers. Yes, our bees' honey is great, pollinated plants produce more and better fruit, and it's fun to raise good queens, but we

know that people really are more important than bees!

We sold twelve nucleus colonies this year, and that means that we have five new beekeepers (NewBees) to care about, too. When we sell a nucleus colony to a NewBee, we provide, at no additional cost, mentoring for the first year, including monthly visits to the NewBee's apiary.

One thing has become painfully clear to us is as we work with NewBees: a one-day, eight-hour beekeeping class "does not a beekeeper make!" Our own nine years of beekeeping also does not automatically make us beekeepers, so we continue to study, observe, listen, and learn. Here are some "how- to" lessons we emphasize with our NewBees and diligently practice ourselves.

1. How to properly light a smoker

This must be at the top of the list. A functioning smoker is, in our opinion, not a luxury but a required safety device. We know this, but, unfortunately, we have placed ourselves in our apiary for "just a quick manipulation" only to find clouds of unhappy bees with plenty of alarm pheromone in the air. Oh, for that smoker sitting back in the shed!

A properly lit smoker will stay lit for 10-30 minutes without further puffing and will provide cool smoke for 30-45 minutes when fully charged with fuel. Too many of our NewBees struggled with selecting proper fuel and providing enough quantity to be useful. Our northeast Texas pine trees – and their needles – abound, and pine needles work well as smoker fuel. We have learned to export pine needles to our NewBees to give them an easy-to-light, effective, and cheap source of fuel. We do not let the smoker go out, even if it means prematurely closing up a hive!

Producing a well-lit smoker starts with a small handful of pine needles, well lit, at the bottom of the smoker and continual puffing of the bellows. The information at this URL may be of help to you if you or a NewBee struggle with your smoker. (http://caes2. caes.uga.edu/bees/get-started/light-a-smoker.html)



2. How to "read" a frame

"Reading" a frame is the whole reason we teach NewBees to do <u>weekly</u> inspections their first year. If they can "read" the frame, then they know what is going on in the hive before drastic beekeeper intervention is necessary.

Recently, we watched a NewBee moving through the frames very quickly. She was looking at the frames and properly identifying the different types of cells and bees on the frame, but she did not comprehend the story that the frames were telling her.

She saw lots nectar and pollen, frames of capped brood, and even some capped honey. She thought everything was fine. We stopped the inspection, quizzed her on what she was seeing, and asked if she had seen any larvae. The lack of eggs or larvae



could indicate that the hive was queenless starting approximately nine days ago. This was a startling revelation for our NewBee. We continued into the second brood box, ultimately found eggs, larvae, and the queen, and all was right with the world. She will not forget on her next inspection to slow down and "read" the frames!

3. How to properly lift and move bee equipment

The old joke is that there are two kinds of beekeepers, those who have bad backs and those who will have bad backs! We do not want this to be true of us or of any of the NewBees we mentor. Proper loads and good lifting mechanics are the keys to keeping preventing injuries – even when it's hot, the bees are everywhere, and we're tired.

We start by making sure that the NewBee has properly fitting protective equipment and stable shoes or boots. Some of our NewBees have exchanged their protective equipment after just one hive inspection because they could not see out of the fencing-veil equipped suit or grasp with their improperly-sized



gloves. We work to ensure that the bee yard is level, free of obstacles, and freshly mown or mulched. We then encourage EVERY NewBee to place their hives on stands at a height appropriate to their stature. For us as six-foot adults, placing our boxes beginning 24 inches above ground height is the right height for us to easily work the hive.

Next, we make sure that the beekeeper can handle the loads to be moved. This is simply a strength issue. In some cases, we use a three cubic foot bale of peat moss, weighing about 55 pounds, to simulate a medium super full of honey. A 45-pound rubber weight lifting plate can also work to give them a feel of moving a somewhat heavy odd-object. It's a whole lot easier to have to drop a bale of peat moss than a box of bees! If lifting this load is a problem, then some trips to the gym may be in the NewBee's future or perhaps a



change of equipment.

