



President's Buzz

by Ed Moyers

A Swarmy March

As Marianne and I begin our sixth year of beekeeping, we continue to be amazed at how different each year seems to be. I'm sure part of this is the result of our continued exposure to things we haven't encountered before. But some is also due to differing weather conditions each year. This year has been no exception . . . We experienced April weather in much of February, and then got a weeklong cold spell in March (cold, even for the month of January). This combination seems to have resulted in a lot of swarming. As a result, Marianne and I have set a personal record of fourteen swarms caught, between the two of us, for this year. Way more than we expected, exhausting all of our spare equipment.

The first swarm we caught was actually Marianne's first solo swarm catch. I was away from home at the time when she spotted it in a dead dogwood tree in our yard. Her only need for consultation was to find out where the spare equipment was hidden. She caught this swarm just a few days before the cold spell hit (the only one we caught before). One fact that I find intriguing is that even though it was our first swarm catch of the year, it was also the largest, with a beautiful queen, and bees eager to build comb and put her to work.

Perhaps the most interesting was a call I got from a construction site across from the NASCAR Museum. The bees made an exciting appearance the day before on their third floor, which is currently being used as a staging area for construction materials. Once the wildly flying bees settled down, they were found on a banded stack of pre-fabricated trusses, safely located under an overhang, out of the weather. They were happy, quiet and oblivious to the construction activity around them. Fortunately, the construction team chose to forego the easy route of spraying them, and contacted me. They asked that I come late in the day, when most of the construction activity was over.

I came with my hard hat (which I had to wear until we reached the area with the bees), a spare jacket and veil for the young supervisor who contacted me and a bottle of honey to show my appreciation for them choosing to spare the bees. The retrieval is surely the easiest I've ever done. All we had to do was remove the bands holding the trusses together, and then remove them, one by one, until we got to the three trusses the bees were congregated around. One at a time, I picked up the trusses (they were small, only a foot

April's Meeting

April 20, 7 PM

Mouzon United Methodist
Church
3100 Selwyn Avenue
Charlotte, NC



The swarm didn't look too impressive from the outside...



or two square), and shook the bees into a waiting five-gallon bucket coated with sugar water. Once done, I poured the bees into a hive body with frames I had brought along. I waited for an hour to allow bees that didn't get in the hive to make a commitment to their queen, then took them home, where they are now busy building comb while their queen lays eggs.

One hive, a double nuc, had swarm cells, but had not yet swarmed. With all of the queen cells in the top box, and the queen in the bottom box, it was easy to split it into two nuc boxes. So I thought all was well until the next day when I saw bees pouring out of the entrance of the nuc I'd made. They flew over to my backdoor neighbor's fence. I prepared some equipment to catch them, but before I was ready, I saw them fly off. At first, I thought they were heading to a new home, but then noticed a bunch of bees flying around in our beeyard. I looked closer, and there were bees all over the nuc that had just swarmed, and many were marching into the nuc's entrance. The swarm was returning! But why?!? I noticed an excited clump of bees on the ground nearby. I reached in with my hand, and found a queen bee. She had to be the queen from the nuc. I placed her at the nuc's entrance, and after conversing with the workers for a few seconds, she confidently walked in.



An Entrepreneurial Spirit

It was a recent article in the Wall Street Journal that got me thinking about beekeepers and their entrepreneurial spirit. In *Good Schools Aren't the Secret to Israel's High-Tech Boom*, Naftali Bennett talks about the cultural dynamics of Israel's success in the high tech world. He attributes Israel's success in the high tech industry to a strong entrepreneurial spirit developed via three aspects of Israel's "shadow education system":

- A heritage of debate
- Youth organizations that use a peer-teaches-peer method of learning
- The army

I see all three of these present in the beekeeping community. "Ask five beekeepers a question," we often say, "and get ten opinions." There is a lot of discussion and debate on issues within the beekeeping community! You see this, whether it's a small group of beekeepers discussing a topic, a panel discussion at one of our meetings, or articles suggesting different approaches to the same problem in the same magazine. Although it may not be debate in the traditional sense, as a community (and even individuals) we look at problems and challenges from different perspectives. Sharing our ideas, and hearing others, provides us the opportunity to select from a wider array of solutions, which often makes us better beekeepers.

We also practice peer-to-peer teaching. Think about it: The articles in this newsletter are written by other MCBA members. Our speakers are often members, some of whom may have less experience with bees than you do. And the same is true of many articles in the bee magazines, and some of the speakers at the state conferences. And, of course, we have our mentors, who share practices and techniques with us. As we gain experience keeping bees, we may develop or adopt new practices that we share with our mentors, sometimes helping them in the process. This is true peer-to-peer teaching.

