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Features

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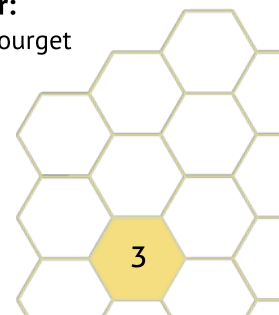
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On the Cover:
Photo: Dr. Josée Bourget
"Reflection"



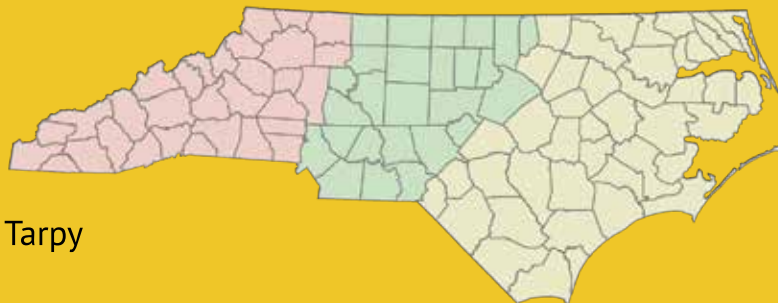
North Carolina State Beekeepers Association



The mission of the NCSBA is to advance beekeeping in North Carolina through improved communication with members, improved education about beekeeping, and support of science enhancing the knowledge of beekeeping.

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From the *Bee Buzz* Editors:

Bee Buzz Story Submission Deadlines: Spring : Jan 14 - Summer: Apr 21 - Fall: July 21 - Winter: Oct 21

We enthusiastically accept article and photo submissions! Please send us your articles and photos of news and information you'd like to share about your local association's latest events, successes and failures, a biography on a long-standing NCSBA member you would like to honor, or a young beekeeper you'd like to see highlighted. All honey bee-related topics will be considered for publication. While we regret that we cannot always include every submission, we will do our best to print as space permits. Submit your article in .doc or .docx format. Photos should be high quality jpg or tiff format. Please include a caption for photos. Do not embed captions in your photos or photos into your news article, but submit these as separate files. If you do not have access to a computer, we will accept typed or clearly handwritten articles. Mail written submissions to: *Bee Buzz* Submissions PO Box 1771 Pittsboro NC 27312.

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Message From The President

by: Doug Vinson, NCSBA President



Writing my final Message

from the President's article has been especially difficult. Do I wax nostalgic about the past three years or do I prognosticate regarding our bright future? Being the consummate middle-of-the-roader, I will take the uncomplicated way out and speak to both.

We are all guilty of saying, "where did the time go" as it applies to our own age, children, and grandchildren. I feel the same regarding my three-year presidential term. Despite all the activity that transpires within the Association during a three-year stretch, the time has passed very quickly.

When Charles Dickens penned the first sentence of his historical novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, I doubt that he had any idea of the popularity that it would have even over a century later. He wrote, "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times", to describe a period of history in which one city (London) was enjoying social and economic success, another city (Paris) was suffering a bloody revolution. The reason for the popularity of the sentence is that it can very well apply to life in general. There are good times and there are tough times and they can occur simultaneously. The same can apply to almost any entity imaginable, governments, cities, schools, and beekeeping organizations.

In one hundred and six years of existence, we have no one to report all the best and the worst of the NCSBA's history. That is not so important; what is important is that we weathered the storms of the worst times by taking advantage of the best times.

More recently the restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic forced the Association as well as individual chapters to either cease activity or use virtual platforms to meet and transact business. As a result, some chapters never fully recovered to their pre-pandemic ability to assist and educate member beekeepers.

Concurrent with these "worst times," efforts begun five or six years earlier by our Legislative Committee to procure state funding of a new field laboratory at NCSU came to fruition. The disappointment of a vetoed budget was erased by the doubling of the budget request to four million dollars. Also, during the pandemic and its hangover, the idea of an Endowed Professorship in Apiculture at NCSU was envisioned. Of course, these items are not news to the reader but do illustrate my point that challenging times also present opportunities of immense value.

Perhaps not as monumental as the lab and the endowment but other Association accomplishments should be noted as well. Membership continues to increase each year. This is in large part due to the success and number of chapter bee schools.

Our Master Beekeeper Program has had a leadership revision with Randall Austin and Robert Smith now serving as co-chairs. New committee members have been added to assist with program duties. Other changes and enhancements have been put into place to further strengthen the program. More opportunities for testing and test content updates are just a few.

Direction of the Certified Honey Producer Program has been assumed by Debbie Griffin after the resignation of Ed Speer. That transition was exceptionally smooth and without any delays in service to program members.

The Born and Bred Queen Rearing Program has been extraordinarily successful during the past three years, completely selling out at each event. The April 2023 session was unique in that live bees, representing all stages of queen rearing, were on site. Also grafting technique was demonstrated and practiced by the participants. This program has drawn attention from other state associations and some thought is being given to offering it out of state.

The 4-H Educational Grant Program, under the new leadership of Gary and Hilda Winebarger, is doing very well.

The Golden Achievement Program is alive and well, but Ray Maxwell could really use some additional volunteers. Please consider lending a hand to this important program.

Obviously, there are many, many more accomplishments that have occurred over the past three years and I will not note them here because space does not allow me to do so. Every effort to ensure success of the NCSBA is equally important.

I mentioned a bright future earlier and I believe that our Association will continue to prosper. To do so, we must work together in a unified approach.

