



Bee Biz

Monthly Newsletter of the Coweta Beekeepers

President's Message

Coweta Beekeepers Association

Message From President Jerry Edwards

Saving the World, One Bee at a Time

April , 2012

I don't know about the rest of you, but I am being swamped with calls from people to remove swarms. I have even battled one at my house, to my wife's displeasure. Although I try to explain to the homeowners that as daylight hours and temperatures increase, honey bees prepare for the spring nectar flows by building their worker bee populations that some hives become overcrowded, people are only interested in one thing—remove the bees NOW!

Swarming season, which can last through the first of June, is a great time to increase your bee yard if you must act efficiently. As most of you know, swarms can stay on a swarming site for as little as 15 minutes or for several days or more. It depends on the length of time it takes for the scouts to find a new hive. So when you see a swarm or are asked to remove one, keep in mind that they will not be on that site permanently so act appropriately.

Sad news to report as the Coweta bee world lost one of its own when Rev. O. Sidney Gresham, founding president of Coweta Beekeepers Association, passed away March 23, 2012. Not only was he the charter president in the club in 1999, he also served as editor of the "Bee Buzz" and was awarded the 2000 Beekeeper of the Year honor. His nephew Wally Batchelor is a member of our club and has followed in his footsteps by serving both as president and Beekeeper of the Year.

Board members the next meeting will be at 6:30 PM prior to the April 9th regular meeting.

Last but not least, this story was set to me by a friend and I thought all of you might be interested.
29 March 2012 last updated at 15:12 ET

Pesticides hit queen bee numbers



By Richard Black Environment correspondent, BBC News

Some of the world's most commonly used pesticides are killing bees by damaging their ability to navigate and reducing numbers of queens, research suggests.

Scientific groups in the UK and France studied the effects of neonicotinoids, which are used in more than 100 nations on farm crops and in gardens.

The UK team found the pesticides caused an 85% drop in queen production.

Writing in the journal *Science*, the groups note that bee declines in many countries are reducing crop yields.

In the UK alone, pollination is calculated to be worth about £430m to the national economy.

And the US is among countries where a succession of local populations has crashed, a syndrome known as Colony Collapse Disorder.

Many causes have been suggested, including diseases, parasites, reduction in the range of flowers growing wild in the countryside, pesticides, or a combination of them all.

The neonicotinoids investigated in the two *Science* papers are used on crops such as cereals, oilseed rape and sunflowers.

Often the chemical is applied to seeds before planting. As the plant grows, the pesticide is contained in every part of it, deterring insect pests such as aphids.

But it also enters the pollen and nectar, which is how it can affect bees.

Dave Goulson from the UK's University of Stirling and colleagues studied the impact of the neonicotinoid imidacloprid on bumblebees.

They let bees from some colonies feed on pollen and sugar water containing levels of imidacloprid typically found in the wild, while others received a natural diet.

Then they placed the colonies out in the field.

'Severely compromised'

After six weeks, colonies exposed to the pesticide were lighter than the others, suggesting that workers had brought back less food to the hive.

But the most dramatic effect was on queen production. The naturally-fed hives produced around 14 queens each - those exposed to the pesticