



Alamance County Beekeepers

March 2020 Newsletter

Monthly Meeting

CANCELED

March | Ag Building

Suzy Spencer
How Slovenia Loves Honey Bees

Speaker Suzy Spencer lives in Raleigh and has been a beekeeper for more than 33 years. She is a NC Master Beekeeper and organizer of the NCSBA “black jar” honey contest.

She traveled to Slovenia in 2018 to learn how they raise bees and discovered the many ways Slovenians love and respect bees.



We'll maintain our tradition of having a mealtime together on evenings when we have a guest speaker. Please bring something for the table and enjoy some time with your beekeeping friends.



Honey bee foraging on [Purple Dead Nettle](#),
(*Lamium purpureum*)
Photo taken by Geoff Leister, 3/13/2020.

Won't You Be a Mentor?

There'll be a graduating class of new beekeepers before too long.

Please let Ira know if you'd like to be a mentor or go-to person to help someone navigate her or his first year of beekeeping!



Bees in the News

Click on the headline to read the article.

[Bumblebees face mass extinction amid 'climate chaos', scientists warn](#), Harry Cockburn, The Independent, 2/6/2020. "A massive decline of bumblebees — the world's most important pollinators — is now underway due to 'climate chaos' and other human impacts on the world" scientists are warning.

[A Warm Winter Means Headaches For Beekeepers](#), Molly Samuel, All Things Considered, NPR, 2/10/2020. "Honeybees normally settle in their hives and rest over winter. But this season has been unusually warm — and that's a challenge for beekeepers."

[Honey Bee Health Coalition Partners Beekeepers and Landowners Together to Enhance Pollinator Health](#), Honey Bee Health Coalition, 1/16/2020. Beekeepers and landowners working together are showing how an array of best management practices (BMPs) can be combined in agricultural landscapes to improve the health of honey bees and other pollinators.



Blooming in the Piedmont



Honey bee on rosemary, *Salvia rosmarinus*.
Photo by Chris Stecker, Horticulture Tech and
Extension Master Gardener
Volunteer Coordinator
Arbor Gate Garden, 3/12/2020.

Born and Bred Queen Rearing

From NCSBA

The NCSBA is offering a program of advanced beekeeper education in the field of queen rearing and colony management. The Born and Bred queen rearing workshops will be conducted with a curriculum of such substance that participants can effectively learn how to raise queens with the information presented and a degree of diligence on their part. Beekeepers of all levels will be able to gain an understanding of queen production that is controlled by the beekeeper and how environmental factors affect the behavior of the honey bee during queen production.

The daylong course will be offered in Pittsboro, NC, on May 9, 2020. The cost is \$75.00 per participant. Enrollment is limited and you must be an active member of the NCSBA in order to participate.



<https://www.ncbeekeepers.org/programs/born-and-bred>

February Meeting Notes

- Ira and Caitlin encouraged everyone who has some time to come out for Arbor Day at Beth Schmidt Park to talk to people about honey bees. See you at the ACB table! (Note: On March 13, this event was **POSTPONED until November.**)
- Rafael Cabrera gave a very interesting presentation about hive scales that his company, [Solutionbee](#), makes. The monitors measure weight, humidity, temperatures inside and out. So far. Looking at the graphs produced by the data, you can tell when nectar flow starts, when it ends, when robbing takes place, when there's a swarm, and more. Improvements and innovations are taking place all the time. Some of our group have early editions of the scales and are well pleased to use them.



State Fair

It's not too early to think competing in the Bees and Honey department at the State Fair this year. Maybe you could create a *Gift Package of Bee Products* that would be judged according to these criteria:

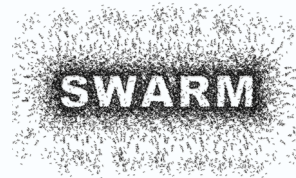
	Points
General appearance.....	30
Manufactured by entrant.....	15
Originality.....	30
Quality of components.....	10
Availability of components.....	5
Manageability (ability to transport.....)	10
TOTAL.....	100



Swarm Responders

Jeff Telander has proposed a way to handle swarm calls that will give beekeepers a quicker way to respond when there is a need. This is a method used by beekeepers in neighboring counties. Ira's advisors agreed it's a good idea, so we're going to try it in Alamance.

If you would like to have an opportunity to respond to a swarm removal call, please give Jeff your name and phone number. He will act as the swarm call manager. When he gets information that someone in our county needs help, he'll send out a group text to swarm responders with basic information on the swarm. The first person who replies that he or she is available to help the caller will get the address and contact information of the caller.



This sounds to be a fair way for people to have an opportunity to re-home swarming bees, and a faster way for callers to get the help they're looking for.

Contact Jeff at telander@gmail.com or **919-618-8094** to be put on the swarm list.

This Month in the Bee Yard

Courtesy of Nancy Ruppert

- Swarming under way -- implement prevention measures (make splits, remove queen cells, "checker-board," temporarily or permanently remove current mother queen); set up "bait" hives.
- Reverse bottom two or three boxes on hive to give queen more room to lay; most bees have moved up above the bottom hive body, leaving it virtually empty. This measure also helps reduce swarming. Caution: Be careful not to split up clusters of brood when you do this. Two to three weeks after this reversal, it's likely that you'll need to reverse them again. (An alternative to reversal: simply add another hive body.)
- Assess for pest and/or disease problems (especially varroa mites, American foulbrood, and European foulbrood) and treat if needed. Treatments should be completed by early April to limit risk of contaminating honey.
- Check honey stores; feed (1:1 or thinner syrup) if needed.
- Look closely at the brood pattern; order new queen if current one failing.
- Continue to replace few frames of old/undesirable comb, if needed.
- Near end of the month, add at least one honey super; remove entrance reducers; equalize hives.



<https://growingsmallfarms.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/CALENDAR-FOR-BEEKEEPING-IN-CENTRAL-NORTH-CAROLINA.pdf?pwd=no>

Calendar

[Beginner Online BEES School](#)

March 4-25

[NCSBA Spring Conference](#)

March 5-7 | New Bern

Plants for Year-Round Bee Forage
in the NC Piedmont
Geoff Leister @ Beez Needz Field Day
March 14 | 10:30 - 1:30

[Duke Gardens Spring Plant Sale](#)

March 28 | Durham

Homegrown on the Square

April 17-18 | Graham

[Born and Bred Queen Rearing](#)

May 9 | Pittsboro



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