



Northern Piedmont Beekeepers Association

Volume 30

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October 2009

IN THIS ISSUE

For New Beekeepers
eXtension (see page 2)
Preparations for winter

SEPTEMBER MEETING

When: Thursday October 15

Time: 7:30 PM

Where: Culpeper Extension Service building,
corner of Davis St and West Street

What: Ready for Winter?

V. I. P.

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VSBA MEETING

Why not carpool to the November 7 meeting of the Virginia State Beekeepers Association.

The program is great and will be of interest to all levels of beekeepers -- newbees and "old-bees."

Both Tom Seeley and Deb Delaney are superb speakers and really friendly! See you there.

HIVE WORKS FOR OCTOBER

Mouse guards! They need to be put on as soon as possible. Don't trust the wooden entrance reducers. Mice love to chew wood.

With all our rain, the goldenrod and aster look great so your bees should have enough food for winter. don't assume—please look in those hives to see what they actually have.

If you need to feed this is the last useful month to do that. Basically 1-3/4 sugar to 1 part water is what you need now. =

If you are keeping screen bottom boards on all year you do not have to worry about the tilt of your hives. If using solid bottom boards, tile hive 1/2 inch higher in back than front. They should be level from side to side.

How about upper ventilation to let the water vapor escape?

Get any queen excluders off immediately!

Clean up apiary. Cut down old, dead or dying weeds. Give grass a mowing (you may have to mow again).

Protect honey supers from ants and cockroaches and mice.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

We had an interesting September meeting thanks to Dr. Frank Linton, who came out from Fairfax to speak to NPBA about different methods of obtaining information about a bee colony in order to better judge its health and needs. Thank you to all of you who attended this meeting to help make it a successful one, and thanks to Dr. Snyder for "bumping" us to the great room at Verdun for the meeting.

Karen Hunt has created a beautiful stained glass bee window for NPBA for another special raffle. Thanks to all of you have bought tickets for this so far. Check out the raffle notice in this newsletter for information on how you can buy your raffle tickets for a chance to win this stained glass window and support your bee club.

The Beekeepers of Northern Virginia (BANV) has graciously extended an open invitation to other clubs and their members to attend their November 17th meeting. BANV has made arrangements to have Michael Palmer, past president of the Vermont Beekeepers Association and 30 year-plus beekeeper, to come down from Vermont to give a presentation. If you missed Mr. Palmer's presentation at the Virginia State Beekeepers' meeting in April 2008, now's your chance! Mark your calendar now, more details in November newsletter.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The Internet -- today's handy dandy reference. But is it all true, factual? No. You have your choice of worthwhile and useful and pure rubbish. How does any beekeeper find out accurate information?

Beekeepers now have the opportunity to have access to a comprehensive resource for science-based information on bee health. It is designed to bring accurate information to all. Here is the site: www.extension.org
If you cannot find the information you wish you use "Ask an Expert" feature for a quick response.

Yes, you will find many other topics on this website. Just open it and look on the right side and open up Bee Health. Have a good time!

SO YOU WANT TO BE A BEEKEEPER...

It is important to realize that bees do not attempt to heat the entire interior of the hive during colder months. They keep themselves warm and thus warm only that portion of the hive that they occupy.

We have been taught that bees and other insects are "cold blooded." Cold blooded, in its traditional sense, means that the animal's body temperature fluctuates with the temperature surrounding it. This concept really has to be revised. Research has shown that bees, and other insects, can generate body heat.

In the case of bees, we know that they consume honey throughout the winter. The honey is digested (metabolized) by the bees for energy to move. In this process of digestion, water vapor and carbon dioxide are produced. We do exactly the same thing! (What do you think the source of water is that "steams" up our car windows in the winter?)

The water vapor has to be removed from the hive—hence the need for ventilation. Ventilation also keeps the level of carbon dioxide down to reasonable quantities.

The energy provided enables the bees to move their muscles in the thorax. That's where most of the bees' muscles are. Muscle movement, or shivering, generates heat.

You may not be able to see this "shivering" since the muscles of the thorax are covered by the hard, shell-like outer covering of the bee.

When little or no brood exists in the hive, mostly during November and December, the bees do not attempt to increase warmth much more than they need for survival. However, once brood rearing starts, about the end of December, the bees will heat the open brood area up to 93 degrees. It does not matter what the outside temperature is.

This is when stores are so important. Since winter feeding is difficult and unsatisfactory at best, having adequate honey stores will insure good brood rearing to begin and continue, for your spring honey crop.

STORAGE

At this time of year we are putting all sorts of things away for the winter. We should include our beekeeping equipment in our storage items.

Honey supers. These are best stored dry. You may see in books that storing supers wet with honey gives the bees a chance to get started earlier in the spring, or some such advice. Well, it actually is not recommended for assorted reasons.

