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The Official Magazine of the NCSBA

GROUNDBREAKING!



Winter 2024 - 2025



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North Carolina Bee Buzz

Winter 2024-2025



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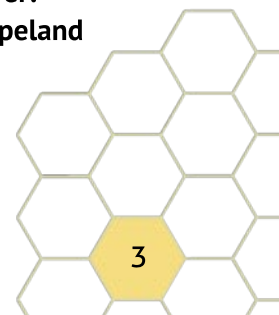
North Carolina State Beekeepers Association

~ Since 1917 ~

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**On the Cover:
Photo: Jacy Copeland**



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: Rick Coor, NCSBA President

NCSBA Beekeepers,

A new apiculture research facility and an endowed professorship in apiculture; the initiative for both began years ago as a plan, a concept, a goal. After years of conversation with NCSU and an initiative to lobby the NC General Assembly, the funds for the building were finally appropriated in fall of 2021. In spring 2022, the conversation and initiative turned to the endowed professorship. With the recent groundbreaking ceremony, the remarkable progress of our efforts has begun to manifest itself.

When the University announced the date for the ceremony, I pondered for a while to find the carefully chosen words that I would deliver at the event. After all, I was to share the stage with Chancellor Woodson, Dean Fox and Senator Jackson (no pressure there). The words were not hard to find given that our Association is in the midst of an historic initiative; one where we are on track to win decisively. But we, as an Association, must be prepared to win the future of the program as well.

There is a tremendous opportunity in front of us as an Association. Through collaboration with the NCSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the NCSU Apiculture Program, there will be new goals, new possibilities, and a new level of Extension outreach and beekeeper interaction. The latter is about to be demonstrated as we work with Dr. Tarpay and his team to help the beekeepers of Western North Carolina recover their honey bee losses from the storm of September.

I hope that you will take a few minutes to read a transcript of my remarks from the groundbreaking ceremony, presented here in the form of the spoken word, with the dashes to represent pauses of speech and capitalized words to begin new sentence fragments.

My intention was to state the obvious; the NCSBA is a great Association with the outstanding potential to shape the future of beekeeping and the honey bee in North Carolina.

Thanks for reading,
Rick Coor, President



Groundbreaking ceremony remarks - Rick Coor

Groundbreaking Remarks at Lake Wheeler, the afternoon of October 3, 2024

Thank you, Dean Fox (for my introduction)-

Good afternoon, everyone- The honor that I have today, is not one that has been afforded to any of my predecessors-and-it is an honor that is bigger than myself- or any one individual-

That is because an occasion for an NCSBA President to share the stage with Chancellor Woodson, Dean Fox and Senator Jackson in order to speak at a groundbreaking ceremony for a university facility-is truly an historic occasion for the NCSBA-one to be long remembered-I want to speak to you about an initiative-a commitment-and the opportunity in front of us-

In 2015, the NCSBA leadership got wind of a long-range facilities plan at Lake Wheeler that called for the demolition of the old lab but not the construction of a new one-

That situation begged the questions: - What were the long-range needs of the Program? -

And-What course of action could the NCSBA take to assist the Program? -

With all things considered, the NCSBA leadership developed a long-range plan of its own-the Apiculture Science Initiative-

It was an initiative to secure funding for a new lab- to establish an endowed professorship- and to develop ongoing support-

It was not lost on the leadership-that success would hinge upon a partnership with the University -the General Assembly-and the beekeeping community-

We engaged the University-and developed a relationship based on trust and action-

We were well received by our state leaders in the General Assembly-namely Representatives Charles Graham, Jimmy Dixon, Chuck McGrady and most notably-Senator Brent Jackson-

To the credit of Senator Jackson, \$4 million was appropriated for the construction of a new facility-

It has taken nine years to reach the point that we are at today- an initiative that has thus far been a plan, a concept, a goal- is about to have a life of its own-

At last, a tangible result of our effort is at hand-

The Apiculture Science Initiative is about to take a significant step forward-

The commitment that I speak of-

Is for an endowed professorship- The North Carolina State Beekeepers Association Distinguished Professor in Apiculture-the first and only university endowment specifically for apiculture research in the U.S.-

Two years ago, the University approved a proposal from the NCSBA for an endowment-

With support from the University- the agricultural community-and the beekeeping community-our effort to fund the endowment has enjoyed remarkable success-

The beekeeping community has responded with substantial support-

The NC Farm Bureau and the Watermelon Growers Association got onboard with us early -they shared our vision -their support truly inspired and energized our efforts -

Business partners- namely Bee Downtown- are with us as well-

And today, two years later- we are closing in on the point where we can apply for the matching funds from the state-funds that will guarantee the success of the endowment-

And we fully expect to reach that point well before the construction of the lab is complete-

Thanks to our pledge holders- the endowment fund is literally growing by the day-it is truly just a matter of time-

Our commitment is strong-and we are on a solid path to success-

There is a great opportunity in front of us-

No doubt about it-

The apiculture lab will be a landmark achievement of the NCSBA-

The endowment will endure as an unprecedented accomplishment-

We are laying the groundwork for a first-class apiculture program at NC State-

These accomplishments will be remarkable-but the opportunity in front of us-holds promise to be even more remarkable-even more noteworthy-

Consider for a moment-the impact of the new facility and the endowment-

New goals-new possibilities-research to preserve the honey bee and its value to agriculture-a new level of Extension and beekeeper interaction-

The opportunity for NC State to be a national leader in apiculture science-

I trust that my contemporaries in the NCSBA leadership-present and future-as well as the beekeeping community-will embrace this opportunity-embrace the apiculture program-

Because- We challenged ourselves to shape the future-to our credit- we rose to the occasion - The future is still ours to shape-

Conclusion-

In a few minutes, the ground will be broken for the building-in a few weeks- the silence will be broken by the banter of construction crews and the rumble of their machines-and when all is done- we will behold a brand-new facility- complemented by an apiculture program that will be secured by an endowed professorship-

