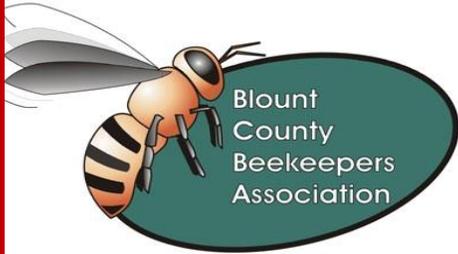


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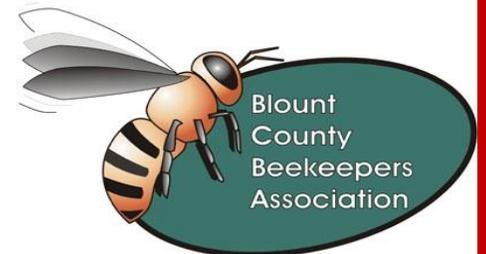
BLOUNT COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

APRIL- 2018



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NEWSLETTER



Our next BCBA meeting will be April 9th at the Maryville Church of Christ, 611 Sherwood Dr. beginning at 6:30 pm. The meetings are free and open to the public. This month's speaker is Phil Craft. His bio is as follows. Phil is a great speaker and very knowledgeable about beekeeping. We hope to have a great crowd so please inform everyone you know that has an interest in beekeeping.

BCBA April Speaker Phil Craft

Phil will speak **the first half** of the meeting on Spring management with an emphasis on honey production. **Second half** he will talk about our biggest threat to keeping our bees alive. Varroa mites and their treatment.



Phil served as the Kentucky State Apiarist from 1999 through 2011. He is a graduate of Oberlin College in Ohio (BA in biology), and of the University of Kentucky. Phil continues to communicate with beekeepers through his "Ask Phil" question/answer column which appears in Bee Culture magazine, and through his webpage, Philcrafthivecraft.com. He is also the U.S. technical adviser for Veto-pharma, the maker of Apivar, and Varroa Easy Check. A native of the mountains of Eastern Kentucky, he now lives out in the sticks in the Bluegrass region of Kentucky near Lexington with his family, a very old dog, and some bee hives. You may send questions to Phil at phil@philcrafthivecraft.com

Blount County Beekeeper Association Will Sponsor A Field Day for New Beekeepers

At Charlie Parton's farm
Saturday April 28th at 10:00 am
1768 East Brown School Rd. Maryville
There will be a sign at the driveway (Beekeepers Field Day)
Bring Safety Equipment: veil, gloves and long sleeves

Guided by an experienced beekeeper you will learn

- a. Proper way to open a hive and remove frames
- b. To identify eggs, larva, capped brood, pollen and honey
- c. Identify queen, workers and drones

After a light lunch anyone who wishes will be able to tour the Honey House. There will be time to ask questions or just hang around and talk. We hope it will be a good experience for all.

Rain date Saturday May 5th
Charlie Parton 865-776-1875
Chuck Davis President BCBA 566-3690

April 2018 - Chuck's Corner

We've been waiting all Winter for Spring to get here. This time of year our bees are getting very busy and hopefully everyone has all of their equipment ready for rapid growth. March was pretty rainy but even with all the rain, I did notice at least one of my hives had already made a few queen cells. Since I saw eggs in the hive, I did take the 2 frames with the total of 5 queen cells and placed them into a 5-frame nuc. Hopefully there will be enough mature drones available in a couple of weeks. We'll see in a month or so.

I hope everyone has been able to find a warm, dry day to check on your bees and that over wintered losses were at a minimum. For all the new beekeepers, hopefully you have gotten your package of bees and successfully installed into your new equipment. There seems to be plenty of pollen and nectar and our bees should do well now (unless we get a weird freeze in April). If you are a new beekeeper and do not have a mentor or an experience beekeeper to bounce questions off of, please contact me and we will try to help find you a mentor close to your location.