One is that the honey will probably crystallize during the winter, thus making it difficult for the bees to clean up in the spring. Another reason is that ants, cockroaches and mice just love that wet comb. So you will spend your winter fending off the critters, large and small.

Another is that wet supers are just plain messy.

Buy an old freezer, wrap your supers in plastic bags and store in freezer or keep them in freezer for a week, take them out and put more supers in. Prolonged freezing will kill any wax moth eggs and larvae.

Queen excluders. Check to see if these need any repair and mark ones that do. You will want to clean up the grill or grid part to remove wild comb and propolis. Cleaning excluders is easy on a cold day. When the wax and propolis is cold, they can be chipped or rapidly and cleanly. However, do NOT bend any of the rods or tear any plastic grid. Take a good look at your excluders. If any rods are bent or plastic torn it is best to throw it away. Any little gap means a queen can get through—that's not what you have in mind. Treat excluders gently! Store flat where they cannot be damaged.

Spare parts. Bottom boards, covers, empty boxes, whatever. Either scrape and store clean of debris or wait until chilly weather to scrape. When you are cleaning up this equipment you will be able to find items that need repair. I shall remind you of those during the winter.

Extracting equipment. Store absolutely clean and free of honey. Honey is acid and will corrode some metals. Do not oil or grease anything but protect items from dirt and water.

STAINED GLASS RAFFLE

In the spirit of supporting NPBA, and because Susan Ishmael's handmade bee quilt was such a hit, I created a stained glass "bee" window for another special NPBA raffle. This got off to a good start at the October meeting.

The stained glass, which is approximately 8" x 8" framed, has an attached chain for hanging.

Tickets are \$1 each and are available at either the October and November meetings, or by mail (several members have sent their raffle checks via mail, and thanks to Kathy Wageley for sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to return her tickets with!).

If you are not able to make it to the meeting on October 15 but want 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.

The winning ticket will be drawn at the November meeting, and would make a great holiday gift for your favorite beekeeper! You do not have to be present at the November meeting to win --- I'm happy to coordinate with the winner for delivery.

It's a beautiful bee on a green leaf. (For those receiving it in black and white.)



COOKING WITH HONEY

It's apple time of year! Go out to the orchards and get an assortment of freshly picked apples, take them home and enjoy them in many ways.

Here's a twist on your usual baked apple. Try it!

HONEY-CRUST APPLES

1/4 cup chopped dates
1-1/4 cups honey (one pound jar, well-drained)
1/4 cup chopped pecans
2 teaspoons grated lemon peel
1/2 cup graham cracker crumbs
1 teaspoon cinnamon
6 baking apples, cored
1/3 cup melted butter

Combine dates, 1/4 cup honey, pecans and lemon peel. Combine graham cracker crumbs and cinnamon. Peel the top third of each apple. Brush with small amount of melted butter. Roll apples in crumb mixture. Place in a 10X6X2-in baking dish. Spoon date mixture into center of each apple. Pour remaining butter and honey around and over apples. Bake in 400° oven for 30 minutes or until done, spooning honey over apples every 10 minutes. Serves 6

NATURE'S GOLDEN TREASURE HONEY COOKBOOK Joe M. Parkhill

It's also apple cider time. Do you still have your grill ready?

HONEY APPLE CHOPS

4 pork chops
1/4 cup lemon juice
1/4 cup honey
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1-1/2 cups apple cider
1/4 cup soy sauce
1 teaspoon garlic, minced or pressed

Combine all ingredients except chops and mix well. Pour over chops and marinate 2 to 24 hours. Grill chops 12 to 15 minutes until done.
SUEBEE HONEY COLLECTOR'S EDITION COOKBOOK Sioux Honey Association

WHAT'S BLOOMING?

lots and lots of goldenrod
white and blue aster
some garden flowers

GOOD STUFF

Here is information about the November 7 meeting of VSBA. It will be held at Blue Ridge Community College, Weyers Cave, VA 24486

Going on I-81, get off at exit 235 and go west for a very short distance to stop light. At light, turn left onto Rt 11. In a short distance, on your left, you will see signs for BRCC, Blue Ridge Community College. Plenty of parking just by meeting building.

Tom Seeley, a noted researcher and author, will speak three times: on varroa, on how bees choose a home and on the hive as a honey factory. Deb Delaney will give us information on who our honey bees really are.

All these presentations will expand your bee knowledge and allow you to further appreciate your bees.

We will also hear from Rick Fell about nosema in our state. He will also give you a tour of beekeeping in Belize. Keith Tignor will provide an update on the overall honey bee situation here. You don't want to miss this meeting.

Meeting dates for NPBA:

October 15 November 19

Website info: www.npbee.org

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For information about Virginia State Beekeepers Association go to the website:

www.virginiabeekeepers.org

Save this date: Tuesday November 17, Michael Palmer of VT will be speaking to Beekeepers of Northern VA. Falls Church High School. You're invited. Details in November newsletter.

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!