



Remember...

Meeting is at 7:00 at the Ag Building, Thursday, 10/18/12.

What's Blooming in the Piedmont?

Heartsease, Smartweed	<i>Polygonum spp.</i>	4-Jul	126	7-Nov
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago spp.</i>	8-Aug	67	14-Oct

OCTOBER 2012

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALAMANCE COUNTY BEEKEEPERS

Alamance County Beekeepers

This month's meeting...

Our next meeting is Thursday, October 18th. The topic will be "Lessons Learned as New Beekeepers". After this is anything like last year's "Lessons Learned" meeting, we all should have a good time and hopefully learn what NOT to do.

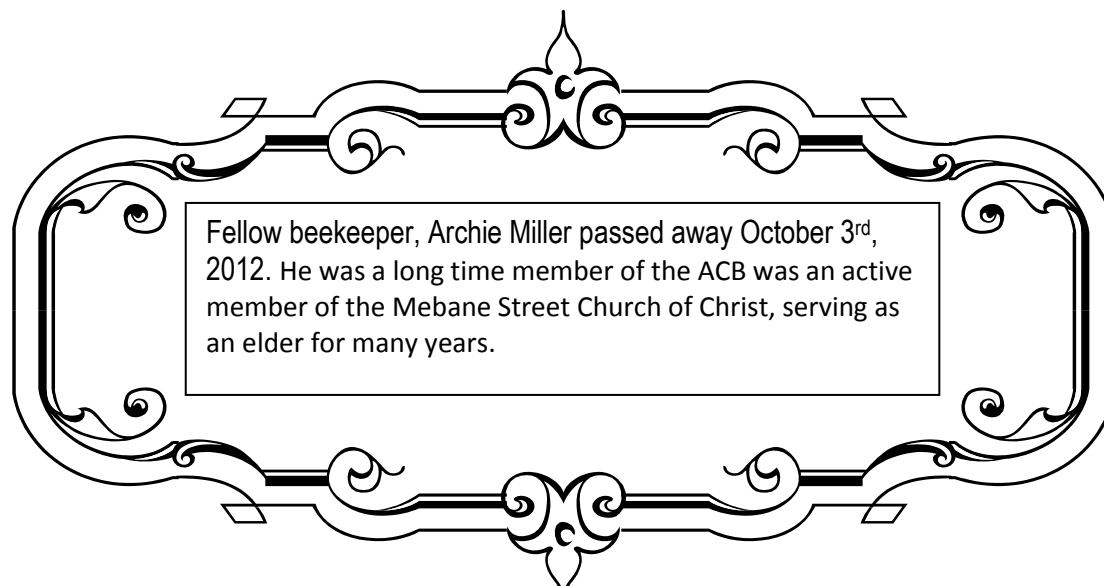
Our speakers will be Geoff Leister, Tony Abbruzzi, Bob & Pam Gaude and Kip Holsonback.

Please bring a few snacks and drinks for everyone to enjoy after the meeting. We will hear from the Nominating Committee during the Business Meeting.

Our next meeting will be November 15th and the topic is Woodworking – Building your own hive presented by our own Don Moore. Please mark your calendars as this should be a meeting you would not want to miss.



Also, three of our members built four Observation Hives (OH) last winter. One for each of two of them, one for the ACB Educational Equipment and one to be raffled off for the benefit of the ACB. The OH to be raffled off at this month's meeting is made from solid cherry and quite pleasing to the eye. Tickets will be \$1 each and of course, the more you buy, the better chance you have of winning this OH for your very own. All moneys will go to the ACB treasury.



Fellow beekeeper, Archie Miller passed away October 3rd, 2012. He was a long time member of the ACB was an active member of the Mebane Street Church of Christ, serving as an elder for many years.

Is Pollen Part of Honey?

Alan Harman

The European Commission is moving to overturn a court ruling that pollen is an ingredient in honey. The Commission said that in line with World Trade Organization standards, the proposal defines pollen as a **natural constituent of honey and not as an ingredient**. The change in EU rules, if accepted by all EU member states, would clarify the position for beekeepers left in limbo by the European Court of Justice ruling. The court said it considered pollen to be an ingredient in honey, rather than brought there naturally by the bees, and if it came from GM plants, the honey would have to carry a warning that it contained GM products.

The warning would be needed if GM pollen accounted for 0.9% of all the pollen in the honey. However, the Commission proposal recognizes that pollen is a natural constituent and not an ingredient of honey; it enters into the hive as a result of the activity of the bees and is found in honey regardless of whether the beekeeper intervenes. "Consequently, since pollen is considered as a natural constituent of honey, EU labeling rules requiring a list of ingredients would not apply," the commission says.