Continue to support our two annual statewide conferences. They are great opportunities for education, fellowship, and vendor interaction. Our upcoming conference, Summer 2023, in Flat Rock will feature a great honey show that we hope will initiate an event that will highlight future summer conferences. Keep an eye out for announcements regarding this event and bring some honey and honey products!

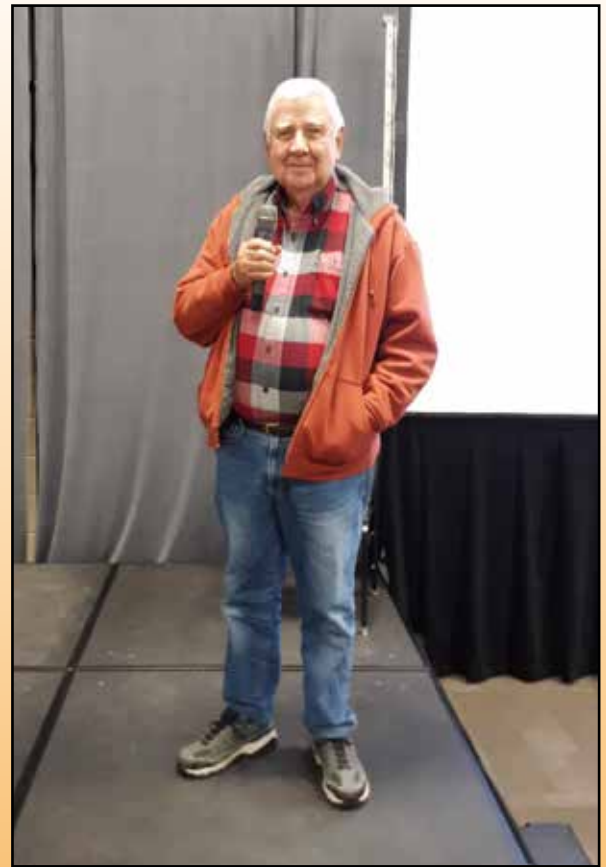
We are about one year into a five-year commitment to fund an Endowed Professorship in Apiculture at NCSU and we must continue to support that effort. Your pledges and contributions will make it happen! Without this, the future of the Apiculture Science Program and the use of the laboratory building could be very tenuous. I am confident that the membership will see this initiative through.

As my three-year term as president draws to a close I can honestly say that it has been a pleasure to serve the membership of the NCSBA in that capacity. I will not attempt to thank all who have made the journey, with the rare exception, easy and stress free. The support and assistance that I have been afforded will always be remembered.

The next president will be much more effective with the same amount of support so I encourage the membership and the leadership team to continue to provide backing and encouragement for that person.

Bee involved!

- Doug



Doug Vinson: NCSBA thanks you for your service!



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North Carolina Pollinator Plants

by: Ulana Stuart, NC State Extension Master Gardener Volunteer

“Summer nectar dearth” to a honey bee is a shortage of nectar-producing flowers sometime during the summer. Healthy bee populations can get quite large due to the pollen production of the spring floral bloom and will require lots of food to maintain. The summer dearth can badly affect a honey bee colony. North Carolina summer weather often presents high temperatures and low rainfall amounts, which in turn can reduce blooming flowers and nectar production. In addition, there are fewer plants available that can produce flowers during this stressful period.

How can you recognize a nectar dearth? To a new beekeeper this can be somewhat challenging. By observing and learning which plants are flowering and when in your area you will have more successful and thriving hives. This will vary somewhat depending on what part of the state you are in.

Here are some high nectar sources that you can plant in autumn to help insure a plentiful source for the following summer dearth season:

Summersweet, Coastal sweet-pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*)



Summersweet, *Clethra alnifolia* "Hummingbird"

This attractive, deciduous, colony-forming native shrub can grow from 3-10 ft. tall depending on the growing conditions. Summersweet is beautiful in

flower, with sweetly fragrant white spires in midsummer. It grows in part sun to sun throughout North Carolina in Zones 5-9 in moist, well-drained to wet soils. Avoid planting in droughty areas. Summersweet establishes and begins to bloom quickly, almost like a perennial. It can be planted in mixed borders, as a hedge, at a woodland edge, or at a pondside. You can cut the shrub back in the winter if it gets too rangy and strong new growth will come back in spring at about 3-4 feet and will flower in summer.

It produces lots of nectar and yellowish-brown pollen.

Please note that summersweet is both deer and fire resistant! There are a few compact cultivars available for small gardens such as 'Compacta' and 'Hummingbird'.



Butterfly-weed, *Asclepias tuberosa*

Butterfly-weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) is a beautiful and very heat tolerant native wildflower. This striking orange to red orange or yellow milkweed grows throughout many parts of the US. It is very heat tolerant. It grows 1-2 ft. tall, often with multiple branching, in moist to very dry, well-draining soil. The narrow leaves are a rich glossy green and alternate up the stem. It likes full to part sun. Butterfly-weed is easy to cultivate and can be used in garden borders or meadows. It blooms over a long period of time in summer. If cut back and watered during a dry period, it will grow back and bloom some more. Do not over-water. Lastly, butterfly-weed is deer resistant! Honey bees collect mostly nectar from its flowers.

Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*) is a deer resistant, semi-evergreen and easy-to-grow edible herb. It grows to 1-2 ft. tall and has a spread of about 18 in. It would work well in a small area or garden. Hyssop does not like more than 6 hours of hot afternoon sun. It likes well-drained soil and can even grow in dry, sandy conditions. Hyssop is not long lived but since it is important to trim it in early spring, it can be easily propagated by stem cuttings or by division.

