

Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

Minutes for Monthly Meeting

04/21/2025

Apprentice Meeting 4/21/2025

Speaker: Doug Stanley, Nadia Clark

Started at 6:13pm

Nuc installation

Nucs typically come with 3-5 frames. Assuming you have 5 frames, you have to install the frames in exact order in direction that they were in when in the original box into your new box. Sometimes the bees will glue frames together with propolis (tree sap) and you'll have to pry the frames out. Make sure to be careful.

Just because your box is designed for 10 frames, it doesn't mean you must have 10 frames in the box. With new bees, it can be better to use 9 frames instead since you will have more room to work. You just want to make sure that the frames are spaced evenly to prevent the bees building burr comb.

It is important to make sure the frames aren't glued together, since you have to transfer the nuc into the new box one frame at a time. It will also make future beekeeping easier.

Rolling a queen is when you have two frames and you accidentally roll a queen on the frame beside the space you are trying to put a frame back in or take out. This could kill your queen, so make sure you calmly and slowly put the frame straight into the box.

An inner cover is a thin piece of wood that covers the top hive box, letting them have bee space instead of just having your outer cover on the frames. When removing it, you want to check to make sure your queen is not on the inner cover. If she is, put the inner cover carefully back on and smoke them, then let it sit for a few minutes until the queen runs back down into the box because of the smoke.

A queen excluder is a plastic or metal sheet with little holes in it. It allows worker bees to move through it while not allowing a queen through. People usually use this to separate their brood boxes from honey supers, ensuring there is no brood in their honey.

A honey super is smaller because they can get very heavy. If you use a deep box for your honey supers, it can weigh up to 100lbs. It just makes honey harvest easier.

When you make a split, you should check in after about a week to make sure everything is going smoothly.

When transferring a nuc, you want to have the nuc to face the same way your car is going. As in the front/back of the nuc is facing toward your front windshield. This minimizes the frames from swinging and minimizes bee stress.

Guard bees, as their title states, guard the hive. Bees will change jobs in the hive as they age, so this is one of the tasks of a bee. The guards prevent robber bees from coming in, pests, etc.

Small hive beetles are a secondary pest, and there are ways to control them. Unscented swiffer sheets in your hive can help, as the beetles' feet will get stuck on the sheets. Once they're stuck, the bees can take care of them. Peppermint candies can also help, since small hive beetles don't like them. You just have to make sure it has pure peppermint oil in it. Bee suppliers also sell traps that bees will chase them into, and then the beetles will fall into the traps. These traps are filled with oil, which drowns the beetles.

When using the Swiffer sheets, you can cut them up into rectangles and place them in the corners of the top box, then make sure your lid closes slightly over them to keep them in place, since the bees will try to drag them out of the hive.

Q&A

When installing nuks, you can put it in pretty much any time of day if the weather is good. There isn't a huge rush to install your nuc right away, you can wait even up to a week. Just make sure you open the entrance of the box, to make sure the bees can enter and exit.

If you have one hive that's a little empty, and one that's pretty full, you can equalize the hives and take a few resource frames from the strong hive. You just have to make sure the queen is not on the frames you're giving.

As of right now (Late April/ Early May) you don't have to feed your bees much, since the honey flow is coming.

People who are susceptible to ants will put the legs of their hive stands in buckets of oil to drown the ants, and dusting cinnamon around the hive helps as well.

Meeting concluded at 6:55pm. 16 people in attendance.

Main Meeting 4/21/2025

Meeting stared at 7:06pm

Pledge of Allegiance

1st speaker: Lauren Ward

Topic: agriculture extension program

Lauren has been a beekeeper for 10 years, and went to A&M for entomology and worked for Dr. Julia Rangel. Then, she worked at BeeWeaver Apiaries, and also for herself.

Extension is the middleman for research, and teaching, focusing on education.

There are 250 offices statewide that focus on health, nutrition, youth, and community programs.

The extension office has workshops, webinars, and virtual courses.

The Master Beekeeping Program is a tiered certification program designed to educate beekeeper of all experience levels. It provides structured learning opportunities, from beginner to advanced.

The apprentice level is Beekeeping 101. It requires a year of beekeeping experience, and you need to pass the written, practical, and in-hive exam. There is also a 10 week course offered for this level.

The Advanced level requires you to have held the apprentice rank for 1 year, and practicing beekeeping for 2 years. There is also a 10 week virtual course for this. You also need to pass 6 online modules, you need 10 public service credits, and to pass the written and practical portion of the test.

The Master level requirements are requires you to have held the advanced rank for 1 year, practicing beekeeping for 3 years, and need 20 public service credits (UNFINISHED, THERE IS A PIC OF THE SLIDE)

So far, only one person has passed the Master Craftsman test.

The Texas Master Beekeeper Handbook is coming soon. It will have 22 chapters, it's Texas Specific.

Junior Master Beekeeper Program (coming soon) it will be a hands on program when possible, had an accessible biology curriculum for educators. It may possibly partner with local association youth programs.

Another Program that's coming soon is the Texas Bee Breeder program. It will have stock selection, queen rearing and instrument insemination, breeding designs and breeding networks.

Other resources the extension office had is AgLearn with free fact sheets and virtual courses.

What's happening now in bees includes the large US honeybee losses. Around 62% of commercial hives were lost. Still being investigated. They are investigating pathogen screening, pesticide residues in pollen, gut microbiome, varroa mite amitraz resistance, environmental and management factors and chemical exposures/immunities.

Local tasks for April is aftercare for swarmed hives, assess your hives for needed space, especially strong hives. Queens mated late, but availability is opening up.

The extension office can be found on masterbeekeeper.tamu.edu/

Lauren.ward@ag.Tamu.edu

Presentation concluded at 7:58pm

Meeting concluded at 8:00pm