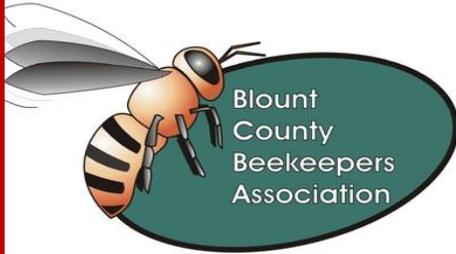


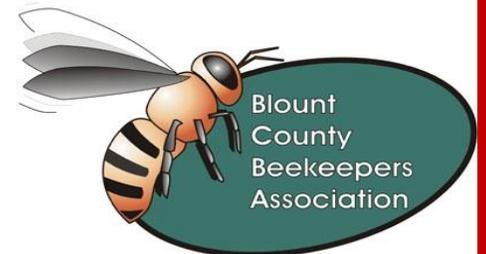
BCBA

BLOUNT COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

JUNE 2017



NEWSLETTER



Our next meeting

Is June 12th at 6:30pm at The Maryville Church of Christ, 611 Sherwood Dr. Our guest speaker will be Shirley DeBusk. She will be speaking on the topic of award winning cut comb honey. Shirley and her late husband has been beekeeping and entering her honey and related items in various fairs with blue ribbon results for many years. She will provide some insight on how to produce super clean cut comb honey (and other honey related topics as well. There will also be a demonstration on how to extract honey. The Club has three extractors that can be used by any club member. Howard Kerr has these and can be picked up at his home. Call first for scheduling. A \$25.00 deposit is required to pick one up and if it is returned clean the \$25.00 will be refunded.

Seasonal Management

With the Honey flow beginning to wind down it is time to start thinking about getting ready to take off our honey. It's time to be thinking about what we will need to process our honey and get it ready to sell or to store for ourselves. Make sure you leave some for the bees. A strong colony will need at least 60 lbs. of honey to make it thru the winter. You can supplement their stores with 2 to 1 sugar water. It is time to get Meds for mites (if you treat for mites). The heaviest mite load will occur in July and August and can devastate a colony before you realize it. Put on robbing screens and give them good ventilation for the heat is on its way. Always think ahead and Happy Beekeeping.

Harlen Breeden

June - Chuck's Corner

The next few weeks is what makes beekeeping exciting. Those with new and developing packages and nucs get to see how quickly a colony can grow. You may also get to see some difficulties such as a poorly mated queen or some type of colony kill – BUT hopefully you will see fresh white comb being built, eggs being laid, capped brood then the exciting orientation flight of a new batch of bees.

Perhaps some of your hives have grown at such a rate that you have been able to add a honey super or two. What you have patiently (and perhaps sometimes not so patiently) waited for is to actually see and taste some of this honey your bees have made. We will be talking about how to get the honey from your hives and then how to extract that honey. Also, a popular item is “cut-comb” honey. You may have several people/customers asking if you have cut-comb honey. At the next BCBA meeting we will have Shirley DeBusk speaking to us on some of the proper ways to have nice looking, blue ribbon winning cut-comb honey. This coming meeting will be action pack, be sure not to miss it.

Even though we are in the busiest part of our beekeeping world, there are many other interesting topics to come. Understanding fall treatment plans, learning how to show your honey (and other bee products) at the local/county fair and of course, the TBA Annual Fall Meeting/Conference in Cookeville are all super subjects that I hope you will be a part of as we discuss these topics at upcoming meetings.

BCBA OFFICERS

Chuck Davis, President
865-566-3690

Mark Evans, Vice
President
865-556-6191

Bernie McGraw, Treasurer
865-984-1005

Mark Ford, Secretary
865-603-2016

Harlen Breeden, Alt.
Officer
865-719-1828

Bee Inspectors

It's the state law to have your beehives registered, so don't neglect this important duty.

If you want them inspected, below is a list of association bee inspectors. There is no cost for this service. If you are planning to move hives, they must be inspected.

Stacey Adair, 983-6223
Jose Ashbrook 258-8636
Ricky Baily, 250-8123
Dennis Barry, 414-2116
Harlen Breeden, 719-1828
Dale Hinkle, 423-261-5234
Charlie Parton, 984-3059
Stephanie Tarwater, 293-6229

A WORD FROM THE TENNESSEE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

As of June 1, 2017, the Tennessee Beekeepers Association had 43 affiliated associations with over 1,700 members. It only takes six local members to join the TBA for the association to be affiliated and have a seat on our board directors. (The TBA web site lists all organizations). Individual beekeepers receive the **TBA newsletter** and are part of a unified voice of beekeepers in the state. There are also benefits to local clubs who become affiliated with the TBA:

Fall Conference: The Fall Conference is scheduled for Oct. 20 and 21 in Cookeville at the Hyder Burke Center (Check the TBA website for more details). Speakers include Dr. Marion Ellis, Dr. Leo Sharashkin, Dr. Clarence Collison, Kent Williams, Dr. John Skinner and many others great speakers. It has all skill levels of presentation for bee keeper from beginner to advanced.

