



Northern Piedmont Beekeepers Association

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For New Beekeepers
Double Screen
Requeening

APRIL MEETING

TIME: 7:30 PM
DATE: March 18
PLACE: Culpeper Cooperative Extension
corner of Davis St and West St
entrance on West St
PROGRAM: Ask the Experts
SPEAKER: You and members of NPBA
including the Bee Course students

V. I. P.

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APRIL MEETING

Since some members of NPBA will be attending the VSBA meeting on April 16, 17, they will be leaving on the evening of the 15th. So bring your questions, answers, comments, show-and-tell gadgets, and whatever else you wish to show and discuss and have a great meeting.

VIRGINIA STATE BEEKEEPERS

Meeting is April 16, 17 at Wytheville
Community College, Wytheville, VA, just minutes off I-81
Info at: virginiabeekeepers.org

HIVE WORKS FOR APRIL

April is swarm month. Bees move up. When bottom hive body is empty it is time to reverse - put it on top so the bees feel they have room.

Prepare for nectar flow with black locust (if it feels like producing nectar) in about a month.

This is the month to really be a plant watcher and weather watcher. Both will guide you in caring for your bees.

If you think you will have a honey harvest this year have you ordered containers? The equipment suppliers are now really busy taking care of procrastinators. Get your container order in if you have not done it.

If you have used any medications in your hive, better take them off now.

Time to be sure grease patties are taken off so the small hive beetle does not eat them.

Keep reversing through April.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Thanks go out to Keith Tignor, the Virginia State Apiarist, for coming up from Richmond to speak at our March meeting about queens and more successful methods of queen introduction. The next meeting on April 15th will be an open forum. This is a good opportunity for new and "newer" beekeepers to come meet other more experienced beekeepers and have an opportunity to ask questions and hear different perspectives.

I know some NPBA members are planning on attending the Virginia State Beekeepers Association's spring meeting on April 16-17th, held this year in Wytheville. We hope to be able to pass along some of the interesting information from this meeting when we return.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

I would like to see all beekeepers, newbees as well as experienced, build up a library of bee books. It does not have to be a large library—a book or two on how-to-do-it, perhaps a reference book, plus a nice-to-read book (a pleasure book). In next month's issue I will be doing some book reviews not only on new ones just out but also others.

I would like to encourage subscribing to *Bee Culture*, or *American Bee Journal* if you prefer. For some reason everyone feels they have to read all the articles in an issue. That's silly—just read the ones that grab your interest.

We are having a late, compressed spring. With the nice weather, get outside with your field guides to wildflowers and identify the plants you see around you. Of course if you see a bee on a blossom make a note of the plant, if the bees are collecting pollen, and time of day.

Now you have the beginning of your list of nectar and pollen plants.

If the bees are collecting pollen you will see it packed in their pollen baskets. If the bees are collecting only nectar you will see...nothing. The nectar is in their honey stomach. They may have pollen sprinkled in hairs.

SO YOU WANT TO BE A BEEKEEPER...

The column this month is directed mainly at those absolutely brand-new beekeepers, those taking the Bee Course and getting their first bees. However, it's a good review for those who are going into their second year of beekeeping, so read it!

I want you to think about your goals for this first year. Actually it's one goal but has several pieces. Here it is.

To have your full hive (explained in next paragraph) with fully drawn combs so your bees have a home and full storage capacity, by the end of July.

If you are using deeps (remember the sizes?) you will have two hive bodies with a total of 20 drawn combs. If you are using mediums (clever beekeepers do) you will have three hive bodies with 30 drawn combs.

Notice, please, that I did not mention a honey harvest. If you are starting bees from packages you will not even think about a honey harvest. If you are starting from a nuc you might get a honey harvest but that only comes after you have accomplished your goal.

Drawn comb is "money in the bank" to a beekeeper. It is a precious commodity both for you and your bees. It is their home and their pantry.

Bees have to have a reason to draw comb. For a swarm it means establishment of home and pantry. So a spring swarm will first draw comb. There's a good use for a swarm.

A colony of bees will draw good comb on a good nectar flow. Are you watching your plants and weather? A good nectar flow means the bees need a place to put it—comb.

Bees will draw comb on 1:1 sugar syrup. So feeding packages, and nucs, too, in spring will encourage drawing comb.

To get good comb have the hive body full: 10 frames in a 10-frame hive body; 8 frames in an 8-frame hive body. It may take a bit of work to meet your goal—but you must, for your bees.

MAKE A DOUBLE SCREEN

Every beekeeper should have a few double screens on hand. They are useful in moving bees and in a nuc method of requeening.

A double screen does not have to be fancy. You can make the frame from scrap wood. You need five pieces.

The thickness can be anywhere from 1/2 inch to 1 or 2 inches. The size of the frame will be such that it fits exactly on top of a hive body. So you will cut two end pieces and two side pieces. What about the 5th piece. Cut that to fit across the middle of the frame. The 5th piece will support the screen in the middle so it does not collapse.

The screen must be metal window screen. The bees will propolize this. But you can clean it with the flame from one of those small hand torches. You can also use hardware cloth with a small mesh, such as 1/8 inch. The mesh must be small so that the bees cannot go through.

Screen is then stapled on each surface of your frame. That's all there is to it.

