



Northern Piedmont Beekeepers Association

Volume 31

Number 9

September 2010

IN THIS ISSUE

For New Beekeepers
Caveat Emptor!

SEPTEMBER

Date: Thursday September 16

Time: 7:30 PM

Place: Extension Office, corner of Davis St
and West St, Culpeper.

Program: Your Honey!

**Bring a sample jar of your honey. Ann
Harman will show you how to find the mois-
ture content and cleanliness of your honey.
Bring your honey questions.**

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: Craig Williams

540-937-3260

pineviewtech@gmail.com

Treasurer: Lele Hankins

540-547-4711

hankins77@comcast.net

Website: www.npbee.org

Webmaster: Mike Wilson

webmaster@npbee.org

Newletter Editor: Ann Harman

540-364-4660 ahworkerb@aol.com

Regional Inspector: Bob Wellemeyer

540-428-0420 beeswax7@wildblue.net

A REQUEST

If you can possibly bring your jar of honey for the meeting in a queenline-type jar it will be much easier to see the honey in the polariscope. If you are a new beekeeper and don't have such jars perhaps you can borrow one until you get a supply for yourself.

If not, that's OK. We'll do the best we can.

VIRGINIA STATE BEEKEEPERS

Info at: 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 SEPTEMBER

The first two weeks of September are ideal for autumn requeening.

Check the food supply. With recent rains nectar and pollen should - again - be available. But do not hesitate to feed if necessary.

Think ahead - do you have enough mouse guards to put on October first? I'll remind you again.

Check colonies carefully. Any wimpy ones? Requeen or combine with a strong colony.

If you plan to feed Fumadil-B® for nosema, feed in syrup around the Equinox, Sept 20, 21. sometimes weather is unsettled, rainy then and bees are in the hive and will take syrup.

Feed about 2:1 thick syrup for storage.

Maintain plenty of ventilation especially if our pattern of hot humid weather continues into this month.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

I hope everyone had a good summer and that you are checking your bees for food stores as we approach fall. A big thank you to club member Alan Wurtzel for his very generous monetary contribution to the club. We will use a portion of his kind donation to get two honey gates to add a few more bottling buckets to the club's extraction equipment, as well as a set of filtering screens. Thanks Alan!

I'd like to remind those producing honey this year to bring a small bottle to the September meeting -- Ann Harman, our guest speaker will conduct a quick analysis of members' honey samples at the upcoming meeting.

Club member Richard Krammes, who has been keeping bees for many years, will be our guest speaker for the October meeting. Based on his years of experience, Richard will talk about methods he has found successful for controlling mites, producing his own queens, and conducting routine monthly maintenance at little to no cost.

Hope to see you at the next meeting.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

This month I will be traveling west as an invited speaker at the Western Apicultural Society (WAS). I checked the weather here on my hill-top for the last week of August/first of September and also for Portland, Oregon. Well, while you are still enduring 90+ degrees, I will have days in the 70s.

I will be seeing some of the bee scientists there and, since I can listen to all the presentations, I should be able to bring back some information for all of you.

I find it highly worthwhile to attend meetings. Sometimes one finds fascinating bits at break times.

You should venture out also —to a neighboring local association. You will meet other beekeepers—with the same successes and problems as you have plus new information! Do it!

SO YOU WANT TO BE A BEEKEEPER...

Hey! Listen up all you newbees! Yes -- you first- and second-year beekeepers. It is now September. This is your last chance to insure that next spring you and your bees will be ready for a great honey crop. Well, if the weather and flowers cooperate.

Take a look around your beeyard. Check your bear fence. Grass grows very well with our rain and as the weather cools. Don't let long grass short out the bear fence. Bears won't be asleep for several months yet. Make sure no dead tree limbs will crash down during a winter storm.

Your wooden ware should be in good shape. Make certain hives are sitting level and won't tip over during the winter when freeze-thaw occurs.

Now have a good look inside your hives. At this time of year the bees should be starting their downward move. However it may not be apparent until goldenrod and aster are in full bloom. By the way, bees really make good use of ragweed pollen.

Take a good look at your frames. Do you find foundation that is not fully drawn out? Or not drawn out at all? That's not good. But you can move those frames to the outside of the brood chambers. If you seem to have many, invite your mentor over for lunch and get advice on what to do.

The queen is still laying but not as much as in spring and early summer. Evaluate the pattern. This is the last chance for requeening. Use the nuc-above-the-colony technique. If your attempt at requeening is a flop, you still have the old queen.

Don't even think about trying to coddle a wimpy colony through the winter. Disappointment will be your reward. Combine a wimpy with a strong. If you do this now you will find that the bees have enough time to sort things out before cold weather.

Don't get upset if you still find some drones. Sometimes a colony will tolerate a few through the winter. That's fine.

BUYER BEWARE!

Well, Uncle Ned died and now you have just inherited all his old bee equipment...hives, frames with comb, extractor (sort of rickety), hive tools gummed up with who knows what besides wax and propolis. What a bonanza! Aren't you lucky!

No.

