Meetings will be the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm
Our new location is Trinity United Methodist Church, 2724 Whiskey Road, Aiken, SC
Please join us!

Presidents Bees-ness
Well Beekeepers we are now in the new meeting location. It is able to hold all our members without standing room only. I want to thank everyone for their help with the success of our club. Since I have started the emails for the calls I get about the bees, we have been able to rescue more bees than in the past. I want to start collecting some data about our Aiken Beekeepers and our bees and track our progress. I would like the following information. 1. Number of hives at the start of the year. 2. How many new hives set up by Box, Nuc, Split, or extraction? 3. Number of hives loss and how or why. 4. Number of hives at the end of the year. If you include your name and/or apiary it will not be included in the data. This is all voluntary. I would like to start with data from this year to try and work out any kinks in processing of the data. This way I will be able to figure out any other data that could or needs to be included. The information can be e-mailed to me at a10ac_boy@tds.net

Beekeeping Chores
Beekeeping does not work by recipe, and an outline like this is no substitute for knowledge and experience. This section is provided primarily for new beekeepers or beekeepers new to the area and others who may want a synopsis of seasonal activities and expectations.

Fall Notes
October. To really be ready, it needs two main things:

1. Enough honey to make it through the winter
2. A enough of bees to keep a strong cluster through the cold winter until the queen starts laying again

As to honey, I like to start checking honey stores in mid-August and keep an eye on them through mid-October. If things look slim, it’s time to put 2:1 or higher syrup out for the bees 16+ pounds of sugar per gallon of water. So, I like to leave a good amount of honey on the gals when I am taking some for me. I do not believe that it is a good idea to take all of their honey in the summer and then have to feed them syrup for their winter stores. Winter is the toughest time on the bees and they should be eating the good stuff (I do not consider sugar syrup the good stuff).

As to the bees, it’s time to put on our hats and do a little bee math. It takes a worker around 30 days to be born and become productive. Ideally, you’ll have a bunch of eggs laid in early September. These will be your winter warriors, come early October. They need to be healthy and there needs to be a bunch of them. I have found that bees typically manage this aspect on their own, but it is important to keep in mind how important this time is. You must have a queen during this period, so make sure you see eggs on every visit. It’s also a great reason to have a spare queen or two on hand, in case of emergencies.

This is also the time of year that the workers evict the drones; the drones are driven from the hive and left to starve or freeze. The hive will have only female occupants until next spring.

Getting Your Bees Ready for Winter…Already

Summer beekeeping meetings are over and it’s time to get back to work. The bees have had a tough time in much of the country this summer because of adverse weather conditions, and it’s now up to beekeepers to make sure the bees get what nature hasn’t provided.

Careful examination of your colonies will show how much food they’ve actually been able to make during the honey flows so far. If you haven’t harvested honey yet your colony should have a surplus this time of year…that is, more honey stored than the colony will need to eat well all winter. Unless you are in the semi-tropical or tropical regions of the country your bees should have somewhere between 50 and 100 pounds of honey safely stored away when the first signs of autumn show. The colder and longer your winter and spring, the more they will need. I live near Cleveland, OH, and our bees typically use about 60 – 70 pounds of honey and five to seven frames of pollen between the end of October and the beginning of April. If you figure about eight pounds of honey for a deep frame mostly filled on both sides you can estimate how much honey your bees really have. A medium frame like I use holds 4+ pounds if it’s filled completely on both sides. Either way, that’s a bunch of frames of honey that the bees need. And don’t forget the pollen.

So winter preparations begin right now. Your bees may, or may not make any honey the rest of the summer and fall, but you can’t bet they will. Never, ever bet on the weather. You have to make sure. Honey, the carbohydrate part of your bees’ diet is essential, but protein is even more critical. If your bees don’t have several frames of pollen already stashed it’s going to be difficult for them to raise brood next spring when the queen begins to produce eggs again. We’ll look at how to provide protein in the next entry here. If your bees don’t have enough honey stored it would be wise to begin feeding. In the areas of the country that have been abnormally hot and dry you can already see stressed goldenrod blooming earlier than usual. Look closely and you’ll probably note
plants bees normally depend on won’t be providing their usual abundant crops either. If you’ve been lucky and have had moderate temperatures and adequate rain you still can’t bet on the weather for the rest of the season. If your bees don’t have enough winter food by August 15th, they won’t be able to gather enough the rest of the season. YOU have to help.

