



Meck Bees

Mecklenburg Beekeepers Association
Meets the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7 pm at
3100 Selwyn Avenue
(corner of Selwyn and Woodlawn)
Mailing address: 121 Hermitage Rd Charlotte NC 28207
704-358-8075
Visit our website at
www.meckbees.org



May 2010

President -
Wayne Hansen

Vice President -
Greg Clements

Treasurer -
Libby Mack

Chaplain -
Jimmy Odom



This months refreshments
are provided by
Jeanne Brady

This Month's Meeting/Program May 20th

Greg Clements will speak about the first 30 days of a Queen Bee's life. It is an interesting study of what happens to the Queen as she becomes the source of life for the hive.



Fairmont Hotels Harvest Honey For Cocktails, Cuisine

With spring upon us, honeybees at several hotels - especially Fairmonts - will be getting busy. Of Fairmont's 60 hotels, seven have honeybee hives to generate honey for hotel-made cocktails and cuisine - and more hotels keep adding them, says Fairmont spokesman Mike Taylor.

The hotels are adding honeybees as part of the chain's environmental program, but they also make for good marketing. Local, sustainable cuisine is a big restaurant trend right now, so hotel-harvested honey can be a big advantage for hotel restaurants, he says. "It provides a sense of authenticity for the hotel to speak about," he told me earlier.

Among the Fairmonts that have honeybees either on rooftops or in their herb gardens, according to Green Lodging News:

- The Fairmont Waterfront in Vancouver: More than 390,000 honey bees are expected to produce 500 pounds of honey.
- The Fairmont Royal York in Toronto: Bees have produced nearly 800 pounds of honey since June 2008, with most used for hotel cocktails and cuisine.
- The Fairmont Washington, D.C.: Three hives each have their own names: Casa Bella, Casa Blanca, and Casa Bianca.
- The Fairmont Mount Kenya Safari Club is installing eight hives, with each to host about 4,000 bees. Guests will be able to attend lectures to learn about bees and honey production. The first honey harvest is expected by September.
- The Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac in Quebec harvests honey three times a year from four hives containing 700,000 bees. Since so much honey is harvested, the hotel bottles the rest to sell to guests.

URGENT MEETING LOCATION INFO

Our usual location at Marion Diehl is no longer available so we have had to make some adjustments.

We may be meeting in different locations for the balance of 2010 so please watch for announcements.

THE NEW LOCATION FOR THE MARCH MEETINGS IS

Mouzon United Methodist Church

3100 Selwyn Avenue
(corner of Woodlawn and Selwyn)
Charlotte, NC 28209



Updates and Information

Beekeepers Yearly Management Calendar for May

Install the supers. Make periodic checks to see if additional supers are needed.

Speakers for 2010

May 2010 - Greg Clements
First 30 Days of a Queen

June - Summer Potluck &
Bob Blackwelder
Honey Extracting Bottling

We have available to club members a roster of all those in our club. It is handy to have in case you need to get in touch with another beekeeper for help or to lend a hand .

Contact Libby Mack at
libbymack@earthlink.net

To request a copy of this pdf file

Honeybee-killing Mites Invade Japan



The Yomiuri Shimbun

Mites that have caused serious damage to beehives overseas have been discovered in Japan for the first time, according to government sources. The pests likely have invaded Japan by slipping through quarantine when honeybees were imported or by smuggling, the sources said. The Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Ministry plans to conduct a study of the actual conditions. According to the ministry, a series of cases of a large number of honeybees dying have been reported in urban neighborhoods in the Tokyo metropolitan area since January.

The mites, known by the scientific name *Acarapis woodi* and measuring 0.1 millimeter long, were found having parasitized in bees' airways, according to the investigation by Nagoya University and the National Institute of Livestock and Grassland Science, based in Tsukuba, Ibaraki Prefecture. The mite transmits a fatal virus to honeybees that renders them unable to fly, ultimately killing them. (Apr. 19, 2010)

Floral Fraud

Some orchids are exquisite cheats: instead of offering a nectar reward to their pollinators, they trick insects into alighting on their flowers by simulating the shape, color, or odor of potential mates. The great variety in orchid deception has been known for a long time, yet new examples keep turning up.

