Bayou Bee Bulletin Number 2 – March 2015

Ramblings of the Bee Bumbler

By way of introduction, my name is Randy Fair, and I am the past Vice-President of the Louisiana Beekeepers Association. I am owner and operator of Clear Lake Apiary and currently run about 250 colonies. My children gave me the name “Bee Bumbler” as a joke, and the joke stuck.

Joe Sanroma, the current President of the LBA, usually fills this section of the newsletter but with getting his colonies to California to pollinate almonds and back, preparing to make spring increases and then moving his colonies up the east coast for further pollinating contracts and honey production, Joe is a very busy beekeeper. “Busy as a bee” is the spring motto of most beekeepers this time of year. And so, from time to time, I and others will be filling in for Joe in this section of the LBA’s newsletter.

So far my winter losses have been below 10%, but spring is not here yet so I will stay positive and hope for the best. But as spring approaches, like many of you, I will be making splits as a means of controlling swarming and to replace winter losses. So while the weather is cold and raining, I will be putting boxes together along with frames, tops and bottoms. Queens are on order and will arrive the second week of March so there is no time to waste.

Whether a beekeeper is planning on making splits with grafted queens or letting his bees raise their own, the splitting method I am about to explain will work for anyone. One thing I hear from beekeepers is their difficulty in finding the old queen. This method does away with that worry.

Start with a strong colony, 5-8 frames of bees and brood in a double deep. Necessary equipment will include an extra deep box with a top and bottom and a queen excluder, and a couple new frames with foundation. Have the empty deep box next to the hive that is being split, brush all the bees off into the lower brood...
chamber and place the frames into the empty box. If there are not 3-5 frames of eggs, larvae and sealed brood in the top box of the hive that is being collected from, remove frames from the lower box until the desired number of frames with brood (5-8) have been collected. Again be sure and brush all of the bees off of the frames. Replace two of the frames in the lower brood chamber with new frames of foundation. This will give the parent colony something to work on and also allow the replacement of older comb with new fresh foundation.

Fill in empty spaces with frames of honey, pollen or foundation (from the original hive) in the new box of frames with eggs, larvae and brood (but no bees.) Place the queen excluder on top of the lower brood chamber of the original hive and place the new box of brood on top of the queen excluder. I leave this set-up alone until the next day. On day two take the top box off and set it on a new bottom board and place a top on both colonies. The top box will be full of mostly nurse bees and will remain in the box to take care of the brood.

Now the beekeeper has two choices for requeening the hive. Leave this “split” next to the parent colony or move it to a new location. If too many of the bees are returning to the parent colony just reverse their position for one day to build up the field force and then move the “split” to a new location. “Well what about a queen?” A “walk away” split is when a beekeeper just walks away and lets the bees raise their own queen. Examine the split in 3-4 days and there should be queen cells started if there were enough viable eggs or larvae in the split. If the bees have not started queen cells, another frame of eggs can be added from the parent colony, introduce a bought queen or just combine the two brood chambers back into one hive.

With purchased queens, let the “split” remain queenless for 24 hours and then introduce a caged queen. The new queen should be readily accepted since most of the bees in your new split are nurse bees. There are as many ways to make splits, increases or nucs as there are beekeepers. This is just one way of accomplishing it. Spring is right around the corner as is swarming season and the spring honey flow. Be prepared and have fun with your bees. Until next time, this is the Bee Bumblin’ rambling on.

In this newsletter we will be presenting:

- **Dear Bee** – Origination of two Louisiana Beekeeping Clubs
  -- Information regarding input from the LBA
- **Agritourism Letter** - Dora Ann Hatch, Agritourism Coordinator from LSU AgCenter
- **Basic Beekeeping Schools Program**
- **Internet sites you might find useful**
- **Article of Interest:** Does the Color Blue Repel Pest Insects? Or *Spooks*?
- **Renew your LBA membership**
- **Commercial Business Advertisements**
- **Listing of the LBA Board of Directors**
- **Listing of LA Honey Bee Clubs and their presidents’ contact listing**
Dear Bee (per last month’s request for input from the LBA membership)