When you use it on a hive you will have to provide an entrance to the upper hive body. You can prop up the hive body on shims just enough to allow the bees to enter. Or you can prop up the inner cover and pull the telescoping cover so that the bees can enter and exit under the inner cover.

An entrance under the inner cover is effective during robbing season. However, ventilation is better with the entrance on top of the double screen. You can choose depending on the season and situation.

A packet of shims from the hardware store is very useful for your bee bucket. Almost as useful as your roll of duct tape.

If you use the nuc method of requeening with the double screen you really can get 100% acceptance provided the queen is acceptable to the bees. Besides if you goofed somewhere you still have the old queen in the lower hive body. A good insurance policy.

REQUEENING

Although you may read in books that requeening should be done in the spring, experts all agree that fall requeening is best. However you should requeen whenever it is necessary—that is, if, in the middle of June you find a poor brood pattern in the hive—requeen. If your bees are excessively defensive, stinging you when you have not even gone near the hive—then requeen.

During the summer months and early fall (first half of September) queens can be purchased without waiting. Furthermore, breeders are more apt to have good queens during those months—the rush of spring is over and they can monitor their queen rearing operations carefully. Furthermore, mating success seems to be better during the summer months.

One of the difficulties we are encountering is when to do fall requeening. Colonies tend to crash during July, perhaps right after honey removal. That is when varroa population is growing large.

Experts recommend no treatments of any sort for several weeks after requeening. Now you have to decide what treatments, if any, your bees need and when.

Now, let's have just one more factor—August is a dearth period for bee forage. Bees are really crabby in August. Queen acceptance is poor during dearth and excellent during a good nectar flow.

Perhaps an ideal time would seem to be September. But it has to be early enough so that if the queen is not accepted you can still get a replacement. Just one more thing to schedule.

However, if a queen is not accepted by a colony and it is getting late in September, two colonies can be united to winter over. The colony can be split and given a new queen in the spring. However, with the nuc method of requeening problems of acceptance are minimal.

Rarely, but it does occur, a colony refuses to accept a new queen in spite of beekeeper efforts.

COOKING WITH HONEY

Easter is in April and many people fix a family dinner with ham. Here are some dishes that you might enjoy with that ham.

CITRUS HONEY CARROTS

1 bunch carrots
1/2 teaspoon salt
1.4 cup melted butter or margarine
1/4 cup honey
1-1/2 teaspoon grated orange peel
1-1/2 teaspoon grated lemon peel

Cook the carrots until crisp tender. Drain. Blend the ingredients and pour over carrots. Stir over low heat until carrots are thoroughly glazed.

Serves 6

THE HONEY KITCHEN ed. by Dadant

SWEET AND SOUR SPINACH SALAD

3 slices bacon
3 tablespoons honey
2 to 3 tablespoons lemon juice
2 to 3 tablespoons tarragon vinegar
2 teaspoons grated lemon peel
1/2 cup chopped apples or pears
2 tablespoons grated cheddar cheese for garnish
1 hard boiled egg, sliced, for garnish
Bibb lettuce
fresh spinach
a few fresh mushrooms or bean sprouts

Cut bacon in little pieces and fry it crispy. Add all at once the vinegar, honey and lemon juice. Simmer no more than 2 minutes. Mix lettuce, spinach, apple, mushrooms or bean sprouts. Pour bacon mixture over while still hot. Toss lightly. Garnish with cheese and egg. Makes 2 large or 4 small salads.

COOKING WITH HONEY Marge Davenport

Be sure to have honey on the table at every meal. Never store honey in the refrigerator. It will granulate quicker than at room temperature.

WHAT'S BLOOMING?

■ redbud	ajuga
■ apple	dandelions
■ oaks	spice bush
■ fruit trees	
■ some garden flowers	

GOOD STUFF

Meeting dates for NPBA

September 16	
April 15	October 21
May 20	November 18
Sunday June 13 Potluck Picnic	
No meeting in July, Aug, Dec and Jan.	

Virginia State Beekeepers Association Fall meeting November 6 at Blue Ridge Community College, Weyers Cave, a few minutes off I-81.
Eastern Apicultural Society Short Course and Conference August 2 - 6, Boone, NC (in the cool mountains!)

WOW! WHOLE HIVE RAFFLE

In the spirit of supporting NPBA, Jerry Headley of Virginia Bee Supply has graciously donated a complete 8-frame hive for another special NPBA raffle. Equipment includes screened bottom board with mite tray, entrance reducer, three medium hive bodies with frames and foundation, inner and telescoping cover, with a retail value of \$125-\$130.

Tickets are \$1 each and are available at the Beekeeping Classes on Tuesday nights, the meetings, or by mail (please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the return of your tickets). If you are not able to make it to either the bee classes or the the next meeting on April 15th but would like to purchase some raffle tickets, you can mail your check (made payable to NPBA) to Karen Hunt, PO Box 213, Amissville, VA 20106, and I'll mail your raffle tickets back to you. If you have any questions, you can call me at 540-937-4792.

Drawing at April meeting. You do not have to be present to win. **Last chance to buy ticket!**

VIRGINIA BEE SUPPLY

Local authorized Brushy Mountain dealer offering a complete selection of woodenware and bee supplies. Save shipping costs. Contact Jerry Headley at 540-905-5563 or www.virginiabeesupply.com.

C & H BEE BOOKS

If you are interested in bee books contact Ann for a list of books available. We cannot accept credit cards but checks and cash are just fine!