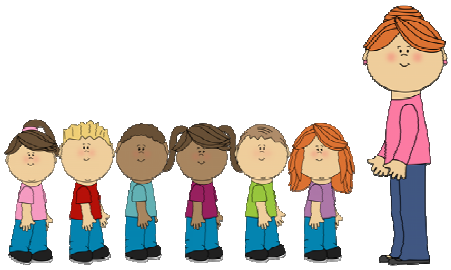
East Texas Beekeepers Association

June Report *by Dick Counts*

June 7, 2018

ETBA is an organization with multiple purposes. We gather each month to enjoy fellowship with other beekeepers and to share and learn about our hobby. However, our purpose reaches beyond this monthly gathering. Article I of our Constitution and By-laws further defines our role as providing educational programs not only for us as hobbyist beekeepers but also to the general public about the importance of bees and beekeeping activities to our agriculture and our society.



We perform this function through our presentations at schools, church groups, organizations and clubs of various types. We operate the ETBA booth at the Tyler fair and sometimes at various weekend festivals and work with TBA at their Texas State Fair booth. We partner with our corporate sponsor Eastman to provide bee presentations at their activities.

Our Queen and Ambassador programs are key elements of these presentations. While we have been without a Honey Queen for the last year, our previous Queen Brittany Miller has been a great help in making many of these presentations for us.

We are interested in getting the valuable queen program started again. We need your suggestions on the structure and operation of our queen program. We also need a volunteer to become the Chairperson of our Queen Program. We need to find young beekeepers interested in becoming a Queen or Ambassador. I will be happy to answer any questions you might have. Please visit with me and share your thoughts and ideas.

Did you know our Beginner's Beekeeping Training was originally developed as a means of attracting families and youth, with a goal of developing young beekeepers with an interest in becoming a Queen or Ambassador? Through our Scholarship Program, we not only teach the basics of beginning beekeeping but focus on participation of our young students in the ETBA organization. We do not cover the advanced beekeeping practices such as President Matt covers in some of his courses, but we do prepare young beekeepers for not only a successful hobby, but also an opportunity of service in the community and to the conservation of a natural and needed resource.

President—Matt Thomas

Vice President—Eddie Collins

Treasurer—John Holladay

Secretary—Bridgette Thomasson

Ex. Director/Reporter—Dick Counts

Honey Queen Chair—tbd

Director-at-Large—Stan Brantley

Program Director — Joe Laws

Webmaster—Ken Wilkinson

Newsletter Editor—Trish Wilson

Next Meeting

June 7th

United Methodist Church
405 West Main in Whitehouse
6:30 PM

EHB vs AHB

Recently at my engagements I received a number of questions about the subject of Africanized Honey Bees (AHB). There are many different reasons that AHB have done so well in North and South America. This month I will describe four of the major reasons. Before we detail the reasons AHB have done so well, we need to understand their origin.

There are around 30 different subspecies of the western honey bee located in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Each subspecies or race of honey bees have different traits and are adapted to different temperatures and environments. Races of bees in Europe are more adapted to cold climates, while in Africa they prefer a more tropical climate. Originally when bees came over, in the 1600s, they were of various races originating in Europe, acclimated to temperate climates. These hives eventually spread down to the tropical regions of South America. Up until 1956 European honey bees were the only bees kept in North and South America.

Before 1956 beehives in South America were not doing very well, primarily their honey production was only 47th in the world. A geneticist named Dr. Kerr had the idea to introduce tropically evolved bees into their environment because they might do better. He secured African queens known for their honey production and kept them in a Brazilian apiary. There are many different ways the hives could have escaped, but the theory was that a grounds keeper removed queen excluders off of the hives. Approximately 30 queens escaped in swarms. These queens produced drones that mated with European queens, creating a hybrid bee which we now know as the Africanized Honey Bee. Since these colonies were so successful in tropical environments, they spread quickly moving into much of the southern U.S. by 2003.