**Origination of two of Louisiana’s Beekeeping Clubs:**

**MISS-LOU** (input provided by Jennifer Jones)

In January 2013, Ken Ensminger, concerned about CCD and the decreasing honey bee population, started talking around the idea of forming a local bee club in order to get more people interested in beekeeping. With the help and support of local commercial beekeeper, Jack Meyer, this talk materialized into the first Miss-Lou Beekeepers Association meeting which was held the very next month on February 11th in Ken’s honey house. Providentially, this happened to be the feast day of St. Abigail, the Irish patroness of honey bees. With the blessings of St. Abigail, over 15 people attended the meeting and formerly voted to create an official club which covers Vidalia, Louisiana and neighboring Natchez, Mississippi, as well as many other smaller adjoining rural towns. Because of the travel time for the majority of members, our meetings are quarterly and last roughly 2 hours. President Ken Ensminger begins with prayer and reading of a short Bible passage pertaining to bees and honey. With the help of members and leadership of Mrs. Golda Ensminger, a table of cookies, cakes, and finger sandwiches or even full meals have become a regular part of each meeting. Guest speakers have offered programs with a wide variety of topics from what it takes to become a beekeeper, the history of beekeeping, to hands on equipment and hive demonstrations. With the suggestion and initial donation from Mr. David Holland, each meeting concludes with a door prize. This February we celebrated the beginning of our 3rd annual meetings and are now boasting a membership of over 30 members. If you happen to be in our area, our meetings are held the second Monday night of February, May, August and November, please contact Ken Ensminger, (318)481-1740, and make sure to “Like” us on Facebook (Miss-Lou Beekeepers Association.)

Jack Meyer (left),
owner A. H. Meyer and Sons Honey Company
and
Ken Ensminger (right),
Miss-Lou Beekeeping Association president
CENLA (input provided by Tim Haley)
In the summer of 2013, following my retirement from the USDA-Forest Service, I sat down and began posting via the Town Talk Newspaper, the BBB, the LSU Agriculture Center, emails and word-of-mouth that I was organizing a Bee Club. With permission from the LSU Agriculture Center, located just east of the LSUA campus, we meet at their conference room. The initial response was outstanding. Individuals showed up – all the way from Lafayette to Winnfield and Leesville to Deville. Our first meeting occurred in July and I believe we had 23 attendees. I took a photo at that event and again one year later in August 2014.

Today we have something like 29 in the club. Obviously it has evolved – some have moved on while others have joined. After leading the club for the last 2 ½ years I have realized that it takes a few devoted individuals with a heart for teaching up-and-coming beekeepers how to get their feet wet and enjoy their desire(s) to be beekeepers. Most of our membership are hobby beekeepers. The commercial beekeepers are there but not many and those that are have less than 40 hives. Three of us, Paul Whitehead (vice president), Wayne Hazelwood (treasure) and myself are the core of the club. We begin each meeting with a pledge of allegiance to the US flag, someone volunteers with refreshments, and we are now listed with the state and fed’s as a non-profit organization. We are presently drafting a mission and a vision statement and working toward developing a web page. We hold field trips and have guest speakers whenever possible. Dora Hatch, the LSU AgCenter’s Agritourism Coordinator gave a talk this last month. She has written an article for this issue of the BBB.

Information regarding input from the LBA
As of this BBB, no-one from the LBA membership has submitted any monthly gadgets, pictures or plans or anything they’d like listed to be sold.

I also have not received a listing of beekeepers in the various areas of the state/clubs that would be willing/able to assist other beekeepers (other than the CENLA Beekeeping Club*) and create a forum for questions and answers section in the newsletter. This is a great idea I will do that, providing I receive input from the constituents. Send me your questions that I will post with a name and contact address. Other members can then send me their answers and I will post them.

*Regarding the CENLA area (Alexandria/Pineville), beekeepers can contact myself or through our club, I will direct them to members who might be able to assist them.
I’ve not received anything regarding items for sale, but as mentioned in last month’s BBB, “The Market Bulletin is published by the Market Development Division and is a free source for advertising your equipment and products: advertisements are free subject to existing regulations. Out-of-state residents may list Want Ads only. Ads may not exceed 25 words. The name, address and telephone number as well as the price of the item must be included with each advertisement.” There is more to be found at the following two web sites (P.S. Check out the December 25, 2014’s issue for three advertisements for the sale or wanted of beekeeping equipment).

http://www.ldaf.state.la.us/about/market-bulletin/
http://www.ldaf.state.la.us/multimedia/

I am still in need of the following information: Please tell me who the president is for the Acadiana Club is.

