

Mountain Empire Beekeepers Association

Minutes

DRAFT October 28, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mickey Cunningham at the Pioneer Church located at 615 Max Meadows Rd. Max Meadows, Va 24360. 20 members were present.

Minutes and Treasurer's Report: Motion to approve minutes—Gary Tolley, seconded by Hank Sturkie. Minutes approved. The treasurer's report was provided by Gary Tolley and presented by Mickey Cunningham. The report was filed for audit.

Speaker: Mickey Cunningham

Presentation: Winter Survival

Mickey presented information on winter survival of the honeybee which included feeding, treating for varroa mites, and the importance of checking for wax moth infestation now. The article entitled Intermediate Beekeeping: Reading Your Colony referenced in Bee Culture on pp.64-67 by David MacFawn was the source of this information.

Winter is downsizing and spring is upsizing for the honeybee. The spring check should be done mid-March to the end of April. You want bees to start laying the last part of March. Around January 1 stop feeding protein supplements (ex. AP 23) because you don't want the queen laying in January. You want her to lay the last part of March. Spring is the growth cycle. Check the hive for any smells. The hive should smell sweet not sour or rotten. Check for the presence of any small hive beetles, and the queen and the extent of her laying of eggs. You will need to know the life cycle of the honeybee egg to larva to pupa to worker. Check for drones and queen cups. Ex: If there are many drones and queen cups or capped/closed queen cups on the lower edge of frames, you will need to take action to prevent swarms. Generally, swarm cell queens are transition queens-short lived. Around April/May check each frame at 14 day intervals based upon weather we are in or approaching significant nectar flow (Bees make honey or swarm). By the first week in April check laying pattern of the queen. If you want to replace your queen, order early. The first mite check should be after January 1. If you have yellow crystals around the opening of the cell, go ahead and treat for mites because this is mite feces. (poop). Ross Conrad last month said there is no need to check for mites until June if you treated in November.

Old Business:

- Patty Younger has offered her church, Pioneer church in Max Meadows, as a meeting place for MEBA until Wytheville Community College is available again. (Thank you Patty!)
- **You can pay for your Virginia State Beekeepers Association Dues by going to their website. Sign up online** (<https://www.virginiabeekeepers.org/join-us> or print this form

<https://www.virginiabeekeepers.org/resources/Documents/printable%20membership%20form.pdf>

and send via USPS mail to:

Ian Henry 5771 Hilltop Street Crozet, VA 22932

- One year from the date that you pay is your membership for the Virginia State Beekeepers Association.

- Beecheck.org BeeCheck is a voluntary communication tool that enables beekeepers and pesticide applicators to work together to protect apiaries through use of the BeeCheck mapping program. It is not a substitute for any state regulatory requirements.
- Apiary Registry by Field Watch – www.fieldwatch.com <https://fieldwatch.com/blog-crop-news-extension-umn-edu-2020-06-use-fieldwatch-to-locate-sensitive-html/> If you register you hives, commercial sprayers of pesticides will go online to tell you within 48 hours that they are going to be spraying so that you can cover your beehives and protect them. There is a \$10,000 to \$50,000 fine if they do not notify you in Virginia. The bees can be uncovered after 4 to 6 hours. (When it is dry.)
- From Cathy Hounshell – When ordering mite treatment or products with an expiration date from Mann Lake, any products not used before reaching the expiration date, you can ask for a refund on unused product(s).
- VSBA Fall Meeting **NOT** coming to Blue Ridge Community College rather Smithfield

New Business:

- Election of Officers for 2022-2023 will be held at the November 2021 meeting.
- Our MEBA president, Mickey Cunningham, represented MEBA with 4H Extension at Grayson Highlands School, presented Honey Bee information to Pre-Kindergarten 4-year-old students through sixth graders including teachers, assistants and principal.
- 2021 Basic Bee Class – Cathy Hounshell will be the instructor. We will need an additional member at each class to answer questions of class members and to assist with administrative things such as: collecting tuition checks, giving out handouts, giving out books etc... Wytheville Community College will be the class site in February/March 2022- if possible. The text book Beekeeping Basics has a new edition with color photos that will be available in December 2021 for \$10.00. No increase in price. If we order 40 books the price will be \$9.00. If we order 50 books the price will be \$8.50. If anyone would like to have the new book with color photos, please let Mickey Cunningham or Cathy Hounshell know **as soon as possible**.
- Volunteers to be mentors for the upcoming class are needed. If you have had bees for a year, you will know more than the student. This is key to success of a new beekeeper.

Hive Report: What Should You Be Doing with Your Hives?

Check for Mites & treat when necessary

Check your batteries for your electric fence

Look out for Small Hive Beetles –SHB

Raffle Winners:

Hank Sturkie – Paramoth

Johnathan Wright – Deep wooden nuc box

Patty Younger – Wax foundation

Hank Sturkie – Scale

Renee Lutz – Metal queen catcher clip

Next Meeting: November 18, 2021 6:30 p.m. Pioneer Church located at 615 Max Meadows Road Max Meadows, VA 24360. **This is the 3rd Thursday due to Thanksgiving on the 4th Thursday.**

Adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Armentrout, MEBA Secretary