



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



October 2010

President -
Wayne Hansen
Vice President -
Greg Clements
Treasurer -
Libby Mack
Chaplain -
Jimmy Odom



This months refreshments
are provided by
Steve Utter

This Month's Meeting/Program
October 28th
Ken and Leslie Carlson will both speak on the art of candle making using beeswax. It will be a hands-on-demo with lots to learn and experience as we watch how candles are made.
Remember we meet the fourth Thursday this month only October 28th Same time 7pm same place new date so see you on the 28th of October



Here is a link to see a low tech way to extract Honey
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Id2CpJfId0c&feature=related>



[New Honeybee Breed Key to Combating Colony Collapse Disorder](#)

A British beekeeper has been working on creating a new strain of honeybee resistant to the varroa mite, a prime suspect in colony collapse disorder (CCD), and it looks like he's hit a high note after 18 years of careful observation and selective breeding. Ron Hoskins found that bees in one of his hives figured out what a great idea mutual grooming can be -- they learned to clean the mites off one another. Hoping that this learned behavior is hereditary, he spread the genes of bees from this colony to his other hives. It worked. Now, combating CCD could be linked in no small part to how quickly the new strain of bee spreads across the country.

[Daily Mail reports](#) that the British Beekeepers Association is excited about the work Hoskins has done, and the hope is the drones from his "grooming" bees will mate with wandering female queens to spread the heartier genes across Britain. It could take quite a long time, and a lot of generations of bees before the behavior becomes normal, but if it's a way to combat the mites that wipe out entire colonies, then it's quite an exciting evolution to witness.

Hoskins, who is from Swindon, has named the new strain the "Swindon Honeybee" and all his colonies consist of this new breed. And the behavior might be the only thing that can save honeybees from the verroa mite:

[Martin Smith, president of the British Beekeepers' Association, said:](#) "The varroa mite is probably the single most important factor that has caused the reduction in bee numbers worldwide. It has now become resistant to chemicals we have used in the past so we are being forced to look into other methods."

The evolution of natural behaviors is certainly a good method to fall back on, with a little nudge from beekeepers. It might not be a silver bullet for CCD -- the cause of which is still under hot debate -- but it certainly doesn't hurt to have bees taking care of mite infestations on their own.

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Hawaii's State's Beekeepers Sought To Fill Out Online Survey



Following devastating local invasions of the Varroa mite and Small Hive Beetle, the UH Honeybee Project in the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources at UH Mnoa is conducting a statewide online survey of beekeepers to document the current status of beekeeping in Hawai'i.

Now that these pests have impacted beekeeping practices on O'ahu and the Big Island, the Honeybee Project hopes to learn about local beekeepers' concerns, preferences and needs with respect to pest control. Researchers also are very interested in gathering the opinions of beekeepers on Kaua'i, Lna'i, Maui and Moloka'i--specifically about what bee health issues are being experienced on those islands.

Beekeepers Yearly Management Calendar for October

Medicate with Fumidil –B for Nosema control

Note: there is a spring treatment in March

Speakers for 2010

Oct– Leslie and Ken Carlson

Candle making

Nov -Richard Flanagan

Skep Beekeeping

Dec - Pot luck

Jan 2011 JR Neumiller

Organic beekeeping

The Mouzon United Methodist Church, the church providing our meeting space, are having their annual fund-raising Bazaar, Craft Sale and Thrift Shop in October. If you have things to donate to help say "Thanks" for our meeting space, contact Sally Rose at 704-525-2556 and tell her you are with the Beekeepers. She will make an appointment to meet you at the church to drop off your donations. Some ideas are furniture, kitchen items, household decorative items, toys, games, crafts, etc. You can drop off items between now and the end of September (by appointment)

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Great News !

