



M E C K B E E S

Mecklenburg Beekeepers Association
Meets the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7 pm
2219 Tyvola Road
Marion Diehl Park and Rec Building
Mailing address: 121 Hermitage Rd Charlotte NC 28207
704-358-8075
Visit our website at

www.meckbees.org



*President -
Wayne Hansen*

*Vice President -
Richard Flanagan*

*Treasurer -
Libby Mack*

*Chaplain -
Gene Shannon*



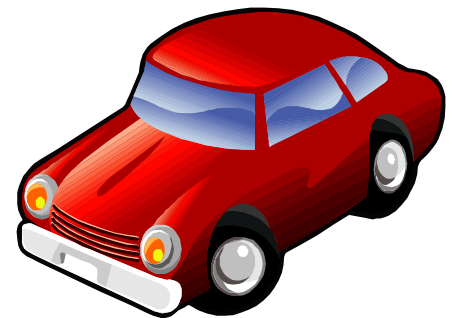
This Month's Meeting/Program October 16th



Buddy Marterre, of Forsythe County, will be our guest speaker . He will share info on bee stings and the effects on individuals. Come and learn about one of the most important traits of our noble honeybees.

**This months
refreshments are
provided by
The Franklins**

There is a movement under foot to see if the NC Beekeepers have and interest in developing our own license plate for the drivers in North Carolina. If you are interested please contact Greg Clements to get more info. This could be the start of something big for beekeepers in North Carolina.



Updates and Information

Beekeepers Yearly Management Calendar for October

Reduce the hive entrance to 3/8 inch to prevent mice from getting in the hives..

Speakers for 2008

October–

**Buddy Marterre
Bee Stings**

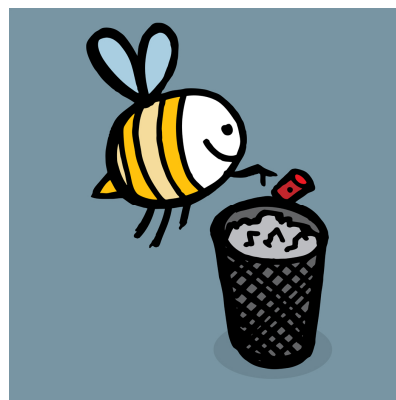
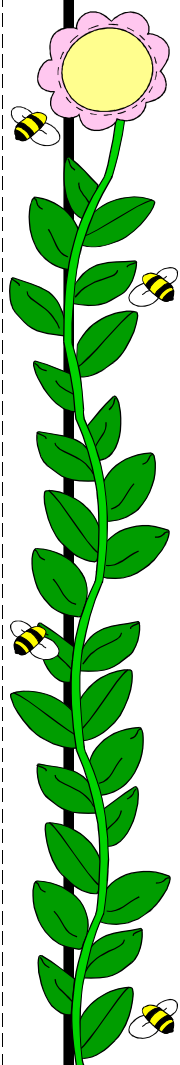
**Nov-Richard Flanagan
Bumble Bees**

Dec—Pot Luck Dinner

**Jan 2009 Jeff Ritchie
Queen Rearing**

**Feb 2009 Bill Bishop
Swarm Control**

**March 2009 Christopher
Horrigan Bee Research
on bomb sniffing bees**



RE M I N D E R

We need a few volunteers to help clean up and stack chairs after each monthly meeting. If you can help out please see Richard Flanagan to sign up. We need the meeting space and if we don't keep it clean we may lose the right to use the Marion Diehl Park and Recreation Center for our monthly meetings.



Q: What does a
bee get at
McDonalds?
A: A hamburger!

Q: What buzzes,
is black and
yellow and goes
along the bottom

of the sea?

A: A bee in a submarine!

Q: What's more dangerous than being
with a fool?

A: Fooling with a bee!

Q: What did the spider say to the bee?

A: Your honey or your life!

Q: Who is a bee's favorite painter?

A: Pablo Beecasso!

Q: What did the bee to the other bee in
summer?

A: Swarm here isn't it!

Q: What is a bee's favorite classical
music composer?

A: Bee-thoven!

Q: Who writes books for little bees?

A: Bee-trix Potter!

Q: Where do bees go on holiday?

A: Stingapore!



OUR VARROA MITE MANAGEMENT

So that you all can better understand our ways of doing things, we wanted to share with you how we deal with parasitic varroa mites. Beekeepers still consider varroa the #1 enemy of honeybees 20+ years after they first showed up in North America. Although we continue to develop our management in light of the mites, we feel like we have a very workable grip on the mite situation. The first thing to note is that we do lots of testing and keep lots of records. We never could have developed a low-tech, organic management scheme for our needs without the information from our testing and record keeping. Around late July, and then partly again in September/October, we do what's called a "24 hour natural mite drop count" on every one of our ~70 full-size production hives. We glean a lot of information from counting all those thousands of mites. For instance, we use the information to select the most mite-resistant breeder stock -- we raise all our own production queens -- and to target our labor-intensive manipulations where they're needed.

As an aside, one of our most important methods for keeping bees despite the presence of varroa is our use of nucs (short for "nucleus colony," which basically just means a small colony.) In just the last few years we've transitioned to running about as many nucs as we have regular hives. Due largely to the different brood (brood=the developing bees, e.g. eggs, larval stage) rearing dynamics in nucs, varroa mites are practically a non-issue in our nucs. Therefore, making up all our nucs each year gives us, among other benefits, practically a free ride when it comes to varroa.