It must be noted and remembered- that our success was possible only by way of our partnership with the University-the General Assembly-the agriculture community-the beekeeping community- we must continue on the path that has brought us success-

I would be remiss not to acknowledge the contributions of Past President Charles Heatherly-it was his sage advice that helped us secure funding for the lab-

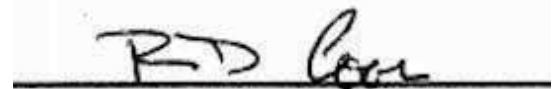
And Senior Director of Philanthropy Sterling Frierson-his guidance with the endowment-has proven to be invaluable-And I must acknowledge everyone here today-

You are all stakeholders in the apiculture program-

I am proud to be here with each and every one of you-at this important step for the program, the University and apiculture research-

Thank you, Chancellor Woodson, Dean Fox and Senator Jackson-

Thank you everyone



Sweet Carolina Honey Showcase

Photo: Jacy Copeland



CALS Dean Garey Fox, NCSBA President Rick Coor, NCSU Chancellor Randy Woodson, Pam Hanson

Pam Hanson, of Carteret County presents a check for \$6,000 to NCSU officials at the apiculture research facility groundbreaking ceremony in Raleigh. The fundraiser held at the Carteret Community College Culinary & Hospitality Center on September 12th, 2024 included members of NCSBA chapters from across NC and a delectable dinner featuring donated honey from the chapters. The "Sweet Carolina Honey Showcase" drew in approximately 100 participants and featured Honey Sommelier Sean Collingsworth from Brevard County. "We are thrilled to help further NC State & NCSBA's efforts to protect our pollinators", Ms. Hanson said.



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North Carolina Pollinator Plants

by: Ulana Stuart, NC State Extension Master Gardener Volunteer

Honey bees evolved as tree dwellers and still prefer to gather most of their forage from trees and shrubs rather than garden flowers. Planting for honey bees should always start with trees and shrubs. Gardeners often say they have no room for another tree but remember a single flowering Basswood tree can provide more nectar than 32,000 square feet of a blooming wildflower meadow. Many of our native trees bloom in late winter. Natural pollen sources in late winter are extremely important to surviving winter colonies because it stimulates brood raising. This late winter brood surge prepares colonies to take full advantage of the spring nectar flow.

Photo: Cold Stream Farm



Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*)

Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) is the best example of a native tree that blooms very early. Keep in mind there are many different cultivars of this native tree available in nurseries that are bred for vivid fall color. The straight species is considered the wild type that occurs naturally throughout the Southeast and produces more nectar and pollen than cultivars developed as ornamentals.

Red maple reaches a height of 40 to 60 feet and a spread less than or equal to their height. It has an abundance of tiny red flowers in clusters that bloom in very late winter. They are most noticeable as a color change at the tips of the branches. The medium size pollen grains vary from round to triangular and form yellow pollen pellets.

Red maple is a deciduous tree that has a broad range throughout the Southeast in USDA Zones 3 to 9. It is found in many habitats including floodplain forests, upland woods and even disturbed sites. An ideal soil should be moist and well drained. It will grow well in full to part sun. Red maple is one of the best all-around choices for a fast-growing colorful shade tree.



Photo: Jim Robbins

Tulip-poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)

Tulip-poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) is another important plant for honey bees throughout Southeast areas in USDA Zones 5 to 9. The showy flowers are cup-shaped with six greenish yellow petals with orange markings and bloom from April to June depending on the exact location. Tulip-poplar is a high source of pollen and extremely high in nectar. The pollen grains are large and the pollen pellets are creamy white. It is a tall, native, deciduous tree that can reach up to 100 feet or more in height, growing up to 3 feet per year. The width of the tree can reach 35 to 50 feet. This magnificent tree is unusual as it can grow continuously throughout the season stopping only when the frost hits. It has a very tall and very straight trunk with no lower limbs. The crown is upright due to self-pruning of lower limbs. Tulip-poplar is readily available from nurseries which also have some smaller cultivars, including 'Ardis', 'Fastigiatum', and 'JFS-Oz' (trade name Emerald City).



Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*)

Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) is a deciduous tree native to the southeast in USDA Zones 4-9. It reaches 40 to 50 feet in height and 25 to 40 feet in width. They grow best in part sun to sun exposure. It is relatively easy to grow in a variety of habitats from moist and well-drained to dry soils. The small yellow flowers emerge in early spring. Honey bees and other insect pollinators often visit the flowers to collect both pollen and nectar. The pollen pellets produced are yellow. All parts of the plant are aromatic and even spicy, especially the bark. Sassafras has fantastic fall colors that can be yellow, red or orange. The fruits are rarely seen because they are high in the treetops. They are a dark blue-black drupe that ripen in late summer and sought out by birds.

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

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In the Apiary: Winter 2024

by: Shirley Harris, Apiary Inspector, NCDA&CS

As the year 2024 page is turned

and 2025 gets started, let us make this new one a year of learning and growth with our knowledge of how to help our sweet honey bee.

Let's try to think like our bees. They are always a few weeks ahead of our human calendar. Let's look back over the last year. What did we do that seemed to help our colonies, and what did we do that hindered them? Sometimes, we need to remind ourselves that honey bees have been around for a long time, and they know best what needs to be done. As responsible beekeepers, we need to make sure we have covered three important aspects. The first is to verify that Varroa mite levels are low. Second is to make sure there is enough food for the bees as needed. And third, of course, is to ensure we have a healthy queen. As always, *work smarter not harder*.



Looking back through the year from my attending several county beekeeper club meetings, I was impressed with the educational benefits that were being offered to members. It is such a priceless attribute to keep teaching and sharing what works with your own honey bees! I'm also excited to see and hear about new Mentor/Mentee programs that are now available. If your club is not offering this wonderful opportunity, it would be worth your while to reach out to a club that does.

