Nashville Area Beekeepers

December 2021

News

Missing a Newsletter?
Archive

nashbee.org

Next Meeting:

What Do Honeybees Do All Winter?

by

Al Taylor

December 12th, 2021

2 p.m.

In Person!!

Please Wear Facemask

Ellington Agricultural Center
416 Hogan Road, Nashville
Detailed Directions & Map -page 11

Submitted by Buzz Evans

Save the Date!

Saturday, February 12, 2022

Advanced Beekeeping Workshop

Ed Jones Auditorium

8:00AM to 3:30 PM

Presentations by:

Dr. Clarence Collison

Kent Williams

December 12th Meeting

Al Taylor

Al Taylor

Al Taylor's first experience with honeybees was as a child going to the beehives with his grandmother who kept bees for honey. Nine years ago, Al and his wife Lou started Hon Taylor Honeybees in Smyrna, Tennessee as a hobby. It didn't take long for 2 hives to become more than 100. In addition to packages and NUCs, they have expanded their operation to include the grafting and raising of honeybee queens. Their apiary features small cell bees and their current stock includes Italian, Carniolan, Sue Cobey Carnicas, Caucasian and Mite Chewer breeder queens. They have recently participated in a project with the Kentucky Queen Bee Breeders Association to produce Purdue Mite Chewer queen cells and F1 queens. In addition to working with his bees, Al has taught beekeeping classes and is a local bee Inspector.

Al will present **"What Do Honeybees Do All Winter?"** His talk will be a look at the biology of winter bees and their impact on your colonies next spring. Thermal images will be shown to see where the cluster is in the hive. Al will discuss "What should you be doing, if anything, to help them survive the winter months?"

John Benham's December Tips!

John Benham

End of the bee cycle - The end of the bee cycle is sometime in late December. The beginning of the yearly cycle starts sometime after the winter solstice in December. The queen will start laying a small number of eggs to replace some winter bees around this time. This is actually the beginning of the Spring build up and caution should be taken if feeding brood builder patties. Cold weather will be around for some time to come and the natural brood build up is slow to occur coinciding with outside food sources such as pollen which will not be available for several weeks. The build up occurring at this time is dependent on Winter Bees and the fat (protein) they have stored to feed the larva that are being produced. Here is when the Winter Bees are necessary for survival. The Brood being reared at this time will be the nurse bees and pollen foragers when the weather breaks and the major brood build-up begins to increase accordingly. The Winter Bees are designed for fat storage but are poor pollen and nectar foragers, thus the necessity of the brood being reared that will be the correct age to forage when the weather breaks and pollen is available. The current honey stores in the colony will be used at an increasing rate for thermoregulation in the colder weather. As the weather warms, more stores are used as food (carbohydrates) for the increasing population of adult bees. All beekeepers should be thinking about this while monitoring long range forecasts for the late winter, early Spring period and giving consideration to the food stores that were noted for the colonies in the Fall. STAY WELL AHEAD OF THE FOOD BEING CONSUMED AND THE COLONY BUILD-UP!

Consider oxalic acid vaporization treatment as the amount of brood is normally low during December. Base your decision on ambient and forecast weather conditions. Consulting with experienced beekeepers on the "How's and Why's" of oxalic acid treatments is advised. Continue to monitor food supplies, lifting the hive and peeking in if candy or sugar was added earlier in season. Even though the colony is in a predominantly dormant period they need to be checked and/or observed occasionally for hive security and food supplies. Make sure dead bees do not block the entrance.

Any questions or comments on these Tips please contact John Benham

Pollinator Plant of the Month (*Submitted by Ian Dawe*)

Ian Dawe

Featuring: Mahonia-Oregon Grape

Duration: Perennial
Habit: Shrub
Leaf: Green, evergreen
Size Class: 4-6 ft.

Bloom Color: Yellow
Bloom Time: Dec - March

Mahonia flowers for many weeks in the winter with bright yellow, fragrant blossom which is worked by Honeybees for nectar on days warm enough to bring them out of their hive.

Clusters of often scented winter flowers are a magnet for bees. The leaves are leathery and evergreen, and flowers are usually followed by dark purple berries.

Evergreen shrub widely planted on account of its ability to withstand shade and tolerance of a very wide range of soils, though prefers moist but well-drained, humus-rich soil in semi-shade, preferring edges of woodland, and dapple-shade beneath trees and will tolerate sun for part of the day. Mahonia needs to be protected from full direct sun and high winds. It is also said to be drought-tolerant though perhaps would not grow as lush in very dry areas.