But what about that third: The army. Okay, so many, perhaps most, of our beekeepers have not served in the military.



**John Caudle Apiaries /
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**We're located at
the corner of
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Honey Bee Lane"**

HERB'S BEES like us on FACEBOOK



All delivery dates depend on weather condition

*** ALL QUEENS ARE MATED 2017 STOCK***

- A. Italian Queens:** Available week of March 20th
Italian Packages - 3#: Available week of March 20th
Italian Nuc: Available Mid-Late April
Italian Hives: 8 or 10 Frame: Available in May
Italian Complete Hives 8 or 10 Frame: Available in May

- B. Russian Queens:** Available in May
Russian Packages: Available in May (when available only)
Russian Nuc: Available in June

Note: Please support your local beekeepers!
*If you don't have a local beekeeper in your area, and need
Queens, Bees, Hives, Supers, etc.
We would "bee" happy to meet your needs!*

- C. Wooden Ware:** We use only "select quality" wooden ware and supplies. All are available for you completely assembled or you can get them primed and painted. Ready for the hive, your choice!
Note: We use only wooden frames with natural bees wax foundation.
"Absolutely no plastics used"

- D.** If you prefer to construct and assemble your own, you can order direct from **Mann Lake - 1.800.880.7694** for delivery right to your door.

HERB'S BEES - Check us out on **FACEBOOK** for tips and general information.

**** Email us at: herbsbees@att.net for all pricing and availability ****



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Herb's Honey
"Purveyors of the
Finest Local Honey"

We recommend raw local honey from a local producer if available! If not, Herb's Honey would like to provide you with all of your local honey needs. Our local honey is the best of 7 counties including Mecklenburg.



NC Seasonal Local Raw Honey

Carolina Blonde - The first honey flow of the year; late February thru March. A very mild taste, light color with a bit of cool mint.

Queen City Gold - A late spring, March thru early May with a bit more refined honey flavor fruity and slightly sweeter.

South End - An early summer May and June honey with a much darker color and the old fashioned flavor and a buttery taste.

Herbs Pride - This is a July thru October, late summer early fall honey. Bronze in color with a fantastic robust honey flavor and taste

Full Season Raw Honey from NC

Mint Hill - From Southern Piedmont area.

This is a March thru October Light Golden color honey mild sweetness with a definite mint aroma and taste.

Mountain Orchard - From the foothills of the Southern Appalachian Mountains.

This is a March through October, moderately sweet, light color Honey with the aroma of fresh squeezed apple juice and a definite berry taste

Blue Ridge Harvest - From the Northern Mountains along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

This is a June through October Honey encompassing rich mountain flora with a light color, strong flavor and aroma!

**** Order online through ETSY.com ****

Our Honey Available at These Fine Locations:

Berry Brooke Farms

1257 East Blvd.
Charlotte, NC 28203

Jones Hardware

10100 Moores Chapel Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28214

Reids SouthPark

South Park Mall
Charlotte, NC 28209

Mecklenburg County Farmers Market

1801 Yorkmont Rd.
Building A #36
Charlotte, NC 28209
(Saturdays from 8 am to 2 pm)

Provisions Waxhaw

107 W. South Main St.
Waxhaw, NC 28173

Piedmont Produce

4212 HWY 218 East
Monroe, NC 28110

CMC Monroe

600 Hospital Dr.
Monroe, NC 28112
"inside gift shop"

Charlotte Supplements

4004 South Blvd.
Charlotte, NC 28209

Tryon House Restaraunt

215 Exmore St. & Old Pineville Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28209

Renfrow Hardware

188 North Trade St.
Matthews, NC 28105

Reids Fine Foods

2823 Selwyn Ave.
Charlotte, NC 28209

You Can Always Order Online Through ETSY.com



But you have to understand the perspective of Mr. Bennett's reference here. Mr. Bennett says that his experience in the army taught him how to "mobilize people and equipment, build contingency plans, and function under immense physical and mental pressure." He concludes by saying, "These situations teach a person how to execute plans—or adapt and improvise." Isn't this what working with our bees does for us? Don't we learn how to execute plans (when to do different activities), AND how to adapt and improvise (when things in the beeyard aren't as we expected)?

A final observation I would make is that that almost every beekeeper I know approaches their work with the bees from an entrepreneurial aspect. Whether keeping bee as a hobby or business, we approach the challenges we face in the beeyard with innovation. We may not come up with original ideas (although many do), but we use the information we gain from one another to develop approaches that don't follow hard rules, and are sometimes unique to us or a particular situation.

