Montgomery County Beekeepers Association
Minutes for Monthly Meeting
November 18, 2024

Apprentice Beekeeper Meeting – began at 6:12 pm
Led by Doug Stanley with 10 in attendance

New Beekeeper Q & A

- With cooling weather, stop feeding regularly.
    - If hives have plenty of honey, no need for sugar brick
        - When in doubt, add brick for insurance
    - January and also February are good times to place sugar bricks in hive
        - January and February are when many hives starve, so very important to make sure hives have food
        - Do not provide pollen patties in winter, as this promotes brood rearing. Supplementing pollen is better for spring to encourage brood growth.
    - Do not try to split hives in late fall and winter
- Is insulation in hives needed?
    - Foam boards can be chewed by bees and mold can form
    - Not needed in Texas
    - Insulation can cause condensation problems
    - Recommend block wind from getting underneath hives
    - Recommend covering bottom screen to protect bees
- Beekeeping Video and Information Resources
    - The Bee Supply recommends great resources online and offers monthly webinars
    - Kamon Reynolds - YouTube
    - Bob Beenie - YouTube
- When to split hives
    - Queens are available in March
    - April queens can be more available
    - Can preorder queens if you need an early one or prefer a specific genetic line
    - Golden cordovan are “sweet” bees
    - Winding Creek Apiary sells “sweet as peaches” bees that are also friendly
- Process to introduce new queen to hive
    - Remove old queen from hive
    - Place new caged queen in hive and allow
- Bee classes for new beekeepers
    - Brehanm
    - TBA classes
    - TBA summer clinic
    - The Bee Supply 101 class
- How new queens are formed

    - Hive determines absence or need for new queen
    - Worker bees feed royal jelly to larvae to create new queens in queen cells
    - First queen to hatch will kill all other queen larvae
- What to do with aggressive hives
    - Split and/or requeen hives

Apprentice Meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm

Monthly meeting – began at 7:02 pm

Led by President Matt Thomas

- In attendance were 29 members and guests
- Flag poem and Pledge of Allegiance led by Dan Brouse

Announcements

- Positions available for 2nd VP and Secretary for 2025.
- Seeking speakers

Meeting Speaker – Natalie B from Bee Mindful (bee-mindful.com) on Trouble Shooting Pests & Diseases Sustainably

- Co-host of Hive Jive Podcast
- Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Naturally
    - Not all bees are created equally
        - Use local bees to better select for fitness
    - Over time, raising bees without treatments produces hardier bees
    - Treating bees with chemicals can actually weaken hives
        - Treatments aren't a silver bullet
        - Genetics drives stronger hives
        - Treated drones can negatively impact quality of sperm in mated queens
- Goal is good, resilient genetics
    - Looking for development of resistance to mites
- IPM Control Methods
    - Don't flip IPM pyramid on its head - Level 1 is most important
    - Levels 4 and 5 are to be avoided
        - Let the bees be bees
    - Top Bar hives are cheaper to maintain and easier for bees to manage
    - Chemical - Level 5
        - Over time, raising bees without treatments produces hardier bees
        - All treatments takes a toll on the bees
            - Soft
                - Essential oils
                    - Thymol
                    - Honey bee healthy
            - Acids
                - Formic acid
                - Oxalic acid

        - Hopguard II
- Biological - Level 4
    - Predators
    - Parasitoids
    - Pathogens
- Physical and Mechanical - Level 3
    - Equipment in good physical repair
    - Rough cut wood
    - Small entrances
    - Mechanical traps
    - Barriers
    - Powder sugar applications
    - Drone trappin/culling
    - Screened bottoms
- Cultural Controls - Level 2
    - Use good queens
        - Untreated local survivor stock
        - Leverage hybrid vigor over inbreeding depression
        - Well fed, well mated, well established queen
    - Strong colonies- cull the weak, propagate the strong
    - Brood breaks
    - Old comb culling - sanitation
    - Natural comb/cell size
    - Minimize stress
    - Encourage propolis
        - Important for the hive's immune system
    - Let the bees do what they do best - protect the biome
    - Foundationless and natural wax
        - Holds chemical memory of hive
        - Removes toxins from the colony and the loney
        - Resonant frequency and acts as information highway
        - May provide better transmission of heat during winter
- Educational and Knowledge - Level 1
    - Understanding biology and life cycle of the pest is foundation for disrupting reproduction and limiting damage it can cause
    - Understand lifecycles of bees and colonies
        - Recognize developing problems early to intervene in timely fashion
        - Realize complete eradication of pests is rarely possible, but can be used to place pressure to get stronger bees
        - Realize that symbiotic microbial and yeast relationships within colony and individual bee gut may be negatively affected by medication or environmental pesticides
        - Be mindful of unintended consequences

        - Bees are a superorganism
        - The family is the animal
- Swarming = colony reproduction
    - Encouraging epigenetics replaces inferior genetics by propagating from stronger colonies
- Castes of the Honey Bee
    - Drone: 2-3 months
    - Queen: 5-6 years
    - Worker: 4-6 weeks
    - Winter Bee: 3-5 months
- Genetics are important
    - Queen mates with approximately 15 drones
        - Importance of queen genetics
        - Importance of drone genetics
- Important to understand Temporal Division of Labor
- Industrial vs Natural beekeeping
    - Industrial - feed, pull, cut, requeen, split
    - Natural - Add frames leave bees alone, pull honey
- Mite problems can be a symptom of problems with the queen
- Recommended Resource Books
    - The Biology of the Honey Bee by Mark L. Winston
    - Honey Bee Diseases & Pests by Canadian Association of Professional Apiar.
- Bald Brood vs. Hygienic
    - Straight line of uncapped brood suggests moth larvae
    - Scattered suggest sniffer bees that will tear off cappings to interrupt mites
- Laying Workers
- American Foulbrood
- European Foulbrood
    - Treatment can be by replenishing nurse bees or condensing colony
- Varroa Mites
    - Mites need brood
    - Allow colonies to contract during dearth reduces mite cycle
    - Brood breaks (during dearth and winter) reduces mite cycle
    - Treatments can have unintended consequences
- Small Hive Beetle
    - Larvae eats pollen and seeks protein
    - Hives can “slime” hives
    - To complete live cycle, beetles must pupate in ground below hive
        - Place limestone or dry bedding under hives to make it inhospitable to beetles

            - Not using screen bottoms can also prevent hive beetles from entering hives
            - Keep high ratio of bees to combs
        - Wax Moth
            - Larvae look for proteins
            - Seek weakened hive
            - Strong population of bees is important
            - Serve as cleanup crew for weaker genetics
- Implications
    - Sustainable, science-based, decision making process
    - Mitigate environmental threats
    - Prevent, identify and manage risks
    - Decrease resistance to treatments

Monthly Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm
(Submitted by Keri Warren)