**We are now an authorized
dealer of Brushy Mountain
Bee Farm**

**Want to avoid shipping charges? Tired of taking a 3-hour
round trip to the mountains to pick up equipment and
supplies? Place your orders through us!**

**Convenient delivery schedules with no additional
charge to you .**

For more information contact:

Randall York (704) 517-6190

cloisterhoney@cloisterhoney.com

11 Execs, 6 Foreign Firms Caught in Honey Sting



(Sept. 2) -- U.S. consumers stand a better chance of buying honey free of drugs, chemicals and other illegal contaminants because investigators from several federal agencies have scooped up some of the biggest players in the sticky, international honey-laundering maze.

A [70-page indictment](#), released in Chicago by U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald, reads like Cliffs Notes for a spy novel: smuggling, bogus shipping papers, phony lab tests, shipments to Chicago warehouses and small honey-packing plants in Washington's Cascade Mountains. All that's missing is the sex.

Eleven Chinese and German executives and six of their food supply and honey export companies were charged Wednesday with 44 counts of conspiring to illegally import Chinese-origin honey, including honey tainted with antibiotics, into the U.S. by mislabeling it as originating in other countries to avoid paying anti-dumping fees, Fitzgerald said.

Why the foreign intrigue with something as benign and universally loved as honey?

The one-word answer is money. Tens of millions of dollars, and that's just what the field agents and federal prosecutors can prove at this point.

These are not nickel-and-dime scams.

"They are charged with conspiring to import more than \$40 million of Chinese honey to avoid paying anti-dumping duties of approximately \$80 million," said Leigh Winchell, special agent in charge of Homeland Security Investigations in the Pacific Northwest. (HSI was formally known as ICE, or Immigration and Customs Enforcement.)

Illegal Additives Create Health Problems

Fitzgerald said the defendants were distributing "adulterated honey that never should have reached the U.S. marketplace."

The adulterants -- illegal additives that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration says cannot be permitted in any food product -- included mostly small amounts of the antibiotics and antibacterial drugs Ciprofloxacin, Norfloxacin, Chloramphenicol and Furazolidone.

Health officials say these chemicals can create health problems for just a small percentage of the population with specific chemical sensitivities. Public health experts say the public should never be exposed to unneeded antibiotics.

The Chinese used these drugs in the late 1990s and into the new century to fight off a massive outbreak of bee-killing disease that swept like a tsunami across millions of bee colonies throughout their huge country.

As part of the conspiracy, the indictment alleges that the defendants had honey en route to the U.S. tested by a German laboratory. After they learned that the honey contained antibiotics, it still was to be sold to U.S. customers and even resold to some after it was rejected by others due to the presence of antibiotics.

The thousands of drums of Chinese honey, or sweetened product being sold as honey, allegedly were falsely declared as having originated in Russia, Australia, India, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand.

Sometimes the drums were actually shipped to the second country before being transshipped with new country-of-origin identification to the U.S. Often, the switch was done by just painting the blue drums -- which are almost always used in China -- a different color and typing up bogus shipping papers.

Federal authorities have seized more than 3,200 drums of honey in Seattle; Tacoma, Wash.; Minneapolis; and the Chicago area during the investigations that led to the indictments.

Understanding the beekeeping suit and how it works is very important for an apiarist. It is his uniform, his personal protection suit that helps him to avoid harm. A beekeeping suit is composed of either a single or combination of the following: full suit, jacket, gloves, hat, veil, leather work boots and other miscellaneous items. Understanding the beekeeping suit requires description of each accessory and on how it will protect the wearer.



A beekeeping suit must be sting resistant, made from polyester-cotton in white color so that it is less sting-attractive for the bees. Understanding the beekeeping suit requires proper fitting. In beekeeping, loose-fit protective suits are more effective. So it is better to buy or order a bee suit next size up and make sure it is baggy and not too tight.

A beekeeping suit must be effective to stop the bees from entering inside it. In beekeeping, exposure to swarm is normal. Understanding the suit needs a keen eye to check the suit's elastic cuffs at the wrists and ankles, zipper at the collar, torso and ankles, and the Velcro seals at the frontal area and back area of the integrated hood.