Sometimes in October, clubs were given the chance to apply for the North Carolina Queen Rearing Initiative with a deadline of November 15th. Hopefully, this new initiative will be successful and available for years to come. With support from the North Carolina Tobacco

Trust Fund Commission and SARE program of the USDA, grant opportunities are available to North Carolina county clubs and organizations to aid in the process of setting up queen rearing operations. Mating NUCS (3-way queen castles) and other queen rearing equipment will be provided to successful applicants, along with a one-day training class, to help assist the process. The goal is for clubs to raise enough queens locally, so their members no longer need to purchase queens from outside the state. For more information, www.ncsuapiculture.net/micrbreeding-initiative.

As beekeepers, we have access to some great resources. One of them is the Honey Bee Health Coalition website, www.honeybeehealthcoalition.org. There are videos on how to check for Varroa mites and a terrific Varroa Decision Tool that can help you decide how to treat for Varroa mites when needed. They also have a Hive Health Best Management Practice Guide available, and it is FREE.



Another great resource is our very own www.ncbeekeepers.org website that contains a lot of information and learning opportunities. Programs and resources are right at our finger tips for us to use and learn from.

In closing, I would like to encourage everyone to step up in your local bee clubs and become officers if you have not done that before. There are many in your club who will help you and support you. Some of the longtime volunteers could use a break and would be happy to encourage you, should you volunteer. You learn as you go, and the rewards are extremely gratifying. Invite everyone to attend the local meetings as well as our state meetings. The 2025 Spring Meeting will be at the Union County Center in Monroe, NC on March 6-8. This one will be a joint meeting with SC Beekeepers Association. Happy Holidays!

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Reactions to Stings – Be Safe Out There!

by Eric Talley



Twenty-five years of active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps put me in many classes, both as a student and as an instructor, concerning safety and situational awareness. Being aware of and prepared for “anything” will usually cause a better outcome in most situations that arise unexpectedly.

I have kept bees for what seems like a long time, and mentored many new beekeepers along the way, without incident. I have taken and passed the training for administering lifesaving treatment for allergic reactions to insect stings, and have had some basic lifesaving field medical training for combat wounds while on active duty with the Marine Corps.

Despite all the experience, training and awareness, I was taken by surprise the other day while working bees with a new beekeeper. I was quickly reminded of the serious and sudden nature of a severe anaphylactic reaction to a bee sting. I knew what to do, but found myself lacking a key first aid tool. Below is some information gained from the internet as a reminder that you need to keep good situational awareness of all of those folks that are near while inspecting your colonies.

- Stings and the consequences of them are commonly caused by bees, hornets and wasps including yellow jackets.
- Most stings only cause localized redness, swelling, itching and pain.
- Some stings, maybe about 10%,

produce a large local reaction, whereas 3-5% produce a systemic reaction affecting multiple organs and causing anaphylactic shock.

- Those individuals with large local reactions are somewhat more likely to develop anaphylactic shock with subsequent stings.
- Those with underlying allergies are also at higher risk.
- Anaphylaxis usually doesn't occur with the first stinging event; usually after two or more stings.
- Even beekeepers with regular exposure to bee stings carry a risk of systemic reaction and anaphylaxis.
- There is no way to predict if or when an anaphylactic reaction will occur without formal medical testing.

Anaphylaxis is a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction that must be treated quickly with an injection of epinephrine and transportation by EMS for hospitalization.

SYMPTOMS:

- Hives, itching, flushed skin.
- Low blood pressure, dizziness, fainting.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.
- All or any of these symptoms may occur.

A new beekeeper who had just taken the beginner beekeeping course wanted to shadow me in the apiary

and see how I manage my colonies. He had purchased some equipment but didn't have any bees yet. Having been stung a couple of times and not having any serious reaction to those stings, he was not concerned about being stung, nor was I at that time concerned for him.

Shortly after opening the first colony, this new beekeeper was stung on the thigh through his pant leg. He went to the truck to spray something on the sting and in doing so took his veil off to drop his overalls to get to the sting. When the veil came off another bee stung him on the top of the head. At this point he walked away from the apiary and I quickly closed the colony back up and figured I'd take him home to his vehicle and come back to the bee yard and work bees later in the day.

Within five minutes of him being stung on top of his head, I had closed the colony and moved the truck to where he was. As he stood up, he immediately collapsed and his arms and legs got stiff. He had diarrhea, started pouring sweat from his entire body, turned red, and I could visibly see his neck starting to swell.

Being aware of what to look for and being prepared to administer lifesaving steps can be completely useless if you don't have an EpiPen to use. I dialed 911, and got some bottles of cold water from the cooler. I placed the cold water on both sides of his neck, hoping to reduce the swelling enough until help arrived. Thankfully, phones these days have a GPS locator in them and

the EMS crew knew exactly how to get to us even though we were way off the paved road and around a couple of curves in the dirt road.

Within a few minutes the EMS folks arrived, gave the beekeeper a shot and carried him away. He spent the night in the hospital and went home with an EpiPen. While he was still in the hospital a friend helped me move 30 of my colonies away from his property and into other fenced-in apiaries where I had room for them.

I have since seen my medical provider and have gotten a prescription for an EpiPen. I hope I never need to use it but I have one just in case.

The reason I tell you about this incident is to make all beekeepers aware that severe allergic reactions and anaphylaxis can happen to folks quickly and without warning. I believe that

if this beekeeper had been stung and nobody was around to see him collapse, he would not have survived. If this beekeeper had had an EpiPen in his possession when he was stung, I'm not sure that he could have administered it to himself before he collapsed.

Nobody knows when, where or even who will be affected by a honey bee sting. New beekeepers should always have a mentor or "bee buddy" beekeeper present while opening and inspecting colonies, at least until they have some sense of how their body tolerates bee stings — someone there to help them if they do have a significant reaction. What if I wasn't paying attention to his progressive symptoms? What if he had been inspecting bees by himself and gotten stung with nobody around? What if your neighbor, who is mowing grass, gets stung

and nobody is paying attention? Situational awareness is key!

Beekeepers, especially new beekeepers, should always have on proper clothing and protective gear to reduce stings.