There are many reasons that AHB have been so successful. One main reason is their swarming behaviors. Most European Honey Bee (EHB) hives will swarm one or two times in a year, Africanized hives can swarm up to 12 times in a year. This swarming technique is possible by one trait they have called usurpation. Instead of sending one large swarm with a lot of the workers, they will send a queen with 10-20 workers. This mini swarm will find a weakened existing hive, enter, kill the queen, and take over the hive.

Another reason they are so successful is their mating behaviors. When an Africanized drone mates with a European queen the genes in the drone will be dominate, making that hive become Africanized. AHB hive also will produce more drones that European hives, saturating drone congregation areas. This makes the chance that a European queen mating with an Africanized drone much higher.

The most obvious trait of AHB is their increased defensiveness, or aggression. While their stings are no more deadly, they are much more responsive to any type of disturbance, something that is speculated that they picked up from their African side. In Africa there are much higher rates of predation on hives giving the bees an increased defensive behavior. If disturbed enough they have also been known to abscond, another reason they seem more aggressive.

Since AHB are more acclimated to warmer climates, they are not as concerned about their nest site. If a swarm is unable to find a hive, they will start to build an open air nest, on whatever they were resting on. They are also more inclined to nest under-ground, making their hives hard to find.

Knowing about Africanized Honey bees is important for beekeepers; it is becoming more of a problem to the U.S. as they keep moving more northward. However, when you hear someone say that they have seen an Africanized hive, you should ask questions to determine if this is true, and if not, help educate the person so they know what a truly Africanized colony is.

~ Peter

On the next page is more information to help you understand and be able to identify the differences between European Honey Bees (EHB) and Africanized Honey Bees (AHB).

EHB vs AHB continued...

Although there is not an easy way to identify the two by their physical appearances without a microscope and a means to measure minuscule wing length differences, there are some character differences that can help in determining what species they are observing.

The Differences Between European and African Honey Bees : A Fact Sheet

Hive Defense and Stinging

European Honey Bee	*African Honey Bee*
• May send out 10-20 guard bees in response to disturbance up to 20 feet away	• May send out several hundred guard bees in response to disturbance up to 40 yards away
• Once agitated, will usually become calm within 1-2 hours	• Once agitated, may remain defensive for much longer--perhaps several days
• Disturbed colony will result in 10-20 stings	• Disturbed African colony may sting 6-10 times more than a disturbed European colony

Swarming and Absconding

European Honey Bee	*African Honey Bee*
• Swarm 1 or 2 times per year	• Can swarm 10 or more times per year
• Swarms are larger and need larger volume to nest	• Swarms are much smaller, some not larger than a coffee cup or a softball--can nest in smaller area
• Rarely abscond (or completely abandon nest) from nesting location	• Abscond often and relocate to more suitable nesting location

Selection of Nesting Site

European Honey Bee	*African Honey Bee*
• Look for large cavity about 10 gallons in size	• Will nest in much smaller cavities about 1-5 gallons in volume (e.g. water meter boxes)
• Typically nest in cavities that are above ground, clean and dry	• Often nest in underground cavities, do not discriminate between moist and dry locations
• Look for protected locations	• Will nest in completely exposed locations (i.e. hanging from a tree branch)
• Due to larger amount of bees starting colony, nests are easier to detect	• Due to smaller amount of bees starting colony, nests are more difficult to detect until they are disturbed

Texas Apiary Inspection Service

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE RESEARCH

Bee Removal Reference Guide: *Bee Removal list last update: 05/09/2018*

***If you are in need of a bee removal please contact one of the beekeepers listed on our website (http://txbeeinspection.tamu.edu/bee-removal/) by county

or your local pest control operator (http://www.texasagriculture.gov/RegulatoryPrograms/StructuralPestControlService/PestControlBusinessLicenseeWebSearch.aspx).

