

Hello All!

My name is Lecia Pearce, and I am organizing this year's "New Beekeepers Mentor Program" for the Mecklenburg County Bee School, which begins in January. For those of you who may not know me, I started Bee School two years ago and have since grown my initial pair of nucs to six hives. My experience has grown over the years, but I could not have done it without the help of my mentor. He was an outstanding teacher and was eager to allow me join in on advanced bee keeping exercises like swarm removal and re-queening. Granted, I was free labor, but I learned so much! To this day, he is still my mentor and my friend. I'm telling you this because mentors are key to helping the new beekeeping hobbyist stay engaged be successful.

Mentoring FAQs:

1. What would I have to do?
 - a. Mentors will be answering practical questions about getting started with bees and equipment, involving the new beekeepers in a visit to an established bee-yard, and inspiring confidence by visiting the new beekeepers bee-yard.
2. I've never been a mentor, so how do I know that I would be any good?
 - a. Most of you were not born with a veil over your head and a lit smoker in your hand, and yet you became a successful beekeeper. You'd be surprised at how much information you'll be able to pass on to a "newbee", and you'll never know how good you'll be unless you try.
3. How much time does it take?
 - a. The time amount of time you'll spend being a mentor is really up to you, as you will make arrangements directly with your mentees to set up meeting times & places. In addition to hands-on time in the beeyard, new students may ask you for advice on setting up their own bee-yard & caring for their own bees. I'd ask that you make every effort to answer their questions to keep them engaged.
4. What if I don't hit it off with my mentee?
 - a. Once you decide to become a mentor, I'll contact you to determine: where you live, how many students you can accommodate, likes/dislikes, favorite color ☺, etc. I will do everything I can to pair you with a compatible student, but we can certainly make a change if it is just not working out.
5. Do I have to attend bee school again?
 - a. No, you do not need to attend school on a regular basis, but **you need to attend the scheduled monthly meeting on January 21st, 2010**. After the meeting is over, we are going to have a short orientation for the mentors.
6. Do I get paid?
 - a. You don't get paid cash, but you do get people that are eager to learn and willing to help. Mentees have been known to be such eager beavers that they have carried supers, performed full hive inspections, and uncapped frames until their hands hurt. I've even heard stories that some mentors have had their cars washed and their grass cut, but that could just be an urban legend.

May we include you on this year's "New Beekeepers Mentor Program"?

Please let me know by email reply or phone call as soon as possible.

NOTE: The only required meeting you must attend will be a 20-minute Orientation / Review at after the regularly scheduled Bee Club meeting on January 21st, 2010. Please let me know if you cannot make this meeting, so I can send you the appropriate information.

Thank you,
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