CAPITAL AREA BEEKEEPERS
MARCH 2010 NEWSLETTER

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2010 CABA MONTHLY MEETING CALENDAR

The Capital Area Beekeepers Association meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7 PM in the auditorium of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Building, 5825 Florida Blvd., Baton Rouge. The following calendar of events outlines subjects/speakers for March 2010 through May 2010.

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APISTAN & CHECKMITE+ ORDERS

The Apistan and Checkmite+ orders are now available. Please see David Ferguson and/or Michael Tchoukalov at the next meeting or contact Michael at 225-767-0118 if you cannot make the meeting but need treatments. A limited amount of Apistan is available. A slightly larger supply of Checkmite+ is available but will only be sold in 10 packs due to the hazard of handling the product. Due to the small amount of treatments ordered the CABA may reconsider continuing this service.

LAST CHANCE FOR QUEEN AND PACKAGE BEE ORDER

Those interested in a CABA queen and/or package bee order in 2010 have until the March meeting to sign-up. Only current CABA members are allowed to participate, so please pay your 2010 membership dues by the meeting. You must also pay for your queen and/or package order in full at that time. You are reminded that queens are $14.00 each and 3 lb. packages with queen are $50.00 each. Marked queens are $1.50 each extra.

Breeder queens used by our Louisiana suppliers are “Minnesota Hygienic” Italian bees. Minnesota Hygienic Italians were developed by Dr. Marla Spivak at the University of Minnesota Bee Lab. These bees are bred to have a high degree of hygienic behavior known to be effective against diseases of the brood such as American foulbrood and chalkbrood. This trait is thought to be two behaviors acting in synergy, the uncapping of diseased cells, then the removal of the pathogen along with the pupae, effectively disrupting the disease lifecycle. Another trait, Varroa Sensitive Hygiene (VSH) is especially effective at targeting varroa mites.

Check with David Ferguson and Alva Stuard at the March meeting to confirm and pay for your order in full. If your 2010 membership dues have not been paid, you must add the dues payment to your check. Orders should be available for pickup by the last week of March or the first week of April. You will be notified of the delivery date so make sure the telephone number we have for you is correct. You must arrange to have your order picked up on arrival.
HONEY BEES BY MAIL

The honey bees that I ordered last January arrived in the mail and that’s when I started this post. As soon as I picked up my 3 pound package of bees at the post office I misted them with some cool water. They were definitely thirsty! Since it was a bit cool that day, the bees rode in the cab of my truck to keep them from being chilled on the ride home.

The first thing I did to get the bees into the hive was to take out 4 frames to make a space for the bees. Next, I pried the plywood cover off of the package. This is my first ever hive of bees and my frames are completely empty. I’m using wooden starter strips instead of wax foundation, so hopefully, the bees will build nice comb in the frames.

The package contained a can of syrup with a few holes in it for the bees to eat as they moved through the mail system. After removing the can I kept the bees in the cage by laying the little piece of plywood back over the hole. I noticed the workers had deposited white wax on the queen cage while in route. They really could not wait to get to work.

The queen was confined in the cage which was hanging in the package. The queen and worker bees were collected from different hives at the commercial apiary where the bees were produced, so the cage gave the bees time to accept her. Otherwise they would have surely killed her. I ordered her marked with a spot of florescent green paint to make her easier to find.

Anyway, the queen cage has a cork that keeps the queen in for the trip, and under the cork there is supposed to be a plug made out of sugar “candy” that the workers will gnaw away to free the queen. Unfortunately when I removed the cork there wasn’t any candy, so I put the cork back in and went and got a piece of bread to plug the hole. I figured that if the queen was still in the cage in a few days I would release her manually during the first inspection of the new hive. I should have prepared for this possibility and had a marshmallow to plug the hole. I did not know if they would eat the bread but I figured the workers would feed the queen through the cage screen and she would be fine.

If you do what I did in this picture you will probably also have to repair the crossed comb that they will build. I found out a few days later that this was a horrible mistake – the bees started building comb off of the queen cage instead of from the starter strips in the frames.

After I removed the cork and improvised a plug I hung the queen and her attendants from one of the frames near the center of the hive. I’ve seen pictures of people having to bend nails and whatnot to improvise a hanger, but the strip of soft sheet metal that this package came with seems to be way easier to use.

Usually in package bee installation you are instructed to shake the bees out through the 3 inch hole left by the syrup can. Lots of shaking involved which doesn’t look too pleasant for the bees. However, I just took the screen loose on the side of the box to open up the entire side as instructed in a “Beemaster” video on installing a package of bees. The whole bunch come out that way, with very little effort or trauma to the bees.

Now just carefully replace all of the frames. Slowly wiggle them in to give the bees a chance to get out of the way. It seems impossible from the way this picture looks, but I don’t think I killed a single one.

Now carefully replace the inner cover. That piece of plywood with the round hole and screen is just laying over a corresponding round hole in the inner cover. My idea is to feed the bees without them getting into the upper chamber. We’ll see how it works. By the way I made all of the hive parts except the frames from scratch. I’m planning to use 8 frame medium depth hive bodies for everything.