Take the orchid *Dendrobium sinense*. Restricted to the Chinese island of Hainan, the species has lovely white flowers with red centers. A team, led by Jennifer Brodmann and her graduate adviser Manfred

Ayasse of the University of Ulm in Germany, observed the hornet *Vespa bicolor* regularly visiting the flowers, pollinating them inadvertently in the process. The hornets didn't just drop in casually on the flowers, however; they pounced on the red centers with the same vigor they exert hunting honeybees to feed to their larvae. In a series of experiments, the team established that the flowers produce a volatile compound also made by honeybees, which is what attracts the hornets. Normally, the hornets cue in on the compound

to locate victims.

Some orchids imitate the shape of a pollinator's prey—the genus *Brassia* bears spider-shaped flowers pollinated by spider-parasitizing wasps—but *D. sinense* is the first known to mimic a prey's scent. (*Current Biology*) —S.R.



Dendrobium sinense orchid, above, and its pollinator, the hornet *Vespa bicolor*, right



The Kenya Top Bar Hive

The Kenya top bar hive (KTBH), was developed for beekeepers in Kenya and has also been used in Uganda. The KTBH or TBH combines simplicity, economy and efficiency. .



Unlike most common designs of modern hive, it does not use frames, rather it uses slats of wood called top bars, which is of course how the hive received it's name. Instead of filling out frames, the bees build comb from the top bars down. The bar is the only means of support that combs have in this type of hive.

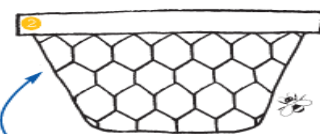
Because of the simplicity of the Kenyan Top Bar Hive's design, one can be built from readily available salvaged materials. In fact the design of a TBH is so adaptable that boxes, 55-gallon-drums, old crates and even dilapidated refrigerators can be used to keep bees. In essence, nearly any large container can be modified to produce a productive honeybee hive.

There are excellent top bar kits and hives available from The BackYardHive, for those not wanting an old refrigerator or cut-down oil drum lying around. The BackYardHive also has shaped top bars, special hive tools, and DVDs available.

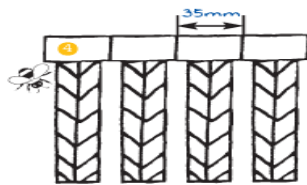
It's said, by the converts, that Kenya top bar hive beekeeping is a more healthy and sustainable method of beekeeping, it allows bees to make their own pure, natural beeswax which means they can make it in the way that suits them best. They make the honeycomb cells the size that they need them to be. In a top bar hive, they do it by building their comb straight down from the bars which rest across the top of the interior cavity of the Kenya Top Bar Beehive.

THE TOP BAR HIVE EXPLAINED

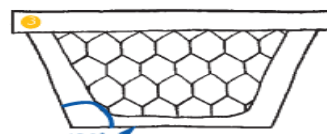
The design is different from hives you might be used to seeing in the UK, because it follows the natural shape of the honeycombs, which hang from horizontal bars laid across the top of the hive. These can be carefully lifted out, one by one, without disturbing the bees. This method produces more honey, more beeswax and gives a greater economic yield from a smaller investment.



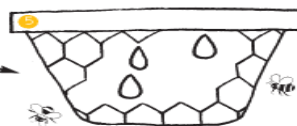
The hive keeps the natural stable u-shape of a comb, so they can be easily harvested.



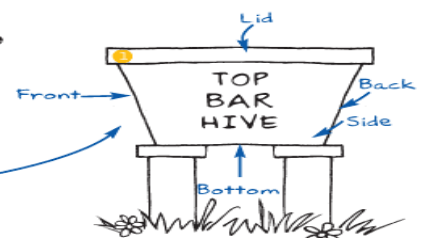
Each top bar is the natural width of a comb plus one bee: 35mm. Any wider, and predators could get in. Any smaller, and the bees couldn't build combs.