Finally, we make sure that the NewBee knows proper lifting mechanics. We emphasize two basics: lift with the knees and not with the back, and keep the feet in line with the hands. Lifting without twisting is the key to not creating twisting torque forces that can cause severe back problems.



4. How to make sure you are prepared in the bee yard

This may seem simple, but lack of preparation is the source of endless frustration for NewBees. We teach NewBees to think about what they might find in their hives, what the bees are currently doing, and what the bees might need from the beekeeper. Planning and preparation allow the beekeeper to have the proper equipment at hand when the hive is open and minimizes the need to run back to the shed for additional items...twice!

We ask each NewBee before we sell them bees to consider what treatment they will use when (not if) they find varroa levels above the threshold guidelines. Recently, we taught our NewBees to do varroa testing using the powdered sugar roll as recommended by the Honey Bee Health Coalition's varroa management guide. Unfortunately, usually as a result of wishful thinking, our NewBees did not have a varroa control product available when a few hives showed high mite counts. We referred them to class notes, instructed them to do their own research, and asked them to purchase and apply a control product – quickly!

Lastly, we instruct each NewBee to have a 5-gallon bucket or other means to carry their equipment to the bee yard, including the all-important record book. Sue diligently instructs them in how to take quick and effective notes on what they find on each frame of each box. One NewBee recognized the wisdom of this thorough note-taking when she discovered that one of her hives was queenless. She consulted her notes and knew that her other hive had adequate resources to help; she also knew exactly where those resource frames were in the hive. She decided to give the queenless hive three frames of eggs, larvae, capped brood, and nurse bees from her other hive so that the queenless hive could raise an emergency supercedure queen. Well done!

5. How to take care of the beekeeper

It's hot and muggy, and this is only the beginning of Texas hot. Several of our NewBees reported that they felt dizzy during inspections, and we closed the hives so that they could take a break. We provided bottled water to those who did not have some, and, later, we discussed taking care of the beekeeper as both a health and a safety concern.

Personally, we eat a light snack and drink a quart of fluids before we head to the apiary in order to maintain proper hydration and blood sugar levels. We ALWAYS bring to our apiary three quart-size lightweight and practically indestructible Nalgene[®] bottles of water or Gatorade[®]. Two are for the beekeepers, and the third, always the same dark red one, is filled with water to put out the smoker.

We remind the NewBees that they can't properly care for their bees unless they care for themselves. We are in this for the long-haul.

So, there you have it: five tips to consider every time you go out to your apiary and to share whenever you mentor NewBees. We wish you a productive spring, a great honey harvest, and a rich lifetime of helping beekeepers. Enjoy God's creation and the honeybees He has placed in it for us to enjoy.

Roger and Sue Farr

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local clubs

with TBA delegate and contact info

Alamo Area Beekeepers Association Rob Holliday president@alamobees.org www.alamobees.org Meetings: 3rd Tuesday on odd # months San Antonio Botanical Gdn, 555 Funston Place, San Antonio

Austin Area Beekeepers Association

Lester Wetherell - (512) 758-0818 austinareabeekeepers@gmail.com facebook.com/groups/Austin/AreaBeekeeperAssociation www.meetup.com/Austin-Urban-Beekeeping/. Meeting: 3rd Monday of each month at 7pm Frank Fickett Scout Training and Service Center 12500 N I-35 (Near Parmer Lane) Austin, TX 78753

Bastrop County Beekeepers Association

Joseph Hakkinen - (713) 408-1260 jwhakkinen@gmail.com https://www.facebook.com/groups/1511905162469905/ Meetings: 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7 pm Bastrop Fire Station #4 1432 North S.H. 95 Bastrop, TX 78602

Bees in the East Club

Mark de Kiewiet- (210) 863-8024 beesintheeast@att.net Meetings 4th Saturday of each month at 10am Water Garden Gems, 3230 Bolton Road, Marion,