Hive Grant: Upon meeting the eligibility requirements, which will be set forth each year the grant is available, Tennessee Beekeepers Association local associations can participate in the hive grant program.

TBA, with the help of grant funds from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, will provide the equipment kit for two new beekeepers per club with the local associations purchasing one kit for a total of three kits per association. 2017 cost is \$130.00 per kit.

Short Course Grant: Local associations are eligible for \$300.00 grant to help offset their short courses. Local associations must make a request for the grant by forwarding verification of having the short course. Verification can be a list of attendees, a newspaper clipping, or flier. Request should be sent to the treasurer (Petra Mitchell) with a deadline for the request of April 30th, 2016.

TBA Fall Conference Scholarship – For a new 2017 TBA Member: This is a one day \$25.00 early registration funded by TBA. One scholarship per TBA delegate for affiliated associations. This scholarship would be non-transferrable and only for early registrations. Each affiliated association would select/choose new TBA member(s) to receive the scholarship. The individual(s) name would be submitted to the treasurer (Petra Mitchell) to verify as a new dues paying member of TBA for 2017 to be eligible for the scholarship. If this new member wishes to attend the two day fall conference, he/she would pay the additional \$10 early registration and for any meals.

Educational Material Grant: \$200.00 for purchase of educational materials. Must send receipt to treasurer for reimbursement. Deadline April 30th, 2017.

Associations participating in all four grants can see a benefit of \$785.00 from their affiliation with TBA.

Executive Vice President, MIKE COULTER

If you would like to place an ad in the BCBA Newsletter contact one of our Officers listed elsewhere in this Newsletter. If you haven't paid for your ad it is time to do that also.

DID YOU FORGET???

DUES ARE DUE

If you have not paid your dues please do so In order to avoid an interruption in receiving the NEWSLETTER. Our newsletter is our way of staying in contact with our active members. You may pay Bernie (preferably by check) at the meeting or mail it to him @

Bernie McGraw
1220 Havenwood Dr.
Maryville, TN 37804



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Bell's Bees: New bees and Newbies

Thanks so much to all the BCBA members who are so generous with their time and expertise. Greg and I attended the April 29 Field Day at Charlie Parton's, and that "hands-on" event was incredibly instructive. Harlen Breeden was our group's field instructor and we learned a great deal from this Master Beekeeper! And Charlie's farm is lovely and his honey house is state-of-the-art!

We picked up our nucs that evening and set them near their new hive homes. We opened each nuc entry and left the bees in the nucs overnight. The next evening, we transferred the nuc frames into deeps. We found each queen. (So grateful we got marked queens!) Other than feeding the bees sugar water via Boardman feeders, we left them alone for two weeks.

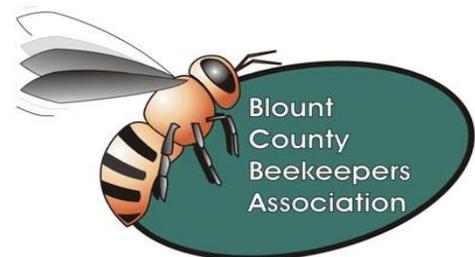
Opening the hives after two weeks was so exciting! Each colony had filled 80% of their first deep during that time, so we added a second deep. We've kept the feeders full, liberally sprinkled cinnamon around the base of each hive to deter ants, and enjoyed watching the bees fly in and out of the hive and all around the farm.

Our original plan had been to let the colonies stabilize and grow all during 2017, with no thought of a honey harvest until sometime in the late summer of 2018. It seems our bees have other ideas! We checked the hives over Memorial Day weekend, and both colonies have their second deep drawn out about 70%! So we put on the queen excluders and added our first honey super!

Special thanks to our mentor, Joe Thompson, who is always "just a phone call away." The BCBA Facebook page is also an awesome resource for "real time" questions and answers, with wonderful photographs and vids of bees and hives, great questions from other "newbees" and wonderful advice and insights from the Veteran Beekeepers in BCBA.

Greg and I are having a wonderful experience as new beekeepers!

- Esther Roberts-



Laura Atwood's Blurb

Yesterday I had the pleasure of speaking on the phone with the father of a friend of mine, Jim Wood. He is a beekeeper from upstate New York who has had bees for almost 70 years. Following are a few excerpts from our conversation.

Laura: How did you start beekeeping?

Jim: An old farmer that lived near me gave me a hive in 1948.

Laura: Did he teach you how to manage it?

Jim: No, he didn't teach me anything. He had figured it out on his own and I did too. Then I had swarms and split some hives. I had five hives when I went into the Navy in 1955 and was gone 4 years. I lost one hive while I was gone.

Laura: Was someone watching them for you?

Jim: No, you could do that then; you can't now. There were no mites, no viruses. Just foul brood which had been a problem in the 30's and 40's but not so much by the 50's. You just had to avoid old equipment to avoid getting foul brood because the spores last forever in old equipment. It is much harder to keep colonies strong now than it was then.

So, it was up and down until the 80's when I start teaching and had more time. Then I got up to about 50 hives. Before that I had been working on the railroad and then as a carpenter and had worked seven days a week. As a teacher, I had days off so I could manage more hives. Then I started splitting hives and buying queens to sell nucs for \$40-50 each. Now I know people charge \$200.

Laura: How do you know when to split a hive?

Jim: It's regional. Here in Upstate New York it's around May 1st or when the dandelions bloom. At that time, I pull out 3 frames and a queen and let old hive make a new queen.

Laura: What if they don't make a queen?

Jim: If they don't make a queen, then you can add a frame that has some eggs, some empty and some that look wet. The wet cells have eggs but you can't see them because they're filled with royal jelly. That is the ones they'll make into a queen.

Laura: What is the most important thing for new beekeepers to know?

Jim: Patience. The problem I see with most beekeepers is a lack of patience. Everyone wants a package in mid-April in the South but they are not ready til May. In NY, it's mid-June.

Laura: To what do you attribute Colony Collapse?

Jim: PPB, Piss poor beekeeping. I'm quoting. But I agree. Beekeeping means patience and with so many people getting into beekeeping everyone is trying to get bee orders out early. Everyone is super excited in April and then ignores them by July and August when they really need to treat for mites three times.

Laura: When it is most important to keep sugar on your bees?

Jim: First in March when the soft maple blooms because that is first nectar flow and they start laying then. Once she lays eggs they need food constantly for the first 5 to 5 and half days. That is when they can starve. So I feed til mid-April and then nectar flow is sufficient until November when the nectar flow ends.

Laura: Do you feed at all in the summer?

Jim: No.

Laura: How do you feed your bees in the winter?

Jim: If I pick up the back of the hive and it's light weight then I put a 5-pound bag of sugar unopened in a shallow super and put it on top. They will chew holes in it and in a few days, it will be a bag of bees.

Laura: How often do you check your bees?

Jim: I can see what I need to see from watching at the entrance and occasionally opening the inner cover and peeking in. But going in and pulling out each frame, no. You'll always upcap honey and mess things up when you pull out frames. Also, you could crush your queen. It takes them days to get back to normal. So, I disagree with people who say you have to go in there once a week. Why? I inspect twice a year: once in the spring and once in the fall.

In the winter, you can take off the outer cover and put your hand on the inner cover and it should be warm. It needs to be 96 degrees inside for queen to lay and they can shiver to generate that heat even when it's 10 degrees outside.

Laura: What do you look for in the summer?

Jim: If bees are heavy with honey and carrying in pollen in the summer then they are fine. You can tell they are carrying in honey because they soar in and then plop down like they are heavy.

Also, a healthy colony will do an orientation flight about every 4-5 days. It will almost look like swarm because they all come out and fly around realizing where they are.

Laura: What do you look for in the winter?

Jim: A cluster about the size of a volleyball.

Laura: Do you have any ideas about what is causing all the problems for the bees?

Jim: Systemic chemical buildup. Fungicides they used to use on apple orchards here that they said were ok then it turned out they weren't. And beekeepers moving bees up the eastern seaboard with the crops are spreading viruses and mites and foul brood everywhere they go. Maine has the highest incidence of foul brood in the nation. I think it is because it is the last stop. Now, queens are suddenly leaving on breeding flights and becoming disoriented and not returning. I don't know what is causing these problems. People a lot smarter than me are working day and night to figure it out and can't.

Laura: What sort of losses do most NY beekeepers report? And did you suffer the same types of losses?

Jim: The average in NY was around 50-60% last year. I lost 10-12%. I think a lot of it is people not understanding bees. Mixing packages from many different hives and then shipping them all around. Insecticides and chemicals are everywhere. I quit pollinating 8-10 years ago because my bees would die even with farmers I knew didn't spray. It was in the seeds and in the soil.

Laura: Are there any sources of information you recommend?

Jim:

Beesource.com

Walt Wright of Elton, TN <http://beesource.com/point-of-view/walt-wright/>

Mel Disselkoen <http://www.mdasplitter.com>

Michael Palmer <http://hcbeckeepers.org/a-better-way-by-mike-palmer/>

George Imeri (George's pink pages):

<http://www.beesource.com/forums/showthread.php?236103-George-Imirie-s-INDEXED-Pink-Pages-Back-Online>

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