The jar of syrup has a few holes punched in the lid and goes right over the screen. If they drink that too quickly, I’ll use a gallon paint can later. Next, I installed an empty hive body and the outer cover. If I had been on the ball I would have placed the entrance reducer before I started.

In just a few minutes the bees were all moving inside and flying around the yard orienting themselves to their new home. In a few hours they were already bringing in pollen from blackberry flowers.

This process might look intimidating, but after all of the waiting I really enjoyed the whole thing. I didn’t get stung and they didn’t seem to want to fly away.
It is not wise to use empty frames on the installation of a package or a swarm. Mr. LaFerney mentioned in a later blog entry that the bees were starting to build combs across frames rather than the length of the frames. Wired foundation will eliminate any problems with wax being built across frames as described by Mr. LaFerney during his package installation. Drawn comb would be even better but is not usually available to the new beekeeper on his first package honey bee installation.

**NOTE:** The pictures used in this article were taken by Shirley LaFerney. The Door Garden website may be visited at [http://doorgarden.com](http://doorgarden.com) I would like to thank David and Shirley LaFerney for allowing me to use text and pictures from his article to benefit the members of the Capital Area Beekeepers Association.
We’d like to introduce you to Christopher Stowell, a Boy Scout in Troop 250, Skiatook, OK. Christopher recently asked for our help. He is submitting a proposal to the National Boy Scout Council to reinstate the Boy Scout Beekeeping Merit Badge which was discontinued in 1995.

Christopher wrote, “Hello, “I am 13 years old and a bee keeper. I am also a Boy Scout. Recently I sent out a letter asking everyone to support my efforts to get the Bee Keeping Merit Badge reinstated in Scouting. The time is here to take action.”

Chris says, “I believe that now more than ever before the survival of the honey bee is important to all. If other boys are not encouraged to learn how to become beekeepers, the honey bee will surely die out. Not only do I feel this way, but beekeepers all across America believe in the importance of teaching the younger generation the importance of the honey bee.”

Häagen-Dazs Brand is helping Chris! They are interested in the sustainability of bees because more than 50% of its all natural flavors use ingredients that are pollinated by bees. They write, “Alarmingly, over the last three years more than 1 in 3 bee colonies have died nationwide. Researchers are calling this mysterious bee disappearance Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), a condition that could threaten the U.S. food supply. Scientists say that the future situation for honey bees is dire since the average age of a beekeeper is 60 years old. Christopher wants to change that, by reinstating the Boy Scout Beekeeping Merit Badge, in order to train a younger population to help protect honey bees.”

Chris also adds, “Haagen Daz is making it easy for everyone who values the honey bee and thinks that the Bee Keeping Merit Badge should be reinstated by Boys Scouts of America. I am asking you to check out the sites below and please sign the petition. There is also a place where you can write a short letter to The National Boy Scouts Council telling them why you think the Bee Keeping Merit Badge should be reinstated. If you can do both that would be great! Remember to pass it on to everyone you know. I am counting on all of you for your support.”

Haagen Daz further adds, “We encourage you to send the letter for Christopher. Feel free to add your own thoughts in the designated area. We will print and send all of the letters to Christopher at the end of June to support his proposal. You can also sign a petition at The Experience Project website to show your support.”

The web sites for electronically signing the letter and petition are listed below. Click on one, then the other to see what it is all about.

http://www.helpthehoneybees.com/#buzzlove

Plus,
http://www.experienceproject.com/beepetition

**COLLISON’S CORNER**

The success of a honey bee colony is dependent upon their ability to forage for the materials necessary for colony development, maintenance, and survival. Colony survival is highly dependent on the hoarding instinct, as well as the collection and storage of food. Depending upon the needs of the colony, honey bees actively collect nectar, pollen, water and propolis (plant sap) as they forage away from the hive. These materials and provisions are collected by field bees; each requiring a distinctive set of behaviors.

Honey bee colonies use a variety of strategies to integrate individual worker activities to meet colony requirements efficiently. Many factors regulate the foraging activities of the colony. The type and quantity of forage collected is related to colony needs and environmental conditions. Foragers are directed to food sources by other field bees through an elaborate system of communicative dances. To bees, food means nectar and pollen. Together, they supply both brood and adults with all their nutritional requirements.
Worker honey bees become field bees when they are 2 to 3 weeks old (Winston, 1987). At that time, they tend to either specialize on collecting pollen or nectar on single foraging trips or become generalists and collect both (Fewell & Page 1993). The decision to collect pollen by honey bee foragers depends on the number of larvae (brood), amount of stored pollen in the colony, as well as forager genotype and available environmental resources (Pankiw et al, 1998). Quantities of stored pollen are regulated by colonies through negative feedback. Pollen foraging activity decreases when excess pollen is added to a colony until the excess pollen has been depleted through consumption and the quantity of stored pollen returns to pre-manipulation levels. When pollen is removed from a colony, the number of pollen foragers, trip frequencies, and pollen load size increases until the amount of stored pollen is restored to the previous balance between foraging intake and nurse bee consumption.