Don't forget we have a tremendous educational resource in our BCBA Library. Please see Noelle about checking out a book (or other material) to continue our education with these lovely insects.

Speaking of lovely insects, new beekeepers are invited to attend the BCBA Field Day at Charlie Parton's farm on April 28 beginning at 10am. This will give you an opportunity to open and inspect a hive of our favorite insects safely and properly. See the newsletter or BCBA's website for more information

We have a great speaker scheduled for our April meeting. Phil Craft was the previous Kentucky State Apiarist and a regular contributor to *Bee Culture* Magazine. Please plan to be there

Hope to see you at the April meeting!

~Chuck

LAURA'S BLURB

BeeCheck

Most months shortly before BCBA newsletter submissions are due, something bee related catches my attention. This month was no exception and is one of the most exciting things I have heard in quite a while. Well, maybe not as exciting as getting my bees from Coley this month... but pretty exciting!!!

This morning on the way into work, I heard on the news that Tennessee has been added to the list of states on the national registry for FieldCheck. FieldCheck is a non-profit group whose purpose is to expand two voluntary online registries that work in tandem and could potentially save lots of honeybees: DriftWatch and BeeCheck. DriftWatch allows pesticide applicators to register and map the use of agri-chemicals and BeeCheck allows any beekeeper (hobbyist or commercial) to register and map their hives. It is all optional. However, if enough of us register it has the potential to create better cooperation between crop producers and beekeepers, which could help save many bees from insecticide poisoning.

It may be overly optimistic to expect these registries to help combat the huge colony losses Tennessee beekeepers experienced in 2017. And, FieldWatch certainly won't singlehandedly solve the problem of Colony Collapse Disorder or hive loss due to other problems that are not yet understood: like viruses, Varroa mites and the resurgence of tracheal mites. Also, is it realistic to expect the apartment building down the street to register with DriftWatch before dousing their annual flowers with carcinogenic pesticides or herbicides that kill pollinators? Probably not. Nevertheless, it is a step in the right direction. FieldWatch also sells signs that beekeepers can post near that hives that warn about harmful chemicals and bee loss. But again, these signs may be helpful or may be ignored since there is no enforcement and the use of these chemicals is, after all, perfectly legal.

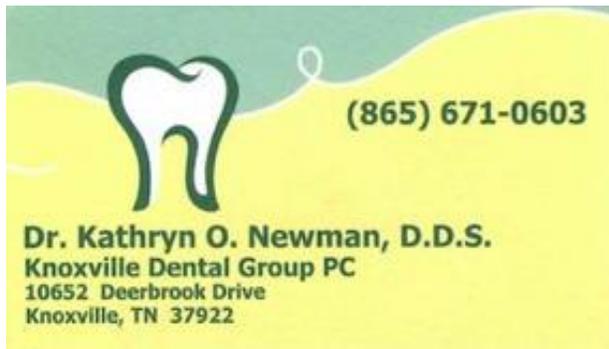
Who knows? Maybe FieldWatch will or won't save a remarkable percentage of our bees. If nothing else, this is a huge, symbolic victory for those of us keep bees in Tennessee. It means two groups (pesticide applicators and beekeepers) with competing needs can use FieldWatch technology cooperatively to avoid harm and ultimately succeed in meeting our interrelated, common needs for pollination and food production. Also, it quite literally puts our bees' needs on the map. I hope you'll consider registering today (and spread the word)!

<http://www.fieldwatch.com/>

~Laura Atwood

PLACE AN AD

If you would like to place an ad in the BCBA newsletter, please call one of our officers listed in this publication. Business card ads are \$32 for a paid member or \$40 for a non-member.