Find a "bee buddy" and work your bees together. Let's look out for each other!!

Eric is a North Carolina State Beekeepers Association Master Craftsman Beekeeper who lives and raises honey bees on the coast. Eric started beekeeping in 1973 as a Future Farmers of America project. Four years later he joined the U.S. Marine Corps and didn't keep bees for the next 30 years. Eric got the bug back and started keeping honey bees again in March 2008. He raises nucs and VSH queens during the summer for his use and sale to other beekeepers in the area.



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Wolfpack's Waggle: BUILDING A BUILDING: Step 8 - Groundbreaking!

by Dr. David Tarpy NC State Extension Apiculturist



Photo: Jacy Copeland

Groundbreaking ceremony for new NC State University Bee Lab - October 3, 2024

With our main role in the design phase of the new Apiculture Facility behind us, we have been waiting with great anticipation to the next stage of the groundbreaking celebration. However, it has been difficult to fully celebrate the moment because of the unfortunate timing, and our hearts and thoughts go out to all beekeepers and everyone who has been affected by the extreme weather events in the state, both east and west. Please stay tuned on various initiatives that we hope to assist beekeepers affected by these flooding events.

We had originally planned on the event very early in the fall semester on August 21st. However, that date got pushed back to October 3rd for various reasons, mostly because of the complicated scheduling of the many invitees so that they could mark the important milestone. We were working with the Advancement team to help with the visuals, including providing some demo hive bodies (painted NC State Red and White, of course!), an observation hive for non-beekeepers to get up close and personal with the bees, and small 1 oz jars of our Wolfpack Honey to give out as party favors. Many, many thanks to our new Apiculture Technician, Kim Guillemette, for putting all of it together!

It was always assumed that the groundbreaking ceremony would take place at the proposed site of the new building, right off of Inwood Drive on the Lake Wheeler Research Farm. The grounds crew had to prepare the site, since the grass was waist high or above, and tents and seating had to be provided. Once mowed, however, it became readily apparent that the location would not be suitable for the event; the heavy rains from the weeks prior caused all of the fire ant colonies to nest very shallow, so anyone venturing out into the field were immediately stung! So to keep everyone safe and comfortable, the location was moved to the Howling Cow Creamery off of Lake Wheeler Road at the last minute.

The speakers including Chancellor Randy Woodson (second from right), State Senator Brent Jackson (third from right), Dean of our College of Agriculture & Life Sciences Garey Fox (left), and of course NCSBA President Rick Coor (center). All were very excited and supportive of the new building initiative, and of course gave the appropriate credit to everyone involved for making this initiative a reality. We are also incredibly grateful to the support and hard work of David Andow (right), the Department Head of our Department of Applied Ecology, and of course Past NCSBA President and Chair of the

Legislative Committee Charles Heatherly (second from left) who has worked so effectively and successfully to make this day a reality.

You might notice that, unlike everyone else, I was wearing my pollinator jacket. After all, the invitation explicitly said "appropriate business attire!" I had actually showed up to the event a few minutes late, since my lecture for my 180-student course on campus ended just minutes before and wanted to make sure we didn't fall behind. I figured that virtually all photo ops of groundbreaking events had people in suits wearing hard hats, but hopefully this will be unique with someone wearing a bee veil!

We are now in another holding pattern in the process, where the competitive bids for the construction are being solicited before the real groundbreaking commences. Once initiated, however, we have been told that it should progress quite quickly with the hopes of it being finalized within a year. We hope to continue to be involved in any details or choices to be made during the

actual building process, and we cannot wait for the final ribbon cutting celebration for the completed facility.

Again and as always, we thank the NCSBA and everyone who have worked so hard behind the scenes to make this happen, and we will all be excited to see the final structure up and running.



Photo: Jacy Copeland

Dr. David Tarpy conversing with guests at the ceremony



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New Bee Lab on Track to Be Built Next Year

by Charles Heatherly, NCSBA Legislative Committee Chair



We have reached an important milestone in our nearly decade-long effort to build a new field research bee lab. That happened October 3, with a groundbreaking ceremony just off Lake Wheeler Road in Raleigh, near the actual site of where the new Apiary Research facility will be located.

With this significant achievement, we are closer to the actual construction of the building. Design plans are complete and scheduled for the University to advertise for construction bids next month, according to Stephanie McArthur, project manager with the University's Design and Construction Office. That process should take no longer than 90 days. It is a simple design, and construction is estimated to take about eight months.

This journey began nine years, two weeks and three days earlier when a group of Past Presidents of the North Carolina State Beekeepers Association met with Dean Rich Linton, then dean of the North Carolina State University Department of Agriculture and pointed out the severe state of disrepair of the existing facility.

We told Dean Linton that it was shameful for Dr. David Tarpy's world-class research program to be hobbled by such a third-class facility.

He agreed that the conditions of the facility were deplorable but mentioned that neither a major repair nor replacement was on the University's priority list. He suggested we take our case to the General Assembly. The General Assembly is the agency that provides funding for state-owned entities. We did just that.

We met with a number of Representatives of the House and State Senators. We invited them to tour the old research lab and see for themselves the dilapidated conditions. It was bad. The roof leaked in several places and was sinking. It was so obvious that several of the legislators apologized and promised to solve the problem. The old building was condemned a couple of years later as "unfit for human occupation."

Among the most helpful were Rep Chuck McGrady, Henderson County; Rep Jimmy Dixon, Duplin County, Rep. Charles Graham, Robeson and most of all Sen. Brent Jackson, Duplin.

Dean Linton suggested that we do a "Scoping Study." We did that and funded the effort out of our own meager resources. A "scoping" study is simply a formal examination of the topic to determine what the problem is, if the need is real and what should be done to solve the problem.

In 2019, Rep. Chuck McGrady sponsored a bill in the House to appropriate \$2 million for the project. It was approved but the Governor vetoed the budget. During the delay, university officials and beekeeper leaders learned that more money was needed.