To clarify how pollen foragers detect the supply of pollen in the hive, individual foragers returning with pollen were followed within observation hives (Dreller and Tarpy 2000). Pollen foragers deposited their loads on the frame where most of the unsealed brood was, independent of the position of this frame within the hive. They also inspected more cells on that frame and spent most of their time there, indicating that pollen foragers may individually evaluate the pollen requirements of the colony. In 18 normal-sized colonies they tested whether olfactory cues provided by a frame of hungry young brood or an additional pollen frame covered by cages affect foraging activity. These experiments showed that olfactory stimulation within the colony is insufficient to increase or decrease the foraging effort, but suggest that foragers must have direct contact with the brood and pollen area to regulate their foraging activity according to the conditions in the colony.

Fewell and Winston (1992) examined interactions between individual foraging behavior and pollen storage levels. Colonies responded to low pollen storage conditions by increasing pollen intake rates by 54% relative to high pollen storage conditions, demonstrating a direct relationship between pollen storage levels and foraging effort. Approximately 80% of the difference in pollen intake rates was accounted for by variation in individual foraging effort, via changes in foraging activity and individual pollen load size. An additional 20% resulted from changes in the proportion of the foraging population collecting pollen. Under both high and low pollen storage treatments, colonies returned pollen storage levels to pre-experimental levels within 16 days, suggesting that honey bees regulate pollen storage levels around a homeostatic set point.

The presence of young larvae also affects the proportion of foragers collecting pollen; more larvae result in more pollen foraging. This behavioral response has been shown to be related to brood pheromone. This pheromone is composed of fatty acid esters extractable from the surface of honey bee larvae. Hexane extracts of larvae containing brood pheromone stimulated foraging (Pankiw et al, 1998). Colonies were provided with extracts of 1000 larvae (brood pheromone), 1000 larvae (brood), or no brood or pheromone. Colonies with brood pheromone and brood had similar numbers of pollen foragers, while those colonies without brood or pheromone had significantly fewer pollen foragers. The number of pollen foragers increased more than 2.5-fold when colonies were provided with extracts of 2000 larvae as a supplement to the 1000 larvae they already had. Within 1 hour of presenting colonies with brood pheromone, pollen foragers responded to the stimulus. The results from this study demonstrate some important aspects of pollen foraging in honey bee colonies: 1) pollen foragers appear to be directly affected by brood pheromone, 2) pollen foraging can be stimulated with brood pheromone in colonies provided with pollen but no larvae, and 3) pollen forager numbers increase with brood pheromone as a supplement to brood without increasing the number of larvae in the colony.

References:
HONEY AND/OR BEESWAX WANTED

▪ New crop “dark” honey (pleasant tasting) in 5 gallon containers; contact John Bourgeois at 985 226-0990.

▪ Unprocessed beeswax cappings or filtered beeswax blocks from cappings. Please call or email James Henderson at 225 803-5406 / LA Beekeeper@earthlink.net to negotiate a price or barter for products offered for sale.

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS GET TO YOU FASTER

The CABA electronic newsletter is available to members and will get to you faster than regular mail. The quality is also better than the hardcopies we mail out. Pictures are in color and are very sharp. As well as being more convenient to members, the electronic newsletter helps save on the labor and expense involved in preparing and sending our members hardcopies. Contact Jimmy Dunkley at beebop4923@cox.net to submit your e-mail address.

WE NEED YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS, PLUS, YOUR PICTURE IS NEEDED FOR OUR MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY!

Members of our club would like to be able to recognize fellow members. Please send a recent picture of yourself to beebop4923@cox.net or show up at our next meeting and have your picture taken. It doesn’t hurt, I promise! Otherwise, the image to the right could be you.

UTILIZE THE SPACE BELOW TO SELL YOUR BEE PRODUCTS!

BEEKEEPING EQUIPMENT AND/OR PRODUCTS FOR SALE *

▪ Cleaned pollen for sale; contact Doug Doremus at 225/293-7497 (H).

▪ Honey for sale in 5 gallon containers; contact David Ferguson at 225/262-0716 (H).

▪ April nucs and/or honey for sale in various size containers; contact Bobby Frierson at 225/241-6132 (C).

▪ Specialty items for sale (beeswax candles, creamed honey, etc.); New Observation Hive for sale (oak design on rotating base, 4 deep frames, needs glass for both sides). Price at $400.00; contact J. Henderson at 225/803-5406 (C).

*The Louisiana Apiary Law requires that all honey bee colonies and used beekeeping equipment be inspected before it can be sold.

JOIN THE CAPITAL AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION TODAY!

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CAPITAL AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Beekeeper’s Name ___________________________________________ No. Colonies _______

Spouse’s Name _______________________________________________ No. Yards _______

Address _____________________________________________________ Telephone ___________

City __________________________ State ________________ Zip _______

E-mail Address _________________________________________________

Annual membership dues are $10.00. Please send your check payable to the Capital Area Beekeepers Association, c/o Mr. David Ferguson, P.O. Box 716, Brusly, La. 70719.

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REGISTER ALL HONEY BEE COLONIES WITH THE LA. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY!