



Haywood County Beekeeper's Association

Monthly Minutes

May 4, 2017

President Allen Blanton opened the meeting and welcomed all new Beekeepers.

He reported that Kelly Beekeeping will have a special hive tool on sale this week only, and he announced that there are free catalogs available to anyone interested in having one. In addition, Allen mentioned that there is a library with books and DVDs available to the club members.

A panel discussion is scheduled for next month and Rich passed out paper for the beekeepers to write down their questions for the panel. Questions may also be submitted via the Contact Form on the hcbees.org website, or through webmaster@hcbees.org. Allen says, "There are no dumb questions except those not asked."

Someone asked about black pollen. A member said it was from locust. It could be discarded coffee grounds, which bees have been known to forage. Also, white pollen is from locust, which is in bloom, along with the tulip poplar.

Allen added that he caught a swarm waist high, while on his way to tonight's meeting! He asked who has already received packages of bees and many club members indicated that they had picked up their bees.

"Spreading your Brood" - Move frames to the left and to the right and put some drawn comb in the middle where the queen will continue to lay. In addition, Allen said he will try to work out a time to do the *Queen Rearing* class. It will be a series of classes and everyone will get to go into the hive. Allen says he cannot do grafting due to his poor eyesight.

Bill Skelton said to get ready for honey flow, because it will be two weeks early this year.

Speaker: Lewis Cauble [WNC Bee or Apiary Inspector]- There are twenty-one counties in Western North Carolina and seventeen bee club

associations within those counties. Lewis can be reached at lewis.cauble@ncagr.gov, or by calling 828-230-4544 (cell).

Things that most often kill colonies:

1. **Mites**
2. **Feeding** – a new hive needs drawn comb, winter stores lacking, dearth, spring stimulates the Queen, after honey flow if no store or nectar are available, feed to much - swarm, fill every cell with honey and there is no room for brood.
3. **Queen events** - colony is dividing - old hive make a new Queen, death, supercedure - changing management = making a new Q to replace the old Q, Q must mature and fly and could be eaten by birds when doing mating flight, comes back to the wrong hive, hive can be left Queen-less.
 - a. Check the colonies for eggs – one egg per cell, if eggs exist, then you have a laying Queen in the last three days.

Laying workers – deposit more eggs in the cells when the hive is left Queen-less for an extended length of time. To fix this problem use the newspaper divide method, placing the worker colony on top of a STRONG Queen colony.

A new Queen could lay 1-2 eggs in a cell if the bees are not making foundation fast enough. If you catch a swarm, wait 2-3 weeks to see if there is no open brood and no eggs, only capped brood then the queen may not be ready to lay yet. You may have a Virgin Queen.

You can test this by adding a frame of eggs and open brood. If they don't have a Queen they will make queen cells and then, produce a queen. The key factor is to be patient.

MITES

Lewis commented about his inspections results and emphasized some things that beekeepers must "Learn to Identify"

1. Colony was big and looked healthy in the fall
2. There was a lot of honey in the top supers
3. When it got cold the cluster was small or not there at all
4. Few of the bottom board
5. Near or just below the cluster is a patch of spotty brood
6. Crystals in cells and walls, mite excrement and urine - too many mites! Many beekeepers maintain no records of treatment of mites.

Treatment is based on the mite load. Use only registered and effective miticide and use them according to the enclosed instructions. Lewis mentioned that few beekeepers read the instructions and thus, improper, and non-effective hive maintenance is being performed. He emphasized the practice of *post-treatment* monitoring and pointed out that there are no treatments for viruses. He stated that Apistan and Checkmite are old and ineffective in today's bee colonies. Apiguard and ApiLife Guard are effective.

IPM - "Integrated Pest Management"

It is a brood based approach that integrates practices of proper pest control. Regular sampling provides an estimate of your mite population and allows you to select the appropriate control technique.

Cultural

- Good genetics, varroa sensitive bees, Russians, ankle biters (new)

Physical/Mechanical

- screen bottom boards, drone trapping, drone foundations - mites lay here

Range of Bees to Mites - The *threshold of infestation rate* is 2-3 mites per 100 bees. Review the Honey Bee Health Coalition look for "Tools for Varroa Management" It is online and in the library. Chart is in it.

Sugar Shake Method: Sample a cluster of three hundred (300) bees there should be no more than six (6) mites or two percent (2%) infestation. A count greater than this threshold is too-high for successful varroa mite control. Stay proactive through, mentoring, sugar shake, sampling monthly, and after any miticide during the spring and fall.

Use #8 hardware cloth on the lid of a pint mason jar. Shake about 1/2 cup of bees (approximately 300) from an open brood frame into a pan and transfer them to the jar. Add the powdered sugar and let the bees crawl around, then, shake the jar gently. Finally, shake the powdered sugar over a "white" flat lid or bucket lid of water and count the mites. Note: *If the infestation level is above the two percent to three percent level, then treatment is required.*

Non-chemical, Cultural and Mechanical/Physical Control:

More Effective

- Drone brood removal - don't leave in too long, in spring take out and freeze
- Brood interruption - Split and let colony raise a Queen
- Re-queening with a good genetic stock

Minimally Effective

- Screen bottom board
- Comb culling
- Using powdered sugar to make bees clean themselves
- Apiary site
- Colony ID/configuration
- Basic sanitation

Miticide Treatments

- **Synthetic:** Apivar - Amitray
 - Cannot use when supers are on
 - Avoid any contact exposure
 - Treatment interval is 42-54 days
 - Disadvantages - brood loss, bees develop resistance to the chemical
- **Checkmite** and **Apistan** – try to AVOID, as they are not very effective
- **Essential Oils** - Botanicals - Thymol - Api Life Guard and Api Guard
 - It is a fumigant and derived from various plants
 - There are temperature restrictions when using
 - Can affect brood and cause Queen loss
- **Acid Treatments** - Mite Away and Quick Strips - Formic Acid
 - Use gloves, eye protection, and respirator
 - A fumigant - a good treatment this close to honey flow
 - Kills mites under capped brood and can use with supers in place
 - Treat one time per hive for one week
 - Treatment is temperature sensitive
 - Formic acid is in honey
- **Flash treatment** - Oxalic Acid
 - Use gloves, eye protection, and respirator
 - Kills mites only on adult bees

- Do not use if you have capped brood – the hive must be brood-less to be affective
- Use in early spring or during the late winter
- Cage the queen to protect her.
- Application methods: Spray, dribble, or vapor
- Follow manufacturer’s directions- wear clothing protection and proper mask
- Disadvantages – Highly corrosive, vapors are harmful to humans
- **Hopguard** - from hop plants, use when hive is brood-less, treatment comes on cardboard impregnated strips
- **Mitecheck** - is a nationwide website with a map indicating hives and mite loads. Report to Lewis if you want your hive located on the map.

NOTES:

1. To keep ants away from the colonies, spray a combination of white vinegar (not apple vinegar) and peppermint oil around each hive.
2. Lewis Cauble will be demonstrating the sugar shake method at Wild Mountain Bees in Weaverville on the second Saturday of each month
3. Field Day will be on August 12 and there will be demonstrations of different treatments.
4. If you want to take the “Certified” Master Beekeeping Exam come to the June 6 meeting at 6 PM to take the test.
5. We need volunteers at the Appalachian Lifestyle weekend to help manage the display on Main Street. It will be the second Saturday in June. Contact Beth S. or Rick Queen

Next meeting will be held on June 6.

Meeting adjourned

Vicki Morrison

Haywood County Beekeepers Secretary