Nectar & pollen are collected in small quantities but is considered an important honey plant in in urban gardens.

Pollen pellets are greenish-yellow

Pollen source*** Nectar source *

Mahonia

Information Courtesy of Garden Plants for Honey Bees by Peter Lindtner and Plants Honey Bees Use by Shannon R. Trimboli

Introducing NABA Members

Dolly Carlisle How I Fell in Love with Bees

Dolly Carlisle

I didn't plan to become a beekeeper. Frankly, I hadn't paid much attention to bees throughout my life. But a few years ago, I did want to grow vegetables and fruits in our suburban yard. So I signed up for the Master's Gardeners of Davidson County and learned enough about gardening to begin. But the first couple of years, our garden didn't produce much. That's when I realized how important bees and other pollinators were. I began to notice that our garden had very few of them. And without them, a large percentage of our plantings weren't going to produce.

So my husband, David Hinton, and I decided that we needed honey bees. We purchased a NUC, the basic equipment and we assumed the bees would take care of themselves. The first couple of years were a disaster and if I hadn't been the type of person who likes a challenge, I would have quit.

That's when we joined NABA and found a mentor or two. That was four years ago. We've lost several hives. I get sad to think of how many we lost. But we kept purchasing NUCS and packages and continued to go to NABA classes and asking questions. I n that process, I somehow fell in love with the honeybees. Yes, they sting. Yes, I had to find out a lot of how bees live to support them. And they certainly don't look like something that I would fall in love with. But fall in love, I did.

The honeybee society is much more sophisticated that I could have imagined. They live for the benefit of the community, not the individual. Which is perhaps why they've been around for over 50 million years. Looking around these days, this homo sapiens wonders if our species will last nearly that long on the planet. (We've only been around about 200,000 years.) At some point in my learning curve of caring for the bees, I stopped seeing myself as lording over the bees, but rather asking what I can learn from them.

I love their ways of communication, like the toggle and the wiggle. Their dances aren't just ways to move and express themselves, but actually have a purpose. Theirs is a truly democratic society, with each bee getting a vote. And the girls call the shots. They do all of the work (unless you call mating with the queen - work), so why shouldn't they set the rules and enforce them?

Like I said, us humans could learn a thing or two from the honeybees.

While learning about the bees, I was totally dependent on mentors and kind individuals within NABA to guide me on my way to being a better beekeeper. I am so grateful for them. They, like the bees, know that passing on their knowledge and wisdom is what keeps the community of beekeepers flourishing. Which is why I volunteered to be the NABA volunteer coordinator. Aristotle is reported to say, "What is the essence of life? To serve others and to do good." I am told that he was a very smart man, maybe as smart as the honeybees.

So if you have learned a thing or two about the bees, please follow the example of great beekeepers like John Benham, Buzz Evans and Gene Armstrong and step up to help new beekeepers by volunteering to be a mentor or serve in some other way in NABA. Contact me and let me know how you'd like to help (dolly.carlisle@gmail.com). And if enough of us do this, maybe, just maybe, us homo sapiens will be around as long as the honey bees.

Introduction to Beekeeping School
January 14/15, 2022
Ed Jones Auditorium

The 2022 Introduction to Beekeeping School will take place at Ed Jones Auditorium on January 14 and 15. The auditorium is located at Ellington Agriculture Center at 416 Hogan Road in Nashville. Please see the map on page 11 in this newsletter.

The school will run from 5:30 to 9:00 PM on Friday the 14th and 9:00 AM to 3:45 PM on Saturday the 15th. Registration will be available at our monthly meetings and on our website, nashbee.org. Tuition is $60 and includes lunch on Saturday, nine hours of instruction, a copy of "Beekeeping in Tennessee" and NABA membership for 2022. Additional family members are $35 each. Free parking is available at the auditorium.

For more information, contact Mike Brent, mbrent@bradley.com or you can register on our website, nashbee.org

NABA Monthly Zoom Meetings- On Website

Did you miss any of our monthly ZOOM meetings? Our programs are posted to the NABA website under "Member Resources". A description of each speaker's program is available in the Newsletter for that month.

The recorded program includes the speaker's presentation plus the question and answer session that followed.

January 2021:	"Basic Equipment for Beekeeping" by David Sells
February 2021:	"Recovering from Winter Losses" by Kent Williams
March 2021	Not recorded
April 2021	"The Game of Drones" by Julia Mahood
May 2021	"Processing Honey: A Closer Look" by Bob Binnie
June 2021	Not recorded
July 2021	"Is my Queen Ready for Winter" by Al Taylor
August 2021	"The Second Year of Keeping Bees or Beekeeping 201" by John Benham
September 2021	"Fall Feeding, Overwintering and Beyond" by Leonard Davis
October 2021	Not recorded
November 2021	Not recorded

Reviews of Books of Interest to Beekeepers (*Submitted by David Hinton*)

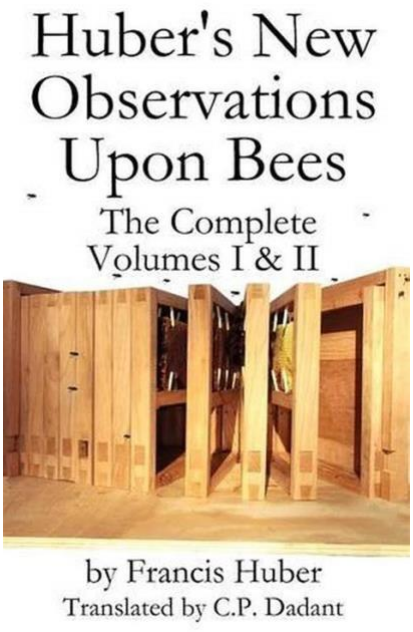
David Hinton

Huber's New Observations Upon Bees, the Complete Volumes I & II

Every field has its accomplished Master who gifts to society a masterpiece. In literature we might choose Shakespeare and "Macbeth," for music Beethoven and the Ninth Symphony, for philosophy Plato and *The Republic,* for painting Leonardo da Vinci and *Mona Lisa.* These masterpieces are works that stand the test of time.

My nomination for the Master and Masterpiece in beekeeper is Francois (Francis in the English translation and Franz in the German)) Huber and his massive work *Huber's New Observations Upon Bees, The complete Volumes I & II."*

For us contemporary readers Huber's observations aren't so new; in fact, the book was originally published in France in 1792 and translated into English and German shortly after. We still read his book today because his observations were groundbreaking and still hold true. Huber informed his readers startling new facts about honeybees such as his revelation that the Queen does not mate in the hive but rather in the air during a mating flight; that bees can convert eggs into Queens by feeding royal jelly; and he describes how Queens battle each other and how drones are "massacred" at the end of summer-early fall. Some of his observations were made with his new invention, a glass-sided hive that was the forerunner of today's observation hives.



Huber's work as a scientist/observer was held in such high esteem that Charles Darwin treasured his copy and commented on it in his own ground-breaking *The Origin of Species.*

Now for the twist in the story: Francois Huber, that great observer of the honeybee—was blind!

Francois Huber was born in Geneva, Switzerland in 1750 to a distinguished family. His father, John Huber, was what is today referred to as a "Renaissance man," a gifted painter, sculptor, musician, and most of all, a witty conversationalist whose company was valued by the famous French philosophe, Voltaire. His son followed his father's tastes but added his own personal passion for the natural sciences and in particular, the honeybee.

In his mid-teens Huber began to suffer from a disease which gradually resulted in total blindness by his mid-twenties. His father took him to the most famous physicians in Europe for treatment but to no avail. But before he became totally blind, he began a romance with Marie Aimee Lullin that is worthy of a Hollywood movie. She defied her father's command not to be involved with this handicapped young man, but had to wait until the age of twenty-five, the legal age of majority at the time, to marry Francois. She devoted her life to her husband's life and work and became "his eyes."

So… are we to trust the scientific observations of a blind man?

My answer to that question is: never underestimate the ability of the mind to overcome the limitations of a body's senses. Do we not listen to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony because Beethoven was totally deaf when he wrote it? Of course not—it's arguably his greatest work and a masterpiece of classical music.

Huber had a powerful intellect and he always drew upon the visual memories of his sighted childhood. In addition to the assistance of his wife, Huber taught his young assistant Francois Burnens how to observe and directed his observations. Burnens remained with him throughout his life.

