



January, 2021

Fort Bend Buzz

the monthly newsletter of the Fort Bend Beekeepers Association
fostering safe, responsible, successful beekeeping

The Fort Bend Beekeepers Association was last able to meet in person on March 10, 2020. We usually meet 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.)

Fort Bend County's COVID-19 alert status is now RED or "High Risk". This a dangerous condition as the number of infections soar and ICU beds fill up at unacceptable rates. Gatherings of more than 10 people is prohibited because of the public health emergency. See the announcement below for details of our online meeting in January.

Hopefully our meetings can return to normal soon.. It is impossible to predict when we will be able to meet in person again.

January meeting is online

Our January meeting will again be online:

Tues., Jan. 12, 7:00 - 9:00 pm

login: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85622635183?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85622635183?pwd=UFR1NFN6MWU1emh1YmJDNG1EK1UrUT09)

pwd=UFR1NFN6MWU1emh1YmJDNG1EK1UrUT09

Meeting ID: 856 2263 5183

Passcode: 275853

To connect by telephone (audio only), call 346 248-7799, Meeting ID: 856 2263 5183 , Passcode: 275853.

An email with clickable instructions will go out ahead of the meeting. We plan to start the meeting at 7:30 after 30 minutes of "social time".

Ask a dozen beekeepers...

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

Q: I want to expand my beeyard by a couple of hives. What are my options (I've never bought bees before)?

An A: You actually have options that don't necessarily involve your wallet. With swarm season right around the corner, you can get on our club's swarm call list. You can sign up to collect "freebees" by emailing Secretary-Treasurer Lynne Jones at emallynne@yahoo.com. Gene deBons coordinates swarm calls that come in through our website or calls to the Extension office

or local animal control offices. Since swarms often don't hang around for very long, you need to be able to respond at a moment's notice.

Another option is to lure bees into a swarm trap when they are in search of a new home. The trap (or a vacant hive) should be placed where bee colonies are known or near where swarms have been seen in the past. A splash of lemongrass oil from the grocery store spice aisle helps a lot since its odor mimics the smell of hormones that are very attractive to bees.

Another low cost option is to split an existing hive. You'll need a temporary site for your split (to avoid losing bees back to the original hive); give them a week or so before moving them back to your beeyard. You can take a chance on the queenless split, hoping they can successfully raise themselves a new queen. Unfortunately this often doesn't work since mating flights for a newly emerged queen is a perilous thing. Something like one in three never makes it back from their nuptial adventure. A better option (or maybe a backup plan) is to buy a mated queen since she can get to work laying eggs in just a few days.

If you plan to buy bees, you probably need to make those plans now. You have three options: an established hive, a nuc ("nucleus" hive), or a package. Each has a laying queen. The hive and nuc (usually

five frames of bees) are already functioning as a colony. The package usually consists of 3 lbs of bees (about 10,000 workers) and an unrelated caged queen. It will take the package a couple of weeks to draw comb and get started raising brood.

However you decide to go, you need to get equipment ready for your new colonies.

Election of Officers

Officers for 2021 were elected at our November meeting. Current officers Craig Rench (President), Lynne Jones (Secretary-Treasurer) and Danessa Yaschuk (Vice President) all agreed to continue their roles. Each was nominated and seconded. There were no other nominations and all three were re-elected by unanimous vote. Jeff McMullan has consented to continue as our newsletter editor.

November Meeting Notes

Before the online meeting, "Bee-scussions" were held from 6:30-7:30.

President Craig Rench opened our online ZOOM meeting at 7:30 pm and welcomed the 26 who had logged in.

First, the election of officers for 2021 was conducted (see results reported above). After the election, President Craig Rench thanked everyone for their participation and

November Meeting Notes (continued)

patience this year. Craig then introduced the meeting's presenters, Danessa Yaschuk and Lynne Jones.

Danessa gave a presentation on making infused honey with dried herbs. A light, mild flavored honey is the best to use for infusing. Dried Herbs you might want to try alone or in combination are: rosemary, sage, thyme, mint, lemon balm, lavender, chamomile, rose petals and pine needles. Danessa uses 1-2 tablespoons of dried herbs to 8 ounces of honey. Some spices work well also: cinnamon sticks, vanilla beans, and star anise are good choices. The basic steps are: prepare the dried herbs; combine herbs and honey; infuse (at least 5 days, longer for a stronger flavor); strain; and store.