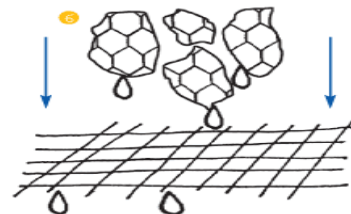
Sides of combs should be inclined at an angle of 120°. to stop wastage as combs don't stick to the sides of the hive.



Bars are removed one at a time, minimising exposure of the colony. Comb is simply cut from the top bar.



Stilts keep predators out and hive at working height.



Combs are squeezed by hand then strained twice through a coarse strainer or screen, then a finer one.

Honey is bottled and capped ready for sale.



State Sets Rules For Labeling Honey

On March 15, Gov. Jim Doyle signed Assembly Bill 575, establishing standards for products sold as honey and authorizing "Wisconsin Certified Honey" labels for pure honey produced in the state.

The signing came two days before the earliest recorded start for Wisconsin honey bees, the official state insect, to bring pollen to hives, said Doug Schulz, chief bee wrangler and proprietor of the family-operated Wisconsin Natural Acres in Chilton. "I saw it, on March 17. The previous record was March 25," said Schulz, who tends about 910,000 honeybees in more than 130 hives scattered across multiple counties.

Schulz said he welcomes the new pure-honey law. "Pure honey is the only food on Earth that never spoils. Nature intended honey to be pure," Schulz said. "But there are so many honey packers, let's call them bee farmers without bees. If you are producing pure honey, you should have bees."

The pure honey bill is intended, through testing and labeling, to not only identify pure honey produced in Wisconsin, but also to point out so-called honey that is adulterated or bulked up with corn or rice syrup or mixed with foreign honey found to have a variety of additives, Schulz said. The adulterated honey costs a fraction to produce and sells cheaper than pure honey.

"Beekeepers can't compete. You can't even afford to pay for your gas," Schulz said. The bill is an attempt to "bring honey back as a unique, nutritious and healthy food rather than just another sweetener, which is where it has drifted to," said Tim Fulton, president of the Wisconsin Honey Producers Association.

Wisconsin joins California and Florida in defining pure honey, a definition lacking in federal Food and Drug Administration standards. "Up to this point there has been no definition of honey, so if someone produces a product that says it is honey and there is suspicion it is not pure honey, there would be no legal recourse (to prove otherwise). It's my word against his," Fulton said. "Honey comes from bees, period. However, to prove that you need a chemical analysis."

The new standards define what honey can or can't contain. The bill allows people who believe they were fooled into thinking they were buying pure honey when the product was not pure to collect damages from the producers. "Funny honey competes unfairly with an industry trying to provide a healthy, nutritious food and a business that sells a food at a significantly lower price," Fulton said. Schulz said establishing bee yards can be an agonizing and secretive process. He said honeybees roam hours from their hives to collect nectar from more than 200 varieties of flowers. Schulz searches for alfalfa, basswood and clover fields not subject to spray from agricultural chemicals to provide prime sources for nectar and high-quality honey. "Our goal is to have the best-tasting honey in the world with no aftertaste," Schulz said.

This early in the season bees bring pollen, used mostly for food for larvae, from pussy willow and soft maple buds and a few hardy wild flowers. "In a great year, we will produce 25,000 to 30,000 pounds of honey," said Schulz, who has been in the business for 35 years, since he was 17. "We've worked hard to get the quality of pure honey we produce. So the label should say it is certified, pure 100 percent Wisconsin honey."

It could take 18 months before honey producers can begin labeling their honey as certified as the program is fit into the state bureaucracy. "My question is if a producer's honey doesn't meet the standards what will their label say?" Schulz said. Schulz welcomes a key provision of the bill allowing beekeepers to voluntarily have their honey tested in order to earn the Wisconsin certified label. But fees for the testing should not be prohibitive for small beekeeping operations or those operators could be forced from business, Schulz said.

Otherwise, producers seeking the certified honey label shouldn't fear the testing procedure. "There is only one ingredient in pure honey, and that's honey," Schulz said.

Steve Wideman: 920-993-1000, ext. 302, or swideman@postcrescent.com

Well, I took a break from this column for a couple of months. I felt bad about that, but the column for March came up so fast that with Bee School and some high numbers of hours at work, there wasn't any time. Then April came along and after a bad case of writer's block, that one disappeared as well. So here we are, almost in May!