Huber's observations are written in beautiful, detailed prose. Just as an example, here is what he wrote about his introduction of a new Queen into a hive: " We next introduced into this hive a very prolific Queen, whose corselet we had painted to distinguish her from the reigning Queen: a circle of bees quickly formed around this stranger, but their intention was not to welcome or caress her, for they insensibly so accumulated around her and surrounded her so closely, that in a minute she lost her liberty and found herself a prisoner. . . ."

Huber's *New Observations"* was translated into a 632 page English edition in 1926 by Camille Pierre Dadant, the French immigrant founder of the Illinois-based beekeeping company bearing his name that I discussed in last month's book review. Dadant & Sons Inc. has kept the book in print since then. I thoroughly recommend it--not perhaps to be read cover from cover, but to be dived into and sampled throughout for the hundreds of gems to be found in his observations.

Available for checkout from the NABA Lending Library at the next meeting.

Bee Science

In the June 2021 issue of Antibiotics is a review on Beehive Products as Antibacterial Agents. Many studies have demonstrated that beehive products have numerous beneficial properties including the ability to act as antibiotics. Many individuals are interested in using natural approaches to improve health, and this interest combined with the decreasing effectiveness of our current traditional antibiotics makes this review worth reading and thinking about.

If you would like to read the article contact Deb

Cooking with Honey

Greek Olive Oil-Honey Cookies

(*cooking NYTimes.com*)

FOR THE SYRUP:

- 2 cups grams granulated sugar
- 2 (2-inch-long) cinnamon sticks
- 1 whole clove
- 1 orange
- ½ cup honey
-

FOR THE COOKIES:

- 1 ⅓ cups extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for greasing the pans, if needed
- 1 to 2 large oranges
- ¼ cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 tablespoons brandy
- 1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon ground clove
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 3 cups plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 cup fine semolina
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ cup toasted nuts, such as walnuts, pistachios or almonds, finely chopped

PREPARATION

1. Make the syrup: In a medium saucepan over high heat, combine sugar, cinnamon sticks and clove with 1 1/3 cups water. Cut orange in half and place in saucepan, flesh down. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally, until the sugar completely dissolves, about 4 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in honey. Set aside to cool completely, leaving the cinnamon, clove and orange in the syrup until ready to use.

2. Heat the oven to 375 degrees and line 4 baking sheets with parchment paper or nonstick liners, or lightly grease the pans with olive oil.

3. Finely grate the zest of 1 orange into a large mixing bowl. Cut the orange in half and squeeze the juice into a measuring cup. If it doesn't measure 1 cup (240 milliliters), squeeze in enough juice from the other orange. Add juice to the bowl with the zest, then mix in olive oil, sugar, brandy, cinnamon, nutmeg, clove and salt.

4. In a separate mixing bowl, whisk together flour, semolina and baking soda. Gradually, fold in the flour mixture into the olive oil mixture. With a wooden spoon, mix until flour is just evenly incorporated.

5. Using your hands, roll dough into 1 1/2-inch ovals or egg-shapes, and place 1 inch apart on prepared baking sheets. Using the palm of your hand, lightly flatten dough. Bake until cookies are golden, 20 to 25 minutes, rotating baking sheets halfway through for even baking.

6. Right before the cookies are done, remove the orange, cinnamon sticks and clove from the syrup. As soon as the cookies are out of the oven, and working in batches, dunk the hot cookies in the cool syrup, gently flipping them for about 10 seconds so they can absorb the syrup. Remove cookies from the syrup using a slotted spoon and arrange them on a tray or plate. Sprinkle the center of each cookie with a generous pinch of nuts, patting them lightly so they stick to cookies.

7. Once cool, store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 5 days. To prevent the cookies from sticking together, place sheets of wax or parchment paper between cookie layers.

Making Candles with Beeswax (*Submitted by Susan Welchance)*

Do you have questions? Email Susan

Thanks to Susan's generosity in sharing her knowledge we are providing instructions on processing and using beeswax. This information was originally provided in the August 2020 NABA newsletter.

Candle Mold Sources: Mann-Lake has a good selection of candle molds. Other beekeeping supply catalogs also have candle making supplies. Be sure to buy the correct size wick for the mold. The catalog will specify the size wick needed for the mold. Ceramic cookie molds are good ornament molds. Brown Bag cookie molds (discontinued but available on Ebay) make beautiful wax ornaments.

Candle Release: After candle has cooled, mold release can be aided by putting the mold in a freezer for 30 minutes. The wax will contract & release from the mold. A product called Mold Release is also very helpful in removing candles from molds. Beeswax candles burn dripless and smokeless with faint honey scent.

