



October, 2020

# Fort Bend Buzz

the monthly newsletter of the Fort Bend Beekeepers Association

*fostering safe, responsible, successful beekeeping*

The Fort Bend Beekeepers Association usually meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm in Fort Bend County's "Bud" O'Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Rd., Rosenberg, Texas. (We are called to order at 7:30 after 30 minutes of social time.)

We were last able to meet in person on March 10 and the Community Center remains closed due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. It is impossible to predict when we will be able to meet in person again. For details of our planned Zoom online meeting, see the announcement below. Hopefully our meetings can return to normal soon.

## October meeting is online

Because of the continuing (and seemingly never ending) COVID-19 threat, our October meeting will again be online:

**Tues., Oct. 13, 7:30 - 9:00 pm**

**login:** [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2436305183?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2436305183?pwd=UzJTNmpLVUE4WjYrUDZvd0VFdXJXUT09)

**pwd=UzJTNmpLVUE4WjYrUDZvd0VFdXJXUT09**

**Meeting ID: 243 630 5183**

**Passcode: 690069**

To connect by telephone (audio only), call 346 248-7799, Meeting ID: 243 630 5183, Passcode: 690069.

An email with clickable instructions will go out ahead of the meeting.

Our program topic for October will be "Prepping Hives for Winter" presented by Chris Moore, owner of Moore's Honey Farm in Kountze, Tx.

We'll again be having a beescussion" this month. It will be on October 22. You will be receiving an email invitation.

## Ask a dozen beekeepers...

Here is this month's Q (from one of our members) and some A's:

**Q: Help....I need a pep talk!**

**An A:** As you've learned, beekeeping ain't always easy. In fact, most new beekeepers throw in the towel in a couple of years. That is why our club's purpose is "fostering safe, responsible, successful beekeeping". As you have

learned, the "successful" part is probably the hardest one.

A failed hive can become an awful mess. Hive beetle maggots cause any honey to ferment, stink and sometimes get runny enough to spill out the entrance. Wax moth larvae (wax worms) fill the hive with poop and webbing that is pretty easy to clean up, but they also burrow into the frames and boxes. Sometimes they are beyond repair.

Any beekeeper facing such messes needs a pep talk. Some want to just pile up the hive and set fire to it to kill the maggots and wax worms. It is a chore, but most of the time the box and frames can be salvaged and prepared for a fresh start.

Successful beekeeping demands diligence and knowledge. Only the strongest hives will survive over the long term. Any that fail must be identified before the woodenware destruction begins. Queenless hives, often the result of swarming, should be identified and requeened right away. Expecting them to raise a new queen before the colony collapses is not usually a good idea. Weak hives should be combined with stronger ones (they can be split back to two hives later).

You can do this! You must be a diligent observer. You have to control varroa mites (doing nothing is a recipe for disaster). Swarming is your enemy; it often results in your best hive becoming queenless. Failure is inevitable (not to mention a potential pest control problem). Hang in there, focus on success!

## September Meeting Notes

President Craig Rench opened our Zoom meeting at 7:30 pm and welcomed the 33 who had logged in.

Secretary-Treasurer, Lynne Jones asked everyone to type their names into the Chat to ensure she gets everyone counted for attendance.

Next, VP Danessa Yaschuk made several announcements:

The Texas Beekeepers Association's Fall Convention has been cancelled. Instead of meeting in person in November, plans are being made for an online virtual conference. This will allow everyone to still have access to the wonderful speakers and beekeeping education you would find at the convention, all while still being in the comfort of your own homes. We will share more details when available.

Our next Bee-scussions meeting will be on September 9 from 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm. The virtual meeting is an online substitute for our social time: an informal get-together to talk about what's happening with our bees. It's a perfect opportunity for someone to ask a question or describe a problem. Even if you don't have a problem, you'll enjoy the online fellowship of your fellow beekeepers. You will receive an email with an invite and a Zoom link following our meeting.

We were reminded that the Association is seeking photos of honey bees, swarms, honey, or anything related to beekeeping from our members to update our website.

