



LANCASTER COUNTY BEEKEEPERS SOCIETY

Summer 2012

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also

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Jim Pinkerton

Late Summer Thoughts

As far as beekeeping goes 2012 has been a good year in Lancaster County. A mild winter, an early spring with many flowers and trees blooming as much as four weeks early, except the Black Locust that seemed to be about the normal time. Some hives were built up to summer numbers by early May. We seemed to get rain just about when we needed it. When it did get hot and dry the clover continued to bloom even when the grass around it was turning brown. The bees still seem to be bringing in some nectar and there are still frames, at least in my hives, with uncapped honey.

If you had bees this year you most likely also had swarms. If you did, be sure to keep checking the parent hives and swarms, to be sure the new queen has mated well and is laying eggs. This can take 3 to 4 weeks after the hive swarmed. The loud buzz of a queenless hive is easily recognized and should be corrected as soon as possible to keep the hive from becoming a drone laying hive...a situation that can be difficult to correct if left go too long.

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Meetings Dates 2012

Feb 25

Basic Beekeeping Workshop
Sat. Feb 25
102 Attended

March 13

Lancaster County Beekeepers
Banquet
47 Attended

Tuesday
April 17, 6:30pm
Spring management
North Museum..

May 15, 6:00pm

Apiary development
**Southeast Agricultural
Research & Extension Center**

June

Hive inspection
**Southeast Agricultural
Research & Extension Center**

August 18

**National Honey Bee
Awareness Day**

August 21
**Annual Picnic
At Strickler's Farm**
See page 5

Sept 18, 7:00

Winter Management
North Museum..
enter by side door

Oct. 16, 7:00pm

"Honey Roundup" and
meeting at

Dutch Gold Honey

The Top Bar Observation Hive at the North Museum

For those who have not seen this hive, this is what we did. The hive has no frames, just bars on top with starter strips for the bees to build comb. The window, that is in the kids Discovery Room makes up the one side of the hive. It worked well except the bees attached comb to the window. We kind of expected that, but hoped the comb could still be removed for inspecting the hive. They did so well they really just outgrew the hive.



At right you can see there was some serious bearding on this hive (top front door and underside). The bees chewed entrances where we did not want entrances. Their comb building also got away from us and they were no longer building on the bars, so the inside of the hive was almost inaccessible.



Now from the inside of the museum it is quite interesting. The comb is attached to the glass and in some spots is 3 inches thick or more and filled with honey. In evaluating this hive Dan Chambers, Ed Bartakovitis and I decided the top bar, as it was, was not working very well, at least from a beekeeper's ability to remove bars to inspect the hive as needed. So, plans were made

to change to a regular hive body, with a window cut in one end. And of course the bees were going to cooperate with our plan☺.

Several bars were removed to give access upwards and a medium hive body with drawn comb was placed on top of the top bar hive. Certainly the queen would move onto that nice drawn comb. Wrong...One week later the medium was filled with open nectar...But no eggs, no larvae and no queen!

All entrances (and they had made many) except the one on the bottom of the medium were sealed. A deep hive body with a window cut in one end and ten frames of mostly drawn comb was added under the medium. It is beginning to look like a very eclectic hive setup...but change takes time. Now, the queen will certainly move up onto those deep frames of drawn comb.....Nope...One week later still no queen.

We took the deep and medium off and began digging out some of the bars. Again the bees had filled those empty spaces with new comb and the queen laid eggs in them.

After some comb was removed several bars came out almost intact. On about the 4th bar in.....THERE SHE WAS..THE QUEEN!!....Happy Dance☺! Now that the queen was moved into the deep hive body, with a queen excluder between the top bar and the new hive, we could move on to phase 2 of our plan. Wait 4 weeks. At that point all brood in the top bar hive will be hatched.

