



# Northern Piedmont Beekeepers Association

Volume 31

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August 2010

## IN THIS ISSUE

For New Beekeepers  
Happy New Year to Your Bees!  
Other Critters

### AUGUST

**NO meeting in August**

Mark your calendars for the September 16 meeting.

For the September meeting, please bring a sample of your honey. A queenline-type jar is preferable but we can have a look at your honey in other jars.

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### AUGUST HOT TOPIC

Honey off. Varroa treatment on.

You can treat with powdered sugar at this time or with your choice of varroa treatments. All scientists agree that July treatment is of the utmost importance during the latter part of July or first part of August. You will have healthy bees to overwinter.

### VIRGINIA STATE BEEKEEPERS

Info at: [virginiabeekeepers.org](http://virginiabeekeepers.org)  
Put November 6 on your calendar of events right now and come to Blue Ridge Community College for the VSBA autumn meeting.

### HIVE WORKS FOR AUGUST

Check your bees' water supply.

Watch out for robbing if you open a hive.

Keep apiary clear of weeds so bees have a clear flight path.

Decide if you need queens at beginning of September for autumn requeening.

Do not go into your hives unless you suspect a problem. All the bees are at home with nothing to do except annoy you.

Honey supers used ONLY for honey are not appealing to wax moth.

Plan to repair honey supers when the weather turns cooler.

If you had a great honey crop why not join your friends at the Farmers' Market and sell some. You can also help by answering questions and passing out recipes using honey.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Hope all of you are weathering the hot, dry spell we have had the past month and a half. Be sure to provide your bees with top ventilation during these hot, humid days. Since we have had basically no rain to speak of, remember to check food stores and feed if needed. Now is also the time to check for varroa and treat if necessary.

Remember we have no monthly Thursday meeting for August. Ann Harman will be the guest speaker at our next regular meeting in September. If you are producing honey, be sure to bring a bottle to the meeting. Ann, who has served as a judge in many shows, will analyze members' honey and provide feedback on moisture content, crystallization and other interesting points.

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

What a strange year. Heavy snows replenished our water table. But spring and summer dry weather gave us reduced rainfall amounts for shallow-rooted plants. Then came June with abominable weather - heat and humidity day after day. July followed with more heat!

Were you thinking about your bees while looking at your garden, watering the tomato plants and petty flowers? Let's hope the bees were on your list.

Next month I'll have that article about wax foundation.

During the autumn and also next spring I would like you to look around your gardens for some of the native bees. Some are really tiny, others look a bit like bees.

I was privileged to take a week-long course in native bee identification. This is for a survey of some of the northwestern Virginia counties. Not only native bees are being monitored, but also birds and grassland plants.

It will be interesting over the next few years to see what changes in the ecosystem are occurring. I am glad to be a participant in the survey.

## SO YOU WANT TO BE A BEEKEEPER...

Your bee projects during August and September will be reflected in your colonies next Spring. That is why we call August the beginning of the bee year.

Although August is a terrible time to be carefully inspecting your hives, you certainly can do a quick review of queen performance. Remember what you want to look for—a good brood pattern. You need also to consider the age of the queen.

If you have a queen who is now 2 years old, she should be replaced or you can expect swarming next spring. (You might have swarms anyway but you still need a new queen.) An old queen's pheromones are diminishing and will continue to do so throughout the autumn and winter.

You can use one or two damp old bath towels to cover frames as you inspect your hives. This technique is especially helpful in August with the chance of robbing. You arrange them so that they cover the topbars except for the frame you have out for inspection.

Now, if robbing begins, put frames back in hive, leave covers off. Quickly go and remove all cover off all hives. Robbing will stop as bees revert back to defending their own hive. You can go out at dusk and replace covers. It does work!

A weak colony can be robbed. If you see many bees zipping in and out of a hive entrance -- frequently accompanied by fighting at the entrance, then you've got robbing. Normal flight is quick but does not have the frantic fast flight of robbers.

Both July and August are good months for "bee beards." I am not talking about the ones on people. I am talking about the gobs of honey bees hanging on the front of your hives. The weather is hot and humid. The population of bees is high. It's hot inside the hive. Not much nectar is coming in. So the bees, particularly field bees, will simply stay outside the hive in a beard. If the heat and humidity continue until late at night, they will hang there until it is a bit cooler. The bees are just fine—don't worry.

## THE NEW YEAR

Consider that everything you do now and for the next months of September and October will influence your 2011 bee year.

We generally do have a good nectar flow with the autumn flowers, particularly goldenrod. However, the goldenrod you see in late August is not used by the bees. (They have their reasons.) Many species of goldenrod exist with different blooming times and places. If you have a good field guide to wildflowers you can perhaps identify some of them.

The wild asters, white and blue, will continue blooming until frost. The bees will collect the necessary pollen and nectar from both goldenrod and aster. It has been said that bees do not winter well on the honey from these plants. I feel that it is other factors that contribute to failures during winter. These two plants may not be ideal but they do provide nourishment.

We do know that a young queen is the best for a successful honey crop in the spring. Her winter bees will be plentiful, keeping the colony strong. Her pheromones will be sufficient to restrict swarming in the following spring.

Keeping parasite loads low is another key to good wintering. Monitor the colonies. If you checked them in July, you can check them again this month to make sure varroa is not getting the upper hand.