This is not a contest and there is no compensation if your photo is used, but credit will be given to the photographer on the photo. A permission form must be completed and returned granting FBBA permission to use the photo. If you'd like to contribute a photo or two, the permission form will be included in the email with the Bee-scussions meeting link.

We continue to receive requests for beekeeper help with property tax agricultural use exemption. If that is something you are interested in, contact one of the officers. We were also contacted by someone seeking employment as a beekeeper.

Danessa then introduced our guest speaker. If you've been a member of FBBA any length of time, Jeff McMullan needs no introduction. For those of you who are newer members Jeff is a long-time beekeeper and club member. He was our past Secretary-Treasurer and has been editing our monthly newsletter (Fort Bend Buzz) for many years. He has 24 or so hives at his pecan orchard south of Cinco Ranch. He wholesales his bottled Real Texas Honey to be sold at area hardware stores. Jeff holds a Master Beekeeper certificate from the University of Montana School of Extended and Lifelong Learning. He has given many presentations for our club and other area organizations and has taught many beekeeping classes.

For our September meeting topic, Jeff shared his Top Ten Beekeeping Tips & Tricks:

10. Soy lecithin is an emulsifier that disperses essential oils in (preferably) cold water.

9. A small trim roller makes painting hives fast and easy. They also are great for applying beeswax to plastic foundation. A crock pot from the thrift store works wonderfully as a dedicated wax melter.

8. A propane torch with auto ignition is the ticket for lighting your smoker. It also works well for

burning out the black gunk when the smoker needs cleaning.

7. The club has a frame jig that you can borrow for assembling frames. An electric or pneumatic brad nailer speeds this process up a lot.

6. Moving hives is easy. If you have a short distance to go, relocate a hive across the yard by putting it on a cart or wagon and moving three feet each day until you reach your destination. Ratchet straps without hooks ("lashing straps") are the best for securing the hive stack. Bee supply companies sell them, but they are also available online. A regular cam buckle lashing strap (not ratcheting) isn't a good alternative. Straight-handled two man hive carriers work really well. Dry-wall vinyl corner bead is an effective and inexpensive way to close up the hive. Cut the 10-ft strip into 17" pieces for the ride home from Home Depot or Lowes. Trim to length with scissors and staple into place.

There were two 6's but no one noticed: N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide (DEET) is the active ingredient in insect repellents. It works for mosquitoes and bees as well. Bees don't like the smell and by spraying some on a paper towel or rag you can chase the bees to where you want them to go. It's really great after you've captured a swarm. Spray it on the limb and the bees won't be going back there. It can also be sprayed on a structure to deter swarm scout bees.

5. A clear plastic 5-gallon water jug (with the bottom cut off) on a pole is great for catching swarms.

4. A ventilated bee jacket or suit is a must in our heat.

3. The Perfect Pocket Hive Tool™, is Jeff's "invention" that is very popular with beekeepers.

2. Avoiding crystallized honey is NBD (no big deal). Store honey in the freezer to avoid crystallization.

1. Salvaged plastic signs have a zillion uses in the bee yard. Use for shade on the hive cover. Apply pe-

troleum jelly or spray with Pam and slide under the screen bottom board, leave for a day; varroa mites will stick and the count will show you when there's a major problem. When storing frames of drawn comb with paradichlorobenzene crystals, use plastic signs to make temporary bottoms and covers. Make a homemade fume board.

Lagniappe: A roll of blue painter tape in your inspection gear comes in handy for many uses. Plan B for bad bees is a professional all-purpose hose end sprayer and soapy water.

Lynne then conducted the door prize drawings. Bee Man Dan Jones donated a frame grip (won by John McConnon) and two Beekeeper Key Chains (won by Steve Brackmann and Laura Parnell). Jeff McMullan donated a Perfect Pocket Hive Tool™ (won by Volkmar Voight). Craig reminded everyone of the Bee-scussions meeting on Sept. 9, thanked everyone for attending, and closed the meeting.

## Treasurer's Report

Last month's treasury balance was \$3,693.32. Since then we collected \$25.00 in dues (including \$10.00 for 2021). Our only expense was \$12.99 in monthly email costs. The resulting balance is \$3,705.33 (\$3,655.33 in our checking account and \$50.00 in cash for change).

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EXTENSION



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