



Remember...

Early meeting and Potluck Supper!

What's Blooming in the Piedmont?

Heartsease, Smartweed	<i>Polygonum</i> <i>spp.</i>	4- Jul	126	7- Nov
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago</i> <i>spp.</i>	8- Aug	67	14- Oct

SEPTEMBER 2012

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALAMANCE COUNTY BEEKEEPERS

Alamance County Beekeepers

This month's meeting...

September 20th Meeting will begin at 6:00 P.M. and will be a Covered Dish dinner. Dig deep in your recipe book and bring enough for all to share.

This month we will be hosting Ben and Becky Starr, owners of Starrlight Meadery in Pittsboro, NC. Starrlight Mead, located in Pittsboro at The Village at Chatham Mills, is North Carolina's newest honey winery. Ben will be sharing their story of how they started in the Wine making business as well as sharing some of their tasty treats !

Spotlight on Farming & Bees

The Alamance County Farm Bureau is bringing the Agriculture Scene to the Burlington City Park, Saturday September 29, 2102. This is in an effort to "Showcase" agriculture so the folks in Alamance County would know that our food doesn't originate at Harris Teeter, Food Lion, Walmart or other food retailers. There will be 16 or more exhibits and we have been asked to participate. This will be a wonderful opportunity to spread the word about the wonderful honey bee and her benefits to agriculture and our food chain.

The Event will begin at 10:00 A.M. and end at 6:00 P.M. with the exhibits/displays ending at 4:00 P.M. Live music will be provided from 12:00 P.M. until 5:30 P.M. A free hotdog and drink will be provided to attendees who visit at least 6 exhibits/displays and get their ticket punched at the exhibit/display.

This will be a fun event and a great way to bring a little farm life to the city and promote a better understanding of what goes on at the farm. We're talking about setting up either a couple of "Observation Hives" or the "Bee Cage" (still deciding). If we use the Bee Cage, we would need a good number of people (so we can take breaks from being in the Cage).

This would be a great opportunity to advertise the 2013 Beekeeping Course !!

If you would like to participate or help, please call Ira (336-314-0499) to let him know.

Heritage Day at Cedarrock Park.

The attendance was off this year for some reason, but we had enough help to set up the bee cage and talk to all the visitors that stopped. I would like to thank everyone that helped our club participate in this annual event. The following members and some of their family helped make this day a success. Many thanks to Drew and Camille Thomas for helping me load the cage on their trailer and move it to the park. At the park we had a good crew including Howard Williams, Ken Gonzalez, Randy Stinson, Don Moore, Geoff Leister and his wife, Camille Thomas with Brittany Williams, my wife Judy, son Charlie and Kayla.

The quiet drone of busy bees in our garden flower patch is as much a fixture of summer as the barbecue and beach. With their fabled industry, bees move between flowers, collecting pollen that nourishes the young in their hive and pollinates each new flower. Most of our cultivated crops are pollinated in this way, as are a large fraction of the wildflowers that decorate the landscape. Unfortunately, this crucial ecosystem service that we take for granted is in peril. Bees are in precipitous decline across the world, suffering from the mysterious blight called colony collapse disorder (CCD). Two controversial papers published recently in the journal *Science* provide compelling evidence that pesticides are to blame.

Neonicotinoids are neurotoxic pesticides that can paralyse and kill insect herbivores by acting as neurotransmitter receptor agonists and are used to protect more than 100 crop species worldwide. Because they spread to all parts of the plant, including pollen and nectar, bees are exposed to low pesticide doses while foraging. Until now, the effects of such sublethal exposure on bees have been unclear.

Using a miniaturized electronic tagging system to barcode more than 600 bees, Mickael Henry and colleagues from the INRA in France examined the consequences of neonicotinoid exposure on honey bee foraging behaviour ([Henry et al., 2012](#)). The team individually monitored bees as they left or entered the experimental hive. The bees in this experimental set-up had two fates: they either returned to the hive or died trying. The researchers found that risk of death in pesticide-exposed bees increased roughly twofold when compared with control bees. This increased risk was evident if the bees were naive or experienced foragers, and with hives that were far away or nearby. Essentially, the pesticide-exposed bees got lost on their way home.

In a second study, Penelope Whitehorn and colleagues from the University of Stirling, UK, found equally striking effects of pesticides on bumblebees. The researchers fed bees a diet of pesticide similar to what they would experience in the field and then monitored colony growth rates ([Whitehorn et al., 2012](#)). Compared with unexposed controls, the treated bee colonies were nearly 10% smaller. This may seem a small difference, but the consequences of this reduction were dramatic. The treated colonies only produced one or two queens, compared with nearly 15 for the untreated bee colonies. Without queens, a colony of bees will leave no descendants.

Neonicotinoid pesticides may not kill the two examined bee species immediately, but their demise comes all the same through more subtle and difficult to detect means. Does this mean that neonicotinoid pesticides are the cause of CCD? Although the evidence of these studies is damning, it is perhaps too early to say. In addition to pesticides, other studies have implicated mites, viruses, general habitat loss or some complex interaction between these as causes of CCD. However, given the irreplaceable role of bees in crop pollination and honey production – not to mention their staggering economic value – it would seem most prudent to ban neonicotinoid pesticides while the jury is out. As of June 2012, France has taken this cautious step, much to the displeasure of pesticide manufacturers. UK authorities, however, are inexplicably yet to do so.

Honey-Pineapple Muffins

Makes 24 muffins

- 12 oz. honey
- 8 oz. butter or margarine, softened
- 10 oz. egg
- 1 oz. vanilla extract
- 20 oz. unbleached flour
- 6 oz. wheat bran, toasted
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 lb. canned crushed pineapple
- 8 oz. carrot, grated
- 8 oz. walnuts, chopped

Combine and mix honey, oil, eggs and vanilla. Add combined, sifted dry ingredients; mix just until moistened. Batter will be lumpy. Fold in pineapple, carrots and nuts. Portion with #10 scoop into each of 24 greased or paper-lined muffin cups. Bake in 400°F oven 20 minutes or until muffins test done.

Mexican Sweet Buns

Makes 64 buns

- 1 quart milk
- 12 oz. (1-1/2 cups) unsalted butter, more as needed
- 1 oz. active dry yeast
- 1 lb 8 oz. (2 cups) honey
- 8 eggs
- 5 lbs. (5 quarts) flour, divided, more as needed
- 1-1/2 Tablespoons salt
- 11 oz. (2-2/3 cups) flour
- 14 oz. (2 cups) sugar
- 8 oz. (1 cup) unsalted butter, softened
- 4 egg yolks

1. Heat milk until just hot; do not boil. Add butter to milk; stir until butter melts. 2. Let mixture cool to lukewarm, then dissolve yeast in it. 3. Mix in honey, eggs, 3 quarts flour and salt. Incorporate remaining flour 1 cup at a time until a soft dough forms. 4. Knead dough until smooth, about 10 minutes. If dough is too sticky, add a little flour. 5. Proof until doubled in bulk, about 1 hour. 6. Punch down dough; divide into 64 equal pieces. Roll pieces into balls. 7. With a rolling pin, roll each piece into a round, then, using your hands and the rolling pin, form each into a boat shape. Repeat with remaining pieces. 8. Lightly butter top sheet of 2 doubled sheet pans (to prevent over browning of bottoms); arrange half of buns on each top sheet pan. Proof until doubled in volume, about 1 hour. 9. Meanwhile, make the topping; mix together the 11 oz. flour, 14 oz. sugar and 8 oz. butter until crumbly. Thoroughly blend in 4 egg yolks. 10. When buns have risen, crumble topping over rolls, trying to cover as much of the surface as possible of each roll, pressing lightly. 11. Bake at 350°F until lightly browned, about 15 minutes. Cool on a rack.

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