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The Official Magazine of the NCSBA



Fall 2025

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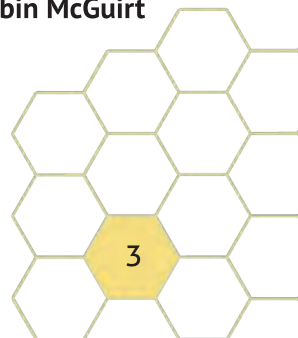
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"Harvesting"

Photo: Robin McGuirt



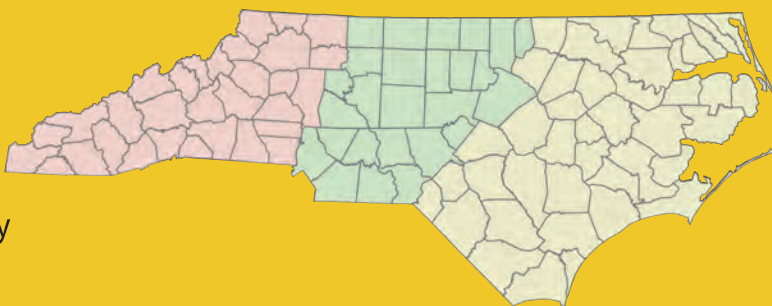
North Carolina State Beekeepers Association



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 21 - 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

In due course in 2018, after four years as President, I wrote my final President's Message; it was mostly about NCSBA business. It made mention of the determined effort to establish direct email communication between the NCSBA President and the individual members of the Association. Ironically, it was necessary for me to review email communication (and lack thereof) at the most recent NCSBA annual meeting. In 2025, after two years as Immediate Past President, two years as First Vice President and two more years as President, I find myself writing yet another final message though this one is more of an op-ed commentary. This time will be my last, final President's Message. It would take a compelling and special set of circumstances for me to endeavor to return to the top office.

My time on the Board has been (and continues to be) rewarding because from start to finish, I seldom acted alone; I enjoyed great support from my peers. I called to order my first Board of Directors meeting as President at the Spring Meeting of 2015 and opened the meeting by addressing the Board. The State Association had not fared well as of late and the time had come for the leadership to take on some major challenges, the first of which was to overcome themselves in order to move forward. The following is an excerpt from the text:

- think of the NCSBA as a corporation for a moment-we are the Board of Directors of this entity-we have the PRODUCT that we need- a product that sells itself- we have the FUNDING that we need for our initiatives- our funding renews itself each year with membership dues- we have the PEOPLE that we need - over 3,200 beekeepers-from all walks of life- all the trades and professions are with us- all the demographic groups- we have the PRODUCT, the FUNDING, the PEOPLE- we find ourselves limited only by our ability to create, plan and execute as a leadership group- so I say to this group, why not us?-

And the rest, it can now be said, is history. I am not known as a presumptuous person and though this message may seem to start out that way, you will soon realize where I am headed by my words. Before I

acknowledge the seasoned volunteers of the Association, I should make brief mention of my detractors; I somehow could never bring enough thought and energy to the office of President to satisfy them. But with the support of my colleagues on the Board, I prevailed through some interesting and yet, telling events. There was an angry call for the Board to "rise up in rebellion against tyranny" just prior to the spring meeting of 2016, a profane zoom Board meeting coup led by a minority of the Board in summer of 2021, the failed election day coup in summer of 2023, and the ridiculous and unsuccessful social media ambush of spring 2024 (that quickly dissipated once the bad actors were discredited). Most of those folks remain oblivious to the direction of the Association to this day and as a result, have fallen on the wrong side of (NCSBA) history- especially the history of success and achievement that has been written in recent years. Although I find myself amused by all this now, I was not entertained in the least during each respective calamity. Sounds like a rough experience but it proved invaluable to know where others stood. In stark contrast, I was recognized twice by my peers: as Beekeeper of the Year in 2018 and then with the McIver-Hass Lifetime Achievement Award in 2024. I was proud to earn my Master Beekeeper medallion in 2018.

As President, I worked with key persons on numerous projects beginning in 2015 with the successful transfer of the MBP from NC State Extension to the NCSBA. In 2016, the NC Bee Buzz was transformed from a publication printed with brown ink on creme colored kraft paper to the attractive gloss magazine we now enjoy. In 2017 and 2018, I assisted with an overhaul of the membership data and helped facilitate the creation of a membership email list. While serving as Past President in 2019, I was on the team that worked with an attorney to revise the bylaws to align with NC nonprofit law. I was honored to have the opportunity to work with Dr. David Tarpy and Past President Charles Heatherly (2016 -2021) to lobby the NC General Assembly for the NCSU apiculture lab. I was on point (with President Doug Vinson) with the

endowed professorship (2022) and saw it reach the funding eligibility threshold while President in 2025. Thanks to everyone who got on board, the endowed professorship has enjoyed great success.