Instead of using a suit, visitors of an apiary can use a cheap observer smock. It is a jacket intended to worn by guests when they are being offered a glimpse of beekeeping. Understanding the suit is not only confined to adult sizes but for children as well. Children's protective clothing is identical to an adult full suit that provides the same protective function.

A beekeeping suit often called full suit is well-designed clothing that protects the wearer from top to bottom. It must sustain various beekeeping chores like colony removal, killer bee extermination, commercial pest control and other utility maintenance. It must not be heavy and not too tight. The same is true with the jacket it must not require the use of straps, rubber bands or strings. The wearer's wrists and ankles must be sealed with elastic cuffs.

The suit is not complete without a leather gloves. It prevents bees from stinging the hands or forearms extending up to the biceps. It must overlap with the full suit or jacket. It is made of thick leather enough to repel bee sting. Some beekeeping gloves are made of canvas and cotton. Some gloves manufacturer offers "guaranteed" sting protection. There are some disputed reasons for this:

1. Sting can sometimes penetrate even leather materials, and
2. only expensive Kevlar and aluminum fabric can guarantee full protection.

Proper beekeeping suit is also include a beekeeper's hat to protect eyes from the sun. Sometimes it is used in combination of a ring veil with 360 degrees screen protection that extends the loop up to arm's length. A veil must be integrated into the suit that is fully detachable and collapsible. It eliminates the use of hat. It is also recommended the use of high-top leather work to protect your ankles and feet.

Suits can be machine washable and dryable under normal weather condition. Beekeeping hoods and veils must be hand washed with soaps. The use of bleach is prohibited for bees dislike the bleach's residual odor. If you are allergic to bee sting that can cause anaphylactic shock, understanding the beekeeping suit and how it works will save you from serious harm.

Marion Beekeeper, 12, Loves the Honey Money, and the Bees



For Austin Chivington, honey isn't the main reason he's hunting for hives ... but he admits it's a pretty good by-product.

Just last week, he relocated a honey bee hive from someone's squirrel box. He got not only the bees, but went back for the comb and the fruits of their labor. "It's got the honey in it. It's tasty," the 12-year-old beekeeper said. "I'm going to keep that. That's good food."

Honey aside, Austin knows the real importance of beekeeping. He's sort of set himself up in the business of bees with the help of a \$500 start-up grant from the Ohio Department of Agriculture in conjunction with Ohio State University Extension office that he secured as a part of his 4-H project with the Waldo Winners.

Bees are disappearing. The hives are being destroyed by colony collapse disorder and parasites. Experts haven't been able to diagnose the causes.

While OSU Extension had eliminated the beekeeping category, they brought it back to hopefully generate an interest in young people that might help return the bee population to the level it needs to be in the future.

We need bees, Austin said. While they go about their work of making honey, it pollinates our plants and flowers. And they do yeoman's work. "One bee has to travel 200 million miles to make one pound of honey," he said. "That's over 7 million flowers."

It is estimated that 40 percent of all the food we eat is a result of insect pollination, according to the Central Ohio Beekeepers Association. Honey bees are the only pollinating insects that can be controlled by man.

Patty Stevens, a social worker and counselor by day and a beekeeper by choice, has helped Austin get started. Before she moved to Marion, she helped establish the Highlands Nature Sanctuary in Bainbridge in Highland County.

That was in 2000, when she decided bees should be a part of the sanctuary, and she found a beekeeper to show her how to do it. She fell in love with bees right away.

"If you have ever looked inside of a hive, it is absolute pure magic. You pull off that hive lid and here are millions of bees doing exactly what they were designed to do. No fighting, no loafing, all working toward survival of hive, and it's a metaphor for what humanity should be doing," said Stevens, who is now 67 and has had as many as 15 hives at one time over the years.

Austin's been working with Stevens for three years learning about bees, building his hives and getting them ready. A sixth-grader at River Valley, he says his friends sort of question what they think is his odd hobby.