Also:

If you are interested in the Texas Master Beekeeper Program, please take a look at the program website for more information (http://masterbeekeeper.tamu.edu/).

Sincerely,

Mary Reed

mary.reed@tamu.edu

If you have any questions about honey bee removals please contact the Texas Apiary Inspection Service at 979-845-9713 or TAIS@tamu.edu and we will be happy to assist you.

Practical Experiences in the Beeyard by Stan Brantley

Honey harvest is coming soon. Depending on your location, the honey flow should continue through the middle of June. You should make plans to extract your honey by the latter part of June or by the middle of July. By then, our summer temperatures will let the honey flow freely from the frames during extraction.

Pull only frames that are at least 90% capped to be confident that your honey has a moisture content of 18% or less and will not ferment. Plan to extract as soon as possible after pulling the supers. Once off the hive, supers are vulnerable to Small Hive Beetle and Wax Moths. If you have to hold them overnight, try to keep them inside a garage or storage building and do not leave them outside.

How do you remove the bees from the supers to be extracted? There are several different methods beekeepers use to get the bees off the frames. The best method for you may depend on how many supers you plan to pull.

If you plan to harvest only a hive or two, the simplest method is to pull one frame at a time and brush off the bees. This is a slow process and not really suitable for pulling a lot of frames. Pull the frame, brush off the bees with a bee brush, and place it in some kind of closeable container to keep the bees from getting back on it. You can use a large plastic bin from Walmart or an empty Deep or Medium box with some kind of lid and bottom. For the bottom, I have some sheet metal pans with sides about an inch tall. They not only keep the bees out but catch any honey that drips from the frames. Some people make similar trays from ½ inch plywood with 1 x 2 sides. The same tray works as a lid or you can use an extra Outer Cover.

A Bee Escape Board can be placed below the super you want to remove if there is no brood in the super. The Bee Escape Board allows the bees to exit the super but not return. Be prepared to lift a full super of honey to put the escape board in place. Wait at least 24 hours after placing the board to allow the bees to find their way out of the super. Small Hive Beetle is a concern when using the escape board. Without the bees to hold the beetles in check, they are free to start laying eggs and sliming the frames. Do not leave the escape board in place for more than a day before extracting. This process does require an escape board for each hive and multiple trips to the apiary.

If you are pulling multiple supers, a gasoline or battery powered leaf blower is a quick and effective way to blow the bees out of a complete super at one time. Place the super on top of the hive, resting on the short side so the frames are vertical and the bottom bars are toward the back of the hive. Standing behind the hive, blow the bees from the bottom bars toward the top bars. The bees will be blown into the air in front of the hive and will find their way back to the hive entrance. After blowing out the bees, be sure to cover the top and bottom of the super to keep the bees from flying back to their honey.

Beekeepers harvesting large numbers of supers often use a Fume Board to drive the bees from the super into the boxes below. A fume board is one of the quickest and most effective ways to clear bees out of your supers. A fume board is a 1-3/8 in. deep, wood-sided box with a metal top lined with a layer of cloth beneath and an open bottom. Spray the board with an agent such as Bee Go, Bee-Quick, or BeeDun and set the fume board on top of your supers. The bees will leave the super to escape the fumes in 7-10 minutes. The trick is to add enough of the fume agent to force the bees down out of the super but not so much as to drive them out of the hive.

Do you know the difference in Orientation Flights and Swarms? Orientation Flights are new bees exiting the hive for the first time and learning the orientation of the hive to the world. They often rush out of the entrance, crawl up the face of the hive, and fly in front of the hive, back and forth and up and down. They face the hive while flying to get their internal radar oriented so they can find their way home from their foraging flights. Swarms issue from the hive "like water pouring out of a bucket", then swirl and circle in front of and above the hive as they seek to follow the swarming queen's pheromones as she flies. Eventually, they come together into a loose group and fly off in search of a new home.

The June Speaker is .....