The Museum has been very pleased with the hive and the attention it has drawn. For their “Live At 2” programs this summer, Dan Chambers, Paul Schnaithmann, Christina Seldomridge, Tom Eiseman (he will be there on Thursday August 23) and I have talked to visitors to the museum about the hive and honey bees. I was a great experience to talk to visitors and watch the kids (and some adults) pressing their faces up against the glass to see the inside of a bee hive without the fear of being stung. When I was there, I went out and pulled a frame of honey and left everyone taste the honey fresh from the hive. When we were done, the frame was returned to the hive for the bees to repair and refill.

Sometime after the 20th of August, the comb can be removed (all brood will have hatched in the top bar section of the hive) and the bees will be brushed off. The bees will return to the regular hive on the stand where the top bar was. The comb can be crushed and strained for the honey. My guess is there maybe 50 pounds or more of “Lancaster City Honey” in there to be extracted and from what we tasted, it is excellent honey. The medium is almost all capped honey by now and will be left for their winter needs. We will evaluate that closer when we remove the top bar hive.

If you get a chance, check out the North Museum. It is a real Lancaster County Treasure. I know we took the grand children there a few times and never got past the reptile room. In the basement there are rock and mineral collections, mounted birds, drawers to open with spiders, crabs, shells and too many bugs to name, and of course our club’s bees. The Discovery Room has all kinds of neat stuff for the kids get out and handle. The North Museum is just a great experience for both kids and adults.

.....Jim

(This ad has not been paid for by any group....☺....just my opinion)



The Hives at the Research Farm on Auction Road

These hives have also been doing very well. So well, there have been at least 4 swarms from the 3 hives we have going. One was very small. If you remember I removed the queen and made a split (between the two hives in May) because there were swarm cells and of course that would prevent them from swarming. Well the old hive still sent out at least one swarm with a virgin queen (I can see Dick Patterson smiling...so much for swarm control☺). A week or so later there was another one.

The first one went easy, but the second one was a challenge. As I attempted to move some bees from the plywood water supply station to a nuc, they would run back out as fast as I put them in. After a few attempts I looked up. There were more bees in the air than on the plywood and in a minute they were all in the air. I figured it was lost, but they did not know where to go so the swarm just hovered over the pole shed. For 10 minutes that is where they stayed, just circling. Then they began to move out over the grass in front of the shed, the lowest bees just about 6 feet off the ground, in a big circle. With the nuc over my head, hoping they would choose to land there, I followed them across to the Master Gardeners garden (there were no pictures of this crazy man in the field with a hive on his head). The swarm chose a bush just inside the garden and began to cluster about 3 feet off the ground, what an experience. This tornado of bees began tightening up the circle until I could hardly see the nuc under the bush for all the bees in the air. From there it was an easy catch.



For the honey extracting demonstration at the Master Gardeners meeting, Liz helped me to remove 2 supers of honey; this was after we collected 2 more swarms from inside one of the plastic covered tunnels. One was maybe 2 pounds and the other the size of a soft ball. While checking the hives, the center hive, #2 (the one with the old queen removed from #1), the brood pattern was found to be somewhat spotty, with many scattered cells bulging out (*see picture on left*). **The queen is laying drone eggs in worker cells, a sign that the queen is failing**, most likely running out of sperm to fertilize the eggs. She was removed and the small swarm with a virgin queen was put in a super above a sheet of newspaper between them and the old hive.

The new queen is now laying and doing great.



Summer Picnic

Our club will be having a summer picnic on **Tuesday, August 21st**. Papa James, Fern, Peter, James & Christian Strickler have graciously invited us to again, have the picnic at their home at 1855 Stony Battery Road, just outside Mountville. You can begin arriving at 5:00 and we will be eating at 6:00. The club will supply paper products and plastic ware, James says they will supply ice water and punch. I will bring ice cream for sundaes again. If members can bring one or two items for the buffet table (hot, cold or just whatever you were making for supper☺) that seemed to work out well in the past. There will be folding chairs available, but if you like you can bring your favorite lawn chair.



There is a pond and Papa James says the kids can bring their fishing gear. No business meeting, just come out and enjoy an evening conversing with members and their families. There are plenty of shade trees, just a beautiful location for a summer evening picnic. RSVP to jim@gatheringplacemj.com or phone 653-5911. Summer schedules can be hectic, if you have last minute changes and can come, we would still enjoy your company.

(Continued from page 1)

How are your hives doing? Now is the time to evaluate them for winter preparation. You do not need a large super hive to survive the winter, but more important, each hive is sized properly for its population. That could be a single deep, a deep and a medium or whatever combination it takes. You want your bees to be able to fill the hive without a lot of comb (undrawn, drawn, capped honey) that does not have bees patrolling it to keep pests out. If your bees have too much room those hive pests are just waiting to take over that unprotected space, if they can.

Wax moth used to be the worst, making webbed tunnels through drawn comb, then webbing between unpatrolled combs and eventually webbing up a whole hive body. The larvae then pupate in tight spaces between the frame ends and the inside hive walls, leaving those oval indentations in the wood, you often see on old used equipment.

But now we have hive beetles. They are present in most hives I have seen. They are usually controlled by a strong population of bees. There are many beetle traps out there that can help to keep their numbers down, but a strong population is still the best prevention. The bees will seal beetles in tight spaces and keep them from becoming a problem. In the museum hive you can see hive beetles between the hive and the glass. But given a weak hive, the small maggot like worms will slime and destroy everything they can, sometimes driving the bees from the hive. If your bees do not need or are not using a super, remove it and either freeze it for a few days or treat it with moth crystals until freezing weather sets in. If not extracting removed frames of honey, freeze them for a few days, and then protect them from new infestation by placing frames or whole supers in a large plastic bag. You can use them to feed your bees later in the fall or over the winter.

Got questions?? Come out to our picnic...a chance to “extract” information from a great group of beekeepers.....Hope to see you there.....Jim

The Elizabethtown Fair is coming up, August 20 to 25. Honey and hive products entered in the fair have been down the past few years with many premiums going unawarded. The fair is early and often beekeepers have not extracted this year yet. You can enter honey extracted in the last year, so last summer's honey could be entered (it is from the last year).

All entries must be brought in Monday August 20, between 9am-9pm. Kelly will be at the stand from 4-9 pm (In the Ag building). Anything brought in from 9am -4pm should be taken to the church to be entered and pay the entry fee (it is \$.25 per item). Then it needs to be brought to the stand. After 4pm you can come directly to the stand and Kelly will get your items entered.

Questions, you can e-mail Kelly at honeybees@dejazzd.com or phone 664-5130.

Let's not let those premiums go unclaimed!

APIARY PRODUCTS DEPARTMENT 23

RULES:

1. All honey and beeswax must be the product of the beekeeper.
2. The exhibit must fulfill the requirements of the class in which it is exhibited.
3. All products must have been produced within the last year.
4. The judge may open and sample any exhibit.
5. Exhibitor may enter only one item per entry number.

PREMIUMS 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th

\$5.00 4.00 3.00 2.00 1.00

SECTION 2Honey

1. Comb honey to be judged on perfection in filling, capping uniformity, neatness and cleanliness.
2. Extracted honey to be judged on body, clarity and cleanliness.
3. Jars are to have labels.

ENTRY # DESCRIPTION & SIZE

230200 - LIGHT COMB (3 sections)

230210 - DARK COMB (3 sections)

230220 - LIGHT EXTRACTED HONEY (3 one-pound jars)

230230 - MEDIUM EXTRACTED HONEY (3 one-pound jars)

230240 - DARK AMBER EXTRACTED HONEY (3 one-pound jars)

230250 - FINELY CRYSTALLIZED HONEY (3 one-pound jars)

SECTION 3..... Beeswax

Beeswax to be judged on color and purity

ENTRY # DESCRIPTION & SIZE

230300 - SINGLE PIECE PURE BEESWAX (not less than two pounds)

230310 - MOLDED OR DESIGNED (not less than one pound)

230320 - DIPPED CANDLES (one pair made of 100% pure beeswax)

230330 - MOLDED CANDLES (TAPERS) (one pair made of 100% pure beeswax)

**Have Pictures of your hives or stories of you experiences?
I would love to include them in our Newsletter.**