



June, 2022

Fort Bend Buzz

the monthly newsletter of the Fort Bend Beekeepers Association

fostering safe, responsible, successful beekeeping

The June 14, 2022 meeting of the Fort Bend Beekeepers will be held at 7:00 pm both online and in person at Fort Bend County's "Bud" O'Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Rd., Rosenberg, Texas. It doesn't seem like COVID-19 will ever go away, so stay informed in case plans must be changed. Visitors (and new members) are always welcome. Membership dues are \$10.00 for the calendar year. If you haven't yet paid for 2022, keep an extra ten dollar bill in your wallet and get your dues for 2022 paid at the meeting. We will be called to order at 7:30 after 30 minutes of social time.

Meeting in person or online

Our June meeting will again be both in person at the O'Shieles Community Center and online:

Tues., June 14, 7:00 - 9:00 pm

To attend online:

login: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85622635183>

pwd=UFR1NFN6MWU1emhIYm
JDNG1EK1UrUT09

Meeting ID: 856 2263 5183

Passcode: 275853

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

As usual, 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'm kinda new at this. I've managed to get two swarms into boxes, but they were gone in a few days. Why won't they stay? What do I need to do differently?

An A: A colony swarms for many reasons. A "reproductive" swarm includes the old queen as they set out to establish an additional colony. "Absconding" swarms include the whole colony that has abandoned a nest site that has become unsuitable or perhaps too small. It is pretty common in our area to have late summer swarms because a

nest site chosen in the spring is now too hot as summer advances.

Scout bees lead the swarm to their new home. In the meantime, the colony clusters near their old nest while the scouts investigate every possible nest site within a mile or more. When a new site has been selected by the scout bees, they lead the swarm to its new home despite your efforts. Evidence suggests that it is the same bees that scout for forage that set out to find a new nest site for the colony.

If the new home you provided is near where the swarm clustered, the scouts have continued their search. Despite your efforts, they may convince the colony that they have found a better place for them to live. Because of this, it is usually a good idea to move a captured swarm a coupla miles away for a few days. It is best to close up the hive at night when all the bees are inside. If many are clustered on the outside, a few puffs from your smoker will get them all inside. Once the bees seem settled, you can close them up at night then move them back to your beeyard.

Your goal should be to provide a new home that the colony would never want to leave. At the very least, it should have wax foundation so that can start comb construction right away. If you insist on using plastic foundation, slop on a heavy coating of fresh beeswax. Old drawn comb is even better than new foundation. The darker it is, the more the bees seem to like it. Comb from another hive with capped brood (but no bees) is better yet.

Empty comb is probably better than comb with eggs and uncapped larvae since there is little work for the new colony to do caring for capped brood before the hive population begins to increase substantially. There are about 3,500 cells on each side of a brood frame. Recall the honey bee life cycle: eggs hatch in about 3 days, larvae is capped after 7 more days, and the adult worker emerges 21 days after the egg was laid. So, for example, if both sides of a deep frame is 2/3 covered with capped brood it means that more than 4,600 new workers will soon emerge ($2 \times 3,500 \times 2 / 3 = 4,667$). All of the new workers will have emerged after spending 13 days as capped brood.

Treasurer's Report

Our May treasury balance was \$2,975.02. Since that report, we collected \$50 in dues and \$100 for mentoring program registrations. Expenses were \$314.94 for a 6-channel mixer with a protection plan and accessories; \$25.96 for a wireless presenter remote; \$19.47 for 4-port USB hub; \$151.01 for a wireless microphone system; \$161.29 for a multimedia speaker for PC; \$689.47 for a wheeled storage cabinet; \$37.88 for a one pedestal sign holder; \$29.66 for five flat storage trays; \$30.30 for six acrylic sign holders; and \$12.99 for the May Squarespace email subscription. The resulting balance is \$1,652.05 (\$1,602.05 in our Wells Fargo checking account, plus \$50.00 in cash if needed to make change).

May Meeting Notes

Attendance at our May 10 meeting was 37 in person and 7 online “Zoomers”.