In the next session, Senator Brent Jackson, a prominent Duplin County watermelon grower, initiated a \$4 million appropriation. It was approved and enacted as part of the 2021 state budget.

The University selected a Charlotte architectural firm, biloba Architecture, to design the new facility. Its work is completed.

If all goes well, and we are crossing our fingers, we could celebrate the ribbon cutting in late 2025. That will be a great day, whenever it comes.



The men who made it happen: Dr. David Tarpy, Past President Charles Heatherly, President Rick Coor, Senator Brent Jackson

SCENE AROUND THE GROUNDBREAKING

October 3, 2024

Photos: Jacy Copeland









The North Carolina Zoo Honey Bee Garden exhibit needs more beekeeper volunteers for 2025!

by: Phil Uptmor NCSBA Zoo Coordinator

The North Carolina Zoo Honey Bee Garden exhibit was opened in 2009 by a cooperative effort of the NC Zoo, NC Zoo Society, North Carolina State Beekeepers Association, NC Farm Bureau, and Syngenta, to educate the public about our beloved honey bee.

The success and popularity of the Honey Bee Garden exhibit has been very good the past 17 years. Over 200 beekeepers have volunteered their time and services for more than 25,000 hours. The exhibit is very popular with zoo guests!

There are requirements for zoo volunteers and additional requirements for beekeeper volunteers. They must maintain an active NCSBA membership, be able to talk to guests about honey bees, have a basic understanding of pollinators in general, speak about the importance of pollinator plants, and be able to explain the activity seen in the observation hive.

There are several benefits to beekeeper volunteers, too. The zoo allows beekeepers to sell their honey under specific conditions and many guests enjoy buying local

North Carolina honey. Many beekeepers have initially volunteered at the zoo to gain credits for the NCSBA Master Beekeeper program. However, many of these beekeepers return even after their sub-specialty was fulfilled because of the satisfaction and enjoyment volunteering in the Honey Bee Exhibit brought them.

The training classes for beekeeper volunteers will be held this Spring. Start your process by completing the registration form on the NC Zoo's website:

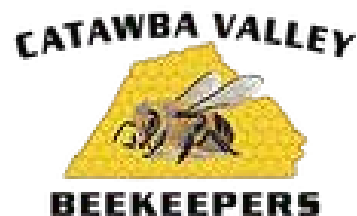
www.nczoo.org/volunteer/conservation-education



CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY:

Catawba Valley Beekeepers Association

by: Doug Vinson, Immediate Past President NCSBA



Often, the reward potential of an opportunity is not at first fully recognized. Such was the case for the Catawba Valley Beekeepers Association when the offer of a permanent exposition building at a local fairgrounds' facility was presented. In lieu of an official Catawba County fair, the Hickory American Legion Fairgrounds hosts an annual regional agricultural fair. The fair is a six-day event ending on Labor Day. 2024 marked the 111th year of this event!



A local special interest group, Foothills Antique Power Association (FAPA), deconstructed, moved, and permanently reconstructed several antique (100+ year old) log buildings including a working sawmill on the fair property. One such log building was not immediately used, leading the group to offer the CVBA an opportunity to use the structure for a beekeeping exhibition center. Although appreciative of the offer, the local chapter had concerns regarding the location of the building in relation to the fairgrounds' layout. The location at the rear of the property away from the main entrance presented a major concern. Other concerns included recruiting and training ample volunteers to staff multi-day events.

Long story short, the CVBA graciously accepted the offer and plans as to how to use the building for disseminating beekeeping information to attendees of the fair and other events held at the venue were begun. Any concerns about location and interest in the exhibition were quickly dismissed as it became one of

the most visited fair exhibits. Recognizing the popularity of the beekeeper's effort is not unnoticed by fair officials. Simple requests are rarely denied. Ten years since the first use of the building, visitor interest is strong as ever. The potential from this opportunity is unquestionable. Club members staff the exhibit during event hours and appear to enjoy this time as much as the visitors.



The exhibit houses typical beekeeping equipment, printed educational materials as well as an informational brochure regarding the CVBA, its mission and training through an annual bee school. Of course, having experienced beekeepers present to answer questions, offer advice, and promote organized beekeeping are foremost for the success of the exhibit.



As always, children are a large and fun part of exhibition visitors. An observation hive is always a big hit, providing an encounter with live bees up close but contained. Competition for and excitement of queen identification by children (and adults!) are some of the

more fun and rewarding moments. Free honey straws are available for children. Children may also participate in a beekeeping question quiz with prizes awarded to winners.

In addition to this great community engagement, volunteer members designed and built a beekeeping display for the agriculture and craft competition located in a separate building. This year's theme was "Products of the Hive" and was awarded a blue ribbon! The accompanying photo of the display shows the mindfulness necessary to relate to folks of our non-beekeeping community. As if these winning efforts were not enough, chapter members were encouraged to participate in the fair honey judging competition. The contest featured entries by 38 individual chapter members in five categories resulting in multiple member winners.

CVBA is home chapter to about 170 members, ranking in the top five chapters statewide. Our 2024 spring bee school enrolled 50 students and was successful in having 20 complete requirements for the Certified Beekeeper level of the NCSBA MBP. It is important to note that many of the bee school participants were motivated to attend because of their visit to the exhibition at the Hickory American Legion Fair.



Another successful community engagement effort is the chapter 4-H program. Chapter volunteers assist 4-H members with assembly and painting woodenware and hands on hive inspection complete with chapter purchased protective gear!

Without mentioning the complete list of the community engagement and educational opportunities it offers it is not bragging to say that the Catawba Valley Beekeepers Association is truly a chapter ON THE MOVE!

Photos courtesy CVBA





Attention Permanent, Life, and Honorary Members

Don't let this be your last paper copy of the *Bee Buzz*! Beginning in 2025, in order to receive mailed copies of the *Bee Buzz* we must have annual confirmation that your mailing address is still current. During a recent review of our membership database we found that we have been mailing copies of the *Bee Buzz* to members who have moved or are deceased, in some cases for many years prior. Help us prevent waste by keeping your contact information current.

