



Since 1948

*Exploring the wonderful world of beekeeping together***The Bee Buzzer***Monthly publication of the***Northeastern Kansas Beekeepers' Association**

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EDITOR: JOLI WINER

AUGUST 2017

General Meeting**Monday August 21st, 2017 7:00 p.m.**

First 15 minutes:

Alex Pantos presents

“Making a Homemade Solar Wax Melter”

Regular Program

Robert Burns Presents:

“All Aspects of Varroa Mites”

Douglas County Fairgrounds Bldg. 21N

2110 Harper St, Lawrence KS

Chad has another great program planned for us this month. First Alex Pantos will talk about how to make a solar wax melter. I know ours has been working overtime the last few weeks and few have some mighty pretty beeswax to show for it! Get it? Talking about a solar wax melter on Solar eclipse day! **We'll have some kind of special give away on that day to entice people to the meeting-we haven't thought of what it is yet!** It will not be used solar eclipse glasses, it will be a nice gift and all attendees will be in a drawing for it.

Then Robert Burns will present on all aspects of varroa mites from identification, what varroa will do to a colony, hive inspections, and treatment options. You need to listen to Robert. He has the healthiest bees of anyone I know. He really takes the time to know what is going on in his hives and then he takes appropriate action. That's a good beekeeper!

Directions: The address is 2110 Harper St. It is easily accessible from 23rd Street, turn north on Harper Street and it is just a few blocks. We are in Building 21 North which will be on your left you turn into the fairgrounds.

**Volunteer at the Kansas Honey Producers
Booth at the Kansas State Fair
September 8th-17th**

Have fun volunteering at the Kansas State Fair Honey Booth. Receive an entry ticket for each day a 4-hour shift that is worked. Sign up at signupgenius.com or contact Kristi Sanderson at 913-768-4961. You may call or text.

**Fall 2017 Kansas Honey Producers Meeting
Friday and Saturday, October 27 & 28, 2017
Ramada Hotel and Conference Center
2700 W. 18th Street, Emporia Kansas 66801**

To make reservations for the Ramada Hotel call 620-341-9287 and mention the Kansas Honey Producers Association to get the best rate. Room rates are \$65 plus tax for a non-smoking double room and \$75 plus tax for a non-smoking king. Reservations should be made by September 27th.

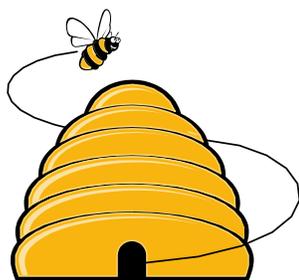
One of our guest speakers several of us had the pleasure of hearing speak at the North American Beekeeping Conference. Dr. Yong Park is from the University of Arkansas. His presentation on Honey Bee Morphology and Anatomy was fantastic. He brought in microscopes so that we could all look at the bee parts. He'll do the same for us! Another presentation he'll be giving is on Small Hive Beetles. He will be presenting four times.

One of our favorite people in the world is Clint Walker of Walker Honey Farm & Dancing Bee Winery, in Rogers Texas. Clint's family business was forced to change when African Bees moved into the area and put the cabash on their queen and package bee business. They were forced to reinvent themselves and he'll share those experiences with us.

Our third guest speaker is Reyah Carlson, an Apitherapy specialist, from Vermont. She is highly regarded in her field. One of her presentations is The Medicine Chest known as the Bee Hive. She also presents on the health and nutrition of all honey bee produced substances and how to use them, raw honey, pollen, propolis, royal jelly and venom. She will also demonstrate the sting technique and application. She is currently researching the use of bee sting therapy on tick borne illnesses. She is highly recommended by KHPA member, Tim Tucker. Reyah will be presenting four times.

Beelines

By President Steve Messbarger



We had a wonderful time in Topeka at Gage Park for the picnic! The food was unbelievable - I always get a little confused over all the choices and just so much room on my plate. I guess that's why we had seconds, because the plates weren't big enough. The desserts were awesome. Thanks to everyone who helped to make it a success! It's the first picnic I've been on where there was air conditioning- what a relief!

Thanks to Jo Patrick for her presentation on plants and seed bombs. I think everyone had fun making seed bombs but I think Jo forgot to bring the fuses. Our bombs didn't have any, so I'm not sure how to set them off!

