

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association
Minutes for May Meeting
May 15, 2023

Apprentice Beekeeper Meeting – began at 6:16 pm

Led by Ed Erwin with 20 in attendance (note: youth leader Nanette Davis concurrently held an Introduction to Beekeeping presentation for the new youth members)

Presentation Topic by Ed Erwin of BeeHarmony.org – Small Hive Beetles & Wax Moths

- **Small Hive Beetle**
 - Most often found on top frames, drawn to pollen and honey
 - Seek cracks and crevices to hide and lay eggs
 - Egg - adult maturation in 28 days, and adults survive 6 months
 - Larvae feed on brood and honey, then go to ground below hives to mature
- **Hive beetle control**
 - Traps - Beetle Jail, Beetle Blaster, Swiffer sheets
 - Organic control - Diatomaceous Earth (DE), Beneficial Nematodes
 - Chemical control - Roach bait (toxic to bees), Bayer CheckMite+, GardStar (toxic to bees)
- **Wax Moth**
 - 2 types - greater wax moth and lesser wax moth
 - Males are smaller than females
 - Both types are attracted by hive odors and enter hives at night
 - Adults do no damage to hives, the larvae do with tunneling and webbing
- **Wax moth control**
 - Keep colonies strong
 - Be wary of giving bees too many boxes at a time
 - Check colony population during warm season
 - Other control measures
 - Freeze lightly damaged frames
 - DIY Wax Moth trap - 1 c. vinegar, 1 c. sugar, 1 c. water, 1 banana peel in 2 L bottle with quarter-sized hole cut in top. Hang near hives.

Question & answer period followed

Apprentice Meeting adjourned at 6:51 pm

Monthly meeting – began at 7:06 pm

Led by VP Brad Womack, as President Matt Thomas was out of town

- In attendance were 54 members and 11 guests
- Presenters & suggestions for presentation topics are needed for monthly meetings
- Volunteers are needed to bring snacks to meeting
- Volunteers are needed for the TBA summer clinic on June 17 at the Lone Star Expo and Conference Center in Conroe
- Book “First Lessons in Beekeeping” is available for \$10.00.

Meeting Speaker – Brad Womack on Top Bar Hives

- **Benefits**
 - Simplicity
 - Inexpensive
 - Easy to manage
 - Bees are reportedly milder than those kept in Layans or Langstroth hives
- **How to Build Top Bar Hive**
 - Recommends basic design plans from Les Crowder's Les-Is-More Horizontal Hive (Bee-Mindful.com/plans)
 - Each hive holds one or two colonies, so efficient for those seeking to increase hive numbers for Ag valuation
- **Tools needed to build a top bar hive**
 - Circular saw
 - Miter saw (or table saw)
 - Square
 - Drill and screws, or hammer and nails
- **Benefits to Bees**
 - Less risky to injuring bees during inspections
 - Less stressful to bees during inspections
- **Ease of Management**
 - Bars are easy to inspect
 - No foundation needed, as bees draw comb downward from wood top bars
 - No issue of bees attaching comb to sides of hive
 - Easier to harvest wax, since there's no foundation
 - Can also avoid bridge comb issues by narrowing widths of top bars to 1 3/8 in.
 - Relatively simple to convert bees from Langstroth hive to Top Bar
- **Swarm Traps**
 - Can create Top Bar style swarm trap, with comb and swarm trap spray as attractants
 - Top Bar swarm trap example was shown, in which bars are easily moved from trap to hive
- On a side note, Brad shared he is experimenting this year in using Russian bees in some of his hives

Small Group Breakout Sessions –

- Varroa Mites
- Catching swarms
- Growing hives
- Improving honey production

Monthly Meeting adjourned at 8:54 pm

(Submitted by Keri Warren)