You may just have inherited a hive full of problems you really do not want.

You have absolutely no idea of the history of all this equipment. You never really kept in touch with Uncle Ned. He just sort of pottered around with his bees; some probably lived and some probably died. Of what? Where did he get his equipment? Was some of it new or did someone give him some hives, frames, feeders? Let's see just what you may have inherited.

Suppose one of his colonies died of American foulbrood. And suppose it was not diagnosed except for Uncle Ned's comment that "too much damp and cold just did them in."

American foulbrood is an exceptional bacterium, *Paenibacillus larvae* ssp *larvae*. It forms spores that are resistant to heat (except very high temperatures), cold, water and many chemicals.

Although the spores are formed by the bacteria while in the cells with developing larvae, bees can track them around anywhere in the hive. You cannot see them except with a microscope. The spores can be found throughout the hive, in cracks and crevices, in cocoons in the cells, in bits of wax and debris, and in stored honey.

All the spore needs to become viable and reproduce, causing the disease, is to be ingested by a honey bee larva shortly after the egg hatches. Larvae older than 53 hours do not become infected.

Left unidentified, a colony will probably die. Now a new problem enters. If a colony weakened by AFB has honey stored in comb, the hive is susceptible to be robbed by other colonies. Now instead of one colony dead, others may

follow. Now woodenware, comb, feeders and any other pieces of hive equipment will be carrying AFB spores.

Let's have a look at some of Uncle Ned's hive bodies. The old ones have cracks in the wood, loose joints and wax and propolis stuck here and there. Spores can be lurking in those deep cracks and loose joints.

Since spores can live for many years—so far Beltsville Bee Lab has recorded 80 years—this old equipment will make good firewood.

What about the frames with comb? Look, frames are cheap. Besides you may be moving toward plastic frame-foundation anyway. Don't even keep the frames and comb for kindling. Burn them up right now. You simply do not want to leave them lying around. Remember, their odor is very appealing to honey bees and you don't want all those little feet running around on combs and frames, especially if traces of honey exist.

What about the hive tools? If they can be scraped fairly clean, small amounts of wax and propolis can be burned off with a little propane torch, followed by a good scrubbing with some steel wool.

Some hive bodies look fairly new. Can they be sterilized somehow? If you really want to take the chance you can scorch them thoroughly with a propane torch.

Forget about the bottom boards. Too many cracks and crevices. The same applies to inner and outer covers.

What about the extractor? Since people don't get AFB, you can clean it up and repair it. However, if it is an old galvanized one and much of the galvanizing has worn off or is damaged it would be better to recycle it as scrap metal. The underlying iron metal can impart an off flavor to honey. Honey is acid and will continue to erode the metal.

Go ahead and figure costs of colonies lost to AFB. What will the price be that you paid for Uncle Ned's old equipment? Add up nucs, packages and new woodenware. Too much!

COOKING WITH HONEY

Early September is the time to use up what you find in your garden and at farmers' markets.

FRESH ZUCCHINI TOSS

- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/3 cup white wine vinegar
- 1 clove garlic, minced or pressed
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1/2 teaspoon seasoned salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 cups zucchini, coarsely shredded
- 6 cups mixed greens
- 1/2 cup red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 cup seasoned croutons
- 1 cup grape tomatoes or tomato wedges

For dressing, combine first six ingredients in blender or shake in a jar. Place shredded zucchini in medium bowl; pour honey dressing over top. Cover and refrigerate 30 minutes or more. Place lettuce in large salad bowl. Add zucchini mixture and toss lightly. Garnish with onion, croutons and tomatoes. Makes 9 servings

NATIONAL HONEY BOARD

Later in the month apples will start to be plentiful. This is a delicious simple dessert.

STEWED APPLES IN WHITE WINE

- 2 pounds apples
- 1/4 cup butter
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Core apples and cut into thick wedges. Melt butter in skillet that has a lid. Add apples and saute until golden; drizzle honey over apples. Add rest of ingredients. Cover and simmer until apples are just tender, about 20 minutes. Cool. Cover and refrigerate. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

NATURALLY DELICIOUS DESSERTS AND SNACKS

WHAT'S BLOOMING?

- daisy-like flowers
- goldenrod
- ragweed
- wingstem
- Spanish needle
- garden flowers

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.

Randy Oliver will be one of the speakers. He writes articles on various topics for the American Bee Journal. If you do not subscribe to that magazine, why not?



With winter and bad weather approaching you should be considering reading—both books and the two beekeeping magazines.

New beekeeping books appear all the time. Many are surprisingly bad.

Looking for a place to sell honey this autumn? Do you know anyone with a Pick-Your-Own Pumpkin Patch? That could be a good place.

So could a place selling apple cider and apples. People out enjoying the better weather of September may well wish to buy some honey.

Would someone like to contribute an article to this newsletter? All you have to do is write it. Yes, I may have to edit it to fit but that's what editors do. Just send it to me electronically please—it means I don't have to copy it into the newsletter.

Oh—you don't want to write on but have a suggestion. Great! Just let me know.

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!