



September, 2022

# Fort Bend Buzz

the monthly newsletter of the Fort Bend Beekeepers Association

*fostering safe, responsible, successful beekeeping*

The Fort Bend Beekeepers Association meets on the second Tuesday of each month (except December). The September 13, 2022 meeting 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 monthly meeting will again be both in person at the O'Shieles Community Center and online:

**Tues., Sept. 13, 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:** Why are my bees hanging around my neighbor's hot tub? For that matter, are they even my bees?

**An A:** You (and your neighbor) are probably beyond "because they are thirsty", even though that is certainly a large part of the answer. Why don't they just go somewhere else?

There is a quick answer to your second question, so let's start there. It will be fun to dust bees at your neighbor's hot tub with powdered sugar and then watch your hive entrance. It's not all that important, but if white bees don't show up, it

is obvious that there is another colony nearby that has found this water source. And just because white bees do show up at your hive, it doesn't mean only your bees are getting water next door. In any case, you're the beekeeper and will be expected to have an answer (or find one) for your neighbor.

Foragers don't just return home with nectar; they also bring in water to quench their hive mates. But beyond just being thirsty, honey bees use water to regulate the temperature of the hive (by evaporation), to nurture baby bees, and to dilute stored honey for consumption. They may get nutrients from water as well.

Having a reliable source of water is very important to the honey bee colony. You will discover that what looks almost gross to you makes a fine water source to a honey bee. Mud, algae and other junk doesn't bother a honey bee in the least.

As beekeepers it is important that we understand that once bees begin using a water source, it becomes "where we go to get water".

They'll continue watering in the same place so long as it remains available.

Bees around a hot tub are really little cause for concern since the number of bees is usually few and they are seldom aggressive so long as they are left alone. Nonetheless, watering bees can become the beginning of conflict in a neighborhood. The only way to end the watering visits is to deny the source.

In deciding where to locate a hive, the first question needs to be "where will they go to get water?". If a natural source of water isn't nearby, it is important that it is provided for them. A birdbath in the backyard works just fine, but you need to make sure that it always has water. Filling it with gravel or marbles reduces drowning. If you have a sprinkler system for the yard, you can often locate the bird bath so the sprinkler keeps it (or some other water source) topped off.

You will have a little work to do to get bees (wherever they come from) to go somewhere else for water. First you must identify or provide a different source, then you must convince the bees to go there instead. Sometimes that can be hard to do. Emptying a birdbath or fixing a dripping faucet is easy enough (once the bees start going elsewhere, you can put water back in the birdbath). If the bees are using the neighbor's hot tub or koi pond, you'll need to cover it with a blue tarp for a few days while the bees find another water source.

Large chicken waterers from the feed store work well for watering bees if you take a couple of precautions. When it comes to water, honey bees seem to have a suicide wish: without prevention, hundreds will drown trying to get a drink. You'll need to put a circle of hardware cloth in the jug outlet or they will get inside and drown when the jug runs low. Marbles or gravel in the water tray is necessary to prevent drowning.

When it is hot as it is now, your

bees will use a lot of water trying to keep it from getting too hot inside the hive.

Afternoon shade is a blessing. Hives do best when out in the open because hive pests prefer shade. When it too hot (like right now!), some beekeepers use a popup shelter to protect their hives for a few weeks waiting for cooler weather. Metal hive covers get incredibly hot in the sun! Placing a corrugated plastic sign on top of the hive will make a huge difference. Be sure to put a brick on top or it will blow away in the first afternoon storm.

### August Meeting Notes

Attendance at our August 9 meeting was 30 in person. No Zoom meeting was conducted.

Vice President Danessa Yaschuk opened the meeting and greeted everyone. Two first time attendees introduced themselves and were welcomed.

Margaret Wrzesinski, Mentoring Program Coordinator let everyone know the Mentoring Table was set up with information and displays for Varroa Mite treatments.

Danessa then announced some upcoming events. There will be three events on September 24th: BVBA's Beekeeping School in Bryan and Beeweavers INFUZED event and Honey Cookoff in Navasota. Danessa asked that everyone mark there calendars on October 8th when we will have an Outreach Activity at Enchanted Gardens from 9am-noon. Members will be needed to staff our table.

Danessa then introduced our guest speaker, Steve Jimenez, with Hives for Heroes. As a Marine, Steve served in Operation Enduring Freedom, leaving the military in 2011. With a desire to help his fellow veterans, in 2018, Steve founded Hives for Heroes, a non-profit service organization focusing on honey bee

conservation and veterans transitioning from military service.

The Hives for Heroes motto is "Save Bees, Save Vets." When Steve left the military, the transition to civilian life was a struggle for him at times. There is a sense of a "loss of mission" and not much of a support system. He says his story is not unique. When he was introduced to beekeeping, he realized it can help to provide a healthy transition and started Hives for Heroes. Beekeeping can help with PTSD and the program provides a sense of purpose and connection with other beekeepers in a positive activity.

The organization has grown from the Houston area, to the entire U.S. and is now expanding into Australia and the U.K.

The program is set up for each first-year veteran, or "NewBEE", in the program to be assigned to a mentor. The only cost to the veteran is the bee suit/jacket and gloves. The mentor needs to have three years of successful beekeeping experience, but does not need to be a veteran. The veteran assists the mentor at the mentor's apiary for one year. At the end of the year, the mentor provides a split or hive to the veteran, who now becomes a "WorkerBee." The second-year WorkerBees are networked together and work in one of the community apiaries. At the third-year, the veteran becomes a mentor to a NewBEE.

The program is available to veterans from any era and the program is opening to first responders as well. The biggest need of the program is more mentors. There are other ways to volunteer or support though. They need volunteers to help things like marketing and staffing their booth at events. The website has a tab to sign up as a NewBEE, Mentor, or Volunteer. There is also a Donate tab and they are a 501(c)3 nonprofit.

Hives for Heroes is Partnering with both beekeeping organizations, beekeeping supply companies, and ma-

lor Corporations in various ways. They can provide apiary management for individuals and businesses, including hives for 1-d-1 agricultural valuation. They have an apiary at TechnipFMC and the veterans who work there take care of the apiary. They do agreements with restaurants, breweries, etc. to set up hive or to provide honey. They also participate in many community events to foster learning and bee education.

At the conclusion of his presentation, Steve took questions from our members and then the door prize drawings were conducted by Danessa and Lynne. Thank you to those who donated door prizes and congrats to those who won.

### Treasurer's Report

Our July treasury balance was \$1,426.94. Since our last report, we collected \$80.00 in dues, \$25.00 for Mentoring Program registration, \$230.00 for member purchases of warning signs, and \$65.00 in donations. July expenses were \$7.46 for paper goods, \$12.18 for duplicate keys, \$61.67 for a web camera and tripod, \$8.65 for name tag labels, \$50.00 for speaker honorarium, \$357.76 for FALA warning signs, and \$12.99 for our email subscription. The resulting balance is \$1,316.23 (\$1,266.23 in the checking account, plus \$50.00 in cash).

TEXAS A&M  
**AGRI LIFE**  
EXTENSION

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