They tell him, "The bees are weird. Why are you doing that kind of stuff," he said. "I try to show them, and they don't quite believe me."

"Have you ever gotten stung," is another question he gets a lot.

"I find that one the dumbest one of all," he said. "We'll, what do you think ... I'm a beekeeper."

Austin does it the organic, old-fashioned way and doesn't purchase packaged bees. He collects wild swarms traveling from place to place looking for a home. He's put the word out he wants them. When someone encounters a swarm, they call.

With the help of his dad, Todd, he heads out to scout it that evening. Then the next morning, early, after the bees have been in for the night and aren't yet moving, he transfers them for travel.

He's collected three hives this year. He keeps them on his grandparents' farm.

Austin's mom, Katie, also wasn't quite sure what her son was thinking when out of the hundreds of 4-H projects he could have pursued he chose bees. She's allergic to bees.

She sought out Stevens to mentor her son and says he does it because he loves the science and mystery of it.

He told his mom, "Someone has to be the 'bee man' and tend to nature."

MeckBees Honey Swap at the October 28 Meeting

What do we bring?

A jar of your own honey or a jar of special honey gathered during your travels.

What do we get in return?

Take home a jar of different honey that someone else brought to the meeting.

How will this work?

Swap your honey for a numbered ticket. When your number is randomly drawn, come up and take a jar.

Does size matter?

Pints and pounds are preferred. It's polite to take home the size you brought.

Will my honey be judged?

As always, your fellow beekeepers will informally provide constructive, and possibly witty, suggestions.



President BZZZZZZ

A few announcements first...

1. October meeting has been moved to the 4th Thursday instead of the 3rd Thursday. We'll try to get a note on the door that night, send newsflashes and announce elsewhere in the newsletter, but somebody won't hear it.
2. The Mecklenburg County seedling sale is scheduled for Saturday, Jan 22, 2011. Pre-orders are being taken now. Call 704-336-2455 to ask for the email with the flyer. It hasn't been posted on the CharMeck.org website yet. See the Oct 2009 newsletter for info on most of these. Spicebush is a new one for me this year. That plant is wind pollinated, so it's not likely the bees work it, although there will always be a girl somewhere willing to prove me wrong.
3. The 4H plant sale is taking orders for early November. Blackberries, blueberries, muscadines, raspberries and figs this year. <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/mecklenburg/plants/>
4. The Mecklenburg County Beekeepers Association will have a business meeting after the regular program in November. Look for more on this topic in the November newsletter. (See Gerry Mack, Richard Flanagan, Randall York, or George McAllister to make officer nominations for 2011.)

This has really been a good year for beekeeping. I've learned a lot, done less yardwork than I should have, and the weather has stayed nice long enough to keep working the bees. For those who have bees in the standard beehives, be sure to inspect them now if you haven't yet. It's too late to get queens, but combine weak hives if necessary so as not to lose both in the winter. Be sure to check the weight of the hives. If it's a two-deep or three-medium system, be sure to take the boxes apart and check the weight in each. I've seen quite a few hives that seemed to have good weight, but the bottom box was pretty much empty.

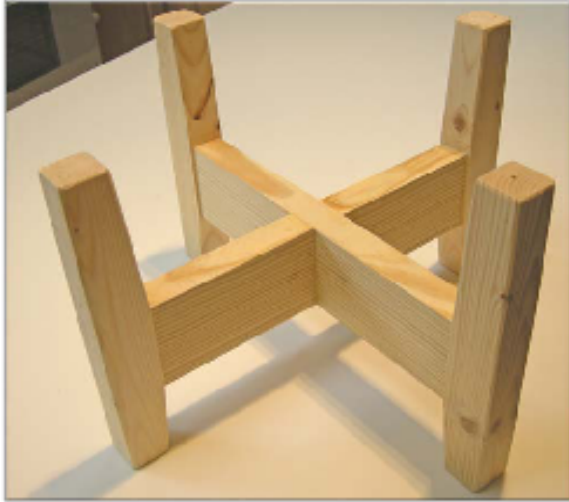
In the time-honored tradition, it's time to tell the bees of the passing of a keeper. My wife's great-uncle Kenneth Ward passed away on Friday, September 24 at the early age of 95. I heard that he lost his bees this summer, but I remember just last year that he was asking me about finding him a queen or two. A fine gentleman, he'll always be remembered better by those who knew him longer, but I'll miss him too.