Agritourism – provided by Dora Ann Hatch, Agritourism Coordinator

Beekeepers Now Included in the 2008 Agritourism Limited Liability Law

Louisiana law makes an individual responsible for injuries that occur as a result of that individual’s neglect, lack of skill, or total disregard for another individual’s safety. Louisiana law makes an individual responsible for any defect or condition on his or her property that causes an injury if the defect was known and the injury could have been avoided by the exercise of responsible care.

Because of this vulnerability to lawsuits to agritourism professionals and the struggle with obtaining liability insurance, the Louisiana legislature passed House Bill 633 by Representative Anders as Act 591 of 2008; thereby enacting the Agritourism Limited Liability Law (R.S. 9:2795.4).

So, what does this mean to the agritourism professional? The intent of the law is to limit the liability of an agritourism professional for injuries that occur through no fault of the agritourism professional. To determine if you are eligible, read the law. The law includes definitions of terms like “agritourism professional” and an explanation of activities considered agritourism. The Commissioner of Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) determines what types of activities are covered as “agritourism activities.” The original law did not list beekeeping, however beekeepers petitioned the commissioner in 2014 to include them as an agritourism activity and their request was granted.

To have coverage under the law, an agritourism professional engaging in at least one or more agritourism activities as explained in the law, must submit a “plan of operation” for each agritourism activity to the director of the extension service of the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center and the director must approve the plan. Those plans of operation are currently reviewed by the LSU AgCenter’s Agritourism Coordinator.

Once the submitted plan of operation is reviewed, the plan of operation is forwarded to LDAF who sends a letter of notification to the agritourism professional. Coverage under the law will exit as long as: (1) the law is in effect, (2) the particular activity or type of activity is included in the regulations.
as an “agritourism activity,” and (3) the agritourism professional is conducting business in accordance with the plan.

To invoke the limitation of liability provided by this law, an agritourism professional must post and maintain a sign or signs that contain a warning notice at the entrance and the site of each agritourism activity. Detailed information on the signage and an explanation of the law is available on the LSU AgCenter’s agritourism website: www.lsuagcenter.com/agritourism Copies of the plan of operation and steps to follow are also on that website.

For assistance with your plan of operation for agritourism consultations contact the LSU AgCenter’s Dora Ann Hatch, Agritourism Coordinator; LSU AgCenter; 11959 Hwy. 9; Homer, LA 71040; dhatc@agcenter.lsu.edu; (318) 927-9654 x 229 office or (318) 245-6791 cell; www.lsuagcenter.com/agritourism; http://www.louisianaagritourism.blogspot.com or e-mail her at dhatc@agcenter.lsu.edu

**Basic Beekeeping Schools** (continuation from last month’s BBB)

The LSU Agriculture Center is sponsoring and providing materials for the development and presentation of beginning bee keeping classes throughout the state and several of those classes have already been held. I have just completed one and graduated 11 individuals in the CENLA area. If you are interested in developing one of these classes or wish become a student then please check out the links below:

Keith Hawkins
PO Box 609
DeRidder, LA 70634
khawkins@agcenter.lsu.edu
Office: 337-463-7006
Cell: 318-264-2448

LSU Agcenter has its “Beginning with Bees” in .pdf format at
http://masterbeek.businesscatalyst.com/
http://www.ldaf.state.la.us/consumers/horticulture-programs/apiary-programs/
www.slideshare.net

**Internet Sources you may find useful**


Blood-sucking mite turns benign bee virus into colony killer:

Honey – there is more in it than what you think: http://www.news24.com/MyNews24/Honey-there-is-more-in-it-than-what-you-think-20130104

Earth Watch Program, Royal Geographical Society – topic: Irreplaceable – The World’s Most Invaluable Species:

**Article of interest for this BBB**

This morning I was listening to National Public Radio’s radio show, You Bet Your Garden (YBYG) with Mike McGrath. While still half-dozing, what caught my attention was the statement “…of the hundreds of different species of native bees…” With those words in my mind I visited the website that hosts McGrath’s program, Gardens Alive Website. From there you can view numerous garden products as well as the most recent blog of Mike’s show as well as visit Mike’s YBYG’s archives. The discussion did not specifically speak to honeybees but was still of interest and something I wasn’t aware of. Today’s discussion was titled: “Does the Color Blue Repel Pest Insects? Or Spooks?”. Here it is, complements of YBYG and Garden’s Alive.

**Does the Color Blue Repel Pest Insects? Or Spooks?**

So this all started with a phone call on our Public Radio show a few weeks ago from a listener who had been following our conversations about how to deter wasps and hornets from building their nests on or near houses—especially houses whose residents were allergic to “bee stings”.

I say "quote" because I learned years ago (when I was a medical reporter) that the culprits are generally yellow jackets or other aggressive wasps and hornets, and that most true bees don't sting.

That's right. Most—if not all—of the hundreds of different species of native bees—like bumblebees, carpenter bees, mason bees, squash bees, sweat bees and ground nesting bees—just don't sting people, even when that type of bee has a stinger...which is really good, as native bees are super-important pollinators of most flowers, virtually all fruits (I see a huge diversity visiting my organically-grown peach and raspberry flowers and gladly reap the rewards) and a good number of your favorite garden veggies. (They don't call them 'squash bees' because they play a strange form of tennis in their spare time. No bees; no zucchini!)

The non-native honeybee, which originated in Africa and was domesticated in Europe, does sting, but you generally have to do something like step on one to get stung; and then that bee dies. Really aggressive wasps and hornets like yellow jackets will sting you because they feel like it; and each one can sting you repeatedly—and generally does.

So anyway; our caller said that his family down South always painted their porches a certain color that he called "haint blue" to keep stinging insects from nesting there. He said that he started doing it himself after years of having wasps build nests on his porch and hasn't had a single nest since. I thought it was a
pretty neat call; and then we were *flooded* with emails.

Bill in Gladwyne, PA wrote: "'Haint' means 'Haunt' in South Carolina, and the color 'Haint Blue' is used specifically around openings like windows and doors to prevent the entry of evil spirits into the house. I don't think it has anything to do with insects."

Deb in Philadelphia's Powelton Village neighborhood added: "'Haint' is a southern term for a ghost or anything that haunts, so I suspect that the traditional color "Haint Blue" might have something to do with repelling spirits. Indeed, a number of web sites say that this is a likely explanation for the color's name."

But *then* we heard from George in Nether Providence, PA. (My first thought was: 'The Nether Provinces'! *He's* a spook! But it turns out that "Nether Providence" is a little area just outside of Philadelphia, near Swarthmore. Darn.)

Anyway, George wrote: "I heard the discourse on painting porch ceilings light blue to keep wasps away. When we bought our home years ago, my mother insisted that we paint the porch ceiling light blue. She claimed it was an old "Pennsylvania Dutch" practice that would keep wasps from building their nests there. I painted the porch ceiling light blue, and no more wasps—paper or mud dauber—ever again. I have no idea why they stay away, but I *can* attest to the fact that it works."

So: what does this storied color *really* repel? Haunts or hornets? Spooks or stingers? Wasps or werewolves? Vampires or *Vespula*?

Well, as Deb noted in her email, there are a huge number of web sites devoted to this mysterious color and practice, but the one that seemed to me to be the most authoritative was the Sherwin-Williams website. Yes, *that* Sherwin Williams; the paint people. The color has its own web page under their corporate banner! I *quote from it*: "Once just an old Southern tradition, the blue porch ceiling has made its way north and is being introduced to new generations. There are numerous theories as to why – from fooling spiders and wasps into thinking the ceiling is the sky, to blue being a harbinger of good luck, to the color extending daylight, to scaring away evil spirits..."

They continue, "Southerners, especially in the area of South Carolina, have a name for the ceiling paint used on porches – a soft blue-green referred to as Haint Blue. "Haints are restless spirits of the dead who, for whatever reason, have not moved on from the physical world," says Lori Sawaya, a Color Strategist they quote. She explains that haint blue, "which can be found on door and window frames as well as porch ceilings, is intended to protect the homeowner from being "taken" or influenced by evil haints."