Smokey Ridge Apiaries

Judy O'Dell

Owner, Manager

368 O,Dell Rd. Maryville, Tn 37801

info@smokeyridgeapiaries.com

865-984-5393

Beekeeping Equipment and Supplies

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

Ricky Baily, 250-8123

Dennis Barry, 414-2116

Harlen Breeden, 719-1828

Charlie Parton, 776-1875

Stephanie Tarwater, 293-6229

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

2018 DUES ARE DUE

IF YOU HAVEN'T PAID YOUR 2018 DUES IT IS TIME TO DO SO. AS OF MAY 1ST WE WILL ONLY BE SENDING TO PAID MEMBERS. BERNIE HAS ASK THAT WE MAIL OUR DUES IN TO AVOID STANDING IN LINE AT THE MEETING. DUES ARE \$20.00 AND MAIL THEM TO BERNIE McGRAW, 1220 HAVENWOOD DR. MARYVILLE, TN. 37804. HE WILL BE TAKING PAYMENT AT THE MEETING ALSO. TO AVOID INTERRUPTION OF THE NEWSLETTER PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES BY THE END OF THIS MONTH.

April Seasonal Management

Looks like spring is moving right along, and hopefully all the “hard” freezes are behind us. With the report of excessive losses of colonies over this past winter (75-80% statewide), honey will be at a premium this year. So, in April we must consider swarm control and honey production.

In order to have a decent honey production we will need strong colonies and a great nectar flow. Getting colonies up to honey production numbers will create congestion at times, and this stimulates the swarming instinct. To try to prevent swarming, keep as much room on the colony as you can without increasing the risk of invasion of hive beetles, which has become more of a problem recently. At one time it was good practice to throw on lots of room with foundation or drawn comb to relieve congestion, but now that extra room can be an invitation for pests, so be moderate when trying to relieve the congestion.

Colonies should be checked weekly during the spring build up. If the colony is already showing signs of swarming by production of swarm cells, almost nothing we do will prevent that from happening. In order to try to minimize loss of bees and future honey production, an artificial swarm should be done. When we make an artificial swarm, we take the old queen and frames of brood, pollen and honey and make a new colony. Make sure there are no queen cells in this split. A minimum of 5 frames is needed for this split, but you can certainly make a larger one, and give them room! While it is written in many books you should move the split at least 2 miles away, I have had no problem leaving the split in the same bee yard.

In the parent colony that is left, you should reduce the number of swarm cells to just a few. If numerous virgins hatch out, there could be multiple after swarms. I also read about making multiple 3 frame nucs with one or two capped queen cells in each nuc if you want to build numbers of colonies and have plenty of pollen and honey to share in each nuc. This practice of course would not allow for any honey production.

If you have your colonies built up and ready to super, the next step is to decide whether or not to use a queen excluder. Some beekeepers refer to them as a honey excluder! If all your equipment is the same size, i.e. mediums, you can use supers without excluders and if the queen lays in the honey supers, you can just move those frames into the brood area at harvest time. I use different sizes of supers and hive bodies, so I prefer to keep the queen out of my honey supers. So I do use the excluder, but only after the bees have moved up into the honey supers

and have started bringing in nectar to store. You must check and make sure your queen is not in the honey supers before you place the excluder on!

If you have drawn comb, keep at least 1 super ahead of the bees. The practice use to be to add 3 boxes of drawn comb at a time, but Mike Studer said at an inspectors class recently that the prevalence of hive beetles has made that type of supering more of a risk for damage to the colony from larval sliming. Keep this in mind if you are seeing larger numbers of beetles in your hives.

If using foundation, place the foundation directly over the brood nest without an excluder to allow the bees to start pulling out the wax for storage. Once the wax is drawn and nectar is being stored, you can check for the queen, then place an excluder. If you are fortunate enough to get a super of foundation drawn and started filling with nectar, you can add a second box of foundation. I prefer to under- super, placing the foundation above the brood nest with the excluder, and raising the capped honey box to the top. This requires more physical labor (checking under capped honey supers) to keep an eye on honey production but has worked well for me over the years. But do remember, there are multiple ways to manage for swarms and super for honey. Do what works best for you, and please feel free to ask your fellow beekeepers what has worked for them!