Bell/Coryell Beekeepers Association

Nan Helmke (254) 289-5802 bellcoryellbeeclub@gmail.com http://www.bellcoryellbeeclub.org Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of each month (except December) at Refuge Ministries, 2602 S. FM 116, Copperas Cove - 7pm

Big Country Beekeepers Association

Crissy Ward- (325) 665-1638 crissyward@gmail.com Third Tuesday of each month 6:30 - 8:00 PM Ridgemont Baptist Church 4857 Buffalo Gap Road, Abilene

Blanco County Beekeepers Association

Teri Albright - (512) 636-9900 blancocountybeekeepers@gmail.com Meetings: 3rd Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm Blanco United Methodist Church - Social Hall, 61 Pecan St., Blanco

Brazoria County Beekeepers Association

Lance Ladewig ladewigle@gmail.com www.brazoria-county-beekeepers-association.com Meetings: 2nd Monday of each month Brazoria County Extension Office, 21017 CR 171, Angleton @ 6:45 pm

Brazos Valley Beekeepers Association

Justin Russell - (979) 492-4114 info@bvbeeks.org www.bvbeeks.org Meetings: 3rd. Tuesday of each month (except Dec. at 6:30 pm) Bryan High School, 3450 Campus Dr. Bryan from 6pm

Caddo Trace Beekeepers Association

Dale Vanhoose - (903) 573-6954 dcv836@gmail.com https://www.facebook.com/groups/818862742106557/ Meetings: 2nd Monday of each month Titus County Agrilife Ext. Bldg., 1708 Industrial Rd., Mount Pleasant at 7 pm

Caprock Beekeepers Association Victoria Watts - (806) 392-2355 mystique175@att.net Meetings: 3rd Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm Freeway Bible Chapel, 5507 Marsha Sharp Freeway, Lubbock 79407

Central Texas Beekeepers Association

Karl Cottrell- (979) 645-0832 CentralTexasBeekeepers@gmail.com www.centraltexasbeekeepers.org Meetings: Monthly on the 4th Thursday (except November and December) Washington County Fairgrounds, 1305 E Bluebell Rd., Brenham at 7pm

Chisholm Trail Beekeepers

Keith Crow- (817) 647-5734 keithcrow2000@yahoo.com Meetings: Last Monday of each month Burleson Bible Church, 260 South Hurst Road,Burleson

Collin County Hobby Beekeepers Assn.

John (Skip) Talbert (706) 761-7893 president@cchba.org www.cchba.org Meetings: 2nd Monday of each month at 6:30 pm Collin College Conference Center, (Central Park Campus) 2400 CommunityDr. , McKinney

Colorado County Beekeepers Association David Behlen (832) 230-5740 coloradocountybeekeepers@gmail.com Meetings: 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:00 pm 316 Spring Street, Columbus

Comal County Beekeepers Association James Cobarruvias (210) 858-9011 jcobarruvias@att.net Meetings: 1st Thursday of each month Beefy's on the Green Restaurant, upstairs room 12910 USHwy 281N at 6:30 pm

Concho Valley Beekeepers Association

Rex Moody (325) 650-6360 cvbeekeeper@gmail.com Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of each month Jan-Nov at 6:30 pm Texas A&M Res. & Ext. Center, 7887 US Hwy 87 N, San Angelo

Deep East Texas Beekeepers Association

Ellen Reeder - (337) 499-6826 ellenswartz@sbcglobal.net Not Currently Meeting

Denton County Beekeepers Association Shane Jordan board@dentonbees.com www.dentonbees.com Meetings: 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm Joseph A Carroll Bldg, 401 W. Hickory St, Denton

Dino-Beekeepers Association

Chip Hough (817) 559-0564 dino-beeclub@hotmail.com www.dino-bee.com Meetings: 2nd Tuesday of month at 6:30 pm Glen Rose Citizens Center, 209 SW Barnard St., Glen Rose

East Texas Beekeepers Association Jim Biles (281) 451-6069 www.etba.info Meetings: 1st Thursday of each month at 6:45 pm; Whitehouse Methodist Ch., 405 W. Main (Hwy 346), Whitehouse