It's that time of year - you put equipment together, painted it, installed bees, made splits, fed, added equipment, babied the girls, and checked on them weekly to make sure they were ok. A ton of hard work and dedication went into this - now you're becoming a beekeeper! After all that, we get to go out and start harvesting the extra honey the bees have made. When you go out and pick up one of the full honey supers, you wonder if your back will hold up by the time you get it back to the truck. That's just another part of the demanding work of being a bee keeper. Then we decap and extract into pails that weigh around 50 to 60 pounds, bottle, label, then sell or give to friends and neighbors. I guess my point being is, when you do all these things, go to meetings, and work your bees to the best of your ability, it takes a lot of hard work and dedication to become a TRUE BEEKEEPER!

I would like to thank all of you that are learning to become beekeepers and to those beekeepers that have helped us become better beekeepers. And then there are those who are the bee "havers", the ones that won't go through the necessary process to become a beekeeper. It happens, and I of know several. Let's hope their bees make it!

I hope all of you and your hives made it through the violent storms we've had. We had one blown completely over. I found the top, sixty feet from the hive and the inner cover was about eighty to ninety feet away. By the time I got to them, some robbing had started, but not too serious. I put it back together and the queen survived somehow.

I hope you're all having a great and successful year! I look forward to seeing everyone at the next meeting.

As always, Bees first

With the Bees, this month-

Now is the time to get your bees ready for 2018! Yes 2018. What you do this fall can help insure that your bees make it through the winter. After you pull your honey off you should make a thorough inspection. You should make sure that you have a queen that is laying eggs and that you see all stages of brood. If the bees have not already pushed her down into the bottom hive body you should move her brood and her down so that they can put any further honey in the top hive body-or if you need to feed they will store it above the brood. Bees move up so the food stores should be above them.

If you find a hive that is queenless it is much better to combine them with another hive this time of year. That is the best way to protect your equipment and save your bees. To combine hives, add the queenless hive above the queen right hive using a sheet or two of newspaper between the hive bodies. You can make a small slit in the paper if you want and the bees will combine themselves. The next time you go back the paper will be out in front of the hive. **Continued page 5**

Beekeeping Groups Around Kansas:

- **Northeast Kansas Beekeepers Assn.**, meets the 3rd Monday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Douglas County Fairgrounds at 2110 Harper St., Lawrence KS., Bldg. 21 N. NEKBA.org. They also have a Facebook presence.
- **Heartland Beekeepers Association of Southeast Kansas, Pittsburg KS** meets the 1st Thursday of the month at 6:30-8:45 pm at Pittsburg State University, Yates Hall room 102 –google them, they communicate by Facebook
- **Golden Prairie Beekeepers Association**, Meet the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm at the Garnett County Extension Office, 411 S. Oak, Garnett KS. Marlin McGowin, 785-433-1381
- **Cherokee County Area Beekeepers**, Columbus KS meet at the Cherokee County K-State Research and Extension Office, 124 W County Rd. Columbus KS 66725, 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm, contact them by Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/CCABclub/>
- **Konza Beekeepers Assn. Manhattan Kansas**, 2nd Tuesday of Each Month at 7pm @ Sunset Zoo 2333 Oak Street, Manhattan, KS 66502, USA konzabeekeepers@gmail.com
- **Wichita Area Beekeepers South Central Kansas Honey Producers Association SCKHPA** in Yahoo Groups (KS - local affiliate) - South Central KS (FB) They meet at the Great Plains Nature Center on the 2nd Saturday of the month at 1:00 pm.
- **Shawnee County Area Beekeeping monthly class**, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8 at the Shawnee North Community Center, 300 NE 43rd St., Topeka KS. contact Becky Tipton at bstbees@embargmail.com 785-484-3710
- **Central Kansas Area-Morford Lavender Farm**, 1376 18th Rd., Kanopolis, Kansas Phone: (785) 472-4984. Join the Morford Lavender Farm Facebook and you will be

notified of the beekeeper meetings that they host there.

- **Montgomery County Bee Keepers Association**, Independence, KS Meets 2nd Thursday Contact: John Blount 620-515-3977
- **South Central Kansas Beekeepers Assoc.** Winfield, KS Contact: Richard Harvey 620-442-8332
- **Western Kansas Beekeepers**, Meet bi-monthly various locations in western Kansas. Backyard hobbyists to small-scale commercial beekeepers. For information or to be added to the contact list: Carolyn Simpson crs@wbsnet.org or 960-765-0098 or Greg Swob gswob@mwenergy.com or 785-639-7766
- **Kansas Honey Producers Assn.** They meet twice a year for a 2-day meeting, once the last weekend in October and once in March. For meeting and membership information go to kansashoneyproducers.org.