Small hive beetles (SHB) will winter over as adults in the colonies. Keep those traps going to keep numbers low. Unfortunately every time you open the hive and break open the prisons, the female starts laying lots of eggs. It may seem a no-win situation. Just keep asking yourself—do I need to open the hive.

*Nosema ceranae* is a problem. You can't see it. The scientists are still working on the problem. The recommendation still is treat with Fumagilin-B®. Let's use that in September. I'll remind you.

So think ahead! Your success depends on starting the New Bee Year right. However, 100% success is not guaranteed. Just do your best.

## OTHER CRITTERS

This is the time of year for phone calls describing "that ball with bees in my tree, can you come and get them." You may have guessed that the "ball" is really the nest of what we call the "bald-faced hornet" that is not a hornet but an aerial-nesting yellowjacket. You can tell the caller the colony will be dead by the first frost.

"I have bees eating the rotten apples under my apple tree." Are they yellow and black? They are yellowjackets. Tell the caller they are not bees and to rake up the rotten apples or stay away from the tree.

You, as a beekeeper, open up your hive and find—ants on the inner cover. Panic! No, calm down. Brush them off onto the ground. The ants just found a dry place to build a little nest.

Bees are not interested in spending time between the inner and outer covers. So here is where critters such as ants and other insects can live in peace.

We tend to get overly upset at seeing cockroaches on the inner cover. These are small wood cockroaches, naturally found under bark of rotting trees. Bees effectively chase them from within the hive itself.

Pity the poor earwig. Their appearance frightens people. But they are merely scavengers, do not live attached to ears, cannot bite or sting.

A praying mantis occasionally finds an apiary and takes up residence, nabbing a bee or two from time to time. The number of bees they eat is negligible and the praying mantis is a very beneficial insect. If you want to move the mantis, just pick it up and put it down on a bush or plant in an area away from the apiary.

At this time of year spiders will build webs everywhere, including around your hives. Yes, you may find a bee wrapped up in a spider's web but, again, the number of bees caught is very small. Let the spiders continue their good work catching harmful insects.

If a yellowjacket invades a hive in the late summer, the bees will take care of it.

## COOKING WITH HONEY

August is the month for peaches. Honey enhances their flavor so keep a squeeze bear of honey handy.

### PEACH MELBA

2 fresh peaches  
1/2 cup low-fat yogurt  
2 teaspoons honey  
several dashes nutmeg  
1/2 cup fresh or frozen raspberries

Arrange one peach half in each of two wine-type glasses. Puree one peach half, the yogurt, one teaspoon honey and nutmeg in blender. Chop the last peach half in very small pieces and add to the sauce, but do not blend in blender. Pour into the wine glasses. Then blend the berries with the remaining honey and spoon on top of the peach yogurt mix. Serve cold.

A HONEY COOK BOOK A.I. Root Co.

### PEACH YOGURT FREEZE

2 cups sliced peaches  
1/4 cup honey  
1/4 cup frozen orange juice concentrate  
1 cup yogurt

Place peeled, sliced peaches in a bowl and toss with honey. Cover and leave at room temperature for 30 minutes to let juices accumulate. Combine all ingredients in blender or processor and reduce to almost-puree. Small pieces of fruit should remain. At this point you may freeze in an ice cream freezer or pour into a shallow metal pan and freeze until firm around the edges, about 1 hour. Transfer to bowl and beat until fluffy. Pack into a plastic or metal container and cover closely. Freeze until firm. To serve, remove from freezer about 15 minutes ahead of time. Mash with fork and beat until fluffy. Serves 6-8

A HONEY OF A COOKBOOK

Alberta Beekeepers Association

WHAT'S BLOOMING?		
Joe Pye Weed	chicory	mint
early goldenrod (bees don't use it)		
thistles	knapweed	boneset
wingstem	herbs	
daisy-like flowers		gardens
white Dutch clover (keep mowed)		

## GOOD STUFF

### Meeting dates for NPBA

September 16  
October 21  
November 18

**Virginia State Beekeepers Association Fall meeting** November 6 at Blue Ridge Community College, Weyers Cave, a few minutes off I-81.



Do you have a favorite photo from a Virginia Farmers' Market? It could win you a prize. The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) is hosting a photo contest to showcase the 2010 Virginia farmers' market season. Submit your favorite digital photograph taken at a Virginia farmers' market between July 8, 2010 and August 18, 2010. Four winners will receive a Virginia Grown / Virginia's Finest prize package worth \$100 each. Visit the VDACS Virginia Grown website, <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/vagrown/>, for details.

### **A Note from the VSBA Treasurer:**

A big "thank you" to all those NPBA members who have renewed their Virginia State Beekeeping Association memberships, which were due July 1st. I really appreciate those prompt renewals, as it cuts down on the need for multiple reminder notices. If you still need to renew your current membership or are interested in a new VSBA membership, the VSBA membership form can be found on the VSBA website ([www.virginiabeekeepers.org](http://www.virginiabeekeepers.org)) or I can send it to you via email. For NPBA members, your annual VSBA dues are \$10. Not sure if you need to renew or think you are already current with your VSBA dues? Call or email Karen Hunt ([kahu9@juno.com](mailto:kahu9@juno.com) or 540-937-4792).

### **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](http://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!