Bee School was excellent this year. We started with almost 90 students, and I counted close to 60 still remaining at the seventh class. I hope people realize that the Bee School is an excellent way to learn about bees, even if you find out the time and money involved in getting started are a bit higher than one might expect. The occasional pain of a sting is part of it, but getting used to an insect just walking around on your hand is probably one of the most rewarding aspects of the hobby. Well, at least it's rewarding for me.

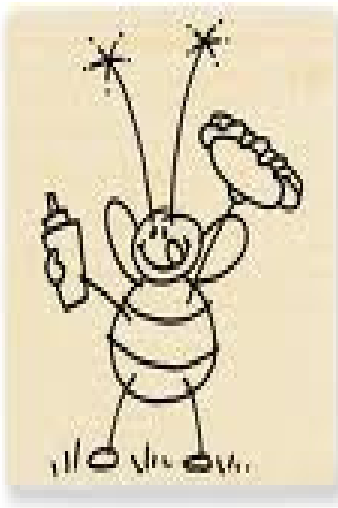
Several club members took the Born & Bred classes on queen rearing this Spring. I took the class in Gaston County on Apr 24. It seems like a simple way to get started raising a few queens. There are some factors, like experience, that will take some time to get through that learning curve. Several club members have mentioned that they would like to be included in selling nucs or bees in some form next year to students in bee school. If you would like to be included in that, please let me know sometime this fall. I'll try to send out a reminder about that.

For upcoming club events, we have an encore of last years picnic, with a different menu. Greg and Margie Clements have invited us up to their place on Lake Norman on June 19. The club will be picking up the hot dogs and hamburgers and buns, but it will be up to the rest of us to bring the side dishes and desserts. Please RSVP to meckbees@yahoo.com with the number of people coming, the club members name, and the side dish you would like to bring. Linda Preston and I will be coordinating the accompanying dishes. We had one person volunteer at Bee School Field Day to work the grill, but he will need at least one assistant. (And that volunteer needs to RSVP with that info as well.)

Today was a good day in the bee yard. I added a bunch of supers, some to hives that didn't have any yet, some to hives that already did. I hope I'll need a few more supers, but thankfully the frames are already built, I just need to add the wax.

Everybody enjoy the bees, and we'll see you around the bee yard!

Wayne

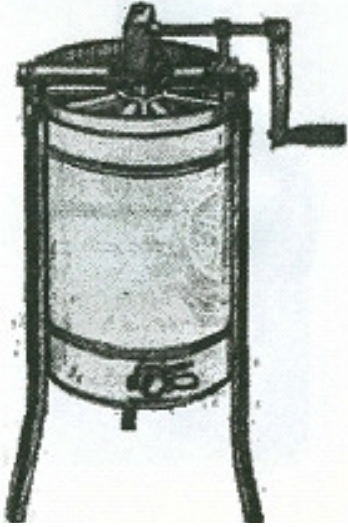


**Greg and Margie Clements have invited us up to
their place on Lake Norman on June 19!!**

Hot dogs, hamburgers and buns provided by club.

Please sign up to bring either a side dish or a dessert.

RSVP to meckbees@yahoo.com with the number of people coming, the club members name, and the side dish you would like to bring.



It's Harvest Time!

We have the following equipment available for extracting honey:

- Extractor (manual)
- Uncapping tank (use your own excluder)
- Bucket with valve
- Electric uncapping knife

The charge is \$2 per day to borrow the extractor.

You will want to use your own filters and food-grade plastic buckets.

To obtain the equipment:

- Call Jimmy Odom to arrange a time to pick it up.
Phone: (704) 408-2726
Address: 17026 McKee Rd Charlotte NC 28278
- When you pick up the equipment, take an envelope and card to mail in your payment
- Return the equipment **promptly, clean and dry**
- Mail your payment in the envelope provided

With the growth of the club, there is heavy demand for the extractor in the summer months. There will be a waiting list, so be prepared for a short wait, and when you get the equipment, please return it promptly so the next person on the list can get it. Please don't pass it on to someone else who isn't on the list. Thanks!