There are multiple ways to update or confirm your address:

1) Visit the online Yellow Book at <https://yellowbook.ncbeekeepers.org>

There you can edit or confirm your contact information.

2) Email us at membership@ncbeekeepers.org.

3) Ask your local chapter to update/confirm your address with us.

4) Send your confirmation/updates by mail to: NCSBA, PO Box 99, Hurdle Mills, NC 27541

This only pertains to Permanent, Life, and Honorary Members. Annual Member addresses are updated/confirmed each year upon membership renewal.

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Need a Speaker for your Chapter Meeting?

This is a reminder to Chapters looking for speakers for their monthly meetings. The NCSBA maintains a list of members willing to give presentations to groups. The speaker list and information on how to join this list can be found under CHAPTERS on the NCSBA website: <https://www.ncbeekeepers.org/speaker-list>

It is updated as needed but at least every year in December.



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Assistance for Western NC Beekeepers

How Your Chapter Can Help

by Jennifer Keller NC State Apiculture Program



Hurricane Helene may no longer be fresh in our minds, or in the news every day, but recovery efforts are still underway. The devastation caused by the once-in-a-thousand-year flood in western North Carolina will be visible for a long time. Many beekeepers offered to help immediately after the flood by taking loads of sugar and syrup to help the surviving honey bee colonies, but at that point the main concern was human life and restoring roads, communication and getting supplies to those in need, with the honey bees taking a back seat. Because information is still being gathered, we don't have a final tally of how many colonies were lost or what the needs might be. We are gearing up for a project to help affected beekeepers this spring by providing packages, splits, hive equipment, or colonies to make up for their losses, but in the meantime, we are hoping to empower the various county chapters to help with this process.

The NCSBA, NCDA&CS, along with the NCSU Apiculture Program is working to connect beekeepers needing assistance with beekeepers wanting to assist, but at the county level. Each of the affected counties has been matched up with 'sister counties' from unaffected areas. The leadership of the beekeeping associations within these counties have been communicating with each other about what the needs might be and how to help. Since spring is the best time to set up new hives and split existing colonies, there is time to coordinate our efforts. The hope is that each county chapter can come together with donations of equipment, splits, nucs, packages, queens or whatever is available to help replace those colonies lost. Once the materials have been gathered, help will be provided to coordinate the transport of the equipment and bees to the counties and beekeepers in need.

If you have bees, equipment or time that you would be willing to donate in the spring, please let your county association know. This is going to be a large undertaking and may seem overwhelming, but with the help of the counties—and everyone doing a small part—hopefully this project will make a large impact on those beekeepers in need.

Below you will find the list of the counties in affected areas along with the counties that have been matched as 'sister counties'. For contact information of the individual county leadership, please see the local chapters listed on the NCSBA website (ncbeekeepers.org), or check the county's website or Facebook page, or visit our website on disaster recovery for beekeepers on the Extension Pollinator Portal at <https://pollinators.ces.ncsu.edu/>.

Thanks to everyone that has already volunteered time and effort, but there is still more to be done.

Jennifer Keller

NC State Apiculture Program

Contact: jjkeller@ncsu.edu





NCSBA

Chapters Needing Assistance

Chapters Paired For Assistance



Ashe	Wake Johnston Harnett Lee Moore	Haywood	Brunswick Columbus Pender Bladen New Hanover	Rutherford	Mecklenburg Iredell Union
Avery	Robeson Scotland Hoke Cumberland Sampson	Henderson	Rockingham Stokes Forsyth Guilford	Swain	Dare Tyrell Washington Hyde Cherokee
Burke	Stanly Montgomery Richmond Anson	Jackson	Currituck Camden Pasquotank Perquimans Chowan	Toe Cane Beekeepers (Avery) (Mitchell) (Yancy)	Beaufort Martin Bertie Pitt Hertford
Buncombe	Chatham Orange Durham Alamance Person Caswell	Madison	Cleveland Gaston Lincoln Catawba	Transylvania	Rowan Davidson Cabarrus Davie Randolph
Caldwell	North Hampton Halifax Nash Wilson Edgecombe 5 County	McDowell	Granville Vance Franklin Warren	Watauga	Yadkin Surry Wilkes Alexander Alleghany Craven Onslow Jones
		Polk	Clay Graham Macon		

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA BEGINS RECOVERY FROM HURRICANE HELENE

by: Todd Swanson President Ashe County Beekeepers

Willie Pascal Mountain Region Director



Hurricane Helene, formed over the northwestern Caribbean Sea, grew well past expectations and hurled wind and record-breaking rainfall into the autumn forests and pleasant flowing streams of WNC. Helene's path swept through parts of Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and Western North Carolina. Lives were lost, homes destroyed, roadways blocked, and major power outages occurred.



Initial reaction to the devastation involved accounting for persons, relocating families and providing for their care. Thereafter, assessing losses and rebuilding became a priority. Now, some four weeks later we can reflect on some of the highlights and sequence of events. These views are from a NCSBA mountain region director viewing from the outside looking across the mountain region of NC.

In North Carolina the path of the storm, traveling in an NNE direction, entered western North Carolina along the southern counties of Transylvania, Polk and western Rutherford Counties. I have not intentionally

excluded Jackson, Clay or Macon Counties. Strong rains preceded the storm entrance into the mountainous area, Asheville Airport reporting 9.85 inches falling on the 25th and 26th of September. Thence on Sept 27th the vapor rich air and strong winds accompanying Helene, traveling at 40-45mph across the area, started the widespread destruction and flooding.



We know the beekeepers in the Western North Carolina mountains were hit hard by the hurricane and subsequent flooding. The path of the hurricane swept through approximately 15 counties of western North Carolina, most of which have active NCSBA chapters. Many large and small apiaries simply disappeared along with winter storage units containing hive equipment. Asters which normally supply a floral source this time of year, gone.