Hyssop has white or blue funnel-shaped flowers that bloom for about a month in late summer into fall and has abundant amounts of nectar. The bees will also harvest the greenish-yellow pollen pellets.

In addition to these plants, there are summer blooming plants I have covered in past issues of the Bee Buzz. Please refer to them for additional planting possibilities.

For more information on gardening use the North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox at plants.ces.ncsu.edu



Photo: gardnerspath.com

Hyssop, *Hyssopus officinalis*

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In the Apiary: Summer 2023

by Shirley Harris Apiary Inspector, NCDA&CS
Dr. Josée Bourget Beekeeper

It is not unusual to experience four seasons in one week during springtime in beautiful North Carolina. This year, Punxsutawney Phil told us that spring would be late to arrive. What he didn't say is that it would trick the bees into a very early one, before keeping them holed up around freezing temperatures for several days at a time. And while beekeepers could not tend to their colonies as we might have liked, the bees kept rearing up inside the hives!

The red maples showed off as early as late January, and brood rearing definitely jumped the gun in February, even if cold snap after cold snap finally cut off the excitement for both bees and beekeepers, like a power outage in the middle of a party. The weather seesaw seemed particularly extreme this year. Warmer temperatures finally arrived in the first week of April, as nights began to hover around the mid-50s. Most colonies survived the mild winter in good health and quickly exploded with bees. There were swarm sightings in temperatures below 40°F this year. This serves as a reminder that though the hollow in which the bees reside matters for their long-term survival – whether natural or manmade – the individual body heat they generate within the cluster only serves to keep the superorganism alive. The heat felt coming out of the hive they occupy is only a byproduct of this behavior, so logically larger swarms have greater chances of survival. Let's hope some kind beekeepers gave most of them a home in which to cozy up, and that they lived to complete their life cycle.

It is always amazing to see how quickly hives build up their population in preparation for the nectar flow. In spite of our particularly unpredictable NC spring, colonies always appear to be ready for it, while some beekeepers might not be. Depending on where you live, your bees may have enjoyed a bit longer red maple budding. In other locations, feeding was necessary to help colonies overcome a shortage of resources, unless you use winter safeguard practices like quilt and candy boards. If you fed your hives too much, you might have found your bees hanging in a tree nearby!

Beekeepers are often disappointed to see their colonies swarm. We must remind ourselves that swarming is part of *Apis mellifera's* natural cycle. The large colonies we artificially build up for honey production are for our benefit only. We really do exploit the noblest of insects. Yet, the buzzing ladies keep

taking their work to heart. Bees don't need nearly as much honey as we push them to make to survive in the wild. The ebb and flow of colony resources balance out over time by design, provided nothing catastrophic happens. As it would in nature, swarming has positive effects in the apiary, in exchange for a honey production premium. For one, the brood break caused by swarming helps reduce the mite population as well as other diseases. And strong colonies that swarm are likely to have good genes, which are then propagated with the new colonies.

With a little luck and forethought, we get to collect our own swarms and be grateful to the bees for saving us the trouble of creating artificial swarms ourselves by way of splits. If you managed to control swarming well enough, your June honey harvest will likely be bountiful, provided your colonies were well tended in those precious preceding months. While the bees never fail to build up in the spring, neither do the varroa mites once the brood nest spans several frames. It is good practice to assess your colony mite load before the nectar flow begins. Once it starts, options to snuff out mite proliferation are quite limited, which can cause colony problems down the road.

Having hopefully mitigated the first round of mite growth during the spring, beekeepers must also account for our especially harsh North Carolina summers. Around the middle of June, and well into September, most nectar found in summer blooms is evaporated by mid to late morning, leaving very little for the bees to forage besides pollen. Water sources also become scarce, as the sun gradually dries up ponds and marshes, and quickly vaporizes it from the bird baths often found in beekeepers' backyards. Our annual summer dearth makes the neighbor's pool particularly attractive if your bees can't find water closer to home, especially salt water pools where bees find desirable minerals. Chlorinated water also appeals to the bees for some of its chemicals. Keeping water available for the bees is far too often neglected and yet so easily remedied. We must not forget that nature's original air conditioning inventors need it to maintain hive climate at a relative 95°F. Insufficient moisture in the hive causes brood cell contents to dehydrate, which affects the health of the growing larvae, and therefore compromises bee health and overall colony fitness. We must also take extra precautions when visiting the hives to not incite robbing. Bees – like humans – like

an easy lunch! Hive visits should be like mini-skirts: just long enough to cover the subject.

By the summer solstice, the queen begins to reduce her daily deposits of eggs and brood rearing gradually slows down. And while we humans are still in the thick of summer activities, the bees turn their attention to their winter preparations, and so must we as beekeepers.

Year round colony health is not just about queen performance and pest management. Good nutrition is just as important for bees to stay healthy as it is for us humans. That means beekeepers should leave sufficient honey stores for colonies to survive winter, on the diet they are intended to consume. We can certainly help the bees make sure the pantry stays well stocked by supplementing with sugar syrup. However, while white sugar is a good fail-safe food source for the short term, it is no replacement for the rich minerals they pack away in their honey factory. Why not give tribute to the bees the next time you savor the nourishing honey they belabored for us?

Swarm found near the apiary on a morning when the thermometer only registered 38°F. The bees were very stubborn. It took 3 attempts to finally get the queen off the tree!
Photo Dr. Josée Bourget



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Master Beekeeper Program: Tweaks to the MBP Requirements

by Randall Austin MBP Co-Chair



In its never-ending quest for continuous improvement, the Master Beekeeper Program Committee has instituted a few changes to the Master-level Sub-specialty options as well as the wording of one Public Service Credit. These are intended to better align the standard options with the goals of NCSBA and the MBP as well as expand the opportunities to qualify for sub-specialties.

Sub-specialty #17, “Completion of a training session in some specialized area of beekeeping”, has been amended to remove the restriction that such specialized training can only count once. The MBP Committee wants Master Beekeepers to have broad experience and training, and only giving credit for one training event for one type of skill doesn’t seem to support that goal. Now credit can be awarded for up to three sub-specialty training sessions. Each sub-specialty must be in a different skill/expertise/training category. For example, training in Born and Bred Queen-rearing and Welsh Honey Judging would now both count since they are in different skill categories but Born and Bred Queen-rearing and NCSU BEES Academy Queen-rearing would not both be separately eligible. If someone were to successfully complete both of those queen-rearing programs, they’d get a hearty pat on the back for increasing their knowledge, but they wouldn’t have two independent competency sub-specialties.

Closely related to #17 is the addition of a separate sub-specialty, #20, “Participation in a BEES Academy”. Credit is given for completion of one of the Intermediate or Advanced beekeeper training sessions provided by the NC State Apiculture Program (<https://www.ncsuapiculture.net/bees-academy-home>). The skill/expertise/training category must differ from any that are claimed under Sub-specialty #17, and credits here count toward the maximum of three training sub-specialties. FYI, we expect the NCSU BEES Academy to become even more popular now that the annual Young Harris College / University of Georgia Beekeeping Institute has announced that it will no longer continue.

A change to Public Service Credits that is related to Sub-specialty #19, “Volunteer hours at the NC Zoo Honey Bee Habitat”, has been made at the request of the NCSBA Zoo Committee Coordinator. Volunteering at the NC Zoo in Asheboro involves specialized training

and requires a serious long-term commitment. It is unfortunate that not everyone is able to do this, but geographical proximity, availability of time and many other considerations are huge practical factors that determine whether someone can commit to offering meaningful service in this particular area. It isn’t just service for service’s sake; it must be value-added with a positive cost/benefit profile for the Zoo. With this in mind, Public Service Credit #9 has been edited to remove the phrase “or volunteering at the NC Zoo Honey Bee Habitat” from the list of items that receive volunteering credit. This does not mean that volunteering at the NC Zoo Honey Bee Habitat won’t receive Public Service Credit! Sub-specialty #19 clarifies that service time at the Zoo does count. It just has been removed from the list of common items for which credit will be given so that people won’t misunderstand the amount of commitment that is involved. If someone is interested in volunteering at the NC Zoo, the first step is to contact the NCSBA Zoo Committee Coordinator so that he can explain everything that it requires.



The most important thing to remember about any of the Sub-specialties or Public Service Credits is that counting any particular activity is at the discretion of the MBP Committee. You may be involved with an activity that is perfectly aligned with the objectives of the program (i.e., to gain relevant education and experience and then share that with others) but wasn’t on the minds of the Committee when the list was created. Submit those items with a convincing rationale for allowing them and the Committee will consider it. For example, if you are summoned to the White House to advise the President on the current status of honey bees and beekeepers in the US, the Committee would likely approve that as a Public Service Credit even though it isn’t on the list. However, we strongly advise conferring with the Committee before buying a plane ticket to Washington, just to make sure that you wouldn’t be disappointed if the event wasn’t approved for some reason.



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Wolfpack's Waggle: BUILDING A BUILDING: STEP 3—GOING ROOM BY ROOM

by Dr. David Tarpy NC State Extension Apiculturist



NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY
APICULTURE PROGRAM

In our first column of this series, we went over the lengthy process of selecting a site for the new Apiculture Facility on the Lake Wheeler Farm Complex just south of NC State's campus in Raleigh. In our second column, we discussed the iterative process of developing the various rooms and spaces that would be needed in a modern apiculture research and extension facility. For the last couple of months, we have been getting closer to where the rubber meets the road.

Erin and Ian Patrick of the architectural firm bilboa (the lower case intentional as part of their branding) have been working very closely with members of the NC State Building Design team, as well as those in our Apiculture Program. Now that we have a firm (but not necessarily solid) plan for the building design and various rooms (see our previous column for a layout), our task now is to envision how we would use each, what kind of functionality we wish to include, and the various design elements we might like to incorporate. So far, we've only been able to go through the front-house spaces, which are mostly public-facing (whereas the back-house spaces are more of the working spaces for those in the Apiculture Program).



MOVABLE WALL CLOSED

Figure 1

As one comes in the front entrance, we will have an open lobby space (Figure 1) that we hope will serve multiple purposes. First, we want to have various LCD screens on the walls that will have revolving slide shows for announcements, educational materials, and other information. Second, we would like to have various glass display cases housing historical, scientific,

and contemporary beekeeping memorabilia and educational items. That way, those that come into the building are immediately welcomed with the history and current practice of honey bee science. Finally, on the right side of the lobby we hope to have a sliding glass wall that separates the extension education classroom. This way, if we have large gatherings we can have one large open space, or we can keep the partition and maintain the two spaces for their separate purposes.



MOVABLE WALL CLOSED

Figure 2

Turning right from the lobby, we have the conference room (Figure 2) where we hope to conduct numerous beekeeping training and other events. Occupied primarily by moveable tables and chairs, we envision five different floor orientations: cinema—consisting only of chairs, seating an estimated maximum of 56 people; town hall—with a rectangle of tables circled by chairs in the front with rows of chairs in the back seating ~44 people; classroom—successive rows of tables and chairs all facing the front so ~32 attendees can take notes during lecture; conference—where all of the tables are placed in the middle and surrounded by chairs facing inward (~18 people); and cocktail—with all of the chairs stacked and stowed, and tables up against the wall, so that we can have a large open space for mingling and discussion. Of course, the front wall will have two large LCD screens and an AV system to project lectures and educational content.

Finally, if we instead turn left from the lobby, we will have our open office spaces (Figure 3) for those in the Apiculture Program and collaborating scientists. While still very much up in the air, we decided that we didn't



Figure 3

want any cubicles or desks where individuals would claim “ownership” for any given period of time. Instead, we prefer the open model where people will come in every day, chose an open space, and pack up at the end of the day. The larger tables will likely be fixed and

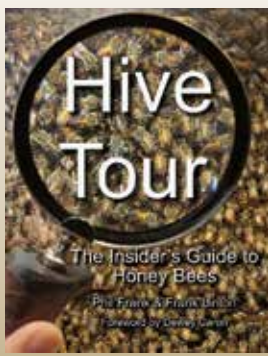
thus have electrical and other outlets built in, but the chairs and orientation can be more flexible to facilitate group work. This will also be the space where we plan to house our apiculture library—a modest collection of beekeeping and biology texts donated to the NC State Apiculture Program over the decades under the conditions that (1) they remain separate from the main NCSU libraries and (2) not be allowed to be checked out. Up until now, this has been a woefully under-utilized resource that we very much look forward to providing to the beekeeping public. This space also has a smaller private office, as well as a storage closet for our educational and outreach materials when not on display.

We still have a lot of work to do, and many decisions to be made, but we are making some tangible progress on the facility structure itself. We look forward to continuing this process, with the timeline goal of having everything go to bid by Thanksgiving. Again, we thank the NCSBA and everyone who have worked behind the scenes to make this happen, and we will all be excited to see the final structure up and running!

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BOOK REVIEW

HIVE TOUR: The Insider's Guide to Honey Bees

by Phil Frank and Frank Linton

New book is a travel guide to the inside of a beehive

HIVE TOUR: The Insider's Guide to Honey Bees

Hive Tour lets anyone see how cool bees are. Stunning photos fill each page, exquisitely detailing honey bees' unique bodies, lives, duties, interactions, and abode. From bee space to brood comb, proboscis to plumose hair, Hive Tour uses extreme close-up images, succinct text, and clear graphics to literally point out exciting details. It is a fun, easy, and informative way to see the mysteries of the hive.

Beekeepers will enjoy wowing family and friends with Hive Tour's sights and insights. Hive Tour is also a fun gift for non-beekeepers, letting them meet bees face-to-face -- no veil needed!

Hive Tour is specially formatted to have uses beyond a standalone book. The 8.5 x 11-inch photos are easy to hold up for students in a classroom or apiary. Pages can also be individually mounted on the classroom wall or displayed at the county fair.

The instructive narrative is designed for a self-guided tour at public observation hives. Visitors see what to look for and where to find it. They can take their own book, or the facility can provide a copy at the hive.

Hive Tour is organized in seven tours (chapters), each focused on helping users find and understand the most interesting parts of: "Hives," "Adults," "Babies," "Bee Parts," "Bee Food," "Behaviors," and "Intruders".

Dr. Dewey Caron, author of the quintessential text book "Honey Bee Biology and Beekeeping" says Hive Tour is "...a fascinating, visual journey through the mysterious beehive. Hive Tour guides us, with full page photos and clear signage, to find how honey bees literally shape their world and live their lives as uniquely social creatures... The coverage of the material is impressive... Hive Tour will even help you find body parts, from end to end (or antennae to stinger)!"

Authors Phil Frank, a professional photographer, and Frank Linton, an EAS-certified Master Beekeeper, have kept observation hives in their homes for many years. Together they have created this guide to the fascinating lives of honey bees. They are passionate about bee education and offer discounts to clubs making bulk purchases.

Learn more about Hive Tour and your purchasing options here: <https://hivetourguide.com>

Additional Praise for Hive Tour:

"...a great learning experience"
-*Bee Culture*

"...a treasure for anyone attempting to understand... what goes on inside a beehive"
-*American Bee Journal*

"A must-have for every beekeeper"
-*Howland Blackiston (Author, Beekeeping for Dummies)*

"I will reach for [this book] whenever a guest starts asking questions."
-*Gail (backyard beekeeper)*



Sample Page

HIVE TOUR: The Insider's Guide to Honey Bees

Phil Frank and Frank Linton

Forward by Dewey Caron

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HIVES FOR HEROES® IS A NATIONAL NON-PROFIT MILITARY VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATION FOCUSING ON HONEY BEE CONSERVATION AND A HEALTHY TRANSITION FROM SERVICE.

MISSION

Through "The National Network of Beekeepers" and Veterans, Hives for Heroes provides connection, purpose, and healthy relationships, while fostering a lifelong hobby in beekeeping. At Hives for Heroes, Veterans and Mentors work together to responsibly steward honey bees and support their local communities through volunteering, apiary management, and offering locally produced honey. The relationships developed and the ability to serve others continuously provide veterans with a purpose greater than self. The Network also facilitates the opportunity for Veterans and Beekeepers to provide value on a **hyper-local** level **throughout the nation** by serving as a conduit for conservation and environmental safeguarding.

