

# Gaston County Beekeeper's Association

Next Meeting Mar. 26<sup>th</sup>

7 pm Citizens Resource  
Center Dallas, NC



## Clean-up of Hives that Didn't Survive

Bees die. But, spring is the season of renewal. Finding a dead hive is discouraging, but please don't give up. Bees need us.

What do you do with "dead-outs" as they're commonly called?

### Dealing with Dead-Outs

First, remove the dead hive from the bee yard as soon as practical. Unprotected, any honey is an invitation for robbing by assorted wild critters and other hives. Moisture will also likely build up inside the hive, encouraging mold.

Second, try to determine the cause, as that will define what you can do with what the deceased colony left behind.

### Clean Up

Dr. Roger Hoopingarner, of Michigan State University, notes that most hives die from **Varroa or starvation**. Thus, reusing those resources (stores and drawn wax) is generally no problem. Brush off the dead bees, rap the frame the flat way to dislodge some stuck in the cells, and protect the wax from wax moths until they are may be reused. These drawn frames are ideal for starting nuc colonies from strong colonies that survived, or for welcoming a new package. Don't worry about leaving a few bees behind in the frames, the new bees will clean them out.

A colony that died from **AFB** requires burning it all, although the hive bodies and major components may be singed with a blow torch to destroy spores. With **Nosema** it may be easier to burn it all, or, depending upon the extent of the damage, treat with the cleaning solution noted.

**Mold**, unless it is black mold, may be wiped off the frames and capped honey. Give any hard surfaces a good scrubbing, with maybe a little extra salt in the mixture. Air them out good and then freeze, saving as much comb as much as possible. The comb, honey and frames may be used in the hive again. Bees will clean up a bit of mold, although by doing it for them they can focus their talents elsewhere (pollination.)

If it is **black mold**, remove and trash the foundation (or melt for other uses). Clean the frames thoroughly, air out, freeze, and reuse.

**Wax moths** may extensively damage the hive and comb, and it may be simpler to burn and start again. If the infestation is minor, remove larvae, clean out all webs, and freeze everything to kill all stages of the wax moth.

#### Hive/Frame Cleaning Solution

2 gallons water 1 cup salt 1/4 cup vinegar

**No need to rinse, bees like a bit of salt.**

#### **Four Important Points for Installation of Package Bees:**

1. Feed package bees heavily until the colony is well established. Sugar and water mixed in a ratio of 1 part water to 1 part sugar, or high fructose corn syrup works well for spring feeding.
2. Keep entrances reduced to a small size. This prevents robbing and conserves heat.
3. Do not add supers or a second hive body until the bees draw out 7 of the 10 frames.
4. Do hive inspections to check the condition of the new hive, on a weekly basis, until the hive is well established.

## *Package Bees*

### **When You Get Them Home**

Immediate actions:

1. Place the bees in a dark, cool area if possible, like a closed garage, or a basement room. Cool means about 50 degrees, much colder than that is not desirable. Dark conditions will calm them down, and keep them from too quickly eating their supplied syrup.
2. Set them on a couple sheets of newspaper or a sheet. There will be debris falling from the cage.
3. Spritz them morning and evening with the sugar solution if you're not hiving them that afternoon. If you don't do this, they may run out of the syrup that was shipped with them.

Bees can survive for several days in the cage, but they should only be contained because there is no other option (i.e., bad weather making it impossible to install them.) Life in the cage is stressful and the more quickly you can move them into a hive, the happier and more productive they'll be, and the greater your chances for success.

### **How fast is the Honey Bee?**

The Honey Bee can fly very quickly but is not the fastest bee. The Honey Bee can fly at 12-15 mph (depending on its nectar & pollen load). A Bumble Bee can average 18 mph. The top speed of a Honey Bee is probably 20 mph, but a Bumble Bee may reach 25 mph for brief periods of time.

There are other species of Honey Bees in Southeast Asia that can fly at speeds of 20 mph on a regular basis. Many hornets can fly faster than our European Honey Bees and they reach speeds of 22-24 mph.

So can a person out run a Honey Bee?

The answer is probably NO. The average human can run at speeds of 7-10 mph. Even a trained athlete running a 4-minute mile, which is 15 mph, is only running at the same speed as a Honey Bee. Even more worrisome is the fact that Africanized

bees can fly faster than our typical European Honey Bee and often reach speeds of 20 mph.

Honey Bees can carry 60-70% of their body weight in nectar and pollen, which does slow them down. So if you're planning on racing a Honey Bee, select one that is flying back to the hive with a load of food.

## *Did you know GCBA has a library?*

The following books are available to check out one month at time, please see Rennie Mace

***Why Do Bees Buzz?*** Elizabeth Evans

***The Beekeeper's Handbook***

Diana Sammataro

***The Hive Detectives:Chronicles of a Honey Bee Catastrophe*** Loree Griffin Burns

***Honey Bee Diseases and Pests ?***

***Starting Right with Bees***

Kim Flottum et al.

***Queen Rearing Essentials***

***The ABC & XYZ of Bee Culture***

Lawrence John Connor

A.I. Root

***Natural Beekeeping*** Ross Conrad

***The Honey Bee Inside Out***

Celia Davis

***First Lessons in Beekeeping***

***The Compleat Meadmaker***

Keith S. Delaplane

Ken Schramm