So how do we "treat" the colonies that have lethal numbers of varroa mites? We've talked before about all the chemical options we don't use. And a big part of what we consider smart organic management is simply avoiding problems as much as possible (e.g. incorporating nucs into our system and using mite-resistant strains of bees), but we still have years where varroa populations get out of hand. In those years we deal with mites primarily through brood manipulations. In hives with marginal mite problems replacing the queen with a queen cell can produce enough of a brood rearing gap to allow the bees to get ahead of the mites. In hives with worse mite problems we will typically remove all the brood combs (along with the majority of mites they contain) and establish a new sacrifice hive with those frames: the original hive re-builds tremendously well given a fresh start, and sometimes the sacrifice hive even survives because of the slow process of rearing a new "emergency" queen and the long brood rearing gap that causes.

Another very important distinctive of our management is that we're willing to accept some losses. Even the most chemically trigger-happy beekeepers can't save every last hive, but the hopeless attempt to accomplish that goal with chemicals can generate all sorts of bad side effects. So long as our overall operation can continue to grow and produce, we even see it as a good thing to naturally cull a small number of colonies.

See you at the farm,
Eric and Melissa Brown

The Van Landingham estate is looking for a beekeeper to help start and maintain a couple of hives. The hives they had this year did not make it. If anyone is interested in this, please contact Dave Marion at the Van Landingham estate and tell him you're a Mecklenburg County Beekeeper. Contact me if you'd like a phone number. Here's the address and website: 2010 The Plaza, Charlotte, NC 28205 - <http://www.vanlandinghamestate.com/>

At the October meeting we plan to have available for discussion, or maybe even order some shirts and hats with the club logo embroidered on them. Maybe this will come through in time for me to get my order in for Christmas! There will be some choices for the ladies as well as for the drones. But probably only one hat.

I didn't have much else to say this month, but this email I sent has kept me laughing for the last couple of days, so maybe I'll share it.

I went over to Charles's Saturday afternoon, since I'd said I'd help clean up from the bees we got out of a 160+ year old house on Thursday afternoon. The hour's work turned into 2 hours as we did some other stuff. I left in a hurry as my wife and I were going to a fish dinner at a church that a friend of mine goes to.

Lisa (my wife) brought me out a shirt to change into and we took off. When we got there I took off my t-shirt and put the other shirt on. Noticing the yellow spots on the back of the t-shirt I asked her if she knew what that was. She guessed "Pollen? Propolis? Rust? It doesn't look like honey..." So I told her "Bee poop." Seems the bees had been stuck in those buckets for almost 2 days, and hadn't been able to let it out. Upon opening the buckets, they pretty much all flew out and pooped the first place they could. Seems I just happened to be in the way.

So we get to the fish dinner and my friend is there, and his wife. So we sat down with her and ate, and talked about bees and work and life and stuff. She is planning to be in the bee school next year, and so I invited her to the next bee meeting. I mentioned that I'd been stung a few times just before coming to the fish fry, in the space between where my gloves stopped and my short sleeves started. Upon looking at my arm, I noticed a stinger still in it. We pulled out 4 stingers. No wonder the arm hurt a little bit.

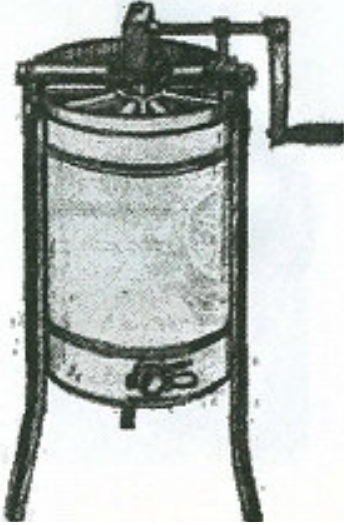
One response to the email was "Leaving in the stingers all day should win you the Jimmy Odom apey-therapy award." Coincidentally, October's speaker is Buddy Marterre, on the topic of Bee Stings.

On use and reflection of the fumagillin feeding, turns out I found it easier to add the fumagillin with or after the third 5-pound bag of sugar. Two hives didn't care for the mix very much. One hive was very strong, and the other is fairly weak. Tomorrow that weak hive may get combined with another. I did get started with ApiLife VAR treatments for the Varroa mite. Now I can smell the eucalyptus in the bee yard. Most of the hives didn't have extremely high numbers of Varroa at last check, and I've been feeding a lot of sugar water to help them get ready for winter. The one swarm I picked up this fall will likely get a boost from a frame of brood tomorrow, but will likely need to be fed all winter.

As I was on vacation last week, I missed all the fun of the honey swap. I heard that it was a good turnout with 27 jars trading hands. Upon getting back, the first day of fall came last Monday, and it's the time of year when beekeeping starts to slow down for the winter. Or does it? There are supers to clean, and boxes to paint, a slatted rack to build, and I need to dust off the PowerPoint from the disease class I taught at bee school last year and drop a few slides and add a few new ones. I need to get a bucket or two ready for catching swarms, and I need to set up some platforms in the bee yard for bait hives for catching swarms. I'd rather catch them than have to go extract them from somebody's house. It's also time to get out the bee catalog so I can mark a few things for my in-laws to get me for Christmas. I also need to find a place to set up the nice drill press I got last year so I can use it one day.

See you around the bee yard,
Wayne Hansen





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 Sam Ritter to arrange a time to pick it up.
Phone: (704) 301-2787 or (704) 364-3052
Address: 219 N. Sharon Amity, Charlotte
- 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!