ETBA President; Matt

Topics; Apiary and Hive Management. Hope to see you there.

...from the Editor

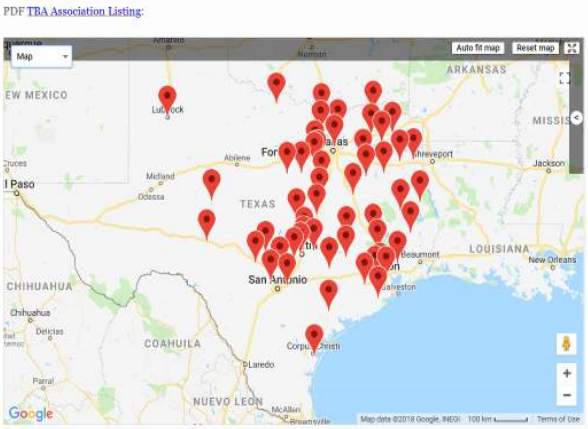
Texas Honey Queen & Princess Program

The Queen's Quiz Bowl was a blast! With the help of Mr. Brantley and Christie Pettibon, each team had to answer any honeybee question that they were asked. The looser of each round had to taste a nasty honey that was mixed together by Ruth Ramos. Gross! We all voted that Mr. Brantley had the best face after tasting it.

~ 2017 Texas Honey Queen, Megan Pettibon

Facebook November 14, 2017

Out of town or helping a friend find a beekeepers meeting near them, go to:
http://texasbeekeepers.org/local-beekeeper-associations/



LOCAL BEEKEEPER ASSOCIATIONS

Local beekeeper associations affiliated with the Texas Beekeepers Association generally hold monthly meetings. These local beekeeper associations present an opportunity for beekeepers to meet and discuss techniques, methods, and new discoveries while providing new educational awareness for newcomers. The larger local beekeeper associations also conduct scholarship programs for young people and elect local Honey Queens and Princesses who visit schools, gardening clubs and community groups to increase awareness of the honey bee.

Each local beekeeper association elects its own officers and conducts its affairs according to published bylaws. Meetings generally run sixty to ninety minutes depending upon the meeting agenda as determined by the officers and members. Each local beekeeper association, and individual local member, is encouraged to join the Texas Beekeepers Association to enable access to the TBA Journal, support at the state level in legislative matters affecting the honey bee, discounted entry into the TBA Summer Clinic and TBA Annual Convention. Each of these annual functions provide exposure to industry leading speakers, research, and education.

TEXAS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Summer Clinic

June 30, 2018 9am - 5pm Conroe, TX

Lone Star Convention Center

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Jamie Ellis

Jamie Ellis is the Gahan Endowed Associate Professor of Entomology in the Department of Entomology and Nematology at the University of Florida and a PhD in Entomology from Rhodes University in South Africa. Dr. Ellis created the AFBEE program (African Bee Extension and Education Program), the UF, South Florida, Caribbean Bee Colleges, and the U of F Master Beekeeping Program.

Whether you're an aspiring beekeeper, a new beekeeper or an experienced beekeeper, there's a topic for you!

Getting Started With Bees: Hive Types
Managing Bees for Your Backyard Apiary
Common Pests and How to Cope
Honey Bee Health & Nutrition
Splitting Hives to Grow Your Apiary
Brood Diseases & Management
Utilizing Products of the Hive
Swarm Management and Capture
Pollen, Propolis, and Wax
Beekeeping as a Business: Honey Sales, Bee Removals, & Ag Exemptions Honey
Bee Hive Autopsy: How to Avoid Making the Same Mistake Twice

And Many More.....

$60 Single Ticket/$50 TBA Members $100 2 pack/$90 for TBA Members

$25 children under 16

Register early! Ticket prices increase at the door.

Register now online at texasbeekeepers.org or contact Shirley Doggett
***sdoggett@mindspring.com*, 400 County Road 440, Thrall, TX 76578**