

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

Minutes for Monthly Meeting

October 21, 2024

Apprentice Beekeeper Meeting – began at 6:20 pm

Led by Doug Stanley with 11 in attendance

Q & A for New Beekeepers

- Fall blooms for bees to forage
 - Snow on the prairie
 - Goldenrod
- Ensure that bees have adequate availability of water in fall
 - May prefer your neighbor's pool for its salts and minerals
 - Keep a good water source close to your hive
- Best time to get bees
 - April
 - Most things are blooming and bees are thriving
 - Ample pollen and nectar for your bees to forage
- At MoCobees.com, there are plenty of resources for beekeepers to use
 - There are recipes for sugar bricks to help maintain your hive's stores over winter
 - During winter it's better to use bricks, because you need to have as little moisture as possible in the hive
 - For sugar bricks you can use shims or a shallow super to keep them in the hive
- How to move bees
 - When it's cold or at night is best time to move them
 - If it's cold (below 50) they are easy to move, and at night you close the hive, then move them early morning.
- Queens
 - Swarm queens can sometimes do well, sometimes not, so you need to watch them
 - Queens that are marked and clipped (tip of wings snipped so she can't fly) makes them slightly more expensive
 - Purchases from online beekeepers aren't always local
- Minimum hives to keep
 - It's best to start with 2 hives
 - Can compare the two hives
 - If one is weaker, you can give resources from the stronger hive to help them.

Apprentice Meeting adjourned at 6:54 pm

Monthly meeting – began at 7:00 pm

Led by President Matt Thomas

- In attendance were 50 members and guests

Announcements

- TBA CONVENTION taking place in Austin on November 15-16. See Texasbeekeepers.org website for more details
- North American Honey Bee Expo takes place January 2-4, 2005, in Louisville, KY. See nahbexpo.com for more details
- The MoCo Bee Association is always open to people wanting to do presentations!

Youth Program Update

- Lila Gould
- Joshua Anderson

Meeting Speaker – Chari Elam on Weak Hives Going Into Winter: Now What?

- Average colony loss in winter is 40%
- Many articles and available resources on beeinformed.com
- It's not about how many hives you have going into winter, but the number you have coming out of winter
 - Usually does not pay to nurse a weak hive
 - Verify the correct hive strength for double deep hives
 - January 5+
 - March 8+
 - May 14+
 - November 12+
 - Be cautious on the amount of smoke you use
 - Choose to count on a warm afternoon
- How well were varroa mites controlled during the year?
 - Commercial beekeepers test every month
 - Individual beekeepers typically test about once every 2-3 months
 - Honeybeehealthcoalition.org has many resources to help you decide how often you should test
 - Make sure if you use sticky boards to test, you keep it under the hive for exactly 24 hours. If you have over 10 mites, you need to treat.
 - Randy Oliver's website, scientificbeekeeping.com is a good resource to learn more about mites.
- Determine whether a hive is weak
 - Is it queen right?
 - Do you have a nonproductive queen?
 - This time of year, there isn't much you can do if you have a bad queen.
 - If you only have 3 frames of bees, make sure you transfer them into a nuc box so it's easier for the bees to warm the box. If you insulate the hive, make sure you do not insulate against the hive box. Leave a dead airspace so it does not condensate.
 - Are you queenless?

- If your queenless hive manages to overwinter, make sure you preorder queen so you can get one right when they're available.
- Importance of multiple colonies
 - You can compare
 - Makes spotting issues more obvious.
 - Share resources between hives
 - Increases your odds of success
- Dividing vs combining hives?
 - Dividing hives is best.
 - When to consider eliminating a hive
 - If resources are dwindling
 - If lacking sufficient number amount of bees, you should consider eliminating that hive.
 - Smoke the frames
 - Make sure your queen is already gone or dead
 - Shake the bees off at the entrance of one of your other hives since they could use more bees this time of year
 - Place the frame accordingly (brood frame in center, pollen frames either on end of box or, if too cold, move the resources close to the middle of the box) Put drawn frames on very end of box or just freeze it if the hive does not need it.
 - Combining hives: The Bee Supply has helpful videos on combining colonies.
 - If the queen is present in the weak hive, kill her.
 - Place newspaper or two pieces of tissue on the bottom box of the strong hive, place the weak hive on top of the bottom box, and feed the bees. Some people cut slits in the newspaper, but you definitely do not have to.
 - If it's cold and you combine, feed sugar bricks instead of sugar bricks. Within a few days the bees will eat through the paper, and you can peel the leftovers off the side of the hive or just let it disintegrate.
- Q & A
 - Make sure you do not go overboard with nursing a baby hive
 - Now is a good time to start feeding the bricks. The Bee Supply sells Stan's sugar bricks to feed over winter that now have Complete, a supplement for bees.
 - How cold is too cold for syrup? If it's about 50 degrees, then the bees most likely won't take the syrup, so you should feed sugar bricks. You should also study your hive to see what is best for your hives. Some people say bees don't fly at 55 degrees, but they do so you should watch your bees.

Monthly Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm

(Submitted by Sofie and Nadia Clark)