All the while, the state meetings continued each season. Dating back to 2015, I worked with different teams of adults who volunteered their time and energy. But the conference team in place now is the mightiest of them all! If you have attended the recent state meetings, you have experienced some well-planned and organized state level events; the NCSBA leadership has been embraced by the local chapter volunteers and the results speak for themselves. That leads me to where I have been going with all this; none of this would have been possible without an ongoing legion of volunteers, Board members and event/program coordinators. The volunteers of the NCSBA have acquitted themselves very well on numerous occasions over the years.

The NCSBA is an outstanding association and has been worthy of my time; there can be found an outstanding group of people that share a worthy and common ground- beekeeping. Therefore, the greatest reward of the past ten years for me has been the friendships and personal relationships that I have with the beekeeping community and University partners.

I feel obliged to mention some of them in this last, final message.

The old guard-

Some of whom I met beginning in 2004. Worrisome as some of them could be, they should be regarded as a dedicated group that embraced a level of volunteerism that embodied the essence of our Association. The old guard would be proud of what they would see now.

The state meetings and all the chapter volunteers-

Twelve state meetings, hundreds of volunteers. The state meetings are fun, unique events; always a lively crew of adults that showed up to volunteer to make it happen.

The members of the NCSBA Board of Directors-

Consultation and working with members of the Board over the course of the years brought about our success.

The NCSU Apiculture Program-

I first visited the NC State apiculture lab in 2004. It was a pleasure to meet Jennifer Keller and the newly hired research professor, Dr. David Tarpy; the three of us go way back together. The condition of the old building

was amusing in 2004 but years later it ceased to be funny and we did something about it!

The NCSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) and NC Ag Foundation leadership-

The leadership at CALS and the NC Ag Foundation are in our corner on the new lab and the endowment.

The General Assembly and Senator Jackson-

It is a long story but the highlights included offering and giving separate tours of the dilapidated apiculture lab to Rep. Charles Graham, Rep. Chuck McGrady and Sen. Brent Jackson, all the while hoping for rainy conditions so the roof would be actively leaking during the tours. Charles Heatherly was the catalyst for all of this and was the key person for the NCSBA. Senator Jackson secured the funding for the new apiculture facility.

Beekeeping businesses and vendors-

Business is business and the NCSBA is associated with a great family of businesses who support the association and vice versa.

The South Carolina Leadership-

There again, another network of great folks that we have been enjoyed getting to know and collaborate with.

The apiary inspectors-

We have a very personable and knowledgeable apiary inspection team in NC that are one of the reasons that beekeeping continues to thrive in NC.

The state fair honey crew-

It is fun to connect with the inspectors and volunteers at the honey bee section and honey booth. Outstanding job done by all.

The Born and Bred team and volunteers-

There was always great local support for the workshops; there again, it was great to meet and work with all those folks.

The WNC Honey Bee Recovery teams-

The beekeepers of the Association rose to the occasion and proved their true mettle! They did a great deed. There was a profound need for hope and renewal in WNC, and the beekeepers were there; there remains a profound need for hope and renewal in WNC.

The numerous beekeepers that I have met and greeted-

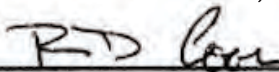
What a great group of folks, thank you to everyone!

Some folks are unsure of the benefits of state membership; many others have found that the greatest benefit is a network of friends and acquaintances on every level. Honey bees are the namesake of the Association but our people distinguish the Association from other groups, especially the online copycats. There is only one NCSBA.

I present a point once made by former NC State Extension Dean Dr. Rich in that most commodity groups are the same type of folks; that is, the corn growers all grow corn, the peanut growers all grow peanuts and so on, but the beekeepers are different. You never know who you might meet next in beekeeping: people from all backgrounds. The NCSBA is a unique association. I want to revisit some of what I wrote at the beginning of this message: *we find ourselves limited only by our ability to create, plan and execute as a leadership group- so I say to this group, why not us?* That challenge has been answered but there will be more challenges if we are to reach our full potential as an association. The Association is experiencing unprecedented success and laying the groundwork for the future. The "next gen" of our organization is subject to be provided for handsomely, especially if we continue to build the endowment.

The NCSBA truly rescued the apiculture program from a foreseen and unfavorable fate; our renown in this accomplishment is nothing less than remarkable and is known far and wide. With a new apiculture facility and an apiculture program secured by an endowed professorship, time will be on our side. Current members of the NCSBA and generations to follow will have an opportunity to be engaged with something bigger than themselves. In other words, become a part of the leading state association in the US.

