



THE SHORE SWARM



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BEEKEEPERS GUILD OF THE EASTERN SHORE

MAY, 2014

WWW.BGESVA.ORG

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE FOR MAY

OK, I think warm weather is here to stay!
Maybe? Perhaps?

This morning while I was trying to collect my thoughts about writing this message, Carolyn called from the kitchen that a backyard hive was beginning to swarm. I quickly got my bee suit on and ran out to spray the swarming bees and the hive with a fine spray of hose water - a trick I learned from a book written by our beekeeper hero, Rev. Langstroth.

If you are lucky, the bees will think it is a sudden rain storm and go back into the hive. I believe I have heard them inside berating their weatherman who forecast bright sunshine for the day! Anyhow, their retreat into the hive buys you enough time to make up a nuc or to just split the boxes apart which disorients the bees. I use anything, besides foul words which have never worked for me, to get enough time to try to save the bees from just flying away. Sometimes the flying queen will get wetted down and you can catch her on the ground surrounded by a ball of her bees. This is my third swarm this month. I only have three more hives to swarm, as if that was any help.

Just to confound my thought-collecting effort further, I had a rental property owner call me from San Francisco. Naturally, she had a very long sad story to tell me about some bad tenants who trashed her place and a man who conned her aunt out of ownership of a property. I will just mention there were other discombobulating calls, without giving any details.

As you can guess none of this helped me get this message done in a thoughtful manner. So, now, I am just cutting to the chase and telling you what I had in mind before the interruptions:

The nectar flow is on in fine fashion over here. The bees are busily hauling it in. Get out there and put some honey supers on and don't let them get more than about 60% full before you add more supers. The bees need the space to spread the nectar out to cure it into honey. I doubt any of us will get 55 gallons of honey like my friend up the street did last year but we can do our best to get some for our families.

Happy honey harvest! I will see everyone at the BIC in May.

Paul

MAY MEETING

TUESDAY, MAY 6TH
6:30 PM

BARRIER ISLAND CENTER
MACHIPONGO

GUEST SPEAKER

DAVE KVELLO
“SWARMS”

REFRESHMENTS
NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS

THE BUZZ AROUND US

THE BEE INFORMED NETWORK

If you're known to the Virginia State Beekeepers Association, you probably received a request from the Bee Informed Network to participate in the annual survey on beekeeping practices and statistics for hives kept in Virginia.

This short survey asks beekeepers about their practices of feeding bees, medicating bees, propagating new colonies, and other aspects of hive management. This survey typically asks beekeepers about over-wintering morbidity and mortality; however, this past year saw remarkable summertime losses of colonies, and the survey was expanded to include data from a 12-month period.

The last date for submission of data was April 29th. The statistics will be collated and examined, and presented to beekeepers when

available. Last year, there was a presentation at the annual VSBA meeting in June. The information was interesting and gave the beekeepers who were present some interesting ideas about what might help colonies survive and grow strong through the year.

Among the facts revealed by last year's statistics: Colonies from which splits are made tend to be strong and resist varroa build-up.

LOCAL RESEARCH ON BEES

Member Russell Vreeland is conducting some research on bees and is getting some help from among our members. In Russell's words:

This first planned experiment is to simply observe the hive and monitor when bees fill an area with pollen. Then note how long they leave it in place before using it or before they put brood near it. The idea is to determine approximately how long the fermentation cycle is for pollen in a hive. After that comes the fun part of sampling over time and analyzing the process itself.

VIRGINIA POLLINATOR SHORT COURSE
MAY 14TH
9AM – 4PM
HAMPTON ROADS AGRICULTURAL
RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER
VIRGINIA BEACH

At least a few of our members have signed up for this course, which will cover:

- The importance of pollinator conservation
- Basic bee and other beneficial insect biology
- Bee-friendly farming
- Habitat restoration
- Experience in an open laboratory outdoors
- Native wildlife habitat restoration

☒ Current farm bill provisions

(POLLINATOR SHORT COURSE – CONT.)

If you're interested in registering, please contact
Ashley Minnerath
The Xerces Society
shortcourses@xerces.org
(855) 232-6639, ex 102

Matt Cormon and Ann Snyder are attending,
and if you'd like to carpool, please contact
either at
bleakhouse@verizon.net
cormons@intercom.net

STATE OF THE POLLINATOR LICENSE PLATE

Samantha Gallagher reports that the new Virginia Pollinator License plate has been approved by the General Assembly, and signed off on by our governor, and now merely awaits processing and production by DMV. She says that the plates will be ready in November (at the earliest) and February, 2015 (at the latest). Those who have filled out and submitted paperwork need only sit back and wait, and the plates will be delivered to you when ready.

