March 2016

A look at the Louisiana landscape shows you that Spring is here. The fields are carpets of yellow flowers and will soon be followed by white clover in lush green pastures. Roadways will soon be lined with the red heads of crimson clover or the bright purple of vetch.

This scene stirs thoughts of increasing hives in the mind of most beekeepers. One way to increase the number of hives in your apiary is to split the ones you already have, add a queen to the split, and suddenly you have a twofer! Like so many things in beekeeping, adding queens can be done in many ways. In the 1930’s, it was accomplished in a manner most of us would not consider today. Beekeepers would make the split, then lay several slices of a large onion across the top bars. A new uncaged queen would be placed among the frames underneath the onion slices. Apparently our beekeeping forefathers relied on the onion odors to mask the new queen’s scent long enough for the bees to accept her.

While I found no information about the success rate of the onion method, one of our north Louisiana beekeepers claims a 98% success rate for his not quite conventional technique. He adds an empty super to the hive and places the queen in a standard 3-hole cage on the top bars, directly in front of a Boardman feeder of sugar syrup. The hive bees must walk across the caged queen as they enter the feeder, spreading her pheromones throughout the hive. By the time she is released from the cage, the bees have accepted her as their new queen.

Our 2016 State Convention is scheduled for the first weekend of December in Baton Rouge. The LBA Board is already hard at work preparing for the convention. The increasing interest in beekeeping across the country is also reflected in an increasing demand for notable speakers. Some of the popular and better-known names are booked two years in advance. In preparing this year’s program, we want to focus on meeting the needs of Louisiana beekeepers. Share with us your ideas for possible speakers or for types of information or beekeeping practices you would like to see on the program.

Our Annual Field Day is scheduled for October, also in Baton Rouge. LSU will be playing out-of-town that weekend, so we will not have to compete with Tiger fans for space and facilities. Plan to join me there!

We are still promoting the “clubs get a member” campaign. If you know anyone who would like to be member of the Louisiana Beekeepers Association (LBA), they can join via our website labeekeepers.org.

SS Brantley, LBA, Board Member
It’s March, 2016 and we’ve had a very unique winter. Never really cold, no ice storms nor extended freezing weather. Heat records were broken in December with two weeks of above-normal temperatures in the 70’s. It was so warm for so long that I’m sure some people thought the trees would start leafing/flowering out and then get chilled with the resultant loss of fruit in the Spring. I don’t think that happened anywhere in Louisiana, but I could be wrong. Winter is over, and it appears that we are going to get a decent Spring this year. In 2013 and 2014 we had late freezes that destroyed the honey flow. In 2015 we had more rain for so long that we not only lost the spring honey flow but we beat out Noah with his flooding and the need for an ark! Swarms and pollen are in the air and the nectar is flowing.

As mentioned in BBB (#1) in this newsletter, I have chosen to give a synopsis of Michael Bush’s presentation, “Swarm Prevention and Splits”. Michael was one of several speakers at our last LBA convention, held in West Monroe in December 2015.

I just wrapped up the second year’s Beginning Beekeeping Class. My monthly visits to the hives during the winter are now down to two weeks for the early spring. By April I will be visiting the apiaries every week. I initiated feeding pollen patties and supplementing sugar water for those hives needing carbohydrates (which are very few in my yards) this February. It is at this time of year that it becomes paramount to monitor your hives for available honey reserves/stores. Many hives starve at this time due to population buildups without adequate stores to feed the increase in mouths to feed. Depending upon your location the honey flow has or will be starting shortly.

In this newsletter:
- Articles of Interest
  - Results of Sticky Board Trapping following oxalic acid treatment for varroa mites, *Varroa destructor*
  - First half of Michael Bush’s Power Point “Swarm Preventions and Splits”
- Internet Sites and New Books You Might Find Useful
- Renew you LBA membership
- Commercial Business Advertisements
- Listing of the 2016 LBA Board of Directors
- Listing of LA Honey Bee Clubs and their presidents’ contact information

Articles of Interest

Results of Sticky Board Trapping following oxalic acid treatment for varroa mites by a local beekeeper who brought his sticky trap to me
- Hive treated on Wednesday, February 24th, 2016 at 3 pm with oxalic acid via fumigation.
- The approximate day temperature at treatment was ~ 70 °F.
- The entrance to the hive was sealed for 10 minutes following treatment, then opened.
- The sticky trap was placed in the hive at 5 pm. (aver. temperature was~ 50 °F).
- Sheet was removed Saturday, February 27th at about 1 pm. (~3 days after placement).
Two views of the total sticky trap sheet and the recorded times/dates of placement and treatment.

Sample square showing seven mites – two are upside down.

View of four sample squares showing a total of 19 mites.