Ah, but wasps and such get equal time. The page continues: "Some people swear that blue paint repels insects, leaving a porch bug-free and pleasant during those long summer evenings and afternoons...and this belief could be seated in historical truth..."
"When blue paints were first used on ceilings, they were usually milk paints...that often had lye mixed into their composition. Lye is a known insect repellent, which would explain why insects would avoid nesting on a painted porch ceiling or ledge. As milk paint has a tendency to fade over time, people would usually need to repaint every few years, covering the existing coat with fresh paint—and fresh lye. But others theorize that insects prefer not to nest on blue ceilings because they are "fooled" into thinking the blue paint is actually the sky."

**PLEASE RENEW YOUR LBA MEMBERSHIP!**

LBA memberships have almost doubled over the last two years. The LBA is excited about this growth and sincerely appreciates your membership support. If you have not completed and submitted your membership renewal for 2014, please use the membership application at the end of this newsletter and send your renewal to our treasurer as soon as possible. The January issue of our newsletter was your last issue if you allowed your membership to expire. Please don’t delay any longer and renew your LBA membership today.

Please feel free to make additional copies of this Bulletin and provide them to others interested in beekeeping and our organization. Reading the information provided below by our membership chairman will help you join us in our recruiting efforts by participating in our “Member Get A Member Campaign.” Prizes are awarded to the top three recruiters annually! The new campaign begins November 1st, 2014 and ends October 31st, 2015.

There are many challenges facing beekeepers. Our organization provides a voice to Louisiana beekeepers and lets state government know that we are an important part of Louisiana’s agricultural industry. There is strength in numbers, so help us help you through your membership support!

To register or renew your membership, go to the LBA website: [http://www.labeekeepers.org/](http://www.labeekeepers.org/)

On the left side of the page select the icon, "Join/Re-New The LBA"

At the top of the next page, select one of the two icons, "Join LBA" or "Renew"
Commercial Business Ads

The Louisiana Beekeepers Association would like to thank all of our sponsors for their business advertisements. We encourage our membership and visitors to our web site to consider the fine products and/or services they offer when selecting a vendor to fulfill their business and/or personal needs.

Over the past five years the number of our newsletter advertisers has steadily increased. In appreciation for their support the LBA has offered vendor booths to these advertisers at our annual State Convention free of charge. Vendor displays have also increased, providing our guests with a convenient venue for purchasing the beekeeping products they might need. These vendors in turn contribute door prizes and auction items to the LBA, making the event more enjoyable for our guests.
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Advertising is an important marketing tool for beekeepers and your beekeeping business is important to the Louisiana Beekeepers Association. Give us an opportunity to provide a portion of your advertising needs in 2014.

Remember, for only $25.00 annually you can advertise your company products in six issues of the Bayou Bee Bulletin. Your business ad will also be carried on our web site, labeekeepers.org.

Remit your advertising fee to LBA Treasurer, Mr. David Ferguson, P. O. Box 716, Brusly, LA 70719 and forward your company’s camera ready, 4 inch by 3 inch jpeg ad image to Mr. Tim Haley, LBA Newsletter Editor, at tamh212@suddenlink.net.
LOUISIANA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION INC.
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martp@bellsouth.net
LOCAL BEEKEEPING CLUBS AND CURRENT PRESIDENTS/CONTACTS

<table>
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<th>ACADIANA</th>
<th>ASCENSION PARISH</th>
<th>ARK-LA-TEX</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unknown – if someone from the club knows the president, please contact Tim Haley, editor – Bayou Bee Bulletin Thank you.</td>
<td>Michael Bourgeois</td>
<td>Mike Welch</td>
<td>Warren Hoag, Jr.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>44116 Stringer Bridge Road</td>
<td>221 Westwind Church Road</td>
<td>1115 S. Lake Arthur Avenue</td>
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<td></td>
<td>St. Amant, LA 70774-3942</td>
<td>Campti, LA 71411</td>
<td>Jennings, LA 70546</td>
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<td>CAPITAL AREA</td>
<td>CENLA</td>
<td>HILL COUNTRY</td>
<td>MISS-LOU</td>
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<tr>
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<td>RUSTON-LINCOLN PARISH</td>
<td>SW LA</td>
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<td>Covington, LA 70433</td>
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