As "The National Beekeeping Network" they provide connection, purpose, and healthy relationships, fostering a lifelong hobby in beekeeping. Founded and based in Houston, Texas, Hives for Heroes has operations across the United States and overseas, including Australia and the UK. Hives for Heroes centers around one NewBEE, one Mentor, and one Hive. In the first year, "NewBEEs" follow their mentor's guidance and direction to learn the basics of apiary management. Throughout year two, Veterans continue their work alongside other beekeepers while growing their own bees and improving themselves and the community. In year three, the Veterans, now experienced beekeepers, have the opportunity to lead "NewBEEs" as "Mentors".

Why Beekeeping?

After military service, many veterans struggle with their transition to civilian life often driven by a loss of purpose and direction resulting in depression, isolation, and addictive behaviors. Beekeeping is a unique hobby that aligns with the experience of military service and provides a path toward a healthier lifestyle. Like training or combat, beekeeping allows a Veteran to suit up, experience healthy adrenaline, overcome fear, and accomplish a goal through process-oriented techniques, thus, finding success to walk away with confidence.





1.02 BILLION
BEES STEWARDED
WITHIN THE NETWORK



2700+ MEMBERS
VETERANS AND MENTORS
INVOLVED



18,000+ HIVES
IN THE HIVES FOR
HEROES NETWORK



50,000+
ESTIMATED HOURS
VOLUNTEERED BY MENTORS

Sustainable beekeeping practices are increasingly important, as native pollinators in the United States are experiencing severe population declines. The decrease in those populations negatively impacts air quality, natural water sources, and food security. Honey bees alone pollinate 80% of all flowering plants, including 130+ types of fruits and vegetables. Hives for Heroes is further committed to supporting the sustainability of honey bees through educational events, impactful relationships, and national influence as they work towards a greater mission to **save bees** and **save vets**.

IMPACT

2,700+ Veterans and Mentors are involved in the Hives for Heroes National Beekeeping Network providing a combined **50,000+ mentorship hours** in 2022 alone **18,000+ hives** in The Network as of May 31, 2022 **1.02+ billion bees** stewarded by The Network

COLLABORATION

Hives for Heroes collaborates with organizations such as: The George W. Bush Presidential Center, Texan By Nature, Texas A&M University, Texas Beekeeping Association, Winding Creek Apiary, Old Security Farms, Texas Bee Supply, US Military and Department of Defense installations, and many others.

Generous financial support has been provided by: Mitsubishi Electric American Foundation, TechnipFMC, ISS Global, Microsoft, Blue Ranch Farms, Kodiak Gas, Hewlett Packard Enterprise Co, BP Oil Company, and Ascend Performance Materials.



NEEDS

Hives for Heroes and its collaborators work tirelessly to address the following needs:

Experienced beekeepers to join the Hives for Heroes network as a mentor, sharing their unique knowledge of apiary management

Funding to continue providing participating Veterans with the highest quality beekeeping platform, resources, and facilitation

Collaboration with individuals, businesses, and organizations that further the mission to save bees and save vets through support and influence



Connecting with **purpose** through
relationships and **service**.

Save Bees - Save Vets

Black Jar Honey Contest Winners

by: Suzy Spencer, NC Master Craftsman, Black Jar Contest Organizer



The 3rd NCSBA “black jar” honey contest was held at the 2023 NCSBA Spring conference. It was a great success and lots of fun for the judges. In a “black jar” contest, judges cannot see the honey or how others are voting. They cast their votes based only on what they think tastes the best. The NCSBA contest is designed so that any attendee can enter and anyone can judge.

There were 44 honey entries. The entries were randomly assigned a line-up number, transferred to another container if not in a standard one, and covered with foil to hide identifying marks. The same type of lid was placed on all entries. The entries were then placed in numerical order in one of 4 ranges so that an individual judge was asked to taste no more than 11 honeys -- but they were allowed to sign in again and judge entries in another range. Judges voted for the top three entries in their range by placing poker chips into the corresponding (covered) voting jar (blue = 1st place = 3 points; red = 2nd place = 2 points; and white = 3rd place = 1 point). There were 34-35 judges per range in the preliminary round on Friday afternoon (138 judges signed in). The top three entries from each range (plus one extra due to a 3rd-place tie in one of the ranges) advanced to the final round on Saturday morning. These 13 finalists were all judged by 114 judges. The top three winners were announced and presented with ribbons on Saturday afternoon.

Coincidentally, the winners represented all 3 NCSBA regions: Mountain, Coastal, and Piedmont, respectively.



People's Choice: Tasters vote on their favorite honey

This would not have been possible without the volunteers who helped and everyone who entered honey and judged – thanks to all of you! My right-hand assistant was Terry Wilson (Wilson County Beekeepers). Other volunteers included Lori Hawkins (Chatham County Beekeepers), Mark Case (Randolph County Beekeepers), and Lanita Jewell and Charles Messer (Union County Beekeepers).



Black Jar Honey Contest Winners

The winners, their local Chapters, the counties in which the honeys were produced and the probable nectar sources were:

1st place: **Chris Hagwood** (Wake County Beekeepers, produced in Surry County, sourwood);

2nd place: **Shannon Harper** (Hampstead Natural Beekeepers, produced in New Hanover County, wildflower)

3rd place: **Alyssa Chowdhury** (Rockingham County Beekeepers, produced in Rockingham County, wildflower).



A big "Thanks" to all the volunteers!

