



# Alamance County Beekeepers

January 2020 Newsletter

## Monthly Meeting

January 16 | Ag Building  
Potluck @ 6:00 | Program @ 7:00

[George McAllister](#)

*Using Queen Castles to  
Increase Honey Production*

George McAllister learned about beekeeping from his grandfather, a researcher and beekeeping teacher at NCSU. He is inspired to continually learn and seek ways to improve his honey bee management techniques.



“Queen castles are integral to George’s beekeeping as they supply his honey production hives with queens, brood, bees and drawn comb as needed throughout the year. The queen castles are also part of George’s swarm management practices as the place where he raises queens from swarm cells.”

Come early for a potluck with beekeeping friends and be part of our first ACB meeting of the new year!



## Golden Achievement Program

Alamance County Beekeepers are going to apply to be [Golden Achievement](#) Chapter of the year for 2019. If you have done any beekeeping program, event, or workshop in 2019, please let Caitlin know at [caitlin.bateson@gmail.com](mailto:caitlin.bateson@gmail.com) so our chapter can get credit. More info on the Golden Achievement Program is [here](#). Thank you!



## Members Invited

On December 13, beekeeper Jeff Telander emailed an invitation to all ACB members to join a Google group he created as a forum for conversations about beekeeping. If you have not joined yet, you are missing a great opportunity for learning from your Alamance County beekeeping community. Thanks, Jeff!

## Bees in the News

Click on the headline to read the article.

[I Have to Tell You Something Very Important About Honeybees](#), Ryan F. Mandelbaum, Gizmodo, 11/19/2019. "When bees get trapped in water, they use their wings as hydrofoils to surf back to the safety of land." Caltech researchers' video shows how bees' wings kick up waves that push them forward.

[Native habitat mitigates feast-famine conditions faced by honey bees in an agricultural landscape](#), Adam G. Dolezal et al, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 12/10/2019. "Industrial-scale production of crops through monocultures has resulted in 'green deserts' of reduced biodiversity in many areas worldwide. Such simplified landscapes may impact ecosystem services such as pollination. Here, we present a large-scale, longitudinal study of managed honey bee colonies in the context of corn and soybean monocultures. Our results reveal a brief burst of colony growth during soybean bloom, followed by a longer period of forage dearth, resulting in decline in several aspects of honey bee health at both colony and individual levels. We demonstrate this decline is reversible when honey bees have access to native, perennial plants (i.e., prairie). Our results suggest sustainable pollinator management in landscapes dominated by monocultures can be achieved through reintegration of native biodiversity."

[Asian giant hornets that eat honeybees and have 'powerful sting' discovered in Washington for first time](#), Kashmiri Gander, Newsweek, 12/23/2019. "The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) said a resident in the city of Blaine, near the border with Canada, spotted an "unusually large" hornet on their property on December 8. The individual alerted the WSDA, and said they had also seen a live giant hornet at a hummingbird feeder, before it headed into a forest. Officials visited the property and took the huge bug away. It was later confirmed as an invasive Asian giant hornet."

## Interview with a Beekeeper

**Name:** Chuck Couch

**When did you first start keeping bees?** I first started keeping bees in late 1980 early 1990 & stopped for a while. Started again in 2004 till present.

**Have you been a beekeeper anywhere besides NC?** I've only kept bees in the great state of NC.

**Why are you a beekeeper?** I became interested in bees when I was about ten by watching a neighbor's bees. They fascinated me then & now.

**Name one factor or thing you do that contributes to your success as a beekeeper.** Successful would be a stretch of the imagination, but I try to continue to learn.

**What is your biggest challenge as a beekeeper?** My biggest challenge as a beekeeper is trying to stay ahead of the bees & their constant new threats.

**What advice would you give to someone thinking of becoming a beekeeper?** The best advice I can give someone thinking of becoming a beekeeper is to absolutely positively take a class from your local beekeeper club.



**Contact:** chuckcouchjr@gmail.com

## Local Talent

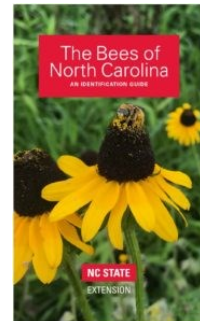
### A podcast:

**The Well Managed Hive**, a podcast hosted by NCDA Apiary Inspector Lewis Cauble, includes discussions regarding beekeeping best management practices with an emphasis on varroa. Guests to date include Dr. Jamie Ellis, Dr. Gloria DeGrandi-Hoffman, Dr. Katie Lee, and Jim Masucci. Look for the podcast at [Podbean](#) or [iTunes](#).



### A guide:

Congratulations to Dr. Elsa Youngsteadt & Hannah Levenson for this excellent new book, available as a hardcopy for purchase and online as a free pdf file. A note from Elsa: "It may not be the most exciting time of year to break out the ID guide ... but even in December-January, we often see Ceratina, Lasioglossum, and Augochlora out foraging with the honey bees on warm days. Happy hunting!" Description: Identifying bees on the wing can be difficult, however, **The Bees of North Carolina: An Identification Guide** is a beginner's resource designed to help users quickly identify native bees. Developed by experts at NC State Extension, it provides an overview of the most common groups of bees in the state. The guide helps users recognize bees by key characteristics and, eventually, by overall appearance.



Source: <https://gardening.ces.ncsu.edu/2020/01/the-bees-of-north-carolina/?src=rss>

Thanks to Geoff Leister for bringing these to our attention.

## NCSBA 2020 Spring Conference

Riverfront Convention Center  
New Bern, March 5-7

You can get the best [rates](#) for the conference by registering now, before February 21.

The full [line-up](#) of presenters and topics has not been completely finalized, but you can be sure that the information will be relevant to beekeeping in our region, and you will take home knowledge that will improve your beekeeping practices. If you have any questions about whether the conference is for you, ask Ira. He's an enthusiastic proponent!



## Calendar

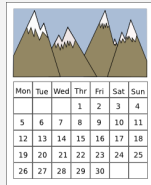
### Beekeeping Classes for 2020

ACB beekeeping classes begin 1/21/2020.

Time to renew membership in ACB for 2020!

### NCSBA Spring Conference

March 5-7 | New Bern



Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		



*Hellebore, 1/5/2020.  
Winter food source of honey bees.  
Will bloom into early spring.*

## This Month in the Bee Yard

Courtesy of Nancy Ruppert

- Add pollen supplements, if needed; check amount and location of honey stores, and feed (2:1 syrup or fondant) if <3/4 super of stored honey left.
- Check/repair/replace stored equipment; order wax/woodenware.
- Order nucs/packages.
- Keep learning---bee school, read books, journals, etc.
- Combine or insulate smaller (less than 4 frames of bees) hives.
- Combine hives where queen has failed, if they're still alive and haven't absconded.
- Move hives if they'll need to be relocated this year.
- Bees may need help removing dead bodies from entrance area.
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<https://growingsmallfarms.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/CALENDAR-FOR-BEEKEEPING-IN-CENTRAL-NORTH-CAROLINA.pdf? fwd=no>



Officers for 2020

President : Ira Poston  
Vice-President : Mike Ross  
Recording Secretary : Sheyenne Michelizzi  
Treasurer : Sarah Stevens  
Program Chair : Caitlin Vatikiotis-Bateson  
One-year Director : Chuck Couch  
Two-year Director : Johnny Mills  
Three-year Director : Paul Jollay  
Webmaster : Geoff Leister  
Newsletter : Cynthia Pierce