You can provide frames of honey from those that have done well to help out weak colonies. Honey is the best way to feed your colony and is always at the top of the list. However, if you don’t have that surplus to share you’ll need to get some sugar syrup on them before the end of the month. They’ll need time to take it from the container, get it reduced and then stored before it gets really cold. The usual recommendation is to mix a solution that’s two parts sugar with one part water…either weight or volume. You’ll get a nice, thick slurry with that and the bees will have no difficulty taking it or turning it into winter food…it’s not honey. I recommend that you add a bit of feeding stimulant…Honey Bee Healthy or one of the many others like it on the market now. These supplements provide an attractive odor for the bees that helps them get started eating the syrup. Once started, you will be surprised how much they take.

Remember, honey is about 80% sugar, so if you need, say 50 pounds of honey to overwinter, that amounts to 40 pounds of sugar…and that’s how much sugar you will have to feed to get to that 50 pounds of food. It isn’t pounds of syrup you need, but pounds of sugar. Don’t skimp!

And don’t get me wrong here. This is winter food. Carbohydrates your bees need to survive the long winter months without incoming nectar. It isn’t honey you’ll harvest later. Winter food. Remember that.

Moreover, you have the responsibility to provide healthy food for them, just as you would your pets or other livestock. Good farmers don’t ever feel that if their animals can’t take care of themselves, then they should die. If you let you dog or cat do that…you’d be arrested. Feed your bees if they do not have enough food to get through the winter. Further, it is not the fault of the bees that you put them in a location that could not provide adequate nutrition. Be good to your bees.

Next time we’ll look at providing more protein so they can raise lots of brood next spring. Until then, keep your veil tight, your hive tool handy and your smoker lit…winter is just around the corner.


**Jennifer Berry**

University Of Georgia Bee Lab

This month, winter preparations continue. First order of business, assess the strength and stores of your colonies and if necessary, combine weak colonies with each other or with strong colonies. The major objective here is to “take your winter losses in the fall.” It makes little sense to try to nurse a weak colony through the winter. It requires a lot of work on the beekeeper’s part, uses resources (honey, pollen, and/or sugar) that can more effectively be used on other colonies, and more often than not results in the loss of the colony in the end anyway. If there is any question about whether or not a colony is strong enough, it is better to combine it in the fall and make splits in the spring as appropriate.

If you treat for Nosema, this is the time of year to do it. In the fall, each colony being treated should receive two gallons of sugar syrup dosed at 1 teaspoon Fumagillin-B per gallon of sugar syrup. It should go without saying that you should have your honey (extracting) supers off before beginning treatment.
A good start is evaluating each and every colony from top to bottom. A quick suggestion before we crack open the lid. Whenever I venture into the bee yard, there’s always a colony data sheet in hand. Below is an example of one used over the years at the University of Georgia bee laboratory. Having this information helps to keep track of each colony’s condition.

Even if you only have a few colonies, take the time and create a data sheet that works for you. By next spring, when you’re doing those first colony inspections, you won’t have to rely on memory. All the information is already written down on your handy-dandy data sheets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yard:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colony Queen (Y/N)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey/Pollen stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHECK THE QUEEN**
Back in the beeyard, first and foremost you should check the viability of your queen. How does her brood pattern look? Are there skipped/open cells? Do you see any supersuere cells?

If the pattern is spotty, you may want to look for other problems first, such as disease or mite infestation, before automatically assuming it is a poor queen. However, the queen could be old, poorly mated, or was not properly reared. If you determine that the queen is past her prime, late summer to fall is a great time to requeen. If by chance you can’t acquire another queen, and the colony is weak, your best bet is to combine that colony with a strong one, a nucleus or another needing a boost.

**DON’T FORGET VARROA**
Queen issues, food supplies, disease, and poor equipment are all things that need to be addressed before winter temperatures descends upon us. Yet there is still one more thing we must not overlook: Varroa mites. Yes, the dreaded *Varroa destructor*. By the end of summer, mite populations are skyrocketing. Don’t wait until your colonies are crashing. Once the downward spiral begins it is almost impossible for colonies to recover. August is the best time to check those mite populations! Not only is it important to get their numbers under control for the existing bees, but also for the future bees that will bring the colony into the New Year.

Bee Culture has a blog check it out.  [blog.BeeCulture.com](http://blog.BeeCulture.com)

**Shifting the Paradigm Toward More Natural Beekeeping**

By Christy Hemenway

Remember when bees weren’t in the news? When they were just a normal part of daily life on the farm? There they were, lazily buzzing in and out of their hives, doing their bee thing ... virtually ignored by beekeepers until time to rob the hives for honey ... 

What’s happened? What changed that we now have problems with acronyms like CCD, which stands for Colony Collapse Disorder, and documentaries about this mysterious bee disease that scientists can’t even study effectively because the primary symptom of the problem is that the bees just disappear?

Bees lived for millions of years with no help or intervention from beekeepers, and now beekeepers can barely keep their bees alive. What on earth have we done?

Think back over our short agricultural history for just a second ... and yep, a second is about all the longer it takes
things in agriculture to such an extent that the use of chemicals is now considered normal, even required. We've created an entire industrial food system that depends upon them. And now, there's some sort of problem with honeybees, everybody's heard that — but nobody knows what it is, or why. Science is looking for the cause of course, but some folks might be tempted to say that the reason(s) is(are) obvious.

One cause may be that the use of pesticides both inside and outside the conventional beehive has grown commonplace over the course of the last twenty-five years. So we may have reached the tipping point where the accumulated chemical treatments are making bees sick.

Another aspect of agriculture that began to change as the “Bigger is Better” mindset began to take hold has seriously affected the diversity of farming. Enter monocropping - which allows us to be very efficient — and to grow huge expanses of all one crop! Efficient in its way, yes, but this situation creates a nutritional “desert” for bees, since outside the short timeframe during which that one crop is in bloom, there is nothing for the bees to eat!

In this way, the monoculture method of farming helped to create the migratory pollination industry. If bees couldn’t live somewhere year round, then we had to “bring the bees to the trees”... and this took us a step further from nature’s original plan when we started trucking bees, locked in boxes, across the country to pollinate such crops as the almond trees.

So now perhaps, with Colony Collapse Disorder, the bees are warning us — acting as the canary in the coal mine. Organic farming shows us that our systems and methods work best when they emulate nature and when we work against these natural systems we encounter devastating problems!

The top bar hive beekeeping system does some things that help us return to a more natural system of keeping bees ... a way that promotes healthier bees by working with those systems, instead of against.

The primary feature of a top bar hive is that it permits the bees to make all their own natural wax, with no so-called “assistance” in the form of sheets of milled wax known as “foundation”. This is important for a three reasons:

• It allows bees to make the cells in the honeycomb in the size that is best for the purpose they will use it for. The size of each honeycomb cell figures into many of the workings of the hive - even down to the length of time it takes a worker honeybee to be born!

• It allows bees to make the honeycombs themselves in the shape they prefer - a gentle curve known as a “catenary curve”.

• It's also important because, do you remember those pesticides we mentioned a minute ago, that have been used in beehives? Those chemicals are what we call “wax-soluble”. This means they dissolve into the bees’ wax honeycomb. And not only do bees live on this wax, but they store their honey in the wax comb cells, and they raise the baby bees there! So when those chemicals dissolve into the wax, they affect everything the bees do. Disconcertingly, these toxins also survive being melted down and re-milled into new foundation - so that even brand new foundation, just purchased, contains detectable levels of these poisons. We have made the inside of a beehive a chemical catch-all!

As with many agricultural things today, our attitude about honeybees needs to be re-calibrated -- it needs to move away from treating bees as machines and return to letting nature take its course. We got pretty far off track in a pretty short time. So far off track that now it's urgent - that we learn, or maybe we only need to remember -- how to farm in ways that support honeybees.

Because we have got to shift this paradigm... and we think it's possible that we are just in time

Read more: http://www.motherearthnews.com/honeybees-beekeeping/shifting-the-paradigm-toward-more-natural-beekeeping.aspx#ixzz1VW0aqT1c

Christy Hemenway
GOLD STAR HONEYBEES
Queen Elizabeth Honey Cake

Pour 1 cup of boiling water over 1 cup chopped dates. Add 1 teaspoon baking soda and let stand.

Mix the following together:

- ¾ cup Honey
- 1 ½ cup self rising flour
- ¼ cup butter
- ½ cup chopped pecans
- 1 beaten egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Mix the above and add in the chopped dates. Stir well – pour into a 9 x 12 pan and bake at 350 for 35 minutes or until done.

Icing

- 5 tablespoons brown sugar
- 5 tablespoons can milk
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup chopped pecans

Bring to a boil for 3 minutes – spread over cake – sprinkle with chopped pecans and coconut (optional)

Let stand in pan until cool - cut into squares

Please send any comments or suggestions for the website to:
Jon Hill - Webmaster  aikenbeekeeper@gmail.com

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Hey!!!! Does anyone want to help with articles, photos, fun facts, etc. for the newsletter?
You can e-mail your contribution to Deborah Sasser  dsasser3@comcast.net

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What do bees take to stay healthy?

Their Bee-Vitamins!!