



# Northern Piedmont Beekeepers Association

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## Beekeeping Events in the Area

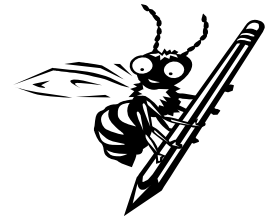
This month's **NPBA meeting** will be held on April 17th from 7:30-9:00 pm at the Culpeper County Extension Building located at 101 South West Street, Culpeper, VA, and will feature **Ann Harman** speaking on *Living with Africanized Honey Bees*, a topic sure to get and hold your attention. Ann has spent time working with Africanized Honey Bees and will present a first hand account of the reality concerning these bees.

A reminder, the **Virginia State Beekeepers Association** meeting will be hosted by the **Loudoun County Beekeepers Association** on April 11 & 12th at the 4-H Fairgrounds on

17558 Dry Mill Road in Leesburg. As always, it should be a great program. Featured speakers include **Nancy Ostiguy** from Penn State University, **Phil Craft** from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, **Michael Palmer**, a commercial beekeeper and president of the Vermont Beekeepers Association, and our own **Billy Davis** and more! Topics include bee viruses, the bone-headed things beekeepers do, varroa treatments, beekeeping in Kentucky, queen rearing & cell building, making nucs and splits, an update on the Northern Virginia queen rearing program, mead making, and a report on the bacterial analysis of the

honey samples sent to **Dr. Rick Fell** of Virginia Tech. The pre-registration cost is \$25.00 for both days until March 28th. A Saturday lunch is offered for an additional \$8.50. Without pre-registration, the cost for entrance will be a little extra. Where else can you get such quality entertainment for just over \$30?

Directions to the 4-H Fairgrounds in Leesburg can be found at the Virginia State Beekeepers website: [www.virginiabeekeepers.org](http://www.virginiabeekeepers.org).



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## Beekeeping Course and Bee Packages

Beekeeping classes are continuing at almost 20 locations throughout the state of Virginia. The Tuesday evening 7-9 pm class being held at Verdun Adventure Bound on Route 229, north of Rixeyville, are half completed. You are welcome to audit the class if you have been a past student. Several people who took it in years past are auditing it, and have told me they are getting more out of it this time than they did the first time.

Package bees ordered through the class are tentatively scheduled to arrive April 13 at the EL-



### What's Blooming this Month?

Life is starting to appear with gusto after this long winter's sleep. The buds are on the trees and flowers and many plants are really showing their color!

**Ann Harman** has mentioned in earlier writings the black locust is one of the earliest trees to begin their nectar flow but for unknown reasons, they do **not** have nectar flow every year! The honey produced by the black locust is very, very light and very sweet.

eanor C. Lords Park in Centerville. The packaged honeybees will be picked up by bee wranglers **Bob Duxbury** and **Karen Hunt** and brought to Verdun, where they can be collected. Changes to this schedule will be announced in the beekeeping class. If there are questions, please contact **Bob Duxbury** or **Kathy Miller**. Their telephone numbers are on the front page of this newsletter.

If you have not already made arrangements to buy bee packages this spring, your options may be limited. One option is to contact our regional

bee inspector, **Bob Wellemeyer**. He has 3# packages for \$57.00 or nucs for \$65.00. His email is [beeswax7@wildblue.net](mailto:beeswax7@wildblue.net), and his home phone number is 540 937 2175 and (cell) 540 229 5359. The Dadant outlet in Lynchburg, VA, may still have bees. They can be reached by calling 434 846 0666 or toll free 800 220 8325.

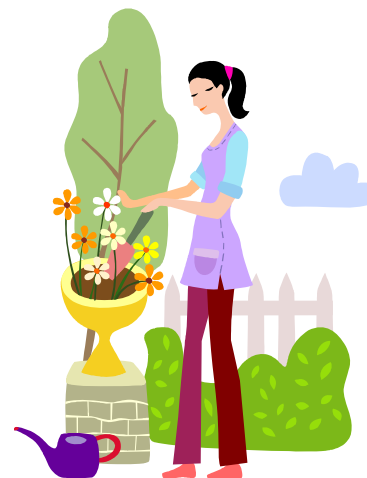


The Wild Cherry tree is one of the first trees to bloom in the spring. Other fruit trees such as pear, black cherry, apple, and plum are also beginning to blossom.

