



Alamance County Beekeepers

March 2021 Newsletter

Message from Ira



I hope you have been enjoying the spring-like weather that we have been having. Your bees have probably been growing in population and building up for our major nectar flow in a few weeks. This would be a good time to make sure your hives (or queens) have plenty of room to lay eggs in the brood nest. You can share the wealth of a strong hive by moving capped brood over to a weaker hive. It would be best if you replaced those frames with drawn comb if you have some, otherwise it's going to take more energy and honey to draw out the foundation. Just make sure you don't move the queen when making those transfers!

If you haven't made plans to purchase packages of bees, you are not too late. The weather in southern Georgia was a lousy as our weather here in Alamance County, so the delivery of the packages will be a couple of weeks later this year. If you don't remember, a few years ago we experienced an unusual number of supersedures on the packages we received. We think the queens did not mate well because of the weather (too cold or too much rain). Anyway, it's better to wait a few weeks to make sure we receive good queens.

On a sad note, we lost a longtime beekeeper on February 24th. Harold Curtis of Graham passed away at his residence at the age of 84. Harold was a Commercial Beekeeper in LaBelle, FL and raised queens in Graham. The Curtis family has been keeping or managing bees for a little more than 100 years. I can remember buying queens at his home. Picking up the queen and leaving \$20 in the jar. We will miss Harold!!

Only a few more weeks of Beginning Beekeeping Class. Last week, Geoff Leister gave a great presentation on Pollen and Nectar sources. It's always difficult following a professional. This week, I will present Primary Management Phases to the class. The following week, Sheyenne and Caitlin will present Products of the Hive.....can't wait !!

Some of us have had our Covid vaccines, others are in the process. I hope these help and we can begin meeting in person sometime later this year.

Bee Safe,

- Ira

March Meeting Info - 3/18 7pm [link](#)



Jennifer Keller is the Apiculture Technician at NCSU . She is responsible for maintaining healthy colonies for research projects conducted at the NCSU Apiculture Lab. Jennifer earned a Master of Science in Entomology while studying Apiculture under Dr. John Ambrose at NCSU. Jennifer first became interested in honey bees while serving in the United States Peace Corps

Jennifer's presentation subject is "Reading The Combs" which will discuss various odd situations we might find in our hives and how the combs can tell us what is happening. Join us for this interesting topic followed by lively Q&A

Click above link to join or, Meeting ID: 821 1161 2951

Passcode: 057923. Past meetings can be found in the members section of our website. Can't log in? Find your local dial in number here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kczD2QFZq6>

Notes from the February Meeting

Ira gave us an update on the club and Beginning Beekeeping Class.

Last month, Lewis Cauble presented information on Swarm Management - how are your hives doing? Who will see the first swarm this year?

As always, if there's something you would like to see in the newsletter, or you have photos, articles, accomplishments, questions, etc, you'd like to add - email us! We can always be reached at alamancecountybeekeepers@gmail.com

Membership Renewals and Mailing address

Don't forget to renew your membership so you can keep receiving the newsletter and club updates from us! You can do it online through our website [here](#), or you can download the application and mail us a check. Our club relies on our dues to keep our programs available!

Our club has a new mailing address! If you should have any need for a mailing address for the club, it is:

Alamance County Beekeepers
PO Box 512
Snow Camp, NC 27349

Beginning Beekeeping Class Update

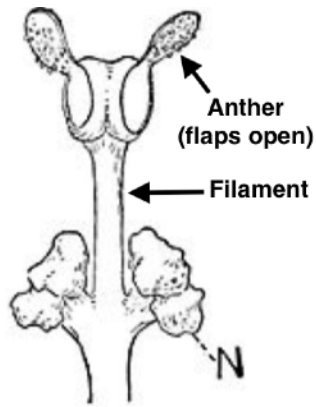
Welcome to this year's class! We are so very excited about this year's Beginning Beekeeping Class! We have had an average of 40 participants per session, and have had some fantastic discussions both in and out of our classes. We know it's easy to be "zoomed out" these days, but thank you to all of the participants and instructors working to make this year's class the best it can be. The fabulous amount of content going into the class is what sets our class participants up for success!

Normally we get the chance to bond and get to know one another during class times in person. As we are virtual this year, we want to remind our class participants (and our general membership) that we are here for you if you need us! We can be reached at alamancecountybeekeepers@gmail.com.

And if you need a refresher on who we are, this is for you: <https://youtu.be/izus3zALMCE>

See you on Tuesday!

From Geoff's Apiary...



Stamen showing nectar glands (N)

Native male (left) and female (right) spicebushes in flower (Lindera benzoin).

Cluster of male flowers (left) with anther caps open. The flowers are cross-pollinated by various insects, particularly small bees and various flies and hover flies. Insects that eat the foliage of Spicebush include the caterpillars of Palamedes Swallowtail (*Papilio palamedes*) Spicebush Swallowtail (*Papilio troilus*), and Prometheus Moth (*Callosamia promethea*).

Note the white spots are the tips of Spicebush stigmas in the photo on the right.