After several days, as communication channels were somewhat restored, some roads cleared, an outer perimeter of networking emerged. On the west side of the affected area Hooper Creek Bee Supply, who had

just moved bees to Florida in the path of Milton, and Dry Ridge Bee Supply began to accept donations and distribute them as necessary to those beekeepers in need. A big thanks to Paula, Carla, and Bryan for their response. On the east side De La Cruz Farms, partnering with Ashe County Beekeepers, accepted donations, offered sugar storage and distribution to those in need. Thank you to Todd, Jeff, Bencita and all the other nameless persons who responded. In the center of this Toe Cane Beekeepers (Avery, Mitchell and Yancy counties), amid an indescribable surrounding of chaos managed to respond and distribute supplies. Thank you Ann, Debbie and others.

NCSBA and its chapters, individuals and partnerships have been actively involved in restoration and rebuilding apiaries. Over 21,000 pounds of sugar was donated by the Greater Good Foundation, Kutik, NC Extensions, Farm Service Agencies and chapters. All is being distributed to those individuals and chapters in need. Ashe Farm Bureau, Rossman Apiaries, Miller Bee Supply, and Hidden Happiness Bee Farm and others throughout the beekeeping community have generously donated equipment to rebuild hives. Set up by the NC State Extension and Outreach Coordinator,

Jennifer Keller, chapters in the mountain region have been partnered with other chapters in the state to assist in restoring colonies.

Chapters of the Mountain Region are very thankful for all the volunteers who have sprung into action from the very beginning, often leaving behind their own misfortunes.

Upcoming is a workshop hosted by Ashe County Beekeepers planned for Saturday, November 16, in West Jefferson for the purpose of assembling some 300 hives and 3000 frames for those who suffered losses. The workshop is open to volunteers from across the state who want to come and assist. The workshop will be held at Midway Baptist Church, West Jefferson, NC, the hours are from 9:00am-3:00pm. Please contact Todd Swanson at toddthecutiger@gmail.com if you plan to attend.

Please note that in order to meet the timeline for publication in this issue of the *Bee Buzz*, our article is brief, and more reporting will follow. Todd Swanson (President Ashe County Beekeepers) and Willie Pascal (Mountain Region Director) jointly submit this report.

Photos from James Wilkes and Faith Farms

Spring Into Action at The Auction!

Pat Weisbrodt NC Master Beekeeper

The spring meeting in 2024 delivered 82 items for sale. Mecklenburg donated 36 beautiful pieces of pottery from Jeanie Frye. Those pieces earned almost half the total raised! All the items donated were appreciated. The handmade items were truly beautiful and fetched some very nice bids. March 6-8, 2025, we will have our spring meeting in Monroe, NC. This money is for the endowment fund. We are counting on our members to, once again, be generous with donations. To all the presidents in the Association, please try and have at least one item on the auction tables.

Thanks to all that donated in 2024. See you in March!



Bee Line to Kentucky

by: Buddy Scott NCSBA Journeyman



This summer turned out

to be another life lesson for me and fellow beekeepers during a Mission Trip to Lynch, Kentucky, to help a fellow beekeeper. Since 2016, each year I have traveled with our local church, the Bridge, and the Kentucky Mission Team to help a small community in need. This year united a team of people together to build a support lifeline for a disabled beekeeper and his spouse.

Photo: Danny VanDevender



Completed handicap ramp built for Tom Cook, an independent beekeeper in Partridge, KY.

I always enjoy helping people in my community, church and fellow beekeepers. Each year I travel to the Meridzo Ministry on a mission trip to help their community. This is where I first met local beekeepers, Tom and Sharon Cook. Tom is a coal miner who was injured years ago and needs a walking stick to get around every day. He and his wife wanted to stay active and became beekeepers to help support their community. Last year, Tom couldn't continue caring for the apiary because his disability got much worse.

This summer I was contacted by Leah Baldwin, a beekeeper and spouse of the church minister to ask about building a handicap ramp for Tom. I met Leah and her husband Drew through the ministry and teaching beekeeping. They knew of my primary work as a construction contractor. I knew this would take money and volunteers to get the project completed.

Early in July, I presented the Cook's story at the Board of

Directors meeting for Beekeepers of the Neuse (BKOTN) in Goldsboro, NC. The board wanted to help and voted to give funding to pay for part of the lumber costs. More money was needed, so the group suggested we ask other beekeepers if they wanted to pitch in at our monthly Chapter meeting. Enough money was raised to cover half of the material costs. To help build the handicap ramp, members and volunteers from the Kentucky Mission Team stepped up to make this project happen. Even Tom insisted on helping with this project in any way that he could.



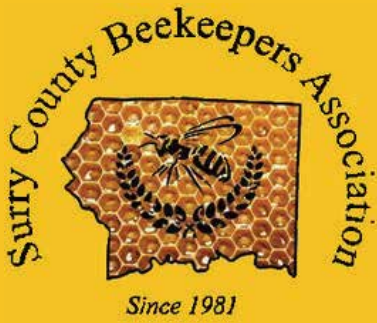
The Kentucky Mission Team inside the Meridzo Ministry for a group photo during the 2024 Mission Trip to Lynch, Kentucky.

During this project, I realized that beekeeping was more than helping bees survive. This taught me a simple life lesson that sometimes we all need to get out of our own hive and help our fellow man. Like honey bees in a beehive, this was a team effort requiring different skills while all serving as one to keep a homeplace safe and thriving.



Buddy Scott, NCSBA Journeyman beekeeper; Sandy Pettit, NCSBA Certified beekeeper; Tom Cook (with walking stick), KY beekeeper; Danny Richards, NCSBA Certified beekeeper, standing in front of finished handicap ramp

Photo: Danny VanDevender



Surry County Beekeepers Association

2024 Photo/Essay Contest Winners

surrycountybeekeepers.org

Honey Bees on the Farm

Our Farm orchard has embraced a fruit tree guild complete with honey bees. We live on a small hobby farm that we are developing into our full-time dream. Upon clearing diseased pines, we decided to de-stump and create pasture land. But, our first act was to plant an orchard and hills of blueberries. As sustainable farmers, we decided the new orchard needed a plant guild to help rebuild the soil health, thwart pests and attract beneficial insects. We planted numerous plants around the apple, pear, and plum trees including over sixty lavender plants that we propagated from cuttings.

