

# SWEET TALK

The newsletter of the Greene County Beekeepers Association

## BEE Aware-- Odds and Ends:

*Bill Starrett*

Last month step 1 in preparing hives for successful wintering focused on having young queens produced after the summer solstice (June 21). Step 2 in preparing for successful wintering is treating for varroa. Interestingly the family of varroa mites now has two separate species, varroa destructor, the more destructive species, and varroa jacobsoni the less serious variety but still a serious problem. Earliest classification systems did not recognize the separate species and classified both pests varroa jacobsoni.

The first objective of beekeepers should be to keep varroa infestation levels low throughout the season. Because varroa reproduction coincides with honey bee reproduction it is natural that infestation levels are highest toward the end of the summer season. As a result of high infestation levels at that time of year many apparently strong hives can totally collapse and die practically overnight leaving beekeepers bewildered about what caused their hive to die so quickly since it was so strong. The devil is in the details.

Varroa prefer to reproduce in drone brood because the extra 3 days it takes for drones to develop makes it possible for 4 adult mites to develop in each cell rather than the usual 1. At that rate infestation levels can rise quickly. While varroa do reproduce in worker cells throughout the season they naturally turn more to worker brood when the

*(Continued on page 4)*

## The Place to Bee on

**Tuesday, August 16 at 7:00 p.m.**

### Agenda

Meeting Call to Order  
Welcome and New Member Introduction  
Overview and Free Raffle Tickets

### Reports

4-H  
Projects  
OSBA  
Area Reports

### Announcements

Show and Tell  
BEE-Short, Practical Beekeeping  
Aug and Sept Calendar  
Questions/Concerns  
Refreshments

Tom and Fran Davidson,  
Successful Steps for Overwintering  
Hives

Raffle and Adjourn

## President's Letter

What a good time we had at the Picnic on July 19<sup>th</sup>! Good food, an auction and our professional barbecue chef, Dan O'Callaghan! Thanks Dan and everyone for putting on a terrific picnic. The food you all provided was outstanding and Dave Foubert ran a great auction. Thanks also to Jeanie Doe who helped coordinate what dishes everyone were bringing. Thanks to all who purchased and donated to the club.

**News Flash!** We will be meeting in the Buckeye Room at the Greene County Extension Office for our October 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. The building is located behind the Grandstands at the Greene County Fairgrounds in Xenia. Please mark your calendars for this venue change for October 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Swarm Season** is not over! We have reports of swarms still occurring, so I recommend you continue to apply your swarm prevention techniques.

**Next Meeting:** Tom and Fran Davidson will be presenting their secret six (6) steps that will guarantee you will be a successful beekeeper and overwinter your hives! I have been trying to pry this info from them for a while; now they will teach us all. They had (along with two other apiaries) a 100% survival rate last winter. Obviously they know what they are talking about. If you apply these techniques, your success rate will increase. Fran also requests you bring an empty two liter plastic pop bottle and she will demonstrate/help you make a yellow jacket trap. Yellow jackets are persistent robbers and can destroy a small hive.

Overwintering our hives is one of our biggest challenges. The foundation for a strong hive that will survive the winter is laid in August and September. If you can't seem to get a hive to "take off", combine it

with another hive....take your loss now instead of the winter. Nectar flows are down and if you want strong hives for the winter watch/be prepared to:

- 1.Feed. Feed up until the goldenrod flow starts.
- 2.Treat for mites or break the queen cycle to kill them naturally.
- 3.Move capped brood frames into weak hives and use small hive beetle traps.

On the farm, it seems that this season is still in overdrive. Everything happens at a rapid pace this year. I have a nuc that built deep sized comb in an opening and fully laid the comb with brood in record time. Since it was attached to the lid, I ended up removing it and placing it in an open frame secured with rubber bands. They should do fine. Robbing is in full swing and I have reduced my entrances so that the smaller hives will have a chance to fight off the robbers. I have screened bottom boards so they will have adequate ventilation in the heat. I have started monitoring hive honey levels during my inspections to see if/when I need to start feeding.

For those who signed up for a sugar buy, the price is down to \$.42 cents a pound for cane sugar (cane sugar is not GMO, beet sugar has a chance of being GMO) in 10-pound bags. I will let you know when the shipment is arriving.

I am sorry that I failed to bring up the honey moisture measuring at the picnic. So for our August meeting, if you want your honey moisture content measured, bring a small sample to the meeting and we will measure it for you. If you own a moisture meter, please bring it to the meeting and help measure the moisture content for our members.

