



Alamance County Beekeepers

Newsletter for January 2017

Monthly Meeting
January 19th

Potluck @ 6:00 | Program @ 7:00

Swarms & Splits
Adolphus Leonard

As we saw in 2016, January is not too early to think about spring build-up.

To help get us ready, Adolphus Leonard, NC Apiary Inspector from the Coastal Plain region, will help us think about and prepare for swarms and splits.



The auditorium will be open by 6:00 so we can gather for food and social time with our brothers and sisters in beekeeping. Bring something delicious to eat, and prepare to spend an evening well.



Halifax Beekeepers Practical
Backyard Beekeeping Conference

January 27th and 28th
Chatham, Virginia

Jim Zeigler, from Halifax Beekeepers, passed along an announcement to interested NC beekeepers about their upcoming conference:

Registrations are growing rapidly for folks attending our Friday night January 27th dinner and program, and the Saturday January 28th all-day classroom event with Dr. Keith Delaplane at the Chatham, VA, Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex. It's not too late to join in. This will be the premier beekeeping event in the area for 2017 and you don't want to miss it!

The topic of Friday night's talk will be "The Honey Bee Superorganism and Why It's Important."

Saturday's topics will be

- Honey Bee Cavity vs Honey Bee Hive
- Lessons for Honey Bee Health from Epidemiology
- Breeding Designs and Their Application
- Emergent Properties in the Honey Bee Colony



Registration deadline is January 23rd.

Contact Mr. Zeigler @ 434-376-4490 or jimmyz6@centurylink.net for more information. You may also view their information [here](#).

North Carolina 4-H Beekeeping Essay Contest



A national essay competition sponsored by the [Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees](#) is underway. At a local level, the contest is managed by North Carolina 4-H.

The purpose of the contest is to provide “a platform for youth to creatively express their working knowledge and research of the craft of beekeeping.”



The essay question this year:

How can MP3 (Managed Pollinator Protection Plan) more effectively protect honey bees from pesticide exposure?

Youth will be looking for beekeepers to interview on this topic. So if you know a 4-H'er, please encourage participation, and be aware you might be called on for your expertise!

More information on the contest can be found [here](#).
Deadline for submitting essays is February 24th.

Notes from the November Meeting

Richard French introduced First Lego League and talked about the group's Animal Allies challenge. Geoff Leister offered to have them come to his apiary and try their bee-friendly smoker fuel on his hives. See more details about that experience at <http://alamancebeekeepers.org/>

Officers for 2017 were selected. Thanks to all who agreed to help out!

Sally Bryan and Darrell Holt (first-year beekeepers) and Zivon Price (second-year beekeeper) presented their informative and entertaining tales from the apiary. Thanks to all of you for your contributions!

Membership Renewal Reminder

Have you renewed your ACB and State memberships for 2017?



You can pay Zivon at the next meeting or by mail. Renewal form was sent in November's newsletter, and can be found [online](#).

Bees in the News

Click on the title to read the article.

[Hillsborough Named 35th Bee City USA](#), 1/3/2017.

[Believe it or not, the bees are doing just fine](#), Christopher Ingraham, Washington Post, 10/10/2016.
Real news or fake?

[Grass was greener but wildlife struggled in muggy 2016](#), Damian Carrington, The Guardian, 12/28/2016. Brambles and birds did well, but bees dipped and butterflies were hindered, according to a review of the year's wildlife and weather by the National Trust. [This story is from the UK.]



[General Mills, NRCS and the Xerces Society announce multi-year, \\$4 million investment in pollinator habitat](#), Xerces.org, 12/1/2016. The partnership will “restore and protect pollinator habitat across hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland in North America.”

[Varroa destructor Mites Can Nimbly Climb from Flowers onto Foraging Honey Bees](#), David T. Peck et al, PLOS|One, 12/12/2016. “*Varroa destructor* mites are able to rapidly infest honey bees foraging at a feeder or at flowers of several species. Our observations reveal that mites can quickly mount honey bees engaged in foraging, and that despite efforts by the bees to groom off the mites, they almost always succeed in leaving the forage site still attached to a bee. *Varroa* transfer from flower to bee can occur in just 2 seconds of foraging activity on a flower.”



Burlington, NC, January 7th, 2017

January in the Apiary

@ Geoff and Linda
Leister

Seen under the snow: [Helleborus](#), an excellent winter bloomer and source of nectar and pollen.



And in the snow-melt on January 13th, a common dandelion.



Thank you for the wonderful images, Geoff.

Beekeepers About Town

Randy Stinson and Sweet Betsy represented the Alamance County Beekeepers at the Burlington parade on 11/19, the Graham parade on 12/3, and the Snow Camp parade on 12/10.



Jennifer Welsh, Linda Leister and Geoff Leister participated in Heritage Day activities at Gibsonville Elementary School on Thursday, November 10, 2016, presenting 22 10-minute sessions to students pre-K through 5th.



Geoff Leister will be presenting [Honey Bees -- From Hive to Harvest](#) on February 2nd to kick off the NC Cooperative Extension Service's 2017 Think Green Thursdays series.

Smith Elementary Science and Technology Day is February 15th, and Geoff Leister and Tony Abbruzzi will be teaching school kids about honey bees and beekeeping.

If you are out and about sharing your beekeeping love and know-how with others, please tell, so we can share the good news!



Officers for 2017

President : Ira Poston
 Vice-President : Mike Ross
 Recording Secretary : Sheyenne Michelizzi
 Treasurer : Zivon Price
 Program Chair : Caitlin Vatikiotis-Bateson
 One-year Director : Wayne Foulks
 Two-year Director : Randy Stinson
 Three-year Director : Paul Jollay

Appointments

Webmaster : Geoff Leister
 Newsletter : Cynthia Pierce

Monthly Management.

JANUARY.

At the approach of cold weather, the bees gradually cease to labor and retire within their hives, and when winter has fully set in, we find them densely crowded between their combs, in a state of almost entire inaction, yet not really torpid. The queen has long ceased to lay eggs, and the last of the brood will generally have emerged before the close of the year. Closely packed together to maintain the requisite degree of warmth, and exceedingly abstemious in the use of those stores which their provident summer toil enabled them to lay up, they patiently await the return of milder weather. They seem to have a presentiment, an instinctive feeling, of the approach of spring; and long before reviving vegetation indicates its advent, unmistakable manifestations in the interior of the hive, show that the colony is conscious of the coming genial change. Not unfrequently the queen begins to lay eggs already in January, though this is by no means a desirable occurrence, resulting commonly in detriment to the colony and damage to its owner. Such precocious brooding involves a consumption of stores which may be needed for the support of the colony in the event of protracted unfavorable weather occurring subsequently, and which could be more advantageously employed for the same purpose at a later period. The presence of brood in the combs, imposes on the bees a necessity to occupy permanently that part of the hive in which those combs happen to be; at least they will very reluctantly abandon the brood-combs if a spell of severe cold supervene. They may hence perish of hunger, though there be an abundance of honey in other parts of their dwelling, to which they cannot readily have access while the cold weather continues, without exposing the brood to destruction. In common hives, the existing exigency, in such cases, can rarely be discovered in time to enable the owner to succor the suffering colony; and, though as a general rule, the bees should not be disturbed at this season, yet where movable frames are used, relief can be given when there is reason to suppose that the bees are in such unfortunate predicament. The hive may be opened and combs with sealed honey transferred from the sides and placed in close proximity to the cluster; or sticks of sugar candy may be pushed down among the bees between the combs, and their wants thus supplied. Such operations, however, should not be undertaken, unless there be cause to suspect that they are necessary; or when a mild day enables it to be done as a precautionary measure. Indeed, if

such a day occur in mid-winter, the opportunity should be availed of, to examine especially the weaker stocks, and such as are not amply supplied with stores. Their wants may then be safely ascertained and easily provided for, so as to carry them successfully through the winter. Whatever supplies are given to them, should be placed in close proximity to the cluster or immediately above it, that they may be readily accessible in any state of the weather.

Besides a sufficiency of stores, adequate warmth is indispensable for the wintering of bees. Straw hives are ordinarily warm enough; but box hives, made of thin boards, need some additional protection if wintered on their summer stands, in the open air. A piece of old carpeting, placed on and around them, leaving the entrance free will generally suffice. Movable comb hives, as commonly made, are sufficiently warm; but they need and should have just sufficient upward ventilation to prevent the condensation of moisture, against the interior of the sides. More than this might cause a deficiency of moisture, and the bees would suffer for want of water.

Mice are prone to enter hives in winter, if the entrances are large enough to enable them to do so; these should, therefore, be diminished so as to allow only one or two bees to pass at a time. Cats likewise are an annoyance, to which bees should not be exposed. They should not be permitted to run upon or gambol between the hives. Nor should the direct rays of the sun be allowed to strike the entrances during the winter, when the bees ought to enjoy undisturbed repose. A slight temporary screen, easily removed on mild days, when the temperature permits the bees to fly, will prove highly serviceable—preserving the bees and preventing an inordinate consumption of honey. If a warm day tempt the bees to fly while the ground is covered with snow, a quantity of loose straw should be scattered on it in front of the hives to keep the bees from being blinded by the glare, and aid them in regaining their homes. If, in addition to this, the apiarian has taken the precaution to secure his hives from being stolen, he will have done all that can properly be required of him, during this month.

When robbing-bees attack a weak colony having a fertile queen, it is advisable to remove it from its stand to a dark chamber or cellar. Set an empty hive in its place, strew therein a handful or two of the stems and leaves of wormwood, and rub the front of the hive and the bottom board therewith. The assailants will soon forsake the spot, and the colony may be replaced on its stand on the evening of the following day.

From American Bee Journal, January 1861.