GUILD NEWS

Many thanks to Marinos Kalmoutis for his very interesting talk at our April meeting about his adventures in beekeeping – about purchasing an entire apiary as a way of becoming a beekeeper. Most of us can be encouraged by his persistence and by all the lessons Marinos learned along the way.

We also benefited from hearing about beekeeping practices in Germany, from Bettina Dembek who had attended a beekeepers' meeting in her native valley recently. We also welcomed a guest Felicite Berrouette, originally

from Belize, who is establishing a substantial apiary here on the shore, using practices and knowledge learned in Belize.

We hope our guild can benefit from a little cross-pollination of ideas from other places!

Thanks to WT Wilkins and Marinos for hosting Open Hive Days for our beginners on April 12th. These experiences are the best for teaching members how to look at real bees in real hives.

If our members and mentors are planning to get together to look at hives throughout the year, perhaps they will extend an invitation to other nearby beekeepers to join them (through our club secretary, if necessary) for more hands-on experiences for everyone.

GUILD NOMINATIONS

Mary Walker and David Fluhart are members of the Nominating Committee to come up with a slate of officers for next year's guild, to be presented at the May meeting and voted upon in June.

NUCS WANTED

Many of our members are committed to making splits from their established local hives this year, and many of the new beekeepers are hoping to purchase the resulting nucs. This is seen as the best way to develop local, well-acclimated bees here on the shore and avoid introduced pests and undesirable bee traits (i.e. the dreaded Africanized Bee defensiveness).

Donna Fauber has agreed to be the go-between for the nuc-havers and the nuc wanters. Please let Donna know if you wish to be put on her list of those who need and those who can supply nucs this year. Contact Donna at
dfauber@verizon.net

GPS COORDINATES

BGES members have been concerned about the effect of agricultural pesticide application on local bees. Several beekeepers have witnessed the die-off of many of their forager bees after nearby aerial spraying occurred.

The local pesticide applicators and farmers do not wish to harm bees, but pesticides are an expected part of conventional farming which is a very large and significant part of our community. So how do we co-exist?

Local pilot Michael Steelman suggested that the best solution is for beekeepers to know and communicate with their farming neighbors – to let them know where the bees are located, what the concerns are, and perhaps even sweeten the relationship with honey.

Another huge help is to send in your hive locations to Bob Good or to John Chubb. They can help you to determine accurate GPS coordinates for your hive locations, and this information will be shared with the 2 men who apply pesticides aerially here on the shore. The pilots – if they are aware of bee locations either through the mapping or from the farmer – can be attentive to wind direction and use other tactics to protect your bees while getting their job done.

Bob Good – robertgood@mac.com

John Chubb – Yeadley1@verizon.net

THE NECTAR FLOW

This is the most exciting time of the year for honeybees, who find their world filled with a variety of nourishing and interesting nectars. Fruit trees and strawberries are blooming prolifically now, as are many great trees and dandelions and many other wild flowers.

Cultivated vegetables that are left to bolt provide nectar that bees enjoy. Cabbage, turnip greens, asparagus, kale, and many other plants that we don't normally appreciate for their blooms, have some value added when we see how much the honeybees enjoy them.

Although clovers and many other plants continue to provide great forage throughout the summer, many feel that the nectar flow begins to ebb when tulip poplar trees bloom out, in June.

STATE MEETING

The Virginia State Beekeeping Meeting will be held June 13th – 14th in Lynchburg, VA. Visit the VSBA website for more information: www.virginiabeekeepers.org.

TRY THIS!

If you would like your bees to draw out regular natural comb in your hive, alternate frames of conventional foundation with empty frames, or frames with only a thin strip of foundation at the top. The bees' habit of allowing that all-important "bee space" will cause the resulting honeycomb to be straight and regular.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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| May 6 th | BGES Meeting, BIC, 6:30 pm |
| May 14 th | Dave Kvello, guest speaker
Va. Pollinator Short Course
9 – 4, Hampton Roads Ag.
Research and Experiment Ctr. |
| June 7 th | BGES Meeting, ES Chamber of
Commerce, 10:00 am.
Guest speaker – Keith Tignor,
Virginia State Apiarist |
| June 13-14 | Virginia State Beekeepers Assoc.
Meeting, Lynchburg. |



-Ann Snyder