

# Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

## Minutes for March Meeting

### March 18, 2024

**Apprentice Beekeeper Meeting – began at 6:14 pm**

Led by Ed Erwin with 44 in attendance

#### **Presentation Topic by Sophie Clark – Hive Splits**

- **Importance of Splits**
  - Prevention of swarming
  - Expansion of hives
  - Reduce mite loads
  - Creating new queens
- **Timing of splits**
  - Before honey flow
  - During good weather to allow queen to mate
  - Make sure hives have capped drone cells
- **Equipment needed**
  - Smokers, entrance reducer, extra bottom board and base, waxed frames
  - Waxing frames
    - Paint melted wax over frames
- **Use a strong colony, one that's wintered well**
  - Be wary of robbing
- **Both sides of splits should have pollen, honey, adequate number of bees**
- **Size of splits**
  - For small nucs, need 3 frames
    - Capped brood, two frames of resources
    - Using nuc boxes, prevents too much space
  - For standard sizes, at least 5 frames is useful
  - Make sure frames have young eggs, 1-3 days
- **Walk-away Splits**
  - Leave nurse bees on frames, using at least
  - Place frames in new box
  - Check back both hive in a few days, looking for eggs
    - One with eggs is hive with existing queen
  - Can be slower to build
    - Can add another capped brood frame, making sure
- **Doolittle**
  - Remove 5 frames of capped brood, first brushing off all bees
  - Place frames in new box
  - Place queen excluder on top of box
  - Place new box on top of original
    - Nurse bees will move to top box and make queen cell

- **Sophie's Method**
  - 2 boxes, separated by queen excluder
  - Observe after a few days, looking for eggs (existence of queen)
  - Separate boxes
    - Place a new queen in new box, or watch for queen cells

### **Apprentice Meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm**

### **Monthly meeting – began at 7:01 pm**

Led by President Matt Thomas

- Recorded in attendance were 65 members and guests

### **Announcements**

- Beginner beekeeper books available for purchase for \$10
- 2024 membership dues are now being collected
- Doug is making used bee equipment available to those in need

### **Youth Program Update**

- Talia
- Jackson
- Lila
- Giulia

### **Meeting Speaker - Bradley Womack: Using Swarm Traps**

- **What is a swarm?**
  - Colony splits due to overpopulation of hive space
  - Natural progression of expansion
- **Benefits**
  - Creates brood break to allow interruption of varroa mite life cycle
- **Why do bees abscond?**
  - Hive is uninhabitable
    - Too small or too large
    - Too much moisture (mold)
  - Bees are installed in package but too little to encourage bees to stay
  - Bees no longer like hive space
  - Lack of forage to support existing colony or too much competition for what's available
- **Where do swarms come from?**
  - Another apiary
  - Trees
- **What makes a good swarm trap?**
  - Has enough volume (approx 40L)
  - Something to attract bees
    - Old comb

- Use swarm commander or similar bee attractant
  - Paint inside of trap with melted wax
  - Open enough in interior to allow bees to build comb
  - Avoid making interior too congested with too many foundation frames
- **Where to place swarm traps?**
  - Generally, at least 10 ft above ground, attached to a tree or post
  - Along roadways or trails
  - Along edge of fields
  - At least 100 yds from other hives
- **Can use homemade or commercial swarms**
  - Rescue Bar (Bee-Mindful.com) for Layens Hives
  - Pot (peat pots)
  - Langstroth style trap
- **Options for hanging swarm traps**
  - Ratchet strap trap to tree
  - Use French Cleat
    - Attach cleat to tree with screws so trap can easily be placed and removed
- **Leave bees 2-3 weeks before moving into permanent hives**
  - Look for bees bringing in pollen

#### **Small Group Discussion Topics**

- New beekeepers
- Swarms and swarm traps
- Bee equipment
- Splitting hives

#### **Monthly Meeting adjourned at 8:51 pm**

(Submitted by Keri Warren)