Stacey Adair

MEMBERS WITH BEE RELATED ITEMS FOR SALE

Charlie Parton will have some California Queens for sale. Call 865-776-1875

Ricky Bailey has Nuc's for sale. Call and Reserve. Call 865-250-8123

Coley O'Dell Will have Queens, Nuc's for sale, Call and reserve. Call 865-984-5393

Howard Kerr Will have Nuc's for sale, Call and Reserve. Call 865-982-6750

Mike Smith has Nuc's for sale, Call and reserve, Call 865-379-1760.

Bell's Bees April 2018

This time last year, we got our first two nuc's and were on our way to becoming beekeepers! Thanks to the BCBA's great mentoring program and Greg's astute learning and dedicated care, our original two colonies ("A" and "B") plus a swarm from "A" Greg captured (which became our hive "C"), all survived the winter! We were thrilled with this success, and eager to really begin working our hives as the season gears up.

So last weekend, we opened each hive with excited anticipation. We took off the early treatment for mites and removed the candy boards and ventilation shims. I am convinced

those candy boards and ventilation shims were instrumental in the fact that our hives survived the cold weather.

Hive "A" is doing really well. The original "A" queen left last year with a swarm we never knew happened until we were inspecting "A" last spring and realized we had a new, unmarked queen in the hive! Then "A" swarmed a second time and that's how we got hive "C." What that means is I got some great experience last year marking two new queens, one in "A" and one in "C"! It also means we have young, native 2017 queens in "A" and "C" and they are thriving.

Hive "C" is doing best of all, with abundant capped brood and new eggs and a plump, busy queen. (The photos with this article are of hive "C" frames and queen.)

Hive "B" however, presented us with a surprise we never expected. Hive "B" was queenless. There were several frames of bees and some capped brood, but no queen and no eggs. We have no idea what happened to our "B" queen. Last year, the "B" colony was the strongest of the three hives! The "B" queen was the original queen that came with the nuc, so we don't know how old she was or what happened to her. The bees were tending the capped brood, but the hive was eerily silent. There was literally no sound coming out of the hive.

Greg and I debated about what to do. We figured we had four choices. One option was to do nothing, but that's hardly an option because all those bees would die and none would replace them, so the entire hive was doomed unless we could get it queen right.

Another option was to buy a queen, but we weren't sure where to go at this time to find a quality queen, and, perhaps more importantly, we really want to keep our bees "local" to our hives if we can, in an effort to have robustly healthy hives and not contribute to the spread of mites and diseases.

A third option was to combine the remaining bees of hive "B" with either hive "A" or "C" and this may still be what we end up doing.

But our fourth option, which we learned from attending BCBA meetings, was to try taking a frame of capped brood and a frame of freshly laid eggs from our healthiest hive ("C") and add those two frames to "B." The purpose is so the remaining bees in "B" will, hopefully, immediately begin building queen cells and produce a queen for themselves.

We will check the hives again this coming weekend. If "B" shows signs of a queen cell, all should be well. Otherwise, we will remove the bees and remaining brood from "B" and add it to "A" and go back to having only two hives of bees.

When we first picked up our nucs last year, I had no idea how interesting this hobby could become! Next month, I'll let you know if our "B" hive survived or if we had to combine it into "A" hive.

Who knew beekeeping could provide so much suspense and drama? And FUN!

~Esther Roberts

Bells Bees Pictures



We had a good turnout for the new Beekeepers class. Jose` Ashbrook and Stacy Adair done a great job of teaching the class. A special thanks to Stacy and Jose`



We also had a good turnout for the woodenware workshop. Chuck, Luke and Harlen enjoyed working with new beekeepers helping to assemble their equipment.



Thank you BCBA for nominating me for the TBA Beekeeper of the year award. I am honored to receive this award from our State Organization.

~Harlen Breedon



**Blount County Beekeepers Association
c/o Mark Ford
3018 French Creek Road
Knoxville, TN 37920**