The EU accounts for about 13% of global honey production or 200,000 tonnes. Spain is the largest producer (33,000 tonnes), followed by Italy, Hungary and Romania (which each produce around 22,000 tonnes) and Portugal (21,000 tonnes). EU honey imports amount to around 140,000 tonnes and account for 40% of total EU consumption.

Beekeeping Ban: I received a call from a person in Plymouth County in Pennsylvania very concerned about an attempt to ban beekeeping in the county. The local beekeeping community is working diligently to ensure that responsible beekeeping is allowed to anyone who wishes to practice the craft. Certainly, beekeeping in residential and urban areas raises issues which are not of concern in a rural setting; however, there must be a voice of reason, sound information and data used to guide all those involved.

Honeybees are misunderstood and their contribution to human welfare is under appreciated. Over the years, the media has sensationalized the "dangers" of bees resulting in an unwarranted or unjustified fear.

According to the CDC (<http://wonder.cdc.gov/cmfi-icd10.html>), from 1999-2009 there were on average 61 deaths per year caused by wasps, hornets, and bees combined. To put it in perspective, for the same time period and same data source, on average there were 52 deaths per year from lightning, 647 resulting from falling from a bed, and 1,833 per year from falling on stairs or steps. Of course, any threat to human life is to be taken seriously; however, there are far more dangerous and risky situations we confront on a daily basis than that caused by honeybees.

I would encourage you to help our fellow beekeepers. Here is their website: <http://www.saveourgardens.org/Pages/default.aspx>

Honey Citrus Soother

Ingredients

3 - tea bags green or black

1 - cinnamon stick

3 cups - boiling water

1/4 cup - honey

1 cup - grapefruit juice

Directions

Place tea bags and cinnamon stick in a 1-quart tea pot. Add boiling water; steep 3 to 5 minutes. Remove cinnamon stick and tea bags; discard. Stir in grapefruit juice and honey.

