



July, 2022

# Fort Bend Buzz

the monthly newsletter of the Fort Bend Beekeepers Association

*fostering safe, responsible, successful beekeeping*

The July 12, 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. Visitors (and new members) are always welcome. Membership dues are \$10.00 for the calendar year. We will be called to order at 7:30 after 30 minutes of social time.

## Meeting in person or online

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

**Tues., July 12, 7:00 - 9:00 pm**

Online login instructions remain the same:

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.

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 need some advice on moving a couple of hives.

**An A:** Honey bees have an incredible "GPS" instinct that they use to locate their hive and nectar sources. It is thought that they use the polarized light in the sky to guide their travel and a "figure 8" dance to inform others. Foragers that are full and ready to return to the hive orient themselves by flying upward in a spiral then head home in a "beeline". This behavior makes it easy to locate bee hives. Foragers can be lured to a saucer with a puddle of honey and then followed on

their return to the hive. It may be easier to just relocate the saucer a hundred yards or so perpendicular to the first flight path and locate the hive at the intersection of the two flight paths. (Google Earth is a perfect tool for this!)

Because of the bee's amazing directional instincts, you should move hives just a few feet or several miles. If the new site is close by, just a few feet away, the bees can figure it out. If moved a few miles, departing bees realize what you are up to and reorient themselves before leaving the hive. Any bees that are away from the hive when you move it will find themselves hopelessly lost. To avoid leaving foraging workers behind, it is best to move hives after dark (with everyone inside) and several miles away. Any bees clustered outside can be easily chased in with a few puffs from your smoker before closing up the hive. If it is your objective to just move across the back yard, you should make the move in short steps (three or four feet) or make an intermediate stop that is much further away. Give them two weeks or so to fully adjust to the new site, then you can make the final move.

It is important to prepare well for a move. The hive must be secure! Close off any "leaks" with painter's tape and use a ratchet strap to keep the hive stacked for the trip. An 8 ft strap is plenty long enough for anything you expect to be able to pick up. Sometimes you can find a ratcheting lashing strap that you can cut to your desired length, but usually you are stuck with a tie-down that has hooks on its ends. The

ratchet is important to keep things really snug.

Vinyl corner bead (for sheetrock) is great for closing the entrance. It comes in 10 ft. lengths for less than \$4.00 from Home Depot or Lowe's. Out in the parking lot you can use kitchen shears to cut a ten-footer it into seven 17" long pieces to fit in the back seat. A Langstroth hive is 16" wide so you'll need to trim it to length then use a staple gun to secure it in place for the move.

Bee supply houses sell a hive carrier but it is not cheap so you might just ask around for one to borrow. It is made of steel conduit and hinged in the middle with tabs that fit into the box handholds. They make one for one person to use but a beehive is far too heavy for that, so you'll need the one for two people (and another beekeeper to help you). After securely strapping the hive stack and closing the entrance, you are ready to go.

## Treasurer's Report

Our June balance was \$1,652.05. Since our last report, we collected \$210.00 in dues, \$25.00 for mentoring program registration, and \$105.00 in donations. Expenses were \$159.80 for Zoom annual fee, \$58.50 for ten flat storage trays, \$233.82 for Squarespace annual website fee, \$12.99 for the June Squarespace fee, and a \$100 memorial donation to the Nevin Weaver endowment fund in memory of Albert Smaistrila. The balance is \$1,426.94 (\$1,376.94 in the checking account, plus \$50.00 in cash).