Next we decided to concentrate on pollination of the orchard and our vegetable garden and installed our first bee hives. While the bees prefer the tulip poplars that dot the hills here in early spring, when the tree bloom is over the lavender rows and the fenced vegetable garden down the hill take precedence as the nectar sources for our hives. Our apple trees are in their third season and are covered in small baby apples, sour cherries were plentiful this season, pears and plums abound and our vegetables are prolific. The bees spend every day diligently pollinating each bloom and, as a bonus, the bees first spring hives yielded beautiful jars of sweet golden honey.

The first section of pasture has been fenced and a small barn has been built. Sheep and their spring lambs dot the hillside near the bees hives. Family and friends visit the farm and find the pastoral scene as peaceful as it is charming. I find peace in sitting in the orchard, sometimes for hours, watching honey bees draw from cherry blossoms, squash blooms or stems of lavender. The beauty of the honey bee is breathtaking and their benefit to a small sustainable farm is immeasurable.



**FIRST PLACE
WINNER**

**ROBIN MCGUIRT
HARMONY, NC**



SECOND PLACE WINNER

**ANTON JOUBERT
SALISBURY, NC**

Sunflower varieties present a wonderful opportunity to examine the biodiversity in pollinators of your local area. They are common to see everywhere from farmlands, to gardens, to potted plants on front porches. The bloom period lasts an average of 30 to 45 days depending on variety, which gives plenty of opportunity to observe the foraging behaviors of our many native pollinators in addition to honeybees. A single sunflower can contain hundreds to thousands of tiny florets which provide ample pollen and nectar throughout the bloom duration. Sunflower pollen is sticky and yellow and often completely coats the bodies of curious insects that frolic on the open faces.

When gathered by honeybees, the pollen is harvested and carried back to the hives on special sacs of the bee's hind legs. Upon arrival, the pollen is passed off to the nurse bee caste which chew it up, add enzymes to the mix, and regurgitate it into cells for later use. The blending of pollen in the cells of a bee colony are referred to as "bee bread." The pollen is utilized as a source of nutrients for the young larva bees and is essential in nurturing growth and their metamorphosis into adult honeybees.

Bumblebees love sunflowers, do not grasp the concept of moderation, and are often found completely coated in the pollen as if they wallowed in it like pigs in the mud. Some other native pollinators, such as mason bees, will carefully collect the pollen onto their bellies. Wasps, hornets, and butterflies will also leap at the opportunity to take part in the bountiful feast! Once the florets have been sufficiently pollinated, they will develop sunflower seeds at their bases and can be dried and harvested, utilized for a variety of things, or can simply be replanted for the next generation of flowers.

Kyle's first visit to Texas to work with a commercial beekeeper was in March 2023. Kyle and a few small-scale beekeeping friends spent the week living the life of commercial beekeepers. They unloaded semis during the night, dropped queen cells into nucs every morning, made splits, fed bees and more.

The day this photo was taken, the team was feeding bees, with Kyle operating the nozzle. We noticed a few bees paying extra attention to Kyle's right hip area. Kyle thought he had spilled a little feed on his suit which caused the bees to be attracted to him. After a period observing more of this behavior, I asked one of the workers to take the nozzle from Kyle and resume feeding bees. I asked Kyle to just stand still so I could watch the bees.

As more time passed, more bees congregated on Kyle's suit. Eventually, Kyle was almost completely covered in bees. We can only assume that a queen had either left on or returned from a mating flight and landed on Kyle. To a group of hobby beekeepers from Wisconsin, we found this phenomenon to be very exciting!

Once all of the bees in that apiary were fed, it was time to move on to the next yard. Kyle wondered how he was going to get all the bees off his suit. We had him jump, take a few steps, and jump again a few times until he was no longer covered in bees.

The commercial beekeeper admitted he had never had anything like that happen previously.

This photo is the epitome of "there is never a dull moment in beekeeping".



**THIRD PLACE
WINNER**

**STEPHANIE SLATER
ELKHORN, WI**





NCSBA Library Update

Winter 2024

The NCSBA Library link on our website has been updated.

As the Count would say: Now there are TWO, TWO ways to get to the NCSBA library collection of DVDs.

ONE, ONE way- Go to the NCSBA website, Resources, down to NCSBA Library and select it. That will take you to the Request for AV Materials. Then select the "Beekeeping Bibliography" link. Next, select the title and call number of the DVD you wish to borrow. Copy it and return to the Request form to paste that information into the form. Finally, provide your contact information and press Submit.

TWO, TWO ways- You can type in: waynecc.libguides.com

On the left column- Library "Quick Links" select NCSBA Beekeeping AV Request which takes you right to our collection. Follow the instructions and links to the bibliography and request form. Then follow the submission instructions.

What about books? The prospect of adding books to the DVD collection has been concluded and will not be implemented. The funds for books will be directed to 4-H program support. The thought of expanding the DVD collection to include books, while being an option, was a deviation from the audio-visual mandate, and would have been a separate operation.

There hasn't been a mad rush for the DVDs, but the library is being used. Western Carolina has made the most requests.

We are trying to create a program of DVDs that will be an excellent source of information for all NCSBA members. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me.

Bob Kemper, NCSBA Fred Deer Librarian

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Photos: Jennifer Welsh








It's Bee School Time!

Many NCSBA chapters are gearing up for their annual beekeeping schools! Bee schools offer an excellent opportunity for new beekeepers to learn the basics of beekeeping at an affordable price. Most bee schools are held in late winter or early spring, and several are already accepting registrations. Visit <https://www.ncbeekeepers.org/calendar/courses-bee-schools> for the latest information on bee school offerings. Chapters can also use this link to register their bee schools. New opportunities will be uploaded throughout the season.



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Photo: Jacy Copeland