



Fort Bend Beekeepers Newsletter

March 2011

The Fort Bend Beekeepers Association meets on the second Tuesday of the month (except December) at 7:00 pm in the Bud O'Shieles Community Center in Rosenberg, Texas. Visitors are always welcome. Refreshments: Boyd Dawson (March), Bill McCauley (April) and Rosie McCusker (May).

Notes from the February Meeting

Twenty two members and guests attended the February 8 meeting of the Fort Bend Beekeepers Association. Guests (and now members) Bob and Nancy Hentschel had attended last year and came to join the association and reported that their hive was down to five bees...not five hives...five bees. Chuck Bunkers had helped them with a difficult cutout and hive beetles soon invaded the new hive. Nancy (and her skeptical husband Bob) are ready for another try this spring. Guest (and now member) Karl Appleton brought along his daughter Grace to his first beekeeper meeting. Karl had seen Jeff McMullan working at his orchard and stopped to ask about the bee hives. Jeff had just gotten a "poke in the eye" by a tree limb while mowing and he got Karl to check his bloodshot eye and then help him go through ten hives. Guest (and now member) Sam Kreidie from Sealy bought equipment and seven hives from a retiring beekeeper and is just getting started keeping bees. Albert Smaistrila suggested that those needing bees this spring might call Jennifer Scott(thebeewrangler.com) to adopt one of her rescued colonies.

Don Angle, President of the Harris County Beekeepers Association, addressed the group

about the upcoming honey bee exhibit at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. The event lasts almost three weeks (March 1 – 20).

The AGventure beekeeping exhibit includes a bee gazebo, an observation hive, hive equipment and all manner of beekeeping gear. Rodeo guests have lots of questions and the Harris County club needs volunteers to help. Several members signed up at the meeting. Others can learn the details, including how to get parking passes and entry tickets, at <http://www.harriscountybeekeepers.org> or call Bill Busch at 281 224-2456.

For show and tell, Bill Busch brought along some honey jelly and a beeswax Christmas ornament that he had picked up in his travels. Jeff McMullan, Jack Richardson and Bill McCauley brought some queen rearing equipment they've used and shared some of their experiences. They outlined how to obtain larvae using a Nicot laying box, how to transfer the larvae into cell cup holders (no grafting required) and how to use a "Cloake Board" to get the nurse colony started raising queens. An important thing to remember is that each queen cell that is produced will need a mating hive and lots of drones! Joycelyn Kasmir asked about using Brushy Mountain's "Queen Castle", a deep hive body with partitions and four entrances to make it in to four two-frame colonies. Jeff uses one (and had just ordered a second one). He explained how it is used.

Albert Smaistrila brought in his latest beekeeping acquisitions (amid chuckles and Margaret's raised eyebrows): a cordless rechargeable electric smoker and a five-gallon chicken waterier from Tractor Supply for open feeding his bees. As promised, Jack Richardson brought in several bare root golden rain tree seedlings. More are available if you dig them yourself. Jack also brought along one of his cardboard nucs and a bat guano sample!

Nancy Hentchel and Greg Pendley won meeting door prizes: windproof propane lighters to get their smokers started.

Treasurer's Report

The February, 2011 report showed a total of \$1,865.48. Income and expenses since that time include \$55.00 in dues collected (11 paid at \$5.00 each) and expenses of \$243.85 (for the new projector screen, see photo). The resulting balance of \$1,676.63 consists of \$78.56 in cash plus a Wells Fargo checking account balance of \$1,598.07.

It is time to pay your \$5.00 annual dues for 2011. We also have Fort Bend Beekeepers ball caps that are available for \$7.00 each (our cost).



New Projector Screen Goes Up!

Fort Bend County employees Kevin Drennan and Efrain DeLeon install a projector screen at the Bud O'Shieles Community Center. The Fort Bend Beekeepers Association, the Fort Bend Master Gardeners and the Coastal Prairie Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists contributed equally toward the purchase of the screen and donated it for use at the Center.


Plan Bee

Plan A was a program on honey bees by Jeff McMullan at the Harris County Master Gardeners meeting on January 18 to assess interest in beekeeping. Interest was high, so "Plan Bee" will be a Saturday morning beekeeping workshop on March 26. It will be at the Harris County Extension facility at Bear Creek Park off Hwy 6 north of I-10. Registration starts at 8:30 am and the program will be from 9:00 am until noon. The January 18 program covered honey bee biology and life cycle, the colony and honey bee behavior. The workshop is intended as a follow-up offering the details of how to keep bees, including hive equipment, hive management and the rewards of beekeeping. After the program, we'd like to have lots of our members on hand to answer beekeeping questions one-on-one.

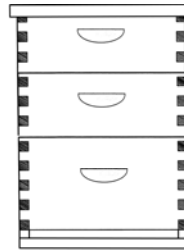
Swarm Stories

On Feb. 12, another desperate homeowner tracked down our association on the Internet in a desperate search. The Saturday morning caller pleaded for help with a swarm in her back yard, She had bees living in the wall that "kept coming back" and she didn't want to deal with more of them. She was in Sealy so the first call went to brand new member Sam Kreidie. Sam said he'd like to help but he'd never hived a swarm before. The second call went to Boyd Dawson who offered to do what he could to help. The swarm capture turned out to be an easy one...he drove his pickup under the tree and, standing in the bed, dropped the bees, limb and all, into a bucket. He'll soon be going back to Sealy for the cutout.

Got Beetles?

small hive beetle (actual size) → 

There have been some strange small hive beetle reports coming in. Some members are seeing few if any at all (to be expected), while others are seeing lots of them (?) We'll discuss the pests at our March meeting.



MEETING REFRESHMENTS

Our Association provides coffee and lemonade and members volunteer to bring a snack or dessert to the monthly meeting. In addition, we often sample honeys and other treats obtained from various parts of the USA and the world. At our January meeting we completed our signup list for 2011. Thanks to Bea Bohus for the treats in February and all those that signed up for upcoming meetings.

Shari Grahmann, Ph.D
Texas AgriLife Extension Service
Horticulture—Agent




Texas A&M System

"Educational programs conducted by Texas AgriLife Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin."

"Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids or services are required to contact Texas AgriLife Extension Service at 281.342.3034 five working days prior to the meeting so appropriate arrangements can be made."

The Texas A&M University System, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the County Commissioners' Court of Texas cooperating."