If you have information about another group that meets please get the information to me-we would like to add them to our website and we will make sure that they are on the Kansas Honey Producers website. Also, if I've made a mistake please let me know so that I can correct it.

Have a Master Beekeeper come help you at your bee hive. I have an EAS and a Mid-west Master Beekeeper certificate. Evaluating your hives after winter, installing package bees, requeening, making splits, or a one on one lesson at your bee hive are just some of the things we can do. After each visit, I will leave you with a written evaluation sheet from each hive we go through. Call or text Kristi Sanderson at 913-768-4961 or email sandersonk09@gmail.com for pricing and appointment times.



Making Creamed Honey

Kristi got everyone excited about doing entries for the State Fair. Cecil is getting ready to make the creamed honey that will be sold at the fair so I thought this might be an appropriate article to share.

This will be about the "Dyce Process" for making creamed honey, but, more importantly, a practical method for using those basic principles for making small batches.

What is creamed honey? Creamed or crystallized honey is honey made to crystallize smoothly by seeding with 10% finely crystallized honey and storing at about 57° F.

We make a 60-pound batch at one time, which isn't a huge batch, but it will yield about 80+ 12-oz. containers. You can make a batch any size you want. But for the purposes of this article we'll do our 60-pound batch. We think it is best to use your lightest mildest flavored honey.

Moisture must be below 18.6%, so it won't ferment. Honey crystallizes best if it is below 18% in moisture content; it does best in the 18%- 17.5% range. If you use honey in a lower moisture range your product will be very firm and not as spreadable. However, if you are using powdered freeze-dried fruits for flavoring your honey the moisture should be about 18%. The freeze-dried fruit sucks up the moisture from your honey and makes it too firm if your moisture is lower than 18%. To bring your moisture level up to 18% you may have to add water. If your honey is 17% and you want to bring it up to 18% you need to calculate using the following formula. To bring your honey up 1% add 1 lb. of water to 100 lbs. of honey. That would be ½ lb. of water for 50-lbs. etc.

Our first step involves heating the honey to 140° to remove any crystals that may have formed already. You want your crystals to be as small as possible and to be made from the starter you will add. At this point we pour half of the honey into another bucket so that each bucket has about 30 pounds of honey in it. We use two buckets, each with a honey gate, for bottling the creamed honey mixture. If using the powdered freeze-dried powdered fruit, it is best to add it when the honey is still warm*(see mixing in the powdered freeze-dried fruit at the end). Then let the honey cool to less than 80°F. You can let this honey sit for 24 hours (even a few hours is beneficial) so any foam & or air bubbles can rise to the top. (If you are on a time schedule, this step can be eliminated.) Then, using your spatula or by using saran wrap laid down on the top of the foam and pressing it down you can gently remove any foam and air bubbles.

The next step is the most crucial. Start with a good starter. We always purchase starter at the grocery store by buying a commercially prepared product from either Sue Bee or Golden Heritage Foods. Make sure you start with a tiny crystal that feels smooth on your tongue. Also choose a starter that is firm and not runny. The best percentage is to use 5%-10% ratio of starter to honey. The more starter you use the faster it will set up. We use 6 pounds of starter for each 60-pound batch. For 12 lbs. (1 gallon) use about 19-20 oz. of creamed honey starter. The starter **and** the honey need to be at room temperature so it will mix better. We put the starter into a smaller bowl and mash it around so it will be easier to mix into the bulk honey. We then divide the starter in ½ and put that into each bucket. Now comes the fun part! How do you blend the starter with honey? We have been using a ½" drill with a stainless steel dry wall paddle on it. This works fairly well. When one of our friends helped us, the drill wasn't at home and she had a big wire whisk that you can get at a restaurant supply store. Actually, this worked quite well. Mix the starter in very well. Your honey will take on a marbled appearance and you will be able to see the starter as it mixes in. You can either bottle at this point or let it sit for 12-24 hours to let any foam and air rise to the top and then remove the foam using the above methods. Remember you are incorporating a lot of air into the mixture. We have been doing this step and consider it important. If you are putting your creamed honey in glass or transparent plastic containers you'll definitely want to do this step. Otherwise, you get a fine layer of foam on the top that you can see it on the creamed honey, but it doesn't affect the taste at all. One book also said that if you can let it set at 40°F for several hours this will stop the bubbles and foam from rising to the top.

Now we are ready to bottle it. After this is done we lug it out to our extra refrigerator. Optimal temperature for making honey crystallize is 57°F. Our refrigerator has a wine cooler thermostat or temperature control unit on it. This thermostat will keep the temperature at 57°F. It takes ours about 6-10 days to become firm.

It is best to store creamed honey at about 70°. Much warmer can make it too soft and once it reliquefies or starts to reliquefy you must start the process all over, beginning with emptying your jars and heating your honey. When we go to outdoor craft fairs and markets we keep our creamed honey in a cooler and just have 'dummy' or empty labeled containers for display on the table.

Tips for Using Freeze-dried Powdered Fruit, Nuts

Another one of our friends uses flavoring extracts. She makes a maple pecan using real pecans and maple flavoring. Remember that the flavoring adds moisture to your honey. She uses the taste method—if it tastes ok that's how much you should use. She tried using maple syrup and did not like the way that turned out.

We make pecan creamed honey. We use two cups of pecan pieces per gallon of honey. We have found that pecan meal or finely ground pecan mixes in beautifully. Some of the pecans rise to the top but some stay suspended. It really makes a beautiful product. We use 5 cups of the pecan meal for a 5-gallon batch plus 10 cups of the pecan pieces.

For cinnamon creamed honey, we use real cinnamon. I buy good cinnamon in bulk at Penzeys (we like the Vietnamese). We use 1 cup, about 4 oz. for a 5-gallon batch. I have tried using the cinnamon from the grocery store and didn't like it. So, make sure and get the good stuff.

Using the powdered dried fruits is a little tricky. The amount of freeze-dried powdered fruits that you use is approximate. For a 5-gallon batch we are using 1 lb. of fruit. You may like it to have a stronger flavor so add more.

We take one gallon of very warm honey and put that in a bowl then we slowly whisk in the freeze dried powdered fruit. After the fruit is mixed in it can be added to the rest of the honey for the batch, after it all cools, add your starter and proceed as above. Remember, when adding other foods to your honey you'll have to make sure and add that to your label. If you use any dried fruit with preservatives in them—like sulfites, you must also list that on your label.

Anything that you add to your creamed honey or liquid honey adds another medium for your honey to crystallize on and can make your creamed honey have a larger crystal than you want.

Properly processed honey will retain its firm, creamy consistency at normal room temperature, but will break down at elevated

temperatures. Recooling will not make it firm again.

Key Points:

1. Check the moisture content of your honey.
2. Heat your honey to remove any crystals that have already formed.
3. Use good firm, finely granulated starter.
4. 57°F
5. Don't try to rush it.

With the Bees, this month—continued from page 2

If you have a choice of colonies to combine your weak hive with—choose a strong hive. Two weak hives combined do not make 1 strong hive.

Also monitor your varroa mite populations. This has become the most critical part of keeping bees alive today. If you treat your hives too late in the fall they don't have a chance to get young varroa free bees in the hive to make it through the winter. That's what you need. I suggest that you treat immediately after you take your honey supers off. When you take off your supers you are cramming all your bees down into the brood chambers and all of those bees have varroa on them and that varroa is going to head into your brood to lay varroa eggs, thereby increasing the varroa load in your hive exponentially. You have so much invested in your hives—wood ware and bees and it is so devastating to lose them over the winter. We have good options for treating our hives now and most of the good ones are considered organic treatments.

At this month's meeting Robert will be going over how to check your hives for varroa and he'll talk about various treatments. I know that it is day of the solar eclipse but this is a meeting that you shouldn't miss.

I'll briefly tell you how to take a sample—they used to say if you had 8 varroa mites in a sample then you should treat—now the recommendation is if you have 1 varroa mite—we all have 1 or more varroa mites!

You need a pint jar with a lid with screen on it and a few tablespoons of powdered sugar. Open your hive, find your queen, then take your sample from another frame that doesn't have the queen! Your sample should be about 300 bees which is about a cup if bees or 1/3 of your jar. Put your sugar in, roll it around in the jar and then let it sit for about a minute. Then over a white sheet of paper shake the upside-down jar, those little reddish specs with legs are varroa mites.

2017 Meeting Dates

Meetings are held at the Douglas County Fairgrounds at 2110 Harper St. It is easily accessible from 23rd Street, turn north on Harper Street and it is just a few blocks. We are in Building 21 North which will be on your left you turn into the fairgrounds. Unless otherwise stated.