#### What is blooming in April?

**Trees:** Oak, Elm, Wild Cherry, fruit trees, tulip poplar. and keep a watch for black locust trees.

**Plants:** redbud, dandelions, henbit, ajuga, chickweed, and some garden flowers.



## NPBA 2008 Meeting Schedule



Culpeper County Extension Office  
101 South West St.  
Culpeper, VA

April 17	7:30-9:00 p.m.
May 15	7:15-8:45 p.m.
June 8	Picnic at Verdun 2:00-6:00p.m.
July	No meeting
August	No meeting
September	7:30-9:00 p.m.
October 16	7:30-9:00 p.m.
November 20	7:30-9:00 p.m.
December	No meeting

## To Buy or Barter

Have raw or filtered beeswax you want to sell or barter? If so, email contact [melindautz@aol.com](mailto:melindautz@aol.com).

Jerry Headley is selling bee equipment starting with woodenware and gradually expanding. Samples of woodenware will be at the April meeting. Contact Jerry at [vabeeguy@aol.com](mailto:vabeeguy@aol.com) or [vabeesupply@aol.com](mailto:vabeesupply@aol.com) for pricing and a list of equipment.



## Legislative Alert—Follow Up

This just in from Lannie Ballard, who has worked tirelessly on behalf of all Virginia Beekeepers to educate our state legislators on current beekeeping issues. This year, due to the state of Virginia's financial situation, beekeepers were about to lose the unused portion of the funds appropriated last year by the General Assembly. The unused funds would not have carried over to the 2009's budget. Virginia Beekeepers made calls and sent emails to the General Assembly, and with assis-

tance from Senator Blevins and others in Richmond, we were able to get the money appropriated. This means both the House of Delegates and the Senate asked for the unused funds to be protected and carried over to the next budget year. Delegate Ben Cline told Mr. Ballard he had members of the Appropriations Committee contacting him about the quantity of the messages they were receiving from the public concerning honeybee funding. Many beekeepers in the state felt strongly about saving beekeeping

funding in Virginia and voiced their opinions to save this beautiful insect called a honeybee and is so vital to our environment. Remember, civics class lesson 101 - the squeaky wheel gets the grease!



## This and That

### Membership Dues are Past Due!

Dues are to pay for mailing the newsletter to its members, to extension services, and for meeting announcements in newspapers around the area. Please send a check for \$10 made to NPBA and mail to:

Lele Hankins  
18182 Pine View Drive  
Culpeper, VA 22701

### Have you checked out the Northern Piedmont Beekeepers Association website lately?



Mike Wilson, the webmaster, has been keeping busy creating another information source. Currently, the website has contact information for club officers, meeting locations and schedules, links to other organizations, some photos, and past newsletters. It is our hope to expand and include hot topics in beekeeping and items of interest to you! Please contact a club officer and let them know what you think would be interesting to the beekeeper. To view the website, go to [npbee.org](http://npbee.org).

## Honey Recipe for the Month

### Cinnamon Honey Buns

1/4 cup butter or margarine  
softened and divided  
1/2 cup honey, divided  
1/2 cup chopped toasted nuts, optional  
2 tsp ground cinnamon  
2/3 cup raisins  
1 lb. frozen bread dough, thawed according to package directions

#### Directions:

Grease 12 muffin cups with 1 TBSP butter.

#### To prepare honey nut topping:

Mix together 1 TBSP butter, 1/4 cup honey and chopped nuts. Place 1 tsp topping in each muffin cup.

#### To prepare filling:

Mix together remaining 2 TBSP butter, remaining 1/4 cup honey and cinnamon. Roll out bread dough onto floured surface into 18x8 inch rectangle. Spread filling evenly over dough. Sprinkle evenly with raisins. Starting with long side, roll dough into log.