Craig Rench, President, opened the meeting and greeted everyone, including six people attending for their first time. They were each asked to introduce themselves and tell the group where they were in their beekeeping adventure. They all receive a hardy welcome.

Gene DeBons, coordinator for our swarm calls, spoke briefly on swarm calls. Swarm calls sometimes come in to County Animal Control or the AgriLife Extension office, but they usually come from “Help! I have bees! our web page (www.fortbendbeekeepers.org). Members that have volunteered for Gene’s swarm call list need to be ready-to-go and able to respond within 30 minutes if you accept a swarm call.

Margaret Wrzesinski, Mentoring Program Coordinator, called for more mentors! Currently there are more mentees in need of a mentor than there are mentors. Mentors aren’t expected to have all the answers, they just need to have a year or two experience to help new beekeepers get started.

Secretary-Treasurer Lynne Jones reminded everyone of BuzzFest at BeeWeaver on Saturday, May 28, and the Texas Beekeepers Association Summer Clinic on Saturday, June 25, in Conroe.

Our scheduled presentation was to be given by Danessa Yaschuk on Simple Splits. Unfortunately, she had to be home with a sick kid, so Craig stepped up to give the presentation in her absence.

A split is the best way to deal with an impending swarm. Some of the signs that a colony might be preparing to swarm are: a lot of bearding on the front of the hive; the colony has lots of drones; the brood nest is being backfilled with nectar; and (the most obvious sign): queen cells, usually along the bottom of

Types of Splits	Positives	Negatives
Walkaway	Don't need to find the Queen	Must wait a month before looking for fresh eggs in 'new' colony.
Overnight	Don't need to find the Queen	Requires a Queen Excluder Two days to complete
Vertical	Can be done earlier in the year Can be done after swarm cells are present (must find queen) Can be undone easily	Requires a Double-Screen Board Must find the Queen
Swarm Control	Circumvents the imminent swarming by making an artificial swarm.	Must find the Queen
Cut-down	The original colony will produce a greater amount of comb and honey. Neither the original nor the new colony will be able to swarm in the near future.	Must find the Queen
Shook Swarm	Don't need to find the Queen	Requires a Queen Excluder Requires a Feeder Requires a Deep box in addition to those used for the original and new hive.
Mississippi	Divides a 2-Deep colony into four Nucs.	Requires four Nuc set-ups.
Taranov	Don't need to find the queen Can be done after swarm cells are present Circumvents the imminent swarming by making an artificial swarm.	Requires a Taranov Board Takes 2-3 hours to complete

the frames. Besides swarm prevention, a beekeeper might want to split their hives are to: create more colonies; control mites by breaking the brood cycle; sell nucs; and raise queens.

There are requirements for a successful split:

Use overwintered colonies. A brand-new colony from a nucleus hive or package, does not have the resources needed for a successful split.

Use strong colonies. It is common sense that the larger the colony, the better your chance of success.

Need a queen. Either provide a queen or it must be able to produce a queen.

Honey and pollen resources and day old larvae or eggs. If you want the bees to produce a queen they must start with very young larvae.

Unmated queens need drones. If drones aren’t mature and flying, the queen won’t be mated.

Imitate normal nest structure. The brood nest of a split must imitate normal nest structure; worker brood in the center, drone brood on the outer edges of the worker brood, pollen on both sides of the nest, honey on both sides of the pollen.

Protection. Reduced the entrance or install a robbing screen.

FEED! FEED! FEED! Feeding will help stimulate the growth of the colony, but you must make sure that it does not cause robbing. If you spill syrup at the hive entrance, wash it up!

After the hive is split, the foragers will return to the hive box in the original location. The other box will not have many foragers until the house bees ‘graduate’ to foraging.

Following the presentation, Jeff McMullan answered numerous questions from members. After which, the door prize drawings were conducted. Thank you to all who donated and congratulations to all the lucky winners. The meeting was then adjourned.

TEXAS A&M
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EXTENSION

Boone Holladay

Boone Holladay
County Extension Agent– Horticulture
Fort Bend County
jb.holladay@ag.tamu.edu
281 342-3034 ext. 7034
1402 Band Road, Suite 100
Rosenberg, TX 77471

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