Thanks. See you August 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Dave Allen**

### GCBA 2016 Board Members:

President:	Dave Allen
Vice-President:	Dave Foubert
Secretary:	
Treasurer:	Tom Davidson
Communications:	Terry Lieberman-Smith
Webmaster:	Dan O'Callaghan
At-Large:	Fran Davidson, Jeannie Doe, Joe Valentour
Past President	Dan O'Callaghan

## What's Bloomin'



**Nectar Sources:** Basswood (American Linden), Yellow Sweet Clover, White Sweet Clover, Milkweed, Mints, Bergamot, Loosestrifes, Vetches, Catmint

**Nectar and Pollen:** Catalpa, Bramble fruits, Roses, Coneflowers, Ohio Buckeye, Rudbeckia, Thistles,

**Pollen:** St. John's Wort

## Treasurer's Report

Balance 9 July 2016	\$3733.78
Deposit Honey Harvest	\$749.00
Deposit Picnic Auction	\$305.00
Deposit Dues	\$ 30.00
Check #1094 Honey	-389.30
Check #1095 Food Picnic	- 89.72
Check # 1096 Greene Co Extension	<u>-65.00</u>
Balance 4 August 2016	\$4273.76

## Basic Buzz in the Beeyard

### August

- Check colonies for disease and monitor/treat for mites
- Remove and extract summer honey crop
- Remove section Supers
- Do not work bees unless necessary to avoid robbing
- Add more supers if needed.
- Decide if you will be re-queening

### September (really?)

- Check colonies for disease and monitor/treat for mites
- Provide supers for fall goldenrod and aster flow
- Requeen Colonies
- Unite weak colonies



## OSBA Fall Conference— *Bee There!* November 5, 2016

This year's OSBA Fall Conference at Tolles Career and Technical Center in Plain City OH will be another record-setting event. Guest speakers include:

Jamie Ellis

Steve Repasky

Reed Johnson

Alex Zomchek

Christie Welch

And others....

Check out our website for the growing list of vendors. Current list includes Bee-Pothecary, Better-bee, Dadant, Blue Sky Bee Supply, Kelley Bee Supply, and Mel Disselkoen. If you pre-order your beekeeping supplies, these vendors will bring them to the conference and you will save on shipping and handling.

Get your honey entries ready for our every popular Honey Judging Contest, judged by Jim Thompson.

For more information, visit [www.OhioStateBeekeepers.org](http://www.OhioStateBeekeepers.org)

## Honey Bee News:

[City Bees Stick to a Flower Diet Rather Than Slurp Up Soda](#)

[Neonicotinoid-contaminated pollinator strips adjacent to cropland reduce honey bee nutritional status](#)

[Research Colonies Stolen In Canada. Worth \\$10,000 each!](#)

**Bee Aware** (Continued from page 1)

bees reduce or quit producing drones once the swarming season is over. The result is greater infestation levels and weakening of a greater proportion of the worker bee population which can cause the sudden collapse of the colony.

Whatever method of treatment for varroa is used it needs to be completed before the end of August so that it is healthy bees that produce healthy bees which will over winter.

## Seasonal Resource Page

### Robber Screens:

- <http://entomology.ucdavis.edu/files/147611.pdf>
- <http://www.beeworks.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=40>
- <http://cookevillebeekeepers.com/06/how-to-make-a-simple-robber-screen>

### Not Sure What Robbing Looks Like?

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vOfn2Nj4JY>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pT9bofzyZa0>

### Yellow Jacket Traps....lots of choices:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xiTggZSLjpE>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqMBIEqOI2I>
- <http://tipnut.com/wasp-trap/> lots of choices

### Water for Bees: Getting ready for winter:

#### Home-Made version of Honey Bee Healthy (adapted from Beesource)

5 cups water  
2 ½ pounds of sugar  
15 drops spearmint oil  
15 drops lemongrass oil

Heat the water to a boil. Remove from heat and stir in the sugar until dissolved. Once the sugar water has cooled, add the essential oils. Stir until everything is evenly distributed.

This solution should have a strong scent and not be left open around bees.

Cool completely before using.

I store this concentrate in the fridge -label it so that your family doesn't drink it!!