Elm Fork Beekeepers Association

Tim Branam 903-814-6686 branam@verizon.net http://www.elmforkbeekeepers.org Meetings: 3rd Thursday of each month The VFW Hall, 3332 North Grand Ave, Gainesville

Fayette County Beekeepers Association

Bruce Ford (713) 818-7348 rosscreekhoneybees@gmail.com Meetings: First Saturday of the month, Feb, April, June, August, October and December at 5 pm Fayette County Ag. Bldg., 240 Svoboda Ln., La Grange

Fort Bend Beekeepers Association

Lynne Jones - (713) 304-8880 info@fortbendbeekeepers.org Meetings: 2nd Tuesday of each month (except Dec.) at 7:30 pm Bud O'Shieles Community Center 1330 Band Rd, Rosenberg 77473

Hays County Beekeepers Association

Contact: Georgia Miguez Email: Hayscountybeekeepers@gmail.com Phone: (512) 827-6239 Website: http://www.hayscountybeekeepersassociation.org Meetings: 3rd Thursday of each month, 6 pm - 8 pm Location: See website for possible location changes. Dripping Springs Vodka Distillery 5330 Bell Springs Road Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Harris County Beekeepers Association Jim Orr - (713) 213-7080 rjfarmandapiary@gmail.com www.harriscountybeekeepers.org Meetings: 4th Tuesday of each month at 7pm Golden Acres Center, 5001 Oak Ave., Pasadena

Heart of Texas Beekeepers Association Gary Bowles (254) 214-4514 gm.bowles@yahoo.com Meetings: 4th Tuesday of each month (except Dec.) at 7 pm Contact club to confirm meeting location

Henderson County Beekeepers Association Kathi Murphy-Boley (972) 467-5092 kdbmurphy@gmail.com Meetings: 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:00 pm Faith Fellowship Church, 5330 Highway 175, Athens, TX 75762

Houston Beekeepers Association Sandi Murray (713) 594-9273 info@houstonbeekeepers.org www.houstonbeekeepers.org Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonett, Houston

local clubs

with TBA delegate and contact info

Houston Natural Beekeepers Association Therese Ramirez - (832) 908-5017 houstonnaturalbeekeepers@gmail.com Meetings: Second Saturday of the month at 10 am 4466 Billy Street, Houston TX 77020

Hunt County Beekeepers Association Jay Gilmer, BeeHappyBee@gmail.com Meetings: 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm American Legion Post 17, 4509 Moulton St, Greenville, TX

Johnson County Beekeepers Association Bruce Watts, Jr. - (817) 992-2294 bruce.jr@sbcglobal.net Meetings: 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm 2099 W FM 917, Joshua

Kaufman Area Beekeepers Association

John Guthrie - (214) 686-8585 kaufmanbeekeepers@gmail.com Meetings: 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm Kaufman United Methodist Church, 208 S Houston St, Kaufman

Lamar County Beekeepers Association Kevin Young - (903) 715-0208 lamarcoba@gmail.com Meetings: 1st Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm Lamar County Fairgrounds, Bldg B, 570 E Center St., Paris

Longview Beekeepers Association

Myra Smith (903) 639-2910 Meetings: 1st Tuesday of each month at 6 pm Texas Agrilife Extension Office, 405 E Marshall St., Longview

Magnolia SWARM Beekeepers

Andy Knight - (281) 305-4072 magnoliaswarm@gmail.com http://www.magnoliaswarm.org Meetings: 1st Tuesday of the month Various Locations (go to website)

Marshall Beekeeping Association

Beth Derr - (936) 591-2399 marshallbeekeeping@gmail.com Meetings: 2nd Thursday of each month at 5:30 pm Cumberland Presbyterian Church. 501 Indian Springs Dr., Marshall

Metro Beekeepers Association

Russ Killingsworth - (817) 751-9513 president@metrobeekeepers.net http://www.metrobeekeepers.net Meetings: 2nd Monday of each month 6:30 - 8:30 Southside Preservation Hall, 1519 Lipscomb St. Ft. Worth

Montgomery County Beekeepers Assn.

Matt Thomas mocobees@gmail.com www.mocobees.com Meetings: 3rd Monday of each month at 6:30 pm Montgomery County Extension Office, Tom Leroy Education Bldg., 9020 Airport Road, Conroe

Northeast Texas Beekeepers Association Rebecca Vaughan - (972) 841-3751 contactnetba@gmail.com Meetings: 2nd Monday of each month at 5:45 pm Canton Baptist Church, 303 South Athens St., Canton, TX 75103

Palo Duro Bee Club

Paige Nester - (806) 678-8048 nesterpaige@gmail.com Meetings: 1st Thursday of each month Creek House Honey Farm, 5015 4th Ave, Canyon

Pineywoods Beekeepers Association

Walter McLendon (936) 632-7099 wem@mail.com Meetings: 3rd Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm Lufkin/Angelina County Chamber of Commerce 1615 S Chestnut St. Lufkin (just off Loop 287)

Red River Valley Beekeepers Assn.

Larry Roderick (940) 237-2814 roderickwaterwells@gmail.com Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of each month (except December) at 7pm Bolin Science Hall Room 209, Mid West State University, 310 Taft Blvd., Wichita Falls

San Jacinto County Beekeepers

Andy Knight - (281) 305-4072 sanjacbeekeepers@gmail.com https://www.facebook.com/SanJacintoCountyBeekeepers Meetings: 2nd Tuesday of each month Calvary Baptist Church, 65 Petroleum Rd., Coldspring 77331 San Marcos Area Bee Wranglers Gay Fraser (512) 264-2021 smabeewranglers@gmail.com Meetings: 2nd Thursday of the month 7:00 pm - 9:15 pm Extra Meetings: 4th Thursday of the month, March, April, May 7:00pm Pecan Park Riverside RV Park, 50 Squirrel Run, San Marcos

Temple Area Beekeepers Association

Jim Billings (254) 760-2053 holly21351@aol.com Meetings: 2nd Thursday of each month at 7pm Troy Community Center, 201 East Main Street, Troy

Texarkana Beekeepers Association Sarah Clinesmith - (903) 277-2145 sarahaddie@aol.com Meetings: 3rd Monday of each month at 6pm Texarkana Public Library, 600 W 3rd St Texarkana

Texas Hill Country Beekeepers Association Linda Williams - (830) 688-0560 texashillcountrybeekeepers@gmail.com facebook.com/TXHillCountryBKAssn/ Meetings: 4th Tuesday of odd months at 6:30 pm Hill Country Veterans Center, 411 Meadow View lane, Kerrville TX 78028

Tri County Beekeepers Association David Huffman huffmaninsurance@glade.net Meetings: 4th Tuesday of each month at 5:30pm Sam's Restaurant, Fairfield, TX Tyler County Bee Club Scott Martin - (409) 283-4507 tcbclub16@gmail.com Meetings: 4th Tuesday of each month at 6 pm Nutrition Center, 201 Veterans Way, Woodville

Walker County Area Beekeepers Assn.

Larry Fuchs - (936) 661-0633 walkercountybeekeepers@gmail.com Meetings: Last Thursday of each month at 7 pm (not Nov or Dec) Walker Education Center, 1402 19th St., Huntsville

Williamson County Area Beekeepers Assn.

Gillian Mattinson - (512) 961-9955 gillmatties@gmail.com www.wcaba.org Meetings: 4th Tuesday of each month at 7 pm (except December) Georgetown Public Library, 402 W 8th St., Georgetown

Wise Texas Bee Club Donny Johns - (817) 939-3249 info@wisetexasbeeclub.org Meetings: First Thursday of the month at 6pm Decatur Conference Center 2010 US-380 Decatur

Wood County Beekeepers Association

Aubrie Jones woodcountybeekeepers@gmail.com Meetings: First Tuesday of every month at 7 pm Winnsboro Civic Center, Hope Ln, Winnsboro

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