Sampling Calculations

- I utilized www.random.org to generate a random number list with the following parameters: 1 number set; 22 samples (2 per row for 11 rows); range: 1-165.
- With this I created a 13.3% sample population with the following squares selected: 4, 12, 18, 47, 57, 72, 78, 80, 88, 89, 98, 108, 116, 117, 118, 128, 132, 134, 136, 145, 150 and 154.
- NOTE: if desired, a 10% sample could be created and you would select for 17 samples (this would generate a 10.3% sample)
- NOTE: A second source of random numbers might be the use of fortune cookies – they print out 5 or 6 numbers on the little slip of paper that is placed in the cookie. I discovered this when I had finished a buffet at an oriental restaurant a few weeks back. With only five or six numbers you might want 2-3 cookies.
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• \((\text{Total Mite Count})(100/[100 \times (22/165)]) = (190)7.52) = 675 \text{ mites}\) or 
\([(165)(90)]/22 = 675 \text{ mites}\)

• The beekeeper was asked to run a second fumigation and sticky board sample on Tuesday, March 1\textsuperscript{st} in the same way he did the first, to the same hive. He was asked to bring me the sheet on Thursday, March 3\textsuperscript{rd}.

• Mites counted after the 2\textsuperscript{nd} treatment = 132.

• Assuming he had ~25,000 bees in his hive, what percent of them had mites - (captured on the sticky board?): \([675/25,000](100) = 2.7\%\) with the first sampling; 0.9\% with the 2\textsuperscript{nd}

- **Questions**: Did he have a large population of mites before the treatment? How well did his treatment work out?

- **Answer**: His mite population was at the Danger Threshold (See chart below). His two treatments reduced the population to something less than 1\%, well below the threshold.

From last month’s BBB, Randy Oliver presented following two slides:

- **Slide Number 1**: Note that in our sample from the sticky board, we were at the Danger Level. If our beekeeper hadn’t treated his hive the varroa mite population would have increased dramatically with the increase in bee population. If he still didn’t treat in mid-summer and allowed his hive to move into the fall months, his varroa mite population would have been off the chart and the hive would have collapsed!
Slide Number 2: By treating again in May or June-July with the goal of killing mites within the brood, our beekeeper would be able to keep the mite count down and maintain a strong and viable hive into the fall.

“The proactive beekeeper will monitor mite levels throughout the season, and apply seasonally adjusted treatment thresholds to keep the mites at acceptable levels. It is far better for the bees to keep mite populations from building, than it is to reduce them “after” they’ve built to damaging levels.” (Randy Oliver, Grass Valley, CA)

Swarm Prevention & Splits – Redirecting the Instincts of the Bees by Michael Bush

The following Power Point can be retrieved from Michael’s website (See Internet Sites You Might Find Useful, above) and represents the section, “Swarm Prevention”.

Causes of swarming
- Overcrowding swarm
  - No place to put nectar so the brood nest is clogged
    - Add supers
Bayou Bee Bulletin

- Honey or pollen clogging the brood nest
  - Remove combs of honey and add empty frames to occupy bees drawing wax
- No place to cluster
  - Slatted Rack, follower boards, more supers
- Not enough ventilation
  - Screened Bottom Boards
  - Top entrances

- Reproductive swarm
  - This is the goal of a successful hive
  - Preparation started the fall before
  - Intent is well set by early spring
- Reproductive swarm sequence
  - Put away excess stores to build up in late winter and hit a high enough population to be able to swarm before the main flow
  - Start rearing brood in late winter
  - All resources focused on building up population while storing enough honey to insure getting through the winter
  - When population peaks, backfill the brood nest

- Sequence from decision to swarm
  - Once there are enough bees and enough stores the brood nest is backfilled starting this sequence:
  - Since the brood nest is filled with nectar, this frees the emerging bees who would have been nurses so they are unemployed
  - And frees the queen from laying so she can slim down to fly with the swarm
  - And the hive won’t need nurse bees (no open brood) so they can swarm

- Swarming
  - Queen cells are built
  - Usually sometime right around or shortly after they are capped the hive swarms. Depending on the weather this can be as long as when the queen cells are about to emerge.
  - The old queen and the unemployed nurse bees leave and cluster on a nearby branch
  - Scout bees find a new location and the swarm flies off to their new home
  - If the hive is still overcrowded one of the virgin queens will leave with more of the bees in an after-swarm

