

Mountain Empire Beekeepers Association

Minutes

March 24, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Tim Service; Mick Cunningham sold raffle tickets.

Pop Quiz for prizes (smoker fuel, Honey Bee healthy, and a wax figure) Tim gave us another name for the ligula= glossa.

Guest: Kathryn Grogan was not in attendance.

Tim introduced his friend, and former schoolmate from Blacksburg, Richard Reid. Richard is a semi-retired contractor previously from the Tidewater area. Richard started with bees in 1973 and quit in the mid-nineties. In 2008, Richard started again. He currently has 190 hives of which, 2/3 are nucleus that were split from production hives. He maintains 17 production hives and expands his apiary by splitting hives. Splitting is a division of a colony. He recommends raising your own queens rather than buying them because you will have better bees. The bees are better adapted, more mite resistant and have better traits. Richard explained that newbies should start with more than one hive. The reasons for splitting hives are: a management technique for mite control, brood break, to have extra queens for replacement, for stock improvement, for sale, to replace dead-outs, for an efficient resource for building up the apiary, nucs are easier for newbies to inspect and to learn. He stated that having more nucleus colonies make fixing problems easier. Nucs can be combined with a queen-less colony. Nucs are good at building comb and foraging, and they are less defensive. Splits can be made with approximately 250 bees, 4-5 (medium) frames, housed in multiple stories and/or single or double width. Richard uses only medium frames in his apiary to make all equipment compatible. Richard recommended that splits can be made anytime, but the earlier in the spring the better. Early splits give the nuc time to build up before the summer dearth and store plenty of honey. Richard stressed the importance of good nutrition for the health and productivity of any hive. The tendency of all hives is to swarm when a congested situation occurs, it's not necessarily genetic. Fall swarms need food and drawn comb and will need to be checked early in the spring. Feed them nothing wet in the winter; "dry camp" feeding is best (sugar on newspaper.) Richard showed how to help a hive with a screened front porch and an entrance reducer in order to reduce the threat of robbing by other hives. Someone asked how to identify a robbing situation. Richard stated that the bee activity is similar to "orientation flights" but with fighting at the entrance. The defender-guard bees are older bees and the smaller hives are more likely to be robbed. Exterior feeders are also attractive to robbers. Italians are robbers where Carniolans and Russian are less likely to rob. Another tip to minimize robbing is to feed the bees at dusk because the majority of the bees are home. To make a split successful, Richard combines these elements: capped brood, nectar and capped honey, empty drawn comb, pollen, plenty of nurse bees and to check in one day to make sure the nurse bees are keeping the brood warm. A question was asked about the red color of the pollen cells on a picture in his slide show, the pollen comes from purple dead nettle. If introducing a virgin queen, emergency queen cells must first be destroyed or removed to use with another hive. Again, Richard stressed the importance of good nutrition. Re-queening requires a follow-up check after three weeks. Richard also referred to Mike Palmer's videos for additional learning.

After a short break, Tim presented the Bee Biology lesson on the bee glands. Salivary (labial) glands (4): largest gland is the thoracic gland (2) in the thorax; and the head gland in the head- called the cephalic

glands (a post cerebral gland); all their ducts join to the tongue. The bee's tongue is tucked under its chin when not in use. The salivarium is the storage space for saliva from ducts which is similar to the proventriculus. The output of the post cerebral gland is an oily substance to lubricate mouth parts and to manipulate wax. The purpose is to break down sugars and fat to aid in digestion, to produce IDGF4, a growth substance and to trigger transition from worker bee to forager bee. The thoracic gland is an aqueous (water based) gland which softens wax, sugar, pollen and honey, and used to clean the queen. The secretion from this gland is used in the pupal stage to make a cocoon and in the larval stage to signal the nurse bees to feed more food. Both glands are fully developed in the queen and the workers and are active for 15-25 days. The glands are underdeveloped or nonexistent in the drones.

Bees in the News:

- There was a massive hive in Florida in a neighborhood that was removed without incident.
- The bees have finished their work in California with the almonds. The beekeepers are making and selling nucs from these hives. Paramount Farms (Wonderland Orchards) is tearing up almond trees due to water shortages in California. The results will be increases in the price of almonds and a field full of solar panels.
- Tim showed a picture of the Kansas City Royals spring training swarmed by honeybees.
- The EPA banned the use of solofoxaflor (a form of neonicotinoids). Many forms are still out there and will be tested one a time to determine harmfulness. Mick mentioned the study on the effects of neonics on queens by the USDA.
- Plague of "Zombees" - Apocephalus Boraalis which is parasitic fly as small as a mite. They affect the bee's wings and cause the bee to fly into the light at night. The bee dies and the AB's larva emerges from the carcass. Tim presented a "Sightings Map" to indicate that this parasite is all across the US and is something to be concerned about. The concern is very new and no prevention or treatment has been discovered yet.

Demo: Tim showed us how to make "Honey Bee Healthy" Recipe:

5 cups boiling water
5 cups sugar
15 drops of each lemongrass and peppermint oil
½ teaspoon lecithin- dissolve first

Use ½ to 1 cup to 5 gallons of sugar water to stimulate eating.

Minutes and Treasurer Report: Motion to approve- Patty Martin and seconded by Vernon. Mick presented the treasurers report.

Old business:

- WFM: Two trifold displays were presented, Vernon will bring an observation hive, and Connie is looking for literature to disperse to adults and for coloring pages for children.
- Website help: Tim asked for someone to help relay information to the webmaster.
- Sugar in bulk: Walmart is the best option at the point. A suggestion was made to research a grant from the Eastman Company which donated 2000 pounds of sugar to the Abingdon club. Patty Martin will check on this so that we can apply next year.

- Bees ordered from Mr. Holt must be picked up Saturday and paid in cash. Buyers are invited to attend the Surry Co beekeepers meeting at 8:30 am.
- Two attendees of the Hot Springs Apitherapy workshop, spoke about their experience there. They will present more at a later meeting and will write a summary for the website.

New business:

- June 20-26 is National Pollinators week- Tim encouraged our participation as a group. On Saturday the 25th, he suggested that we gather at a local grocery store and set up a table to greet and talk with customers about bees and their role as pollinators. Laminated bee pictures could be placed in the store on the products bees pollinate. A “treasure map” for children to locate the products in the store will be given. Also, suggested was for the group to sell seed bombs. This would require us making seed bombs at the meeting in May in preparation for the June event. Tim’s wife will donate the clay, we will need compost and non-invasive seeds. Our homework is to find tree and perennial plant ideas to include in the seed bombs. Tim asked for volunteers to contact the grocery store and contact Lowe’s for a donation of compost and seeds.
- May 14th is the workshop at Mr. Clifford’s bee yard.
- Mick shared that the beekeeping article “What’s the Buzz” from the Galax Gazette and The Declaration was sent to every mail box in Grayson County.

Raffle: 1 hemlock super, 1 hemlock bottom board with screen and mite board, 3 pints of Honey Bee Healthy

Adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Rene Neff for Tina Cunningham

(Thank you Rene!)