Wax Bloom: This is a frosty white coating that appears on beeswax over time. It is harmless & can be removed by rubbing with a soft cloth or warming the surface with a blow dryer. The bloom disappears at 102 degrees F. Bloom has no adverse effect on the way a candle burns.

NOTE: When working with hot, melting beeswax never leave it unattended. Beeswax' flashpoint is 490 – 525 degrees Fahrenheit (F). The melting point of beeswax is 143 – 151 degrees F. Ideal pouring temperature of wax is 150 – 170 degrees F.

CANDLE MAKING – ITEMS NEEDED:

- Beeswax;
- Hot plate; do not melt beeswax over an open flame!
- Fire extinguisher (you may never use it but better safe than sorry!);
- Double boiler components – sauce pan for boiling water & pouring pitcher for melting wax;
- Wick & wicking needle;
- Bobby pins or popsicle stick for centering wick;
- Mold(s);
- Digital Scale;
- Wax thermometer;
- Chop sticks or similar item for stirring;
- Mold Release;

MOLDS – Candle molds may be purchased (Mann-Lake is one good source). I prefer the rubber like polyurethane or silicone molds over the plastic molds) or they may be made from household items. Container candles can be made from items like small jars or coffee cups.

WICKS – It is important to have the right size wick for the candle or it will not burn efficiently.
Mann-Lake Wick Guide:
60 Ply Wicking: >3" diameter candle
2/0 Wicking: 1" – 3" diameter candle
4/0 Wicking: <1" diameter candle
Ready-made wicks with a wick holder tab can be purchased for container candles or tea light candles.

CANDLE POURING – INSTRUCTIONS FROM 2016 MANN-LAKE CATALOG

Lightly spray mold with Mold Release (repeat after 3-4 uses of mold). Use a wicking needle to thread wick through bottom of mold. Pull the wick so that it's about 6" longer than top of mold. Leave the wick at bottom of the mold long so when you remove candle, the mold re-wicks itself. If your mold has a cut in the side make sure the seams are aligned properly so there will be no need for seam repair. Secure the seams in place with a rubber band.

Secure the wick over the mold. Bobby pins or popsicle sticks work will for this purpose. The wick should be centered & straight but not too tight. A wick too tight or too loose will affect the way the candle burns. Pour melted wax into the mold **SLOWLY**. This prevents air bubbles from forming. The slower the candle cools the better it will turn out. When candle is completely cooled remove it from mold & trim wick at top & bottom of candle. The mold is now wicked & ready for next pouring. If the bottom of the candle is uneven, heat a metal pie tin to gently warm bottom of candle to flatten it out so the candle sits level.

WAX ORNAMENTS - Beautiful wax ornaments can be made with ceramic cookie molds. Discontinued Brown Bag cookie molds in beautiful patterns can be found on Ebay. When making a beeswax ornament spray the mold with Mold Release. Pour the melted wax into the mold **slowly**. Before the wax completely hardens insert a small piece of wooden skewer into the top of ornament for a hole. When the ornament has completely cooled, remove from mold. Gently work skewer through the wax ornament. Thread a narrow ribbon through the hole for an ornament hanger.

Warmest wishes from your newsletter team!

Directions to Ed Jones Auditorium

Ellington Agricultural Center, 416 Hogan Road, Nashville, Tennessee 37220

From I-65: Take Exit #78-A east on Harding Place. Take a right at the second light onto Trousdale Drive. Travel south on Trousdale for approximately 1.5 miles. Turn left on to Hogan Road at the four-way stop. Hogan Road ends at the front gates of the Ellington Agricultural Center. Note: all buildings have identifying lawn signs for your convenience.

From I-24: Take exit #56 west on Harding Place to the Nolensville Road intersection at Walmart. Turn left onto Nolensville Road and travel south 1/10 mile and turn right onto Edmondson Pike. Travel 1 1/2 miles on Edmondson Pike. The east entrance to Ellington Agricultural Center is on the right.

To the Ed Jones Auditorium: Enter the front gates from Hogan Road. Bear to your right. The Moss Building (antebellum style mansion) will be on your left at the top of the hill. Follow the drive until you reach the auditorium (a large white barn-like structure that sets at the end of the lawn behind the mansion.) It is located at 416 Hogan Road.