The NCSBA “black jar” honey contest is held only at the Spring conferences and not every year. The Summer conferences are reserved for the expertly judged contests for honey products, beeswax products, mead, photography, foods-made-with-honey and other things. Check the NCSBA website to see the classes and recently-updated criteria for each, and plan to enter.

NCSBA Spring Meeting: Silent Auction a BIG Success!

by: Pat Weisbrodt, Chatham County Beekeepers Association

The Silent Auction at the NCSBA Spring Meeting was a big success! There are so many people to thank, but let me begin with thanking our host chapter, Union County Beekeepers! There are not enough words to describe the team assigned to the auction- Dedicated, Hardworking, Helpful (to all donating or bidding on items), Communicative, Support for the entire team, and ALWAYS a smile!

A sincere Thank You for all that donated! It was amazing to receive **78 auction items** which helped us earn just **over \$3,400.00**. Vendors and members were very generous.

Bidders were also very generous! We sincerely thank all that made the auction a success.

A special thank you to the NCSBA Board for allowing Chatham County the opportunity to organize and carry out the auction. And please, if you have any comments or suggestions, please forward to beegalpat@gmail.com so that we can make next year's auction even better.

Next spring, we hope you will once again be generous with donations and auction bids. Vendors are always generous, but the five counties earning the most at the spring auction are Chatham, Mecklenburg, Onslow, Wayne, and Catawba.



NCSBA Library Update: MAJOR NEWS

I was recently informed that several Wayne Community College Library staff will be retiring at the end of April. Their positions have not and may not be filled. That means some services are being eliminated including servicing the NCSBA DVD collection housed at Wayne Community College.

The collection is now inactive, and you will not be able to check out any of the collection's DVDs.

As it stands, the DVDs will remain at the Wayne Community College library until a decision is made about what we should do with the collection or until the college hires staff for the vacant positions as well as opting to continue servicing the NCSBA collection.

Bob Kemper, NCSBA Fred Deer Librarian

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Wilson County Beekeepers 2021 GAP Experience

by: Greg Wolgemuth, Wilson County Beekeepers

Wilson County Beekeepers Association (WCBA) first became involved with the Imagination Station Science and History Museum (IS) located in downtown Wilson, N.C. when NCDA&CS Apiary Inspector, Adolphus Leonard asked if our club would be interested in assisting with the colony maintenance of their observation hive.



Of course, the answer was Yes, and within a few weeks, Adolphus was at our Wilson County Apiary delivering two anonymously donated nucs, one to populate the observation hive, and one to be held in reserve as a support hive. Soon after, we coordinated with Brooke Bissette Farmer, the Director of Exhibits, for the installation day and bees were in the museum. All was going great, or so it seemed.

Greg: Where can we put the support hive?

Brooke: We have an area on the roof where we could put it.

Greg: That sounds fantastic! Rooftop hives are becoming very popular.



Photo: Greg Wolgemuth

Wilson Bee Club Members Bruce Petway and Mellisa McCloud working the rooftop hive in downtown Wilson

Well, not exactly fantastic. Turns out the only way to access the roof was to crawl through a window, not easy with beekeeping equipment and live bees! And surprisingly, it's extremely hot on a rooftop in downtown, especially with a bee coat on. But it was what we had, and we made it work for several years.

Fast forward to 2021. Wilson County Beekeepers is growing at an amazing pace and members are becoming more engaged in the NCSBA and community outreach. It became apparent that we could at least qualify for the minimum Golden Achievement Program (GAP) requirements and perhaps receive the \$300 incentive that was being offered. With the help of a dear friend, Suzy Spencer of Five County Beekeepers, we began to compile our GAP notebook. The announcement that we had tied with 5CBA for the win was one of the sweetest moments in my beekeeping journey and will be hard to ever top!



Photo: Greg Wolgemuth

Tractor Supply: Generous donation of a security fence

Next came the reality that the \$700 grant for winning had the requirement of funding a service project. Lots of ideas were tossed around. Then on a visit to the IS observation hive we noticed all the work that was being done where the old parking lot used to be out back. The sign was already in place: Pollinator Garden. This was it! We could place two beehives in the garden and use them for public demonstrations of working honey bee colonies to compliment the inside view of the colony in the observation hive. Simple.



Photo: Victoria Salter

The Imagination Station Pollinator Garden with the security fence and hives in the background

Well, not exactly simple. Turns out the hives had to be inside of a fenced-in area for safety and needed flyway barriers due to the location's proximity to the adjoining property. It was soon apparent that the \$700 Grant would only be a good start in funding this project.



Photo: Victoria Salter

The colonies this spring, making delicious downtown honey

Enter the fantastic members of the Wilson County Beekeepers, the staff of the Imagination Station, the unbelievable support of the local downtown businesses, Wilson City Hall, and especially Tractor Supply Company, which donated the extremely nice security fence.

As the site work was being completed, the support hive was brought down from the roof, moved back to

the club apiary, split into two colonies, and then moved back to their permanent home.



Photo: Victoria Salter

The Imagination Station Dream Team. Clockwise from bottom left: IS Staff, Tala Brown, Brooke Farmer, Ashley Frizzelle, & Wilson Bee Club Member Victoria Salter

This spring the colonies have been drawing out foundation and filling boxes with honey. The honey will be extracted and sold in the museum gift shop as an additional means of funding the great work the IS does for the youth of our city and surrounding counties.