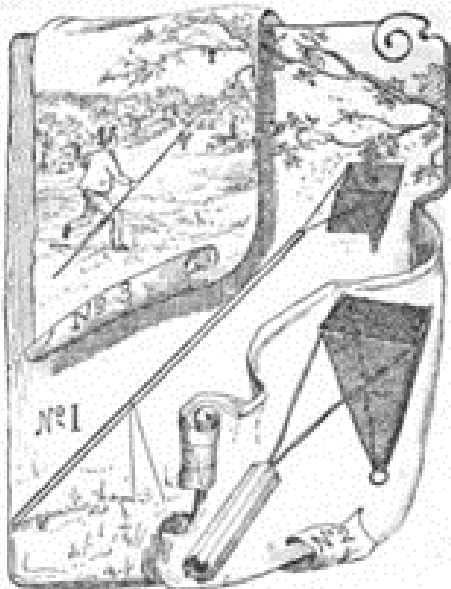
## June Meeting Notes

Attendance at our June 14 meeting was 37 in person and 7 online “Zoomers”.

Craig Rench, President, opened the meeting and greeted everyone. First time attendees introduced themselves and were welcomed.

Gene DeBons shared a 1905 A.I. Root Catalog he acquired recently. It was interesting how little basic beekeeping supplies have changed in the past 117 years. As you would guess, the price for familiar items has changed quite a bit. Today’s common DIY bucket on a pole for swarm-catching, could take a lesson from the Manum’s Swarming-Device.

### **MANUM'S SWARMING-DEVICE.**



Margaret Wrzesinski, Mentoring Program Coordinator, spoke briefly on the items she brought for the Mentoring Table, which included waxing plastic foundation and a solar wax melter.

Vice President Danessa Yaschuk reminded everyone of the upcoming Texas Beekeepers Association Summer Clinic and then introduced our speaker Jeff McMullan.

Jeff’s presentation, “Honeybee Pests and Diseases”, focused on Integrated Pest Management (IPM). IPM is best described as using the LEAST TOXIC MEANS to control

IDENTIFIED PESTS that are causing or likely to cause SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE.

The key to managing pests and diseases is to have a strong and healthy hive through beekeeping practices, genetic selection, and when necessary, pesticides and antibiotics. Though an individual beekeeper can work at improving the genetics of their hives by choosing the best hive for splits or rearing queens, the professional queen breeders typically do a better job of observing desirable traits and producing queens, often from instrumentally inseminated queen mothers.

Options for dealing with a weak colony are treating with pesticides/antibiotics, feeding (syrup and/or pollen substitute), providing capped brood from another hive, combining it with another hive, requeening, or eliminating the colony (or just allowing it to fail).

Tracheal mites are microscopic and live exclusively in the trachea of bees. Though they decimated the beekeeping industry when they first became established in the mid-80s, lines of bees were developed that are resistant to tracheal mites and they are no longer the issue that they once were.

Varroa mites appeared in the US less than ten years later and continue to be the most serious threat to our hives. Varroa are the animal kingdom’s biggest external parasite (in relation to their host). The development of the Varroa Sensitive Hygiene (VSH) trait in honey bees is ongoing in the queen breeding industry. Bees with this trait remove brood infected by varroa in from the hive, limiting varroa reproduction.

Varroa feed on pupa and adult bees. This weakens the bees, but the more serious effect is the spread of diseases in the hive. Varroa spread the deformed wing virus, which results in bees crippled by crinkled,

deformed wings.

Beekeeping practices that can help control varroa mites include screened bottom boards, small cell foundation, requeening (for a brood break), powdered sugar roll and drone brood trapping. In-hive controls include drone brood trapping, sugar dusting, and pesticides (hard and soft)

Wax moth larvae (wax worms) feed on comb and stored pollen. create webbing and leave feces in brood comb. They are usually only a problem in a weak hive or where the hive is too big for the bee population (perhaps due to swarming). They also infest improperly stored comb.

Small hive beetle larva foul the honey with their feces. In a bad infestation, the honey will be “slimed” by fermentation. The colony will often abscond when the infestation reaches that point. There are traps that can be inserted between the tops of frames with oil or diatomaceous earth in the trap to kill the beetles. Checkmite and GuardStar are pesticides labeled to treat small hive beetles .

After a few questions, the door prize drawings were conducted. Thank you to all who donated and congratulations to the winners. The meeting was then adjourned.

## **TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION**

*Boone Holladay*

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