- Heading off this sequence
  - Walt Wright’s Nectar Management
  - Nectar management changes the sequence by fooling the bees into believing they don’t have enough stores to swarm
  - Basically it's putting alternating frames of empty drawn comb and capped honey directly ABOVE the brood nest.
  - If you would like to purchase a copy of Walt's manuscript, it's about 60 pages long and last I heard was $8 in a pdf by email or $10 on paper. You can contact him at this address: Walt Wright; Box 10; Elkton, TN 38455-0010; or WaltWright_@hotmail dot com (don’t forget the underscore)
• Redirecting after the sequence is started
  o Assuming no swarm cells
  o Open the brood nest
  o Insert empty frames between drawn brood frames. The number is dependant on
    the strength of the hive.
  o Expand the brood nest to the next box
  o Sometimes called “pyramiding up”
  o This involved moving some of the brood frames up to the box above to get the
    brood nest expanded into more than one box
• Sequence after opening the brood nest
  o Unemployed nurse bees start drawing comb, so they are now employed
  o The queen has somewhere to lay
  o More nurse bees are employed caring for the new brood the queen is laying
• When to open the brood nest
  o It’s best to do this as early as they can fill the gap, where you want to put the
    empty frame, with festooning bees before they start getting “honey bound”
  o This should be done anytime in the spring when you observe the brood nest
    getting clogged with honey and the brood nest contracting instead of expanding,
    while the population of bees is peaking
  o BEFORE they start building swarm cells
• Hopelessly committed
  o Once they are building swarm cells, my experience is they are hopelessly
    committed to swarming. I would do a split. You can get a lot of nice queens
    from this kind of a split.
  o Destroying swarm cells usually results in a queenless colony as they have often
    already swarmed when you destroy them, or they go ahead and swarm even
    though you destroy them
• Do swarm cells make swarmy bees?
  o In my opinion no. Here’s a quote that mirror’s my opinion:
    "For years our bee journals have been printing reams of articles on the question
    of a non-swarming strain of bees. It has always seemed to me there was a lot of
    time wasted advocating such an improbable accomplishment, because nature
    would hardly yield to an arrangement that in itself might destroy the species. If
    accomplished it would be tantamount to breeding the mating instinct out of
    domestic animals." --P.C. Chadwick ABJ, April 1936
Internet Sites and Books You Might Find Useful


- **Genetic Diversity and Provide Breeding Resources:**  [http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/graphics/photos/jan16/k11143-1.htm](http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/graphics/photos/jan16/k11143-1.htm)

- "Mutually beneficial pollinator diversity and crop yield outcomes in small and large farms." - 22 January 2016, issue of *Science*, published by AAAS. The paper is by Lucas Alejandro Garibaldi at Instituto de Investigaciones en Recursos Naturales, Agroecología y Desarrollo Rural (IRNAD) in Río Negro, Argentina, and colleagues

- **EPA Opens Public Comment Period on the First of Four Preliminary Risk Assessments for Insecticides Potentially Harmful to Bees:**
  - EPA encourages stakeholders and interested members of the public to visit the [http://americanbeejournal.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5fd2b1aa990e63193af2a573d&id=0f7438c4d2&e=8a28c24912](http://americanbeejournal.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5fd2b1aa990e63193af2a573d&id=0f7438c4d2&e=8a28c24912), review the risk assessment and related documents, and submit comments. All comments submitted will be accounted for in our final risk assessment. The risk assessment and other supporting documents are available in the docket at: [http://americanbeejournal.us1.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=5fd2b1aa990e63193af2a573d&id=bd201908ce&e=8a28c24912](http://americanbeejournal.us1.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=5fd2b1aa990e63193af2a573d&id=bd201908ce&e=8a28c24912).
  - EPA is also planning to hold a webinar on the imidacloprid assessment in early February. The times and details will be posted at: [http://americanbeejournal.us1.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=5fd2b1aa990e63193af2a573d&id=f442e38878&e=8a28c24912](http://americanbeejournal.us1.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=5fd2b1aa990e63193af2a573d&id=f442e38878&e=8a28c24912)

- **Iowa Honey Producers Launches Searchable City Beekeeping Ordinance Website**
  - The Iowa Honey Producers Association have announced the immediate availability of [http://www.beelaws.org](http://www.beelaws.org). This website helps Iowa residents learn their city’s ordinances related to beekeeping. It is believed to be the first searchable bee law website in the nation.

- **Michael Bush’s Website:**  [http://www.bushfarms.com/beespresentations.htm](http://www.bushfarms.com/beespresentations.htm)


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 2016, please use the membership application at the end of this newsletter and send your renewal to our treasurer as soon as possible. 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 “Clubs Get A Member Campaign.” Prizes are awarded to the top Club annually! The new campaign begins November 1st, 2015 and ends October 31st, 2016.

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:
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".

Membership dues are $10/year/individual and/or family. Your contact for mailing dues will be:

**David Ferguson**
P.O. Box 716
Brusly, LA  70719
Ph. 225-726-1664
E-mail Address:
dwferguson315@cox.net
dave@labeekeepers.org

*The winner for the member get a member for 2015 is Dr. Rhea Jones from the Beekeepers of Tangi-Tamington Club.*
Commercial Business Ads Information

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. Those who pre-purchase supplies through the vendors can have them delivered and avoid shipping charges.

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 2015.

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
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LOUISIANA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE YEAR 2016

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