Approx. dosage: 1 tsp per quart of 1:1 sugar syrup for feeding

### Marshmallow Bee Fondant

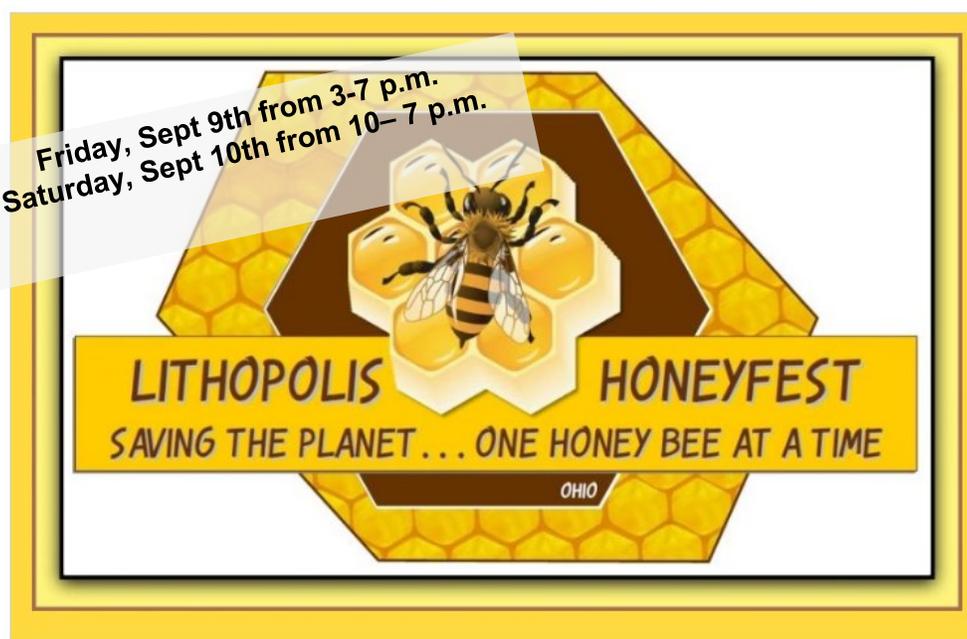
3 bags (10.5 oz) marshmallows  
½ c. water  
4 pounds confectioners sugar

Put marshmallows in a microwave safe bowl. Bowl needs to be large because marshmallows will puff up and cause a mess if they overflow. Pour water over marshmallows. Microwave, 20 seconds at a time, until melted.

Carefully remove from microwave. Stir in powdered sugar. Once it is difficult to stir, turn out on cutting board or countertop that has been dusted with confectioner's sugar. Knead in remaining sugar.

Coat the fondant with a light layer of shortening to help keep it moist. Wrap in several layers of plastic wrap.

Look for sales of marshmallows at the end of the cookout season!



## Lesson Learned !

### Jeanie Doe

This is my 3rd year of beekeeping. All of my hives are new this year-2 are Georgia package bees and one is a swarm I got in May.

My center Georgia beehive has been a super hive with a lot of bees and honey and a beautiful queen. During the last week in June I noticed my swarm hive was not as active as it previously had been. My grandkids were arriving for a 10 day visit so I didn't have time to get into the hive. When they left I opened up the hive and knew I had a serious problem. I saw not many bees and no queen.

I called Fran and Tim Davidson and they came out to look. The hive lacked a queen but they also saw evidence of drone laying worker(s). Oh no ! What could be worse ?

From what I'd read this is mostly a situation of no return and the hive is doomed. Either I move and dismantle the hive or just let them die out. Fran and Tom had just read the translated, Laying Workers. It Happens. Fix It. article by Hungarian beekeeper Paul Hizsnyai in the July 2016 Bee Culture magazine. Mr Hizsnyai says a drone laying worker hive can be turned around by moving the hive to the place where a strong hive is sitting and the strong hive takes the weak hive's place. The foraging workers from the strong hive will come into the weak hive. Destroy as much of the drone brood as you can with a capping tool and let the weak hive sit for 2 days; the foragers will clean up the hive. Then add a nuc with a queen.

This is what we did and after 10 days my weak hive has an influx of new bees, a lot of capped brood and different stages of larvae from the new queen. There's very little drone brood comb or drones and I don't really notice my strong hive as having less bees.

I'm going on vacation for a week and will check my hives when I get back but I feel that this hive has been completely turned around. My many thanks to Fran and Tom Davidson for all their help and having read a timely article with a solution for a dying hive. If you missed the article it's worth going back to the July Bee Culture magazine and Hizsnyai explains the process in detail.

#### Editor's Note:

*Thanks for the article Jeanie. Two things to note....not only a great reason to invest in a subscription to a beekeeping magazine (club members can get a **discount** to American Bee Journal), but also to enroll in the multi-session beekeeping classes through Greene County Parks & Trails, as this is one of the beekeeping management skills taught in the 201 class!*

*While swarms are fun to catch, they usually come with an older (potentially failing) queen.*

# GCBA Honey Harvest Review in Photos:

