



Northern Piedmont Beekeepers Association

Volume 30

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SEPTEMBER MEETING

When: Thursday September 17

Time: 7:30 PM

Where: Verdun Adventure Bound

What: Frank Linton on Toward a Colony Health Monitoring System *or* How Are You Girls Doing in There?

V. I. P.

President: Mike King

PO Box 213

Amissville, VA 20106

540-937-4792

kahu9@juno.com

Vice President: Deb Parker

540-854-4883

brokenpost@gemlink.com

Secretary/Treasurer: Lele Hankins

540-547-4711

hankins77@comcast.net

Website: www.npbee.org

Webmaster: Mike Wilson

webmaster@npbee.org

Newsletter Editor: Ann Harman

540-364-4660

ahworkerb@aol.com

Regional Inspector: Bob Wellemeyer

540-428-0420

REALLY IMPORTANT

The September meeting will be held at Verdun Adventure Bound. We have a special treat with the presentation of Frank Linton. Since it is a Power Point, we need the space for the A/V equipment and a big audience!

Directions to Verdun Adventure Bound are on page 4. If you took the NPBA Bee Course, you know where to go.

HIVE WORKS FOR SEPTEMBER

With all the rain weeds and grass grow! Keep those weeds and grass down in front of the hive so the bees do not have to fight their way through overgrown plants.

Last chance for requeening during the first half of September.

Protect your honey supers from wax moth. However, if only ever used for honey, not ever for brood, wax moth is not interested.

Don't store wet honey supers. Small Hive Beetles (SHB) love them.

Check your hives for adequate honey and pollen. Beekeepers are reporting a dearth of nectar, in spite of the rain.

September and October are your best months to give sugar syrup for the bees' winter food supply.

Look ahead—do you have enough mouse guards? Mark your calendar for October 1st installment of these. I'll put a reminder in the October newsletter.

Read about change of venue for meeting!

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

NPBA will have a special guest speaker for our September meeting—Frank Linton, a beekeeper in Northern Virginia. Dr. Linton gave a fascinating presentation at the Virginia State Beekeepers' Association meeting last Fall, which included some interesting ideas he has implemented with his hives at his home in Fairfax. His unique hive set-up allows him to collect data, using household items, from inside his hive to help in gauging health and condition of his bees, all while in the comfort of his house.

The location of this meeting will be held at Verdun Adventure Bound instead of the Culpeper Extension Office in an effort to better accommodate folks. For directions to Verdun and other meeting information, please see the meeting listing section and page 4 of this newsletter. You won't want to miss this meeting, and I hope to see you all there!

On another note, I am trying to track down some of the club equipment. The club was given an extractor several years ago, and received another donation last Fall of a second extractor, a hot knife and other assorted items. The extractor that was donated last Fall has been accounted for, but I cannot seem to locate the original extractor, the hot knife or other items. If anyone might know where this missing club equipment is, or has any information that might be helpful, please contact me at 540-937-4792, or at kahu9@juno.com.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

We are fortunate to have Frank Linton come and speak. Since he is a beekeeper he well knows what other beekeepers want. Come and hear what he has to say. Besides he has a delightful sense of humor.

Although we are entering autumn with plentiful rain giving us scenery like a tropical rain forest, some beekeepers have reported a lack of late summer nectar. Or perhaps the nectar is proportionally high in water and therefore low in sugar content. Bees prefer nectar rich in sugar. Do check your bees.

SO YOU WANT TO BE A BEEKEEPER...

September is really your last busy month with your bees. In our climate, September days can be nicely warm to very hot. Get outside and look or drive around searching for areas of September flowers.

At this time of the the workers—who are in charge of the hive—will begin to move the queen down. Yes, I have seen in old books that the beekeeper should “put the queen down in the hive.” Well, the worker bees know what to do better than you do.

The workers stop cleaning and polishing the cells in the upper hive body. So the queen goes down looking for a place to lay eggs. The workers then fill the empty cells with honey—food over brood. You will soon learn how they are doing by simply looking down between frames. However, from time to time you need to pull up a few frames to have a good look. If your bees need feeding, then feed them!

At this time of year a 2:1 sugar syrup is recommended. However I have found that exactly 2 parts sugar to one of water may crystallize in the feeder. So make the syrup slightly more dilute to prevent crystallization.

Scientists are recommend feeding Fumagilin-B® to help with nosema, especially *N. ceranae*. Do not add it to hot syrup! Let the syrup cool.

In your area you may have some of the blue or white aster start to bloom. It will bloom up until frost. The bees make good use of this. However ripening aster honey stinks. It just smells awful. However, when aster honey is ripe and capped it is a nice table honey—with no stink!

During September the queen will slowly decrease her egg laying. Do not worry about this. She is just entering her autumn rest period.

Drones are usually gone by this time but do not be alarmed if you see a few still around. Some colonies will tolerate a drone or so during the winter.

Make certain that your queen is doing a good job. Examine her brood pattern!

REQUEENING IN AUTUMN

The advantages of requeening colonies in autumn are many. But disadvantages do exist.

Colonies entering the winter with a young, vigorous queen mean a good population entering winter and enthusiastic egg laying in late winter and early spring.

Generally, the larger the colony in winter means that temperature control is easier for the bees. A large cluster generates more heat than a small cluster. The bees do not attempt to heat the hive, only their own bodies and any brood that will be emerging in late winter.

Does this mean more food for them to eat? Well, yes, in one sense. More mouths to feed means more food. But the larger cluster will be using their food more efficiently. They also can move to resources more easily than a small cluster.