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Build Your Own Hive Stand

by: Chris Hagwood NC Journeyman Beekeeper, President Wake County Beekeepers Association

I have been keeping bees since 2015 and have tried a few different styles of hive stands over the years. Like many others, I started with just cinder blocks. We had some already and the spot for my first hives was level, so that worked well.

As I branched out and used new locations for my hives, I needed something that would hold more than one hive at a time. I saw someone post a picture of one online that was portable and using that photo I recreated it in my garage.

This type of stand will hold up to five 8-frame hives, but I find four hives to be ideal. When I have only three hives on the stand, I have room between hives to set down supers and such.

The stand is 8-feet long by 19-inches deep. I know many may want to add a bit more depth if they want space to rest frames, but that would require many more braces between the rails to support the hive.

The items needed to build each stand are:

4 - 2 X 4 X 8 treated lumber

4 - 3/8 X 4.5-inch or 5-inch bolt

8 - 3/8 washers

4 - 3/8-inch nuts

3-inch deck screws

2 - stacking blocks available at lumber yards: These blocks are strapped to the bottom of large stacks of lumber so that a forklift can get under the stack and move them in the lumber yard. Once the strap is removed to sell that stack of lumber, the lumber yard disposes of these and usually gives them away if you ask for them. You can use two 2X2 that are 24-inches long if you are unable to locate these free stacking blocks.

First, cut one 2x4x8 into 24-inch pieces for legs. Make parallel 45° angled cuts on each end of each leg that removes one corner. The amount you remove here can be minimal. The resulting legs should look like the ones in Fig. 1. Make sure you are cutting the correct corners off, but if you make a mistake, you can continue using the legs. When assembled, you will need a corner cut off to keep it from poking above the rail, and the opposite corner will be cut off to provide flat surface contact with the ground.



Figure 1

Next, cut one 2x4x8 into 16-inch braces. You will only need 4 braces, so you can stop cutting this 2x4 after you have 4 pieces if you are only building one stand. If you build them in sets of three, you can purchase eleven 2x4x8, twelve bolts, twelve nuts, and 24 washers and have nothing left over.

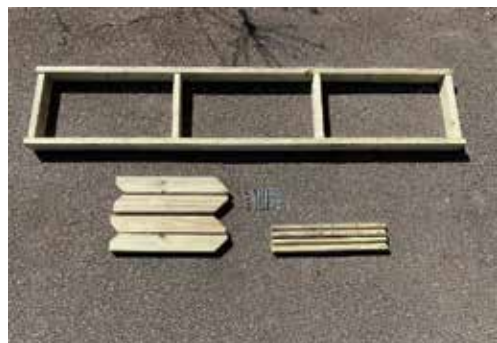


Figure 2

Assemble the rails by nailing or screwing the braces at each end and two more 32 inches apart in the middle (Fig. 2). I find it helpful to make sure one side of the rails are the top of the stand and the braces do not poke above that edge. This prevents high spots that snag on the bottom board when you slide the hive on the stand.



Figure 3

Place the hive stand on the ground upside down so the top is resting on the ground. The arrow points to the top of the rail, which is facing down. Place two legs on one side and space them about 1/2 to 1-inch apart at the center line. Face the cut part of the leg as shown (Fig. 3). You will assemble the hive stand upside down so you can swing the legs up to stand it at the end.

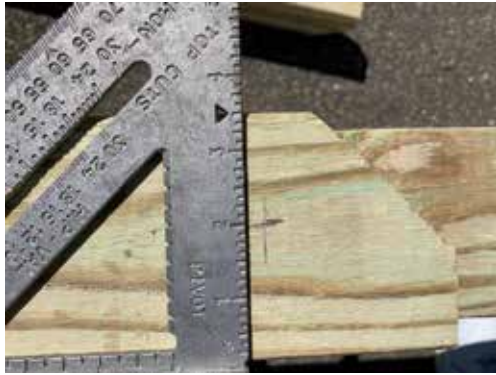


Figure 4

Measure a spot 2-inches from bottom on the outermost (hinge) end of each leg (Fig. 4). You will insert the 3/8 bolt at this spot to pivot the leg up and around. Insert a deck screw temporarily at this point to test that it is in the right spot when you swing the leg up and over (Fig. 5).



Figure 5

The cut part of the leg should end up parallel to and slightly below the top rail when it is in place (Fig. 6).



Figure 6

When you have the legs in the right spot, drill a 13/32 hole (something slightly larger than the 3/8 bolt). Insert a bolt through one washer, the leg, then the rail,

and place a second washer and nut on the inside. Tighten each nut but leave it loose enough to move the leg easily (Fig. 7).



Figure 7

Repeat for each leg. Cut two stacking blocks into 24-inch lengths. Attach the stacking blocks to the stand legs across the hive stand at approximately the same location as the two inside braces. The stand should look like Fig. 8.



Figure 8

Swing the legs up and out (Fig.9).



Figure 9

Turn the stand over to set it upright. Adjust the location of the two leg braces to level the hive stand. The weight will be distributed between the bolts and the blocks. The legs are easily adjusted to accommodate sloping ground from side-to-side and even front to back (Fig. 10).



Figure 10



Henderson County Beekeepers Association is hosting a monthly speakers series including national names such as Hilary Kearney, Lexi Hoopman, Tom Repas, Ian Steppler, Phoebe Snyder, and more. If you can't make it to Hendersonville, North Carolina in person, Zoom options and post-event recordings are possible with those speakers who allow it.

Visit HCBeekeepers.org or email president@hcbeekeepers.org for more information or to ask about receiving a copy of a past or future speaker.



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www.ncbeekeepers.org for more information