In an almost unrelated story, my own Dad passed away a couple of Sundays ago. I was fortunate to be able to take the week off, and have simply been amazed at the number of cards and thoughts and prayers that have been shared. I never talked my Dad into keeping bees, but while I was home at my parents house, there was a steady flow of people from my parent's church bringing food or stopping by with condolences. One lady and her oldest son have been church family friends close to thirty years. I had already decided to give her a little bear of honey, and I was aware that her husband had passed away a little over a year ago. What I did not know was that he too had been a beekeeper. So I'm gradually beginning to understand why beekeeping seems to be in my blood.

See you around the bee yard,

Wayne

Mecklenburg Beekeepers Association



Honey Bee Helpers

Honey Bee Helpers is a monthly forum to share our home-grown gadgets and ideas. Please send your photos and stories to gerardmack@earthlink.net.

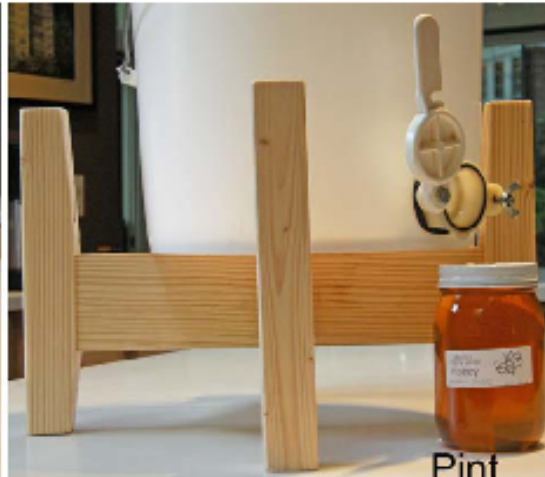
Filling the Jars

A bee mentor once told me that "It's not honey until it's in the jar". His follow-up was that "It looks better inside the jar".

Balancing buckets and bottles on a shifting pile of bee magazines and milk crates can provide an exciting, yet sticky, learning experience.

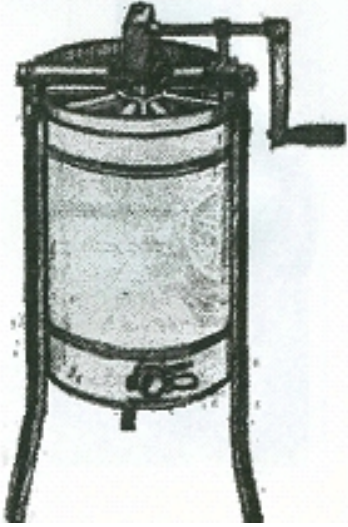
Our honey bucket bottling stand is made from scrap 2x4s. Two cross-pieces are connected with a lap joint and are mortised into four legs. Screws would work too.

Notice that the legs above and below the cross-pieces are not the same length. This means that the stand can be used to bottle tall quarts in one orientation or flipped over to bottle shorter pints and pounds in the other.



Next Month – Frame Jigs

Bee school equipment day brings out our collections of home-built jigs for building frames. They involve an assortment of straps, levers, springs, catches and hinges. Please send in your pictures (this means you Wayne, Frank, Bill, Richard, Johnny, etc.) for next month's **Honey Bee Helpers**. Thanks – and keep passing on your other ideas and suggestions for the column.



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 George McAllister to arrange a time to pick it up.
Phone: (704) 579-1169
geomcallister@hotmail.com
- 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!