- Monday, September 18th, 7:00 pm
 - Monday, October 16th, 7:00 pm
 - Monday, November 20th 7:00 pm
 - Monday, December 18th 7:00 pm (note we'll be in Flory Meeting Hall Meeting room)
-

Tips for August

- Use the weed eater and mow around your hives so that the bees can get in and out.
- After pulling off your supers check your hives to make sure they have laying queens—
- Provide water for your bees- this will keep your bees alive in this heat
- Bees are hanging on the outside of the hives to help keep it cooler inside the hives—not much honey coming in so they are just keeping cool.
- ◆ Harvest any fall honey & get it extracted. Any honey that you pull off to extract should be extracted within a few days, in this heat wax moth damage can happen in just a few days also small hive beetle can also do a great deal of damage to your supers and your honey. Don't pull your honey off until you are ready to extract.
- ◆ Check the moisture on your honey-moisture is running very high
- ◆ Take an inventory at your bee yards to see what equipment you need to repair or replace over the winter.
- ◆ Get your entrance reducers on towards the end of September to keep mice out of your hives. Check for mice before installing mouse guards. Check your bottom boards for holes big enough for a mouse to go through.
- ◆ Store any frames with drawn comb in paradichlorobenzene (moth crystals). Wax moth damage can be devastating to your combs. Store them in a cool ventilated area. Do not store your supers in plastic garbage bags as this acts as an incubator for the wax moth.
- ◆ Update your record book—you won't remember

in the spring!

- ◆ Check your hives for stored honey. Most colonies will need 40-60 pounds of honey to winter successfully. The top deep super/hive body should be packed full of honey. If it isn't you should feed the bees some syrup. If mixing your own syrup in the fall the mixture should be 2:1 sugar to water by weight. That would be 4 lbs. of sugar to 2 lbs. of boiling water. You can also get high fructose corn syrup. However, you may not use corn syrup or any type of syrup that you purchase at the grocery store. It has things in it that can cause problems with your bees. NEVER feed honey purchased from the grocery store—it can spread American Foulbrood disease to your bees.

Here are the reasons bees die over the winter, make sure you take care of these problems in the fall:

1. Bees run out of honey
 2. Too few bees to maintain the cluster
 3. The bees' digestive tracts compact with too much waste matter
 4. They exhibit parasitic mite syndrome
- ◆ Check your colonies to see if you need to treat for Varroa mites.
 - ◆ Combine a weak colony with a stronger colony. Colonies may be split again in the spring.
 - ◆ Keep a vigilant eye out for small hive beetle.
 - ◆ Inspect your hives to make sure you have a good laying queen. You should see brood in all stages (eggs, larvae, capped).
 - ◆ If treating for mites get your treatments on as soon as possible. Mark your calendar with the date they went in and the date they should come out. The earlier you can get your treatments on for Varroa mites the better chance you have of getting healthy young bees into the hive to make it through the winter.
 - ◆ Make sure your brood is in the center of the bottom hive body. Arrange honey frames on the sides and in the top hive body--it should be full of honey. If it isn't, feed your bees syrup.
 - ◆ Make sure your hives are tipped forward, just slightly, so water doesn't pool on the bottom board and cause moisture problems.

Kansas State Fair Honey Competition

**You must enter online at
kansasstatefair.com by August
15th to enter honey at the state
fair for free!!!**

Open to all beekeepers, young and old. All jars must be plain and free of labels. No inner seals in lids. In addition to premiums, rosettes will also be awarded with 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place unless otherwise stated.

AG400 Extracted Honey; Light \$15.00 10.00 5.00
AG401 Extracted Honey; Dark \$15.00 10.00 5.00
AG402 Chunk Honey \$15.00 10.00 5.00
AG403 Comb Honey \$15.00 10.00 5.00
AG404 Cut Comb \$15.00 10.00 5.00
AG405 Crystallized/Creamed Honey \$15.00 10.00 5.00
AG406 Honey Gift Package \$30.00 20.00 10.00
AG407 Beeswax \$15.00 10.00 5.00
AG408 Beeswax Candles \$15.00 10.00 5.00
AG409 Art Design in Beeswax \$15.00 10.00 5.00
AG410 Frame of Honey (shallow or medium depth) \$15.00 10.00 5.00
Best of Show (also receives a plaque & rosette) \$15.00

YOUTH ENTRIES, AGE 18 AND UNDER

AG412Y Extracted Honey; Light \$15.00 10.00 5.00
AG413Y Extracted Honey; Dark \$15.00 10.00 5.00
AG414Y Honey Gift Package \$15.00 10.00 5.00
AG415Y Frame of Honey (shallow or medium depth) \$15.00 10.00 5.00
Youth Best of Show (**also receives a plaque & rosette) \$15.00

Best of Show: The Kansas Honey Producers Association will present an engraved plaque to the beekeeper with the greatest total number of points as determined by the judges. In open class adult division, you must enter three or more classes to be eligible for this award. You must enter at least two classes in the youth division.

If you enter and can get your honey to Cecil Sweeney –he will take it down for you and pick it up. 913-856-8653 or email joli@heartlandhoney.com. Or bring it to the August meeting and he can take it from you at that time. If bringing it us you must have it to us by Labor Day.

Entry rules and regulations, with tips and scoring for entries:

Extracted Honey: also known as strained honey is honey that has been separated from the comb by centrifugal force, gravity, straining, or other means. Shall consist of (3) three one-pound Queenline or Classic jars, no inner seals in lids. All jars must be plain and free of labels.

Chunk Honey: shall consist of (1) one strip of cut comb (full length of the jar) in three (1) one pound. Round glass jar.

Comb Honey: (3) three "rounds" "cassettes" (clear lids both sides, no pressure sensitive label), or "basswood sections" (cardboard carton with window, no producer name or address).

Cut Comb Honey: (3) three comb honey cut and placed in commercial plastic comb honey boxes 4"x 4".

Crystallized/Cream Honey: Shall consist of three glass jars between (8) eight ounce. and (16) sixteen ounce. All jars must be the same.

Gift Package: Items must be clearly labeled, as they would be offered for sale - except any marks identifying the entrant must be obscured or removed, or fictitious. Fictitious labels must meet legal label requirements. Gift package, if wrapped, must be able to be unwrapped for judging. Homemade food items must have recipes attached. Gift packages must contain at least 50% producer made items. A 3" x 5" note card must be included that states the intended use of package. Youth gift packages may not contain alcoholic beverages.

Beeswax: (3) three-pound block, geometric shape, not decorative, smooth surface top and bottom

Beeswax Candles: Four molded or dipped candles. No non-beeswax enhancement allowed, except wick.

Art Design in Beeswax: Entries must be (2) two pounds minimum weight, 100% beeswax: may be more than one piece but must be firmly joined together: may be cast in mold or carved. No non-beeswax enhancement allowed.

Frame of Honey: Shallow or medium depth. Frame must be in a display case, both sides visible. Display case available upon request.



**2017 North American
Mite-A-Thon,
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9
TO SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER
16, 2017**



Protect their lives. Preserve ours.

Mite-A-Thon is a national effort to collect mite infestation data and to visualize varroa infestations in honey bee colonies across North America within a one-week window. All beekeepers will be asked to participate, creating a rich distribution of sampling sites in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Their varroa monitoring data will be uploaded to www.mitecheck.com.

The parasitic mite, *Varroa destructor* (varroa), and the viruses it vectors is a significant driver of this honey bee colony mortality. Yet, indicators suggest that many beekeepers are not monitoring honey bee colony varroa infestations and therefore not able to connect infestation to colony loss.

OBJECTIVE: To raise awareness about honey bee colony varroa infestations in North America through effective monitoring methods. 2. Management strategies will be made available for discussion within bee organizations utilizing Mite-A-Thon partner developed information and outreach materials.

DATE: The week of September 9, 2017, with a practice test during summer 2017

PARTICIPANTS: All beekeepers are encouraged to participate

COST: There is no cost. You can create your own test materials or kits can be purchased online. Some

scholarships are available (js@pollinator.org).

OUTREACH: Promotion of Mite-A-Thon will be through local bee clubs, state beekeeping organizations, and national associations (see partners for examples)

DATA COLLECTION: Participants will monitor the level of mites (number of mites per 100 bees) using a standardized protocol utilizing two common methods of assessment (powdered sugar roll or alcohol wash) and then enter data, including location, total number of hives, number of hives tested, local habitat, and the number of *varroa* mites counted from each hive. The published information will not identify individual participants.

SPONSORS: Sponsorships are being solicited to underwrite costs and grants, as necessary.

CONTACT: Miteathon@pollinator.org. 415-362-1137

TO DO: Determine your preferred method of testing for mites and commit to a day for testing, either individually or through beekeeping organizations, and report your data (see above).

**Old Bee Gal
By Becky Tipton**



Beeswax is pretty amazing stuff. The first true beekeepers were the clergy. They wanted the beautiful pure beeswax for candles. Beeswax candles burn very clean, much cleaner than tallow which was the common candle material before petroleum/paraffin. And although beeswax makes beautiful, fragrant candles, that's just the beginning of things you can do with beeswax.

Beeswax has long been used in the kitchen to season pans and keep food from sticking to them. It does a fantastic job of seasoning a cast iron

skillet but you can also rub it on cookie sheets. You can make a great food wrap by applying a very thin coating of melted beeswax to cotton fabric. The material will mold to the shape of the bowl you wish to cover and protect the food much like plastic wrap (only without the enviro hazard). Beeswax is perfectly safe for us to eat and even believed to contain valuable trace elements.

We sell beeswax in one-ounce chunks. Our biggest customers are carpenters. They use beeswax to lubricate a sticky drawer, door or window. Rub a screw across a chunk of beeswax and it will turn much more easily. A light coating of beeswax will prevent a hand saw from rusting and make it cut more smoothly.

Beeswax is also used by quilters. Keep your needles sharp and rust-free by sticking them into a chunk of beeswax. Run your quilting thread over the chunk of beeswax and the thread will pass through the material easier with fewer knots.

Melt a chunk of beeswax and you can use it to waterproof seams on a tent or your hiking boots. Some people mix it with neats foot oil or mineral spirits. I've made a leather conditioner for years: 2 1/2 oz. beeswax, 4 oz. lanolin, 2/3 c. mineral oil, 3/4 c. water, 1 tsp. borax. This works well on both leather and wood.

Beeswax is used in art, casting metal, dyeing fabric, and decorating Easter eggs. Want to make your own non-toxic crayons? Start with beeswax.

Beeswax is secreted from the wax glands of worker bees. The glands produce small clear/white flakes of wax (on the bee's abdomen) and the worker uses her strong mandibles to work the wax into the amazing hexagon shape. The hexagon is the most efficient shape in nature. It is both strong and has no wasted spaces. Amazingly, one teaches the bees to build the hexagon, it is innate knowledge of the bee. They just know how! The hexagon is used for both brood rearing and honey storage within

the hive. It's extremely efficient.

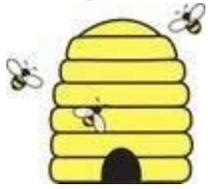
Beeswax contains over 240 different compounds but will also vary slightly from location to location. It melts at about 145° F, will discolor if you heat it above 185°F, and has a flash point of 400°F. You should NEVER leave beeswax on a heat source unattended! NEVER heat beeswax over a direct flame—use a double boiler.

My favorite use for beeswax is in skin care products. Although we have had a whole generation that seemed to forget that beeswax was great stuff, it's become a very popular additive to nicer skin and hair care products. We see hive products proudly listed on cosmetic labels—they are perceived by consumers as high quality. Soaps, lotions, balms, and butters—recipes for things you can stir up in your kitchen are readily available and produce delightful results.

The first year you harvest honey, you may not have much beeswax with which to work. You can gently melt it (a solar melter works well) and save those chunks until next year. We like to process beeswax with a water-bath. It both cleans the wax and melts it. But, the combs in your honey supers can be used again and again, saving the bees the energy of building new comb. It reportedly takes 8 times the energy for a bee to build comb as it does for them to fill it with honey! If you have the room, your combs can be placed in your freezer to kill all wax moth and SHB eggs. This is an excellent way to store supers. You can also stack supers and treat them with the moth crystals, paradichlorobenzene. Leaving empty supers unattended, either in your basement or garage, will invite a host of unwanted pests into your beeswax.

So, as you are harvesting that beautiful honey, don't forget to care for the beeswax. It's a very valuable hive product. Protect those honey supers. The bees will fill them up again next year.

Honey Plants



Jo Patrick

The Oxford living dictionary defines the word dearth as, "A situation where food is in short supply." Such is the case with our honey bees. Depending on your location, your bees may have little or no forage available now. In Northeast Kansas, the nectar flow usually lasts through the 4th of July.

Some of our flower gardens may be providing some nectar, especially if single varieties are planted in large numbers. Honey bees practice flower fidelity. That means that on a single forage, the bee will only work one flower source. They also are more attracted to large groupings of a single species.

The hearty natives are kicking in now. The roadsides and rural areas are producing sunflowers and Jerusalem Artichokes. In open areas the Tall Ironweed, Joe-Pye Weed, Milkweeds, and thistle are plentiful and the blue pitcher sage will be blooming soon. While Ironweed isn't considered a honey plant, I have seen bees working them on occasion.

My *Caryopteris* shrub is forming tight buds. *Caryopteris* is a very attractive low growing shrub that is available in plain and variegated varieties. It usually blooms when nothing else is available and is a magnet for the honey bee.

Next month we can anticipate the fall bloomers to start. As beekeepers, we often hear about Goldenrod. There are over 200 species of Goldenrod in the United States. Honey bees are not attracted to all of them. It would appear that is the case with the Goldenrod in Northeast Kansas. Honey bees are seldom seen working Goldenrod in this part of the state. They do, however, like the late summer/fall blooming Asters. Asters are related to chrysanthemums and both are related to sunflowers. Like the chrysanthemum, asters come in a wide variety of colors and sizes. In Kansas, you will find the native New England aster, heath aster, aromatic aster, sky blue aster, and the shade loving white woodland aster and blue wood aster. Asters are an important source of food when there is not much else available. The sugar content of some aster species ranges from 24% to 41%. The table quality of aster honey is not very desirable, but it provides an excellent opportunity for honey bees to stock up on winter

stores.

In the agricultural fields, soybeans typically hit full bloom around the first week of August. Soybeans are one of the most cultivated crops in the world. They are self-fertile, but it is reported that honey bees can increase production of pods and seeds. Pollination and fertilization is usually accomplished before the flower opens. Honey bees will visit the flowers for both pollen and nectar and a major nectar crop can be made from soybeans.

Depending on farming practices, the second cutting of alfalfa is about due. Cut alfalfa is of no use to the beekeeper as farmers cut right before blooming. If allowed to bloom, honey bees will take advantage of the pollen and abundant nectar which produces an excellent honey crop. As I stated in last month's Honey Plants, the honey bee must "trip" the blossom for maximum cross-pollination. Colonies with plenty of brood and young bees is ideal for working alfalfa as the older bees get tired of being bopped in the head by the bloom. The wiser bee begins to work the bloom from the side and adequate pollination may not take place. It is my understanding that in the northern part of the state, Red Clover, *Trifolium pratense*, is blooming. While difficult for the honey bee to work, Red Clover can produce a major honey crop. The deep shafts of the red clover are difficult for the short-tongued honey bee to access.

While we are between the main and fall nectar flows, might I suggest taking this time to plan nectar and pollen additions to the homestead or your backyard? Late summer and fall is an excellent time to identify existing trees and shrubs as the leaves are still on the plants. This time can be used for planning and scouting potential hive locations. The beekeeper can then determine what holes there might be in the nectar flow. In a horticulture class I took, a long time ago, an instructor repeatedly told the class, anytime you can dig a hole is an appropriate time to plant a tree. Yes, that is true, but experience has taught me that trees and perennials will be under less stress if planted after the cool fall temperatures move in. Fall plantings will spend the winter building extensive root systems. In the spring they will take off and flourish ready to handle the stress of summer. Garden centers and nurseries often mark down their prices in the fall too. If you have holes in your nectar flow, or need to multiply existing plants, take the time now to research what could be added to the landscape to keep your bees continually working.

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Northeastern Kansas Beekeepers Association
Robert Burns, Treasurer
7601 W 54th Terr
Shawnee Mission KS 66202

Address Service Requested

Meeting

Monday, August 21st, 2017

The Northeastern Kansas Beekeepers' Association

Membership is open to anyone who is interested in bees or bee culture. Dues are \$15.00 per calendar year (December 31-December 31) for the first in the family joining. Those joining in July or later in the year may pay \$7.50 for ½ year. Additional members of that family wanting voting privileges shall be assessed dues at \$1.00 per year. Youth memberships (18 years of age and younger) are \$7.50 per year. New memberships and renewals should be submitted to the treasurer.

The *Bee Buzzzer* is the official publication of the Northeastern Kansas Beekeepers' Association, Inc. and is published monthly. Commercial ads are accepted in the newsletter for a fee, non-commercial ads by paid members are accepted & are free.

The library of the association is free to all members. Books may be checked out at the meetings and kept for a period of 30 days. The bee publications, *The American Bee Journal* and *Bee Culture* can be subscribed for through the treasurer.

The Association meets each month on the third Monday at 7:00 p.m. except during the months of January and July. A beekeeping class is held in March. This is a nonprofit organization; elected officers serve without pay. Everyone is invited to attend the meeting. Check *The Buzzzer* or our website at NEKBA.ORG each month for the actual date, time and location. If the weather is bad call an officer to find out if the meeting will be held.

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| | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
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