Our strong nectar flows are early, generally starting in early May. Let's say that you want peak population on May first. Count backwards: three weeks as a field bee, three weeks as a house bee (now we're up to three to six weeks of field force), and backwards from emerging adult to egg—20 days. So when do you want to have peak egg laying by the queen? You're right—in March! Now you can see that a young queen in autumn means a big field force in May. The bigger the field force, the more honey for you and your bees.

The disadvantage of autumn requeening is that there may not be a strong nectar flow on to encourage the field bees to be busy. Therefore queen acceptance may not be as good as during a strong spring nectar flow. However this problem can easily be overcome by using the nuc method of requeening.

Another disadvantage may be that beekeepers perceive the population to be large. In fact the number of bees actually present may be greater in the spring (see above). It's just that the field force is not as busy in autumn, therefore the number of bees just hanging about is greater.

Let us explore the nuc method of requeening. You can have 100% success with it.

requeening, cont.

One advantage of the nuc method is that if the new queen dies or is not accepted by the nuc bees, you still have your old queen. She will be just fine until you requeen in the spring.

You need a double screen. So go ahead and make one. Four pieces of 1X1 (or whatever) for the four sides of the frame. The frame fits exactly on your hive body. Cover both sides with metal window screen. (Yes, the bees can chew through plastic screen.)

For your nuc you need a frame with honey and pollen, a frame with capped brood, a frame with brood and some empty comb for the new queen to start laying.

Transfer these and their clinging bees to a hive body. Either use two follower boards, one on each side of the frames or use empty comb. Your nuc can have 3 or 4 or up to 5 frames. Just be sure to have enough clinging (nurse) bees to take care of any brood. Be certain you do NOT put the old queen in this nuc!

Give the original hive enough frames of empty comb to fill the spaces left when you removed the frames for your nuc.

Put the double screen over the original hive, fix an entrance for the nuc and put the nuc on top of the double screen. Introduce the queen, in her cage with no attendants, into the nuc. Check for her release and subsequent egg laying.

When you are satisfied all is well and the nuc is functioning, it's time to find the old queen in the colony below. If you separated the hive bodies with queen excluders you have reduced your search area to only 9 or 10 frames. Remove the queen. If you want to keep her until you are certain all is well, pop her into a queen cage with a mini-marshmallow in the open end and 4 or 5 workers who will feed her.

Remove the double screen, put a sheet of newspaper down (it is not necessary to cut slits in it) and put the nuc on the paper. The bees will chew the paper and throw little bits out the entrance. Check the colony in about a week to make sure all is well. You have made a successful autumn requeening!

COOKING WITH HONEY

The late summer and early autumn fruits are being sold at farmers' markets and roadside stands. Honey will help you take advantage of their wonderful flavors.

HONEY-MINT FRUIT SALAD DRESSING

1/2 cup honey
1/2 teaspoons ground cardamom
1 teaspoon crushed fresh or dried mint leaves
1 teaspoon grated lemon rind
1/4 cup lemon juice
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup salad oil

Combine honey, 1/2 cup water and cardamom. Bring to a boil and simmer for about 3 minutes. Add mint. Chill, then strain. Add remaining ingredients and blend well. Chill. Makes 1 cup.

MISSISSIPPI HOMEGROWN

Mississippi Beekeepers Association

Here is an interesting version of a cucumber salad. Cucumbers also go well with mint.

CUCUMBER A LA TURK

2 cups plain yogurt
3 tablespoons honey
juice of 1 lemon
dash of salt
sprinkling of pepper
1 teaspoon paprika
1 tablespoon chopped mint leaves
3 chilled cucumbers, peeled and thinly sliced

Combine the first five ingredients in a bowl and mix well. Shortly before serving, peel and slice the cucumbers and place in a bowl. Pour dressing over cucumbers, sprinkle with paprika and mint leaves, and serve.

THE BOOK OF HONEY by Francis & Gontier

WHAT'S BLOOMING?

■ garden flowers
■ white Dutch clover (loves the rain)
■ daisy-like flowers)
■ some wildflowers (look around)
■ goldenrod
■ ragweed
■ wingstem
■ Joe Pye Weed
■ Spanish Needle

September 2009

NPBA

IMPORTANT STUFF

DIRECTIONS TO VERDUN ADVENTURE BOUND (Beekeeping classes were held there.)

From Rt 211, take Rt 229 south toward Culpeper. In about 4 miles watch for the Rescue Squad sign (sign on right). As you pass the Rescue Squad itself on your left, slow down! The entrance to Verdun has a sign where you will turn LEFT. Continue on drive past big red barn, down a little hill. Classroom building on left, parking lot on right.

From the south - get on Rt 229 going north toward Rt 211. Cross over Hazel River bridge, past Rixeyville. In a few miles you will see the sign, on your right, for Verdun Adventure Bound. If you pass the Rescue Squad you have gone a little too far. Turn around..

A troupe of Boy Scouts may be meeting in the building at the same time. NPBA will use the two rooms on the right.

Meeting dates for NPBA:

September 17
October 15
November 19

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VSBA autumn meeting Saturday, November 7 at Blue Ridge Community College, Weyers Cave, just off I-81.

Website info:
Northern Piedmont Beekeepers
www.npbee.org

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For information about Virginia State Beekeepers Association go to the website:
www.virginiabeekeepers.org

C & H BEE BOOKS

If you are interested in bee books contact C & H Bee Books for a list of books available. Call Ann to request a book list.

We cannot accept credit cards but checks and cash are just fine!

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