Clockwise from the top: Trumpet Daffodial (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*), Japanese Pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*), Henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*), Purple Dead Nettle (*Lamium purpureum*)

From Geoff's Apiary... cont'd



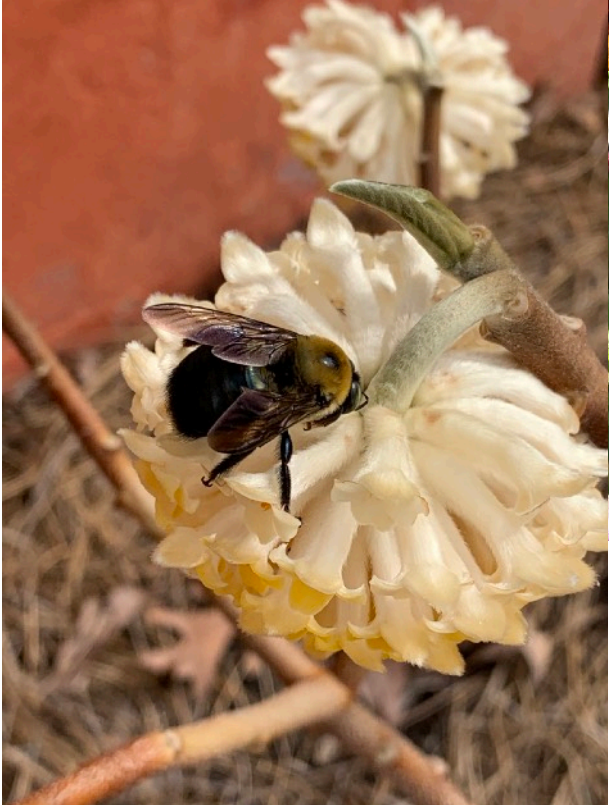
Top left: Flowering Quince (*Chaenomeles speciosa*)
Top right: Paperbush (*Edgeworthia chrysantha*)
Left: Snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum*)
Bottom 3: Hellebores



Calling All Backyard Photographers!

Even though we can't all be together right now, we would still love the opportunity to do a little show and tell in a friendly competition! Let's see those back yard (and front yard and side yard!) pollinators at work! Honeybees and native pollinator friendly, so feel free to get creative.

Send in your photos to alamancecountybeekeepers@gmail.com. We'll have the membership vote blind on their favourite next month and reveal the winner at our May meeting!! Door prizes and bragging rights at stake, you don't want to miss out. In the spirit of getting to know YOU, this is not open to officers in the club.



Credit for photos from the top left, clockwise: Geoff Leister/Jeff Telander, Jennifer Walsh, Laurie Fais. Thanks!!

In-person Meetings are on Hiatus, But Virtual Learning Isn't!

Beekeeping Webinars: Live and recorded online presentations by the NC State Apiculture Program, <https://entomology.ces.ncsu.edu/apiculture/beekeeping-webinars/>

Stay at Home Beekeeping Series: Distance Learning for Beekeeping Clubs, Alabama Extension, <https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/bees-pollinators/stay-at-home-beekeeping-series-distance-learning-for-beekeeping-clubs/>

Question from Class: What is the difference between Catnip and Catmint?

Both catnip and catmint are assigned to the Mint Family (Lamiaceae) and to the genus *Nepeta*, but are assigned to different species. As with all Mint family members, the presence of a square stem is always notable. Both plants are pollinator supportive and need containment as clumps will spread, once established.

Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*) is native to Europe and Asia <<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/nepeta-cataria/>> Catnip flowers are typically white <<https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/weeds/plants/catnip.htm>>. The nectar of the flowers from both species attract long-tongued bees primarily, including honeybees, bumblebees, cuckoo bees, long-horned bees, and leaf-cutting bees all seen foraging in my apiary on both *Nepeta* species. Other visitors include Halictid bees, wasps, flies, butterflies, and skippers. Extracts from catnip acts as a repellent for certain insects, including aphids, squash bugs and mosquitos. But the plant is most noted for the presence of nepetalactone that is the active ingredient that drives house cats ecstatic.

Catmint (*Nepeta racemosa*) is native to Caucasus and northern Iran and exhibits showier flowers that are purple to lavender and are better-behaved spreading habits, but less excitement for cats (leaves less enticing). In particular, the *Nepeta x faassenii* 'Walker's Low' a hybrid with sterile seeds. <<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/nepeta-x-faassenii-walkers-low/>>



[Catnip](#) (*Nepeta cataria*)
- flowers are typically white.



Catmint (*Nepeta racemosa*)
Catmint flowers are lavender.

Thank you Geoff for the photos and research!

This Month in the Bee Yard

NCSBA annual Spring Meeting has been replaced with a webinar series. Click [here](#) for information.

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 hives 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?fwd=no>



Officers for 2021

President : Ira Poston
Vice President : Mike Ross
Recording Secretary : Sheyenne Price
Treasurer : Sarah Stevens
Program Chair : Jeff Telander
One-year Director : Johnny Mills
Two-year Director : Paul Jollay
Three-year Director : Zivon Price
Webmaster : Geoff Leister
Newsletter : Caitlin Vatikiotis-Bateson