I decided over a year ago to forego my third year as President in order to have some time to serve as needed to help transition a new leadership team into the operations of the Association, the state meetings, and continue our relationship with the apiculture program and NC State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. But in the end, I look forward to returning to what I was doing in the beginning: living a simple life, raising queens and going to the state meetings where I could hang out with old friends and make new ones; to come full circle, so to speak. I look forward to seeing many of you again. Until such time arrives, I shall remain, with best regards to the Association,



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Master Beekeeper Program

Master Beekeepers and MBP Chapter of Distinction Awards

by: Eric Talley, MBP Coordinator



During the awards ceremony at the summer conference, we recognized and presented certificates and medallions to nine new Master Beekeepers and one new Master Craftsman Beekeeper. Congratulations to all of these beekeepers for completing the requirements for these levels in the Master Beekeeper Program.



Master Beekeepers

Marc Eden

Buncombe County Beekeepers Association

Willie Pascal

Burke County Beekeepers Association

Brian Carlton

Davidson County Beekeepers Association

Maryann Helton

Mecklenburg County Beekeepers Association

Jerry Hopping

Yadkin County Beekeepers Association

John Kasprak

Cumberland County Beekeepers Association

Celeste Mayer

Orange County Beekeepers Association

Eric Garris

Tar River Beekeepers Association

JG Story

Chatham County Beekeepers Association

Master Craftsman Beekeeper

James Rash

At-Large Member in Ashe County

Congratulations go out as well to the three chapters who received the MBP Chapter of Distinction Award at the summer conference Awards Banquet. The award is intended to provide special recognition for the educational efforts of three chapters of the NCSBA who have been actively involved in the education of beekeepers. These are not a 1st, 2nd or 3rd place, but simply three chapters who accomplished their educational efforts in an exceptional way. These three chapters each received a check for \$500.00 and a Certificate suitable for framing.

- **Bee Excellent Association**
- **Granville County Beekeepers Association**
- **Onslow County Beekeepers Association**

There were four of the 83 active chapters of the NCSBA who applied for the Award this year. The competition was keen and competitive and shows all of the effort put forth by all chapters that applied.

Those chapters who applied this year and didn't receive the award, and those who did not, should start gathering documentation for next year's submission for the award. All chapters can apply in the 2026 year, except those three chapters who received it in 2025. Once a chapter receives the award they cannot apply for the next 3 years. This leaves room for all chapters of the NCSBA to get involved.

It's time to see how many beekeepers will take the time to read, study and test for the next level of the Master Beekeeper Program. Along the way you will gain the knowledge that will make you not only a better spokesperson to the public, but a more informed and experienced beekeeper who is actively working to promote healthy bees and reduce pests. **Bonus**, you will be assisting your chapter to gain the points needed to become a future Chapter of Distinction.



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In the Apiary: Summer 2025

by: Jennifer Keller, NCSU Apiculture Extension & Outreach Coordinator
& Shirley Harris, Apiary Inspector, NCDA&CS



The long hot summer is ending and so, too is beekeeping season. It won't be long before spring is here again, and believe it or not, now is the time to start preparing. If we take a few moments now to help our bees survive winter, we will be sure to have a more productive spring, leading to a rewarding honey crop. Unfortunately, beekeepers always need to be thinking months ahead of schedule. Winter isn't even here, and I am already thinking about plans for splitting hives, raising queens and harvesting honey next year. It is important to make sure to have healthy hives going into winter. This means a healthy, laying queen, a good population of worker bees, and enough food to keep them alive. If any of these conditions are less than ideal, measures need to be taken to address the situation. If the colony cannot be made to have adequate conditions, then combing it with another colony may be the best course of action. It is easier to get one strong colony through the winter rather than two weak ones. It is always possible to make a split the following spring when populations increase.

The varroa mite population has been on the rise all summer. Monitoring mite populations should be an ongoing task, but especially now as their populations can get out of hand very quickly at this time of the year. Doing a quick mite check monthly will allow you to catch the colonies that have high mite numbers and treat them before the mite population overwhelms the colony. By taking action early, hopefully the colony will remain healthy which will help to ensure its survivability over winter.

Feeding your bees can be a controversial topic among beekeepers. Should I use a 2:1 sugar to water solution or should I use a fondant or sugar brick? Should I feed using a top feeder, in-hive feeder or entrance feeder? Every beekeeper will have their own opinion on this topic, and you will have to find a system that works best for you, but the main takeaway is that you need to have well-fed bees. Remember, honey bee colonies will not freeze to death. If honey bees can survive winters in Minnesota, Michigan, and Canada, they can most definitely survive our North Carolina winters as long as they have enough food.

Inspections should remain short during this time of year. The goal of the inspection is to confirm the presence of a laying queen. It is not necessary to see the queen but rather look for a frame of eggs. Is there one egg per cell and is there an egg in every cell? If so,

you can conclude that the queen is doing a good job and begin to close up the hive. While putting the colony back together, pay attention to how heavy the boxes are. If it feels light and easy to maneuver, consider providing extra food.

Finally, it is not uncommon to find deadouts in the apiary during the fall and winter months. These empty boxes should be removed from the yard promptly and stored in the appropriate manner to keep pests out of the wax. Wax worms, small hive beetles and mice have the ability to destroy the combs if left unattended. Drawn comb is a very valuable commodity in the spring, and it is important to safeguard it so it may be used again when needed.

DEAL WITH DEADOUTS PROMPTLY BEFORE WAX MOTHS AND OTHER PESTS RUIN VALUABLE DRAWN COMB



Photo: Jody Moore

Enjoy your 'free time' now that you will not be as busy in the bee yard. During your down time, remember to prepare your honey for sale, holiday gifts, or for participating in one of the regional or state fair Bees and Honey competitions! It is also a good time to start planning for next spring.



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NCSBA Library Update

Fall 2025

Mark Lee, the Director of Library Services at Wayne Community College, said that requests for the NCSBA library's DVDs have been slow this past quarter. The main users of the DVDs were from the eastern and central areas. Hurricane recovery and colony losses in western NC may have impacted the requests from that area.

The three new DVDs that we ordered for the library are now available. If you want to know more about queens, swarms, or equipment, be sure to check out those new library offerings. I continually am on the lookout for more DVDs about those and other bee related topics but have not come across any recently.

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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Wolfpack's Waggle: BUILDING A BUILDING: Step 11 - Calm Before the Storm

by Dr. David Tarpy NC State Extension Apiculturist



Ever since our new Apiculture Research & Extension Facility on the Lake Wheeler Experimental Research Farm had the final construction bid accepted on February 26th, we have been waiting in eager anticipation. At that time, we were told that full-time construction would start early June, but as of mid-July we are still waiting for the bulldozers and land excavators to show up.



That doesn't mean that folks haven't been busy behind the scenes, however. For example, they dug the well! Clearly, important to have water at the new facility, and the septic field has been determined and mapped out. They have also put out wooden stakes to mark the precise location of each and every landmark, so that when the excavators show up they will make quick work of things.

We have also had some follow up meetings about details inside the building. For example, we have been choosing among the seemingly infinite options for cabinetry in the main research lab—what kind of bench top (probably going with classic black slate), cabinet facing, and handles. We are also in the process of

designing the wall mural for the entrance hallway. This will be important to get right since it will be so prominent to all visitors of the facility, and we want it to work seamlessly within the overall motif. Wall wrappings are very prominent in building design right now, so we really hope it will be eye catching and attractive.

Also, the walk-in incubator is a go! This is important because it was a specific sub-project (called an alternate) that was not included in the main project, and the winning bid did not include it as part of the overall building. However, the intent was to build the infrastructure for it, including the cement base and electrical hookups, in case funds ever come through to build it after the fact. Well, thanks to so many generous donations (see this column in the Summer 2024 *Bee Buzz*), we have been able to cover the additional expense for the walk-in incubator. This will enable us to have a small room—the size of a large walk-in closet—set at broodnest temperature (95°F) and relative humidity (~60%) under red LED lights (so that, to the bees, it will be dark) to precisely mimic the conditions of a hive. This will facilitate any number of experiments that we conduct *in vitro*, from cage experiments to queen rearing to survival bioassays.

As of the writing of this latest column, there is still no word on the demolition of the old building. We have had some turnover in our Dean's office so there may be some delays in developing a plan on converting the condemned building into an overflow parking lot, but we hope to come up with a path forward while construction is underway. We are also making progress on the landscaping in and around the building, where the grounds crew are planning to implement a Piedmont prairie habitat that, once established, will not only require less maintenance and inputs but provide pollinator-friendly habitat around the facility.

Again and as always, we thank the NCSBA and everyone who has worked so hard 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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CONGRATULATIONS TO JENNIFER WELSH,
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APPRENTICE HONEY JUDGE CERTIFICATE.

PREPARE ENTRIES NOW FOR THE NC STATE FAIR

October 16-26th, 2025

The NC State Fair may seem a long way off, but now is the time to start preparing. Soon it will be time to harvest honey, so be sure to save some of your best honey and the cleanest wax cappings to make an entry for this year's State Fair. There are thousands of dollars' worth of prizes up for grabs and categories for everyone to enter. Aside from the obvious honey entries, there are also opportunities to enter candles, blocks of pure beeswax, jewelry, paintings, mead, cosmetics, crafts, photography and more.



Cooking with Honey is also a part of the competition that has not had as many entries since the pandemic, and we would like to build that competition back up. There are numerous categories, including breads, cakes, pies, snacks, salad dressings, just to name a few. Start testing honey recipes now and choose your favorites to enter. Get the whole family involved! Those under 15 can enter the Junior division for each of the cooking categories as well as the honey competitions.

The deadline to enter online is September 15, but entries do not need to be at the fairgrounds until the weekend before the fair.

