

Mountain Empire Beekeepers Association

Minutes

July 26, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by Anthony Ellis in room 122, Smyth Hall, Wytheville Community College. 21 members were present.

**Minutes.** Motion to approve minutes from June 28, 2018 meeting—Harry Jo Yates, seconded by Cathy Hounshell. Minutes approved. Mickey Cunningham presented the Treasurers report. The report was filed for audit.

**Speaker:** Phil Blevins, Extension Agent, Washington County. 276-676-6309; [pblevins@vt.edu](mailto:pblevins@vt.edu); 234 West Valley Street, Suite B, Abingdon, VA 24210

**Presentation: Fall and Winter Management of Honeybees**

- Fall management is preparing colonies for winter
- Successful wintering depends largely on condition of colonies in fall
- Before parasitic mites, winter colony loss was only 10%
- Check colonies for:
  - Arrangement of hives
  - Ventilation
  - Food
  - Hive strength
  - Fumidil B treatment for Nosema in fall (note: hard to find Fumidil now)
- Remove surplus honey & empty supers after last flow or killing frost
- Merge weak colonies (less than 15 frames covered with bees)
- Never winter bees on foundation or partially drawn comb
- Put in entrance reducers
- Remove queen excluder
- Temperature
  - Extreme highs and lows will cause colony loss
  - Starvation is most common cause of winter death; either lack of honey or inability to reach the honey in extremely cold weather
- Survival & health
  - Colony strength
  - Food stores
  - Hive ventilation
  - Disease & pest control
- Should hives be insulated:
  - Bees begin to cluster when outside air temperature gets to @50 degrees
  - As temp drops, bees in center begin to generate heat while those on the outside serve as insulation
  - Bees move in and out of cluster to feed
  - Bees generate heat by contracting flight muscles in their thorax
  - Center of cluster averages 91-93 degrees; outmost most limit of 44 degrees, densest is 55-66 degrees
- Successful wintering
  - Young healthy queen; replace queens at regular intervals
  - Adequate reserves of food: 60 lbs. of honey; 500-600 sq. inches of pollen (3-5 combs of well filled pollen)
  - Additional nutrients (colonies wintered with no pollen = 78% loss)
  - Uppermost super should have 40-45 lbs. on honey; center 2-3 frames should be partially filled
- Feeding
  - 2:1 sugar syrup; add 1 tsp Honey-B-Healthy for 20 lbs. of sugar to help bees convert the sucrose; never boil; boiling makes a chemical change in the sugar
  - Remove queen excluders; evenly distribute frames
  - Bring food to bees; feed syrup when temperature is above 50 degrees; use fondant but provide water
- Keep colonies disease free

- Nosema: feed Fumidil B in fall; feed each colony 2 gallon of medicated syrup during mid-fall
- Parasitic mites
- Foul brood--treat with terramycin; destroy infected colonies
- Ventilation & Moisture Control
  - Keep bees dry, not warm
  - Fix so moisture can escape from hives: inner cover, inirie shim
  - Orient front of hives to southeast
  - Protect from wind
- Protect against pests
  - Mites
  - Bears, feral hogs--use high voltage electrical fences
  - Mice
- Reducing the size of hives (wooden ware) in winter makes for easier management
- Quote of the evening: "beekeepers want to blame hive failure on one big thing but it's a combination of several small things."

### Hive Report

- Nectar flow is low; late summer blooms are starting
- Check for mites
- Tim Service still has some queens
- Some have had bad experiences with mean & aggressive Buckfast queens
- Hop Guard II--new procedure--check instructions
- In August, bees will need "dirty water", i.e., add calcium (pinch of pelletized lime) to their drinking water; in November, add potassium sulfate (Amino-B)

### Treasurer's Report.

- Mickey Cunningham presented his report; the report was filed for audit.
- Alana Yates moved that \$200 be allocated to purchase raffle items for the 2019 class. Kirk Burkett seconded; motion passed.

### Old Business:

- Cathy Hounshell, Mickey and Tina Cunningham had a display at the Wytheville Farmers Market on June 30; good response; got names of 8 potential students.

### New Business:

- Bland County Heritage Day requested that MEBA do a display similar to the Wytheville display on August 18. If anyone would like to take this on, contact either Mick Cunningham (276-579-2123) or Cathy Hounshell (510-917-0916) for display materials.
- Mickey Cunningham and Cathy Hounshell will be attending the Easter Apiary Society meeting August 13-17 in Hampton, VA.
- Lynda Bracken will do a lotion making demo using honey at the August meeting.
- [Repeated from June minutes] VDACS is sponsoring a Beehive Distribution Program. A beekeeper needs to submit a form to the State Apiarist and if approved, they will receive funding for woodwork for three hives. Here is a link: <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/plant-industry-services-beehive-distribution-program.shtml> This program is a first come, first serve program.

### Raffle Winners:

Kenny Murphy: wax brush

Cathy Hounshell: smoker

Fred Williams: brush

Ronnie Osborne: alcohol wash

**Adjourned** at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Cunningham for Connie Armentrout, MEBA Secretary