Mom's Rejuvenating Honey-Almond Scrub

Ingredients

8 whole - unblanched almonds

2 tablespoons - rolled oats, uncooked

1 tablespoon - honey

2 teaspoons - yogurt, sour cream, or

lightly beaten egg white

Directions

Process almonds and oats in a blender until they are finely ground. In a small bowl, mix ground almonds and oats, honey and yogurt until blended. Pat scrub on face and neck; leave it on for up to 10 minutes for extra softening. Wet your hands and massage gently to exfoliate. Rinse off. Makes enough for 1 scrub.

~~~~~

## HONEY BEE RESEARCH, COLONY COLLAPSE DISORDER, AND THE MEDIA: CAVEAT LECTOR

(“READER BEWARE”)

By David R. Tarpy, NC State University Extension Apiculturist

Honey bees have always been a source of fascination yet trepidation for humans throughout our history. This stems in large part because they do not fit neatly into most categories. Bees are not domesticated animals—as they are free flying and live as wild creatures—but they are still managed and shepherded by beekeepers. They do not fall under the strict umbrella of agriculture—as they are technically a service industry to agriculture—yet they are still vital for ~35% of our food supply through pollination of over 100 crops.

Perhaps in part because of these fuzzy boundaries, the media often has similar trouble in trying to portray honey bees. This difficulty is no better apparent than in the media’s portrayal of honey bee science in general and research on Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) in particular. The main goal of the media is to communicate—in fairly simple and straight forward language—something newsworthy to the general public. When it comes to recent findings dealing with honey bee health, these reports can actually be *oversimplified*, where anything dealing with honey bee mortality is immediately equated with CCD. This is just simply not the case! Rather, the health of the honey bee population, and the scientific evidence that investigates mechanisms behind ill-health, lies on a continuum ranging from poor anecdotes on one end and strong empirical data on the other. The media often cannot or fails to portray this subtle yet fundamentally important nuance.

Let’s take a couple of examples in the past year that spans this range of high- to low-quality scientific evidence as they are portrayed in the media. In each case, both the scientists and the media claimed the findings to explain the underlying reason behind CCD. Fairly recently, a paper was published in the highly prestigious US journal *Science* by a French research team titled “A common pesticide decreases foraging success and survival in honey bees,” which gained fairly widespread media coverage. The researchers fed honey bees sub-lethal doses of a neonicotinoid pesticide (which have long been questioned to be involved in bee ill-health), recorded foraging behavior by measuring the rates of returning field bees, and mathematically modeling the effects on colony populations. They showed quite convincingly that pesticide-fed bees were less likely to return to the colony than untreated controls, and that this could theoretically effect colony populations over time. However, the study did not actually measure colony decline (but rather mathematically projected the effects on colony health), did not include a third treatment of bees treated with another toxin (known in scientific parlance as a ‘positive control’) to see if *all* poisoned bees have an increased mortality compared to the pesticide in question, and the mathematical model suggested that it would only

### ALAMANCE COUNTY BEEKEEPERS 2012 OFFICERS

- IRA POSTON, PRESIDENT
- MIKE ROSS, VICE PRESIDENT
- JAN FOULKS, TREASURER
- PENNY BONDURANT, RECORDING SECRETARY
- CAMILLE THOMAS, PROGRAM CHAIR
- EDDIE THOMAS, 1-YEAR DIRECTOR
- PAUL JOLLAY, 2-YEAR DIRECTOR
- DON MOORE, 3-YEAR DIRECTOR



affect colony population over the course of several months (not several days, as in the hallmark symptom of CCD). Thus this study provides important evidence towards the long-term struggle against agricultural insecticides, but there are clearly other important pieces to the puzzle to explain how neonicotinoids are linked to CCD.

s required to create catastrophic apiary mortalities would be astronomical. Clearly, more needs to be done on this topic before there is any strong liAnother study came out a couple of months ago, and I'm fairly sure you heard about it: "zombie flies." This media story was based on a scientific article by a research team at San Francisco State University who reported a curious parasitoid of honey bee foragers. This potential pest is the phorid fly *Apocephalus borealis*, which is known to parasitize bumble bees, but the reported results demonstrate that it can also infect and eventually kill honey bees. It turns out that this "host switching" from bumble bees to honey bees was reported as far back as the 1980s, and there remains many questions about how widespread and impactful these flies might be on colony health. For example, all of the earlier studies that investigated colonies that were actually afflicted with CCD showed no trace of these parasitoids, and the population densities of flienkages with global honey bee mortality, let alone CCD.

Perhaps the greatest example of scientific oversimplification is a short article in *Current Science* by a research group out of India. They observed honey bee foragers being attracted to—then dying in—disposable paper coffee cups, where foraging bees collect the discarded sweetened liquids but then drown. From this, the authors make the following argument: "There are about 1.3 billion and 800 million cups of coffee and tea consumed daily around the world by using millions of disposable cups. This may lead to bee collapse in future and reduction in agricultural productivity throughout the world." I find this dubious logical connection to be, to say the least, ridiculous. Next time one of your colonies die, check your trash!

CCD is indeed a cause for concern, but I believe that it is imperative to place honey bee mortality into the greater context of why honey bee colonies die overall (Figure 1). Over the last 5 years (for which we have the best data), about one-third of the US honey bee population has died over the winter. In most cases, these losses can be explained by known factors, such as varroa mites or other management issues (e.g., starvation, problems with queens, known pesticide poisonings). In about of quarter of these cases, however, these losses are genuinely unexplainable, as none of the usual suspects can be conclusively linked to mortality. Of these, only a subset are attributed to CCD *sensu stricto* (that is, they fit all of the defined symptoms of the syndrome). So in the end, only a fraction of the 2.3 million managed honey bee colonies in the US have died with "CCD-like symptoms," which leaves the vast majority dying from many other causes. As such, honey bees die from many things, so the media (and particularly honey bee scientists) should not equate CCD with all honey bee mortality.

The take-home message: the best way to maximize colony health is to focus on the enemies that we know: keep your varroa mites in check and ensure proper nutrition (things over which we have control).

Looking at the entire puzzle, with each piece representing a different scientific study, it is abundantly clear that colony mortality is the product of multiple factors, both known and unknown, acting singly and in combination. Thus there is no "one" cause (or solution) to CCD specifically or honey bee ill-health generally. Honey bees are complex, as is our management of them, so we should not blindly believe any over-simplification of honey bee research that attempts to explain global colony mortality. Rather, we should collectively and rationally try to fit all of the pieces together to gain a better perspective. As beekeepers, we inherently understand this complexity, and so our portrayal of apiculture science should do the same. So the next time you read the latest sensational headline, just remember—*caveat lector*.

## Alamance County Beekeepers      \_\_\_New \_\_\_Renew Membership Pay Form for 2013

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dues \$6.00, State Dues \$15.00, Both \$21.00    \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dues \$6.00, State Dues \$15.00, Both \$21.00    \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\* Name of second member for two-member family.                      Total    \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT ^

Check here if address change

Please deliver my Newsletter via e-mail

Please make checks payable to Alamance County Beekeepers.

Mail Completed forms to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(County - if other than Alamance)

Janice Foulks  
2529 Johnson Lane  
Burlington, NC 27217