Cut log into 12 (1-1/2 inch) slices. Place 1 slice, cut-side up, into each prepared muffin cup. Set muffin pan in warm place. Let dough rise for 30 minutes. Place muffin pan on foil-lined baking sheet. Bake at 375 degrees for 20 minutes or until buns are golden brown. Remove from oven; cool in pan 5 minutes. Invert muffin pan to remove buns. Recipe from the National Honey Board. Website: [www.honey.com](http://www.honey.com)

## Review & Preview

All honey supers should be ready to place on the hive. Give your bees water now so they will be trained to this water source rather than your neighbor's bird bath or swimming pool.

If you decide to re-queen, April is okay although queens are best accepted by a colony during a good nectar flow so mid-May would be better. A strong nectar flow in the Northern Piedmont area generally begins in May, although with warm weather, it can occur up to two weeks earlier. This is also a good time to merge weak colonies. Remember, a weak colony will not produce a honey crop. And of course, be alert for signs of swarm preparation.

In the Mid Atlantic Region, swarming can occur anytime from April through June. April is the month when the colony typically begins swarm preparations. Once there is a nectar flow, the urge to swarm generally subsides as the bees get busy collecting. Although swarming is the natural way honey bees reproduce, a beekeeper tries to manage the colonies to prevent swarming. Colonies that swarm rarely recover to produce a honey crop. Additionally, in the Northern Piedmont area less than 50% of the swarms survive the first winter.

Although swarming is not fully understood, there are several reasons why a colony makes preparations to swarm. First and foremost: the brood nest becomes congested due to colony size or just availability of open cells for the queen to lay her eggs. In spring the queen and the colony generally expand their nests upwards rather than side-to-side. The available comb above may be limited by lack of space or a super full of honey. A band of honey need only be half an inch wide to prevent the queen from moving upward into empty comb. To

prevent the “chimney stack” affect, many beekeepers rotate hive bodies every ten days or so. The super with



the queen and the brood is placed on the bottom and an empty super from below the brood nest is placed on top. The frames with brood

can also be moved within the original super and by moving some of the brood frames to the center of the super above. Spreading the brood and the bees both out and up increases their perception of having adequate room. Place frames of drawn comb between frames of brood, but do not put frames with brood facing the inside of the super. Be careful the brood frames are not separated to such a degree that a small colony of bees cannot cover and keep the brood warm. Providing colonies with extra space before they need it is important in swarm control.

When there is a shortage of queen pheromones from lack of production by a failing queen or poor distribution due to congestion in the brood area, the bees are stimulated to make queen cells. Queen cells are generally found hanging from the bottom of brood frames. Removing queen cells can delay a colony from swarming providing it is not done within hours of when the swarm would normally emerge.



Unfortunately, destroying swarm queen cells does nothing to alter the basic problem. Locating all of the queen cells in a congested colony is not simple. If one cell is missed, a swarm will emerge. Remember supercedure cells are generally fewer in number and are located in or near the center of the brood nest. Supercedure

occurs when less pheromone is produced, usually because the queen is old or has been injured. The old queen may not be killed. They may continue to lay a reduced number of eggs, be tolerated by the new queen, be fed by the workers, and usually dies after a few months.

George Demaree described a drastic, but almost always effective method of swarm control. Destroy all the queen cells, place the queen and one frame with a small amount of brood in the bottom super, and add a queen excluder. One or two supers of empty comb are placed above. Take the remaining frames of capped and uncapped brood plus the adhering bees and place in a super on top. This creates space for the queen to lay her eggs and the separation of the brood from the queen makes the bees in the upper super perceive they are queenless. Those bees begin to rear another queen. The existing queen begins laying in the lower super and none of the colony's strength is lost. This method is labor intensive as the upper brood nest must be checked every week to destroy new queen cells. These two supers can be reunited when the honey flow is in progress. An alternative is to allow the upper colony to raise a queen and manage the colony as a two queen unit. If the decision is made to join these two units, the old queen can be killed or you can let the two queens fight it out. The younger queen generally wins.

The weather may also modify swarming behavior. When colonies are developing, a period of good weather followed by bad weather seems to accentuate swarming. Another factor may be poor ventilation. A failing queen, genetic makeup, and an imbalance of worker bee population are also reasons for swarming.