I share all of this to say to all of you, "Thank you!!" Thanks for sharing your ideas and experience. Thanks for being willing to debate different approaches in a respectful manner that allows folks to hear other ideas without feeling threatened. And thank you for your innovation, which inspires me every time I work with my bees. You have helped me become a better beekeeper!

-Ed Moyers

Bee City USA *by Martha Krauss*



The BeeCityUSA program encourages cities to celebrate pollinators.

Certified BeeCityUSA communities galvanize neighborhoods, businesses and municipalities for pollinator conservation. Both Matthews (4th certification) and Davidson (37th certification) have been certified in Mecklenburg County. For more information about becoming a Bee City visit beecityusa.org/become-a-bee-city.

Matthews BeeCityUSA participated in the Matthews Historical Foundation Victorian Lawn Party at the Reid House on Saturday, April 8, 2017. Five Meck Bee members hosted a table with information about bees. There were posters, displays and the Meck Bees Observation Hive. Children were fascinated by seeing the bees. My favorite comment was, "Bugs, I love bugs!"

Adults also responded enthusiastically. Some were interested in becoming beekeepers and they had many questions for us to answer. We gave them the meckbees.org website to find out about the meetings and the Bee School 2018.

The next event that Matthews BeeCityUSA will have a presence is Earth Day on the Greenway in Matthews and Kids In Nature Day on Saturday, April 22, 2017. Hope to see you there!



From left to right: Will Krauss, Daphne Traywick, Martha Krauss, Hazen Blodgett, Stacy Feldstein



Telling the Bees – Bill Bishop

by Kim O'Shea

I have Bill Bishop's Bees. He and Ray were kind to set up a hive for me from frames in Bill's bee yard. When Bill called me to catch a swarm, it was Bill's queens that came to mine. When the Queen emerged, the hive went back to Bill's bee yard for 10-14 days to mate (consistently, the Queen was laying after 8 days). He insisted I bring the hives back to his yard, as "he was confident what I'd be getting. He's only spent the last 35 years getting it right, for the bees."

It will be with a heavy heart, and tears, that I too will tell Bill's bees of his passing. Somehow, although 90 years old and a body tired, I thought that Bill Bishop would be talking bees in my ear forever.

And then, I remembered, I have Bill's bees. Through Johnny Preston, I attended the 'Bee Breakfast' every Sunday for over a year, breaking bread with a lovely gaggle o' Beekeepers. Thanks to Bill and him sharing his home each Sunday, I have Bill's beekeeping friends, too. Not all of them, mind you . . . there are LOTS of folks out there whom Bill helped, but I relish each time I meet someone new and they have a Bill Bishop and the Bees tale to tell.



Perhaps we all consider ourselves, those touched by Bill's bee smarts and kindness, as a Nuc. A hive not bound by boxes. Although Bill is no longer with us, we continue on his instruction, his stories, his bits o' equipment, ingenuity and although he wouldn't admit it, he was the one beekeeper, among all that I met, who talked the most about "bee science." He always knew the "how's and why's." He teased me for my "book knowledge", but what he didn't know is that when he and I talked about bees . . . I took notes.

If anyone knows people who know Bill, please do let them know. In Ireland, which I call home, when someone passes, it is everyone's

task to let everyone know. So everyone gets a moment to light a candle, tell a story, at least reflect quietly, or among friends, on that person's contribution to the rest of us. And so, their memory continues on. Much like, I guess, Telling the Bees.

On a lighter note (and I don't think that I am telling any secrets here): Bill Bishop believes in ghosts. So, I am hopeful that Bill musters the strength to hang around a while, to haunt ALL of our bee yards. He can come and go as he pleases, but when you hear that little voice in your ear giving guidance on the next bee chore . . . I bet you, it's Bill. And you really should listen.

Take care, the Beekeeping Community just lost an elder.

May we all continue in his stead, for the bees. In the simplest of fashion, ever with a smile and a giving heart. Beekeeping is as much about the bees as it is the people who support them. And may we all think like Bill "when-ever I get to to talkin' bees with people, I, too, am always learning something new."