Lynne gave two presentations. The first was on making creamed honey or, as she prefers to call it, "set honey". Set honey is simply intentionally crystallized honey. Some of the factors that determine how fast honey naturally crystallizes are: the type of nectar the honey comes from, the water content, pollen/particles in the honey, storage temperature, storage container, and agitation. When honey crystallizes on its own, it can have an unpleasant texture (chunky, crunchy, or gritty), but when it is done intentionally it should have a smooth and creamy texture. Lynne provided the pros/cons to pasteurized vs. unpasteurized methods of making set honey and went through the steps for both. (The basic directions can be found at <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-Creamed-Honey>.)

Lynne's second presentation was on honey and beeswax gifts. She included recipes for a few things she has made lately and many photos, recipes, and links for ideas ranging from krupnik (Polish honey-spiced vodka) to honey taffy, unique candles and beard balm.

After the presentations, the drawing for door prizes was held. A lovely set of beeswax ornaments donated by Danessa were won by Laura Parnell. A hive tool donated by "Bee Man Dan" Jones was won by Norm Harris. A bee bracelet, also donated by Dan was won by Margaret Wrzesinski. A bottle of honey vodka donated by Lynne was won by Tracey Grimme.

Craig announced that our next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 12, almost certainly via ZOOM. If you need some help or advice before then, please feel free to contact one of the officers or go to the website and use the Contact tab, or just reply to a FBBA email you've received. We wished everyone safe and healthy holidays and we hope to see you again in January.

Treasurer's Report

Our November treasury balance was \$3,662.34. Our only expenses were the \$12.99 monthly email cost for November and December (\$25.98 total). The resulting balance is \$3,636.36 (\$3,586.36 in our Wells Fargo checking account, plus \$50.00 in cash to make change). A financial summary and year-end property inventory for 2020 is presented at right (we spent \$186.08 less than we took in during the year).

Fort Bend Beekeepers Association 2020 Financial Summary

Opening balance (Jan. 1, 2020)		\$3,450.28
Income		
2020 dues paid (112 at \$5.00)	\$560.00	
2021 dues paid (11 at \$5.00)	\$55.00	
donations	\$300.00	
mentee fees	\$50.00	
Total Income		\$965.00
Expenses		
website expenses	(\$388.47)	
Texas Beekeepers Association dues	(\$50.00)	
PA system repair shipping	(\$25.10)	
Zoom subscription	(\$159.80)	
SurveyMonkey services	(\$105.53)	
bank posting error	(\$0.02)	
speaker expenses	(\$50.00)	
Total Expenses		(\$778.92)
Ending Balance (Dec. 31, 2020)		\$3,636.36

Fort Bend Beekeepers Association December 31, 2020 Property Inventory

<u>Description</u>	<u>Date Acquired</u>	<u>Initial Cost</u>	<u>Member Contact</u>
three framed beekeeping posters	various	unknown	Boone Holladay
Learning Hive	various	\$313.81	Jeff McMullan
red wagon	10/16/2009	\$45.98	Jeff McMullan
extracting equipment			Jim Lynch
extractor, stand, etc.	8/19/2011	\$583.33	
pin uncapper	11/8/2014	\$15.15	
honey refractometer	11/30/2016	<u>\$71.64</u>	
		\$654.97	
frame assembly gear	3/5/2012	\$157.88	Nancy Hentschel
25 frame assembly jig	5/8/2018	donation	Lynne Jones
outreach exhibits			
banners	11/7/2013	\$80.96	Jeff McMullan
posters and easels	2/8/2016	<u>\$193.30</u>	Jeff McMullan
		\$274.26	
public address system	6/21/2014	\$620.22	Lynne Jones
7/18 remaining swarm traps	11/3/2014	\$54.62	Boone Holladay
Mentoring Program supplies:			Lynne Jones
19 Beekeeper's Journals		\$136.99	
56 extra Journal fillers		\$61.04	
8 "The Beekeepers Handbook"		<u>\$190.00</u>	
		\$388.03	
gray cart for meetings	7/7/2016	\$121.25	Boone Holladay

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

Boone Holladay

Boone Holladay

Texas A&M
AgriLife Extension Service
Fort Bend County
1402 Band Road, Suite 100
Rosenberg, TX 77471

County Extension Agent—Horticulture
Fort Bend County
jb.holladay@ag.tamu.edu
281 342-3034 ext. 7034

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating. Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aid or services are required to contact Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 281-342-3034 five working days prior to the meeting so appropriate arrangements can be made.