



MAY 2008
NEWSLETTER OF THE ALAMANCE COUNTY BEEKEEPERS

Remember...

May 8 Privet blooms
May 20 Persimmon blooms
May 28 Sweet Clover blooms

Take steps to prevent swarming

Equalize supers for maximum honey production

Alamance County Beekeepers

This month's meeting...

will be at Western Steakhouse at 6:30 PM Thursday, May 15. Our guest speaker will be Dr. Buddy Marterre, who will talk with us about bee stings, allergic reactions, immunology, and therapy. Certainly we all need to be aware of how to be prepared in the event of an adverse reaction to a bee sting, and how to make others around us more comfortable with the bees.

How do honeybees make honey?

A **honeybee** starts the honey making process by visiting a flower and gathering some of its **nectar**. Many plants use nectar as a way of encouraging insects (bees, wasps, butterflies, etc.) to stop at the flower. In the process of gathering nectar, the insect transfers pollen grains from one flower to another and pollinates the flower.

Most flower nectars are similar to sugar water -- **sucrose mixed with water**. Nectars can contain other beneficial substances as well. To make honey, two things happen:

- **Enzymes** that bees produce turn the sucrose (a disaccharide) into glucose and fructose (monosaccharides).
- Most of the moisture has to be **evaporated**, leaving only about 18-percent water in honey.

An enzyme, invertase, converts most of the sucrose into two six-carbon sugars, glucose and fructose. A small amount of the glucose is attacked by a second enzyme, glucose oxidase, and converted into gluconic acid and hydrogen peroxide. The gluconic acid makes honey an acid medium with a low pH that is inhospitable to bacteria, mold, and fungi, organisms we call microbes, while the hydrogen peroxide gives short-range protection against these same organisms when the honey is ripening or is diluted for larval food. Honeybees also reduce the moisture content of nectar, which gives it a high osmotic pressure and protection against microbes.

The physical change involves the removal of water, which is accomplished by externally manipulating nectar in the mouth parts and then placing small droplets on the upper side of cells and fanning the wings to increase air movement and carry away excess moisture.

The effect is to make honey a very stable food. It naturally resists molds, fungi and other bacteria, allowing it to last for years without refrigeration!

Source: <http://animals.howstuffworks.com/insects/question300.htm>

May Article

Win A Prize!!!! This month's article was submitted by Scott and Monica Jewell, and they have certainly put a twist on things! Rather than an article, they have given us a list of fun facts about honeybees and beekeepers. They have challenged all Alamance County Beekeepers to "Know the Honeybee Facts and Trivia". So study the list, then come to the monthly meeting (6:30 PM on Thursday, May 15 at Western Steakhouse).

Bring your knowledge to the May Alamance County Beekeepers Meeting and win a prize!!!!

Honeybee Facts and Trivia

Submitted by Scott & Monica Jewell

1. Honeybees are the only insects that produce food for humans.
2. Queens lay approximately 2,000 eggs per day at a rate of 5 or 6 per minute.
3. Honeybees visit approximately 2 million flowers to make just one pound of honey.
4. A hive of bees will fly over 55,000 miles to bring you one pound of honey.
5. A honeybee flies about 15 miles per hour.
6. One healthy hive contains approximately 40,000-45,000 bees.
7. A honeybee has five eyes.
8. Scott & Monica Jewell have been involved with Beekeeping for 8 years.
9. During the production period, a bee's life span is less than six weeks.
10. Fermented honey known as Mead is the most ancient fermented beverage.
11. Honey has been used for thousands of years as a topical dressing for wounds since microbes can't live in it.
12. The average temperature of a hive is approximately 93 degrees Fahrenheit.
13. There are more Beekeepers in the state of North Carolina than any other state.
14. USDA estimates about 1,100 bee stings are required to be fatal to a human.

NCSBA Summer Meeting Update

The NCSBA Summer Meeting is set for July 10-12 in Southern Pines, NC. **THIS JUST IN...** Online registration is now up and running. You can register online and pay at the door. Remember — the state meeting is a fantastic learning experience, and a great place to make new beekeeping friends! *Don't delay, do it today!*

Call for Mentors

At times we get requests from people who want to get into bees — in a good way, I mean! If you would be willing to serve as a mentor for new-bees, talk to Joe Eiden or one of the other officers. (They're listed on the last page of the newsletter.)

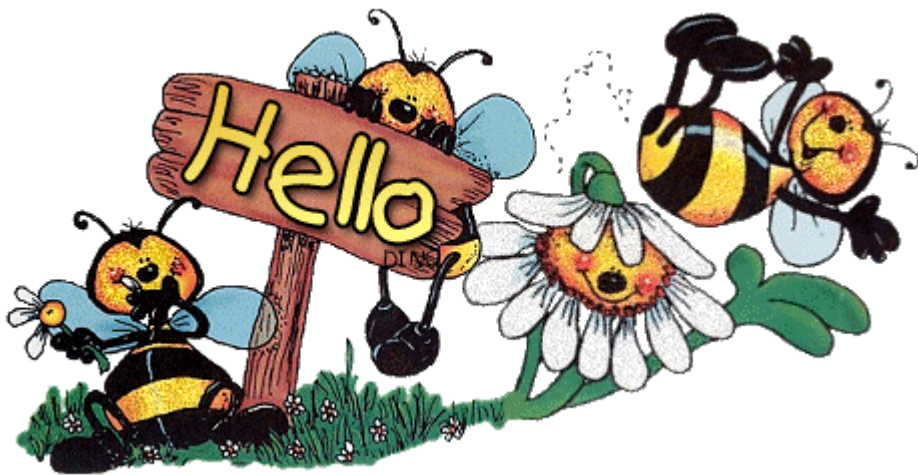


Extractor Offer

Keep in mind that Ken Pipes is offering his extractor on a loan basis, free of charge, to any new beekeeper that is a member of the Alamance County Beekeepers. It is a four-frame tangential extractor that will handle the deep, medium and shallow size super frames. This extractor is motor driven with a manual speed control. (Extractor will need to be held down while in use.) All frames to be extracted should be wired or have reinforced foundation. Please call Ken at 336-229-5622 if you would like to use his extractor. If no requests are received to use his extractor, he will again use it as a honey storage tank.

15. Scientists say it should be aerodynamically impossible for bees to fly, because their bodies are not in proportion to their wing span.
16. Scott & Monica Jewell have 6 hives.
17. To produce two pounds of honey, bees travel a distance equal to four times around the earth.
18. The average worker honeybee makes 1/12th teaspoon of honey in her lifetime.
19. Bees from the same hive visit approximately 225,000 flowers per day.
20. The 2008 State Spring Beekeeping Conference was held in Burlington, NC
21. How much is one honeybee hive worth? It is worth a visit.
22. A queen may mate with up to 17 drones over a one to two day period of mating flights.
23. How many fathers does a drone have? None
24. How many grandfathers does a drone have? One (on the mother's side)
25. How many licks does it take to get to the center of a tootsie roll tootsie-pop? No one will ever know!!!

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Article for June: Dan Fuhrman

June Speaker: Bill Shepherd will present on the topic of his choice.

June Meeting Refreshments: Covered Dish Meal at Stoney Creek Coon Club

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