For more information, read the full description and rules for the Bees and Honey Competition in the State Fair Premium Book online. If there are any questions, contact Adolphus Leonard, Adolphus.Leonard@ncagr.gov, or the NC State Fair (919) 839-4513.

Even if you don't enter, please stop by to admire the beekeepers' hard work. It is quite impressive once it all comes together. If you have plans to attend the Fair, you may also consider volunteering at the education booth where the highlight is finding the queen in the demonstration hive. Discussing bees with the general public is always a fun and rewarding experience.



Microbreeding Initiative Update

by: Jennifer Keller, NCSU Apiculture Extension & Outreach Coordinator



With funding generously provided

by the NC Tobacco Trust Fund and the Southern Region SARE program, the Microbreeding Initiative is coming to the end of its first season with many success stories being reported. Twelve clubs received this grant, allowing each group to purchase the equipment necessary to start a small-scale queen rearing operation. The goal was to be able to raise enough queens to have a sustainable program and be able to supply queens to its members instead of having to order queens from out of state.



There are many stories from participants about their experience with this project. The number one statement heard repeatedly is that this has been such a good learning experience! This is true of the groups that have had success and raised numerous queens, and it is also true of the groups that have struggled and maybe only raised a handful of queens. Either way, the participants are very grateful for the opportunity to learn how to raise queens and seem to have a better appreciation of the efforts involved. Just like most of beekeeping, nothing is as easy as it first appears!



Many of the groups have had success, but at this time I would like to recognize two groups that have taken this opportunity and run with it. Sampson County and Wilson County both got an early start, formed a committee of dedicated members to work on this project, and have remained committed throughout the summer. Having good mentors has also been a key ingredient in both situations.



Sampson County set up an apiary using just a few colonies to start with but quickly increased the numbers significantly. Their mentor, Steve Weeks, led the group through all the steps involved from cell builders, to grafting to mating nucs. They set up their schedule so that they meet every Monday morning to check the grafts from the previous week, move cells to mating nucs, and then to prepare for grafting the next round of thirty cells for the following week. Carrie Vann did an excellent job of recording their activities each week. They had success most weeks, but there were a few glitches where things didn't exactly go as planned. For example, one week there were no cells, and it was discovered that there was a queen in the cell builder.

Things like this happen and must be chalked up to another learning experience. Overall, this group was

able to overcome most of the challenges and in the end were able to successfully produce a steady stream of queens each week. Thus far, they have produced 39 mated queens and have handed out many extra queen cells to club members. Steve, Carrie, and Leigh Sumner hand delivered five of the queens they raised to the NCSU Queen and Disease Clinic to get feedback on the quality of their queens. Compared to the average, these queens were good enough to receive a grade of B+. Congratulations, Samson County! Keep up the good work!



Wilson County has also had great success but approached the program in a completely different manner. Their focus is on producing nucs. Several members of the club were already knowledgeable in queen rearing, so here the challenge was organizing a queen rearing community. Led by Greg Wolgemuth and Ted Williamson, Wilson has a core committee of six members although others step in as available to help and learn. Instead of raising queens to sell, Wilson raises queens in nuc boxes and when the queens are mated and laying, the queen and three frames of brood are boxed up and sold as a nuc. The original boxes still have an emerging brood frame to accept a new cell from the next round of grafting, and it will be supplemented with some new frames to fill up the box.

Using this method, Wilson was able to provide thirty nucs as part of the WNC recovery effort and we are very grateful for their efforts! Since then, the club has continued with their process of setting up 3-frame nucs to sell to its members at a reduced cost of \$100 each. The money raised not only goes back into the program to ensure its future success, but a portion of the profits will go towards their teaching and outreach efforts. This year the club will be teaching 800 fourth grade students about honey bees and their importance in agriculture and the proceeds from selling nucs will help fund this project.



Like all the clubs, Wilson had some challenges and failures. One example is when a frame of brood was added to the finisher colony with 20 beautiful queen cells. It was discovered later that there must have been a queen on the added frame and all 20 of the cells got torn down just at the time they were needed to go into the mating nucs. This mistake was used as a learning experience and hopefully won't happen again.

Lessons Learned

Many other clubs have also been reporting their experiences. Most are positive, even if there have been some setbacks. Finding a laying queen in a cell builder or having cells torn down because of the overlooked virgin queen may be setbacks but these are also important learning experiences that will hopefully make for better beekeepers in the long run.

There is a steep learning curve with queen rearing and this year may have been a year to learn through trial and error. With a year of experience, I would expect most clubs to start off strong next spring. We look forward to hearing more about these clubs and their experiences with raising queens.

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My Experience with Manually Drying Honey

by: By Adrienne Huntress

This summer, I dealt with a new challenge in my backyard-scale honey harvesting adventures... honey that was too wet! Since it was such a pain to work through, I wanted to share my story in the hopes that I might spare other beekeepers from the difficulty of manually drying honey down to an appropriate moisture content.

Part 1: A Brash and Careless Harvest

In early June I harvested ~72 lbs. of honey. I was a bit overzealous and in a fit of overconfidence decided to push my limits on extracting frames that were (on average) less than 75% capped, a rule that I had diligently followed in years past. In my defense, I started by extracting the most capped (dry) frames and monitored moisture content over the course of extraction. I reasoned that I could stop extracting should I decide that the later frames were too wet to process. But despite seeing 20% moisture content liquid running out of the honey gate toward the end of my long extraction day, I was too drunk on the excitement of processing frames to stop. I did very poor napkin math in my head and decided that the ~18% moisture content honey harvested earlier in the day would bring down the overall moisture enough for it to not matter. At Day 0, the honey coming out of my bucket tap read at a solid 19% moisture. This is Part 1 of how I got myself into a very sticky situation.

Part 2: Magical Thinking and Futile Hopes

After realizing that I had created a wet 70-pound monster child weighing much more than my actual 6-year-old child, I unscientifically figured that air conditioning and time might evaporate away the wetness that plagued my honey. This was certainly Future Adrienne's problem to deal with, as Current Adrienne was mentally and physically exhausted from extracting. I didn't tightly seal the 5-gallon bucket containing my harvest. Two weeks later I read the moisture off the bucket tap. 20%. Uh oh!

Part 3: Begging the Honey Gods for Mercy

It took me a full week to summon the courage to start the process of finishing what the bees had started. I



My early setup, which was not sufficient to get my honey dry- fans helped a lot.

gathered all my strength and began investigating my options. My research indicated that maximizing surface area and air circulation while minimizing humidity were the main process variables I had to orchestrate. I set up the smallest room in my house (bathroom) and plugged in a borrowed dehumidifier and set a space heater to keep the room at 85°F. I put bowls of honey around the room- on the sink, toilet, and floor. I set the rest of the bucket to drip ever so slowly into a mixing bowl. I exchanged the bowls into the bucket a few times over the course of a day. Moisture didn't move. I removed the heater and added a second, more powerful dehumidifier but realized it did not have a continuous mode. I added a tray to the rotation of honey-in-bowls-to-bucket. Room stayed at ~85°F. Exchanged bowls/bucket/tray honey throughout the day to mix wet-dry honey portions. Moisture didn't move. I began to worry for my sanity and for my marriage, as the reduction in our household to a single bathroom had not been the most pleasant of experiences.

I removed the heater and added two fans, waking up at 3:00am one night unable to sleep for fear of having to give away all my honey with a caveat that it must be consumed in 6 months lest I kill one of my gift

recipients. I considered quitting beekeeping and beginning a less grueling hobby like underwater cave diving. Finally, the following day, I began to see a significant drop in moisture content. After another day of constantly swapping bowls, trays, and bucket honey with this system, I made it to 18% moisture. *Good enough and good riddance*, I thought.



A happier me with the bees

Part 4: Reflections and Recommendations

If you must embark upon this frustrating endeavor, I strongly suggest procuring a powerful dehumidifier that has a continuous mode and putting your honey in several trays, which have better surface area than bowls. I wish I had run fans sooner rather than later, as this seemed to be a key factor in getting my honey to start yielding moisture.

In retrospect, the main lesson learned is **don't replace the bees' process of fanning and drying honey if at all possible!** I have heard that another club member has had issues this year with wet honey despite harvesting capped honey at recommended ratios. Perhaps the ambient humidity leading up to pulling frames is a factor for consideration. I know that in my case, though, carelessness was a large factor. In future harvests, I plan to run a dehumidifier in the room that I store frames in prior to and during extraction- and to immediately stop if the honey gate reads more than 18.6% moisture content, even if it breaks my heart a little bit.

Adrienne Huntress is a Certified beekeeper, a member of the Durham County Beekeeper's Association, and has kept bees in the Triangle for 5 years. Photos: Adrienne Huntress



Honey harvested for long-term storage should contain no more than 18.6% moisture. Honey with a higher moisture content is subject to fermentation. The moisture content of honey can be measured with a refractometer.

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Bee-Engaged:

An Average Joe Beekeeper's View Block for Bee Re-Orientation (Short Distance Hive Moves)

by: Joe Komperda, NC Master Beekeeper

Practical Beekeeping:

An Alternative View on Hive Moving – No longer 3 inches or 3 miles



Summary:

Beekeepers commonly ask, “How can I move my hive?” with the answer being “3 inches or 3 miles”. I use an alternative method that allows me to move hives with little to no bees returning to the prior hive location whether I move the hive 5 feet, 100 feet or even a quarter mile.



The Method:

There is a saying that when you move a hive it needs to be moved 3 inches or 3 miles otherwise the bees will go back to the initial hive location. This requires that a short distance move, of say 5 feet, to be completed 3 inches at a time over 20 days. Otherwise, you need to move the hive to a new location - 3 miles or more away - for a week or two followed by moving it back to the same yard in the desired new location. If you keep bees in urban or suburban areas, moving bees to another bee yard may not be an option. So how do you get the bees to reorient to a new location?

Beekeeping books along with beekeepers' advice and direction claim that by placing grass or branches in front of the hive opening on the landing board at the new location, one can cause the bees to reorient to this new location. But many folks report that this does not work consistently, if at all. Although it would appear to humans that the grass and branches are blocking the bee's front view from the entrance and landing board, the small spaces we cannot discern still provide a bee's

eye view of their familiar landmarks around the hive.

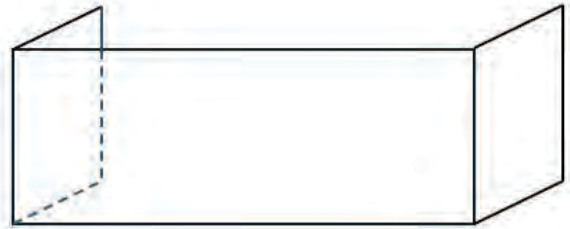
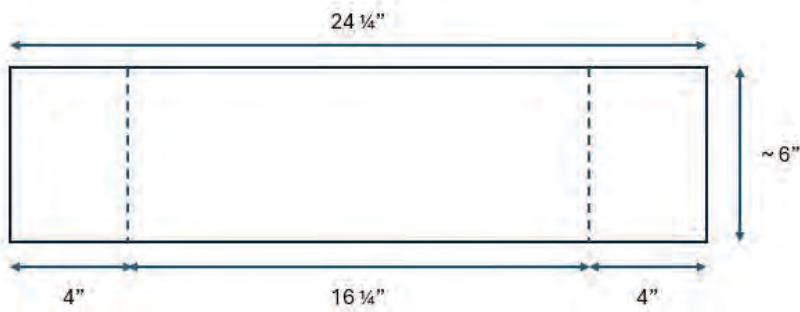
If the bees can see still their landmarks from the vicinity of their new hive location, they will use those visual cues with their internal “GPS” to return to their prior home location. Even without a hive, they will congregate in the old location because they are still oriented to that spot. And when they can't find their hive, they can become irritable and will sting anything or anyone in the vicinity of their missing nest.

To overcome the possibility of seeing through the grass & branches, I simply create a “view block” that the bees cannot see through (see the photo that follows with several view blocks in place). Others have suggested placing an extra outer cover in front of the entrance or even a piece of plywood to create a view block. I usually don't have extra outer covers or pieces of plywood hanging around my apiaries, but cardboard is easy to find. Using a simple scrap of cardboard acts as a virtual “Brick Wall” in the bee's line of sight causing the foragers to become disoriented and triggering new orientation flights.



The Procedure:

For a 10 frame Langstroth hive, I cut a piece of cardboard to a rectangle of about 24 1/4 inches wide by 6 inches tall (see the following diagram). I fold the ends on each side about 4 inches in from the end making a flap that leaves a front “wall” of about 16 1/4 inches wide by 6 inches tall.



I fold the ends on each side about 4 inches in from the end making a flap that leaves a front “wall” of about 16 1/4 inches wide by 6 inches tall.

A couple of pieces of duct tape secure the two end flaps to the side of the hive (see photo below).



Use duct tape to secure View Blocks in place

For other size hives, you can just reduce the overall length of the cardboard to fit the front of an 8-frame hive and reduce it even more to utilize this tool on a 5-frame nuc. To perform the move, the bees are “locked” into their hive with an entrance reducer that has the openings taped over. Locking the bees in is performed the night before moving to ensure that the maximum number of foragers have returned by nightfall. This

means most bees are in the hive but there may be a few that spend their evening on a flower. Once the cardboard view block is installed, the hive is ready to move. I usually wait until morning to move the hive as it is much easier to avoid unforeseen obstacles that might be encountered in the dark. I like to run ratchet straps top to bottom on both the sides and ends to keep the boxes tightly secured from the bottom board to the top (outer telescoping) cover. I also run a horizontal strap around the sides after placing four pieces of wood vertically against the boxes (under the horizontal) strap to hold the boxes together to avoid shifting.

Upon moving the hive and positioning it in its new location, the entrance reducer that locked the bees in is removed. The bees coming out of the hive in the new location cannot see anything but the cardboard wall. Without their familiar landmarks in front of them, they reorient thus locking in their new location.

I have performed moves of inches, feet, yards or even a mile numerous times (10+) every season for close to ten years now and the bees reorient to the new location with none of the bees congregating at the previous hive’s location. Others who have tried this method report similar hive movement success. It’s worth consideration as it might assist beekeepers in moving hives without having to find distant locations or worrying about forager loss!