Mel Disselkoen presenting his OTS Queen Rearing Technique

April 22, 2017 @ Mouzon Methodist Church (3100 Selwyn Ave, 28209)

10am to 12noon Classroom Presentation with Q&A

1pm to 3pm Field Demonstration & Discussion

Fee: \$20 MCBA members; \$35 non-members

On-line registration to open soon on MeckBees.org

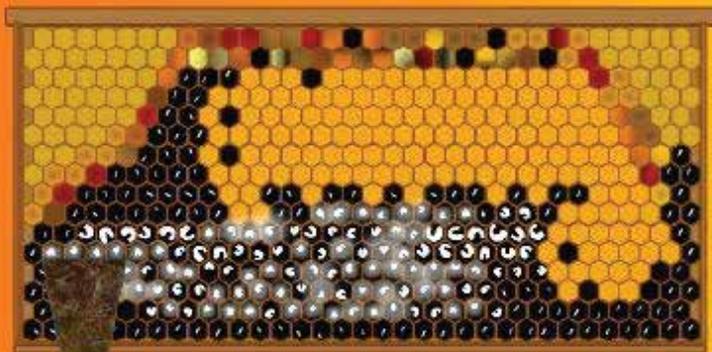
Mel Disselkoen's On The Spot (OTS) Queen Rearing Technique is a very approachable and reliable way for both beginners and advanced beekeepers to produce their own queens. Be sure to attend this one!!! Check out Mel's website www.mdasplitter.com to learn more about his OTS method and his book!



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OTS QUEEN REARING

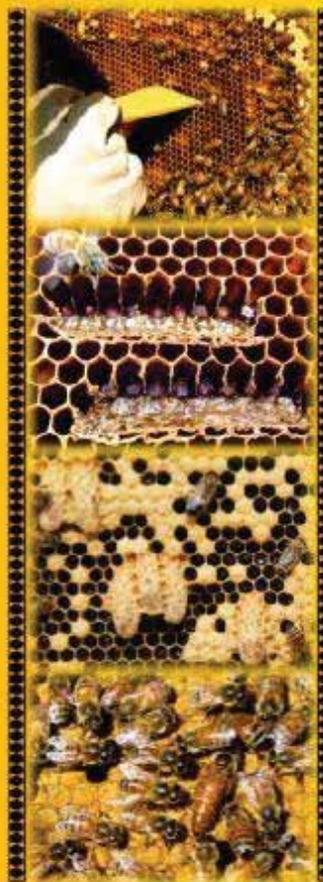
A Survival Guide For Beekeepers Worldwide



Self-Sufficient Beekeeping Strategies
For Novice and Expert Alike

- On-The Spot Queens
- Notching Method
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- Generate Private Stock
- Honey Production
- Pollination

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by MEL DISSELKOEN

Publication details and pricing forthcoming



What's Blooming in April: Holly *by Matt Burgoon*

Common Name: Holly, Winterberry, Possumhaw

Botanical Name: *Ilex opaca*, *I. verticillata*, *I. decidua*

Plant Type: Evergreen shrub or tree

Typical Bloom Period: April - June

Nectar Usefulness: medium

Pollen Usefulness: medium

In later spring in Mecklenburg County, beekeepers can count on plants of the Aquifoliaceae family (Holly) to provide both nectar and pollen to their honey bees and other native bees. Hollies are native to North and South America and Asia, and they are widely used as landscaping plants, so they provide ample forage for bees in both urban and suburban environments. Most species are evergreen, keeping leaves up to three years, but we are fortunate in Mecklenburg to host deciduous species as well.

Holly plants depend on honey bees and other pollinators for fruiting and propagation because they are “dioecious”. This means that the pollen-generating male flowers are on distinct plants from the female seed generating flowers.

The flowers of a dioecious specie are called

“imperfect” because they do not have both male and

female parts on the same flower. It is easy to tell whether

the holly plant you are examining is male or female by looking at the flower structure. All of them have four sepals and four petals. The flowers of a male plant have four anthers sticking out in square array. They are called “staminate” because of the developed stamen. The flowers of a female plant have a clustered ovary in the center of the flower. They are called “carpellate” and sometimes “pistillate”. If you plant a holly with hopes of seeing berries, it is necessary to get a female, and also to get a male that blooms at the same time. A good garden center can help you select the best cultivar pairing.

Most of the holly found in the urbanized portions of Mecklenburg County are *Ilex opaca*, “American holly”. American holly is easy to identify because of its common association with winter holidays and distinctive bright red berries. The leaf shape is called spinulose-dentate — having irregular sharp spines poking out. The spines are indeed sharp, and since *I. opaca* is evergreen and grows densely, it is regularly used as a hedge in landscapes. Left unpruned, however, a holly tree will grow up to 30 feet tall with a shape that is conical. Unless harvested by birds, the bright red berries remain on a female tree from season to season. Flowers and fruits might be limited on a plant that is pruned excessively.

Mecklenburg County is also commonly home to two deciduous species of *Ilex*: *I. verticillata* “black alder or winterberry” and *I. decidua* “possumhaw”. They may be distinguished by slight differences in the shape and edge texture of the leaves. Possumhaw leaves are more elliptical and have rounded bumps on the leaf edges, while winterberry leaves are more obovate and have sharply serrated edges. Winterberry leaves also have more



Staminate Ilex opaca in South Park on March 1.



What's Blooming cont'd

conspicuous leaf veins. In wintertime, only the berries remain on these species, and provide a sparkle of red under a fresh snow or frozen rain.

Holly pollen is orange. Beekeepers that separate their honey by source report that holly honey is very light in color and flavor, a true "spring honey" from a plant usually associated with the chills of winter.

The following are rich sources of native plant information:

Flowers of the South, native and exotic.
by Wilhelmina F Greene; H L Blomquist
Publisher: Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, 2011, ©1953.

Manual of the vascular flora of the Carolinas.
by Albert E Radford; Harry E Ahles; C Ritchie Bell
Publisher: Chapel Hill, N.C. Univ. of North Carolina Press 1976, 1976

Information about nectar and pollen values are from:

Garden Plants for Honey Bees
by Peter Lindtner;
Publisher: Kalamazzoo : Wicwas Press, 2014.

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Pictures & Article Submissions
are always needed and are
greatly appreciated.

Email any submissions to:

Rachel.E.G.Woodhouse@gmail.com

Subject: Honeycomb



In the Beeyard

by David Segrest

The most important thing we are dealing with right now is swarms. The future issues that will need action right now are making honey and keeping the bees alive through winter. Hey!! We just finished winter. Honey comes off in late June or July. This is April.

The plan for winter starts now. Hives need to be strong and well provisioned and healthy. We will talk about that more next month. New beekeepers have learned in bee school that “you probably won’t get any honey the first year.” This is true in normal circumstances. There are ways to change this. We will discuss two ways here. For beekeepers who started with packages or nucs; feed these hives as long as they will take it or until the 1st brood box is almost full. Add another brood box and keep feeding until that is almost full. At this point we would normally stop feeding and put a queen excluder and add supers. Instead separate the boxes. Put the queen and the capped brood and a couple of frames of honey in one box. If you are not sure you got the queen put a frame of very young brood and eggs in there. Leave everything else in the other box.

Place a queen excluder on one of the brood boxes. Put 3 supers on top of that. Put another queen excluder and put the other brood box on top of everything. There was not room to tell you everything so get your mentor to help you.

The second method will probably not work if you started with packages. If you started with nucs, as soon as the bottom box is almost full in the strongest hive, steal a frame of brood (preferably capped) and a frame of honey from the weaker hive and put them in the second box. Keep feeding until the 2nd box is full then add your queen excluders and honey supers. Quit feeding the strong hive, keep feeding the weaker hive and encourage it to build up to full strength for winter.

You may want to schedule a mite treatment to finish before adding supers. Once again, I didn’t tell you everything. Get your mentor’s help.



Mecklenburg County Beekeepers Association
2017 Dues Form
(Please print clearly)

Today's Date _____

Please circle one:

County Association \$5 I am: New Renewing N/A

State Association \$15 I am: New Renewing N/A

Total Paid: _____ **If renewing, Member ID # _____

*First Name: _____ *Last name: _____

*Address: _____

*City: _____ *State: _____ *Zip code: _____

Phone: _____ *Email: _____

County of residence: _____ Send Newsletter via: _____ Email (thanks!) _____ Paper

How long have you kept bees? _____ (yrs) Number of hives _____

Would you like to become more involved with the Club? Yes / No

*This information (name, mailing address, email address) will be provided to all members of the Mecklenburg Beekeepers (and to members ONLY- no one else will receive this information from us). If you DO NOT want this information shared, please opt out by initialing here. _____

Questions for State Membership only:

I want to receive the NCSBA quarterly **Bee Buzz** newsletter by: Email Circle one: Postal mail Don't want it

I want to receive notices of bee-related EDUCATIONAL opportunities by email: Yes No

I want to receive bee/beekeeping related SOLICITATION emails: Yes No

The "Yellow Book" membership directory is mailed to active members annually as a printed copy. It is not available electronically. If you **DO NOT** want to receive a hard copy of the Yellow Book, please initial here _____

Make check payable to MCBA and mail completed form to:

Jodie Rierson
MCBA Secretary
7032 Chapparall Lane
Charlotte, NC 28215