Joe Komperda, the Average Joe Beekeeper, is a Master Beekeeper through both the North Carolina State Beekeepers Association (NCSBA) and University of Montana Master Beekeeper Programs (MBP). He lives in Statesville, NC after having moved to NC from Colorado two years ago.



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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EAS 2025

North Carolina Beekeepers Shine

by: Doug Galloway, NC Master Craftsman Beekeeper



The Eastern Apicultural Society's

70th anniversary and 67th Conference was held at the DoubleTree Hotel and Conference Center in Cherry Hill, New Jersey from Sunday July 27 thru Friday August 1. The event started with a (2) day Short Course consisting of beginning, intermediate, advanced, honey, apiary and queen rearing tracks. Then the (3) day Conference portion which included (5) different tracks each day. A total of (54) presenters and speakers, many speaking several times, along with countless volunteers created an enjoyable, enlightening and memorable experience for all attendees. Some other offerings included the challenging (2) day EAS Master Beekeeper exams, an all-inclusive Honey Show, a competitive Bee Olympics, silent and live auctions of amazing honey bee related items and art, dinners, an awards banquet, memorable awards and presentations from remarkable professionals whose research is in part funded by grants from EAS through their "Foundation for Honey Bee Research". Attendees at this year's EAS Conference came from 31 states and the District of Columbia. Nineteen of the attendees came from North Carolina.

NC Director to EAS

The EAS Board of Directors is made up of officers either elected or appointed and a director from each of the supporting states. At this year's Conference Board Meeting held on Sunday, the Board approved the newly appointed North Carolina director, Maryann Helton. Thank you, Maryann, for representing NC beekeepers at EAS.

Divelbiss Award

At each annual conference, the Eastern Apicultural Society presents the Charles and Evelyn Divelbiss Education Award. This award is presented to that person or couple who has—over a period of years—reached out to the non-beekeeping public to explain the value of honey bees in our lives. This year, Don and Susan Hopkins were recognized as the Divelbiss Award recipients. Don has served as the EAS Apiary "Honey Bee Wrangler" for the past 18 years plus speaking and leading the Short Course Apiary Track and the Bee Olympics competition. Congratulations, Don!



Photo: Mary Duane

Jennifer Keller and Don Hopkins show off their awards

Roger A. Morse Outstanding Teaching/Extension Service/Regulatory Award Supported by Anita Weiss Foundation

This award is given annually to recognize an individual in teaching/extension and/or regulatory activity in the field of apiculture. This year, Jennifer Keller was recognized as the Roger A. Morse Award recipient. In addition to assisting Don Hopkins for several years at EAS, Jennifer has been leading the Short Course Queen Rearing track. Congratulations, Jennifer!

EAS Master Beekeeper Certification.

Harrison Bolton, NCSBA at-large member and Head Beekeeper for Bee Downtown, successfully completed the rigorous EAS Master Beekeeper Certification. Unlike the NCSBA Master Beekeeper Program, that offers multiple levels and education incentives, the EAS Master Beekeeper Certification Program was designed not to compete with member state programs but to offer beekeepers an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills by subjecting themselves to a two-day, (4) exam, comprehensive evaluation. Congratulations, Harrison!



Harrison Bolton achieved EAS Master Beekeeper

EAS Honey Show

Like all honey shows, multiple categories and related sub-categories are evaluated and the best of each is celebrated with a ribbon recognizing the entries ranking compared to the other in the same category. Additionally, EAS recognizes the best of each category. An example would be the category of extracted honey, with a blue ribbon going to each sub-category like light honey, amber honey and dark honey. The best of all extracted honey is then awarded a Silver Award.

At the EAS 2025 Honey Show, North Carolinians accounted for a total of 10 ribbons. Blue ribbons were received by Sarah Peters from Forsyth County, Phil Uptmor from Chatham County and Doug Galloway from Caldwell County. Additionally, a Silver Award was received by Phil for his Chunk Honey entry and Doug for his Black Jar entry. Congratulations to all!

EAS 2026 Conference

The EAS Conference is hosted by Member States.



Phil Uptmor wins for his chunk honey entry

North Carolina hosted EAS at New Bern in 1991 and at Appalachian State University, Boone, in 2010. Both Conferences were beautifully organized and had excellent attendance. This coming year, Kentucky will be hosting EAS at Bellarmine University in Louisville, July 26 – 31. The 2025-2026 EAS President, Dr. Leonard Davis and his team are working hard to offer another fun and informative Conference. Keep an eye on the EAS website for upcoming details and registration info.



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NCSBA Summer Meeting Highlights

Flat Rock, NC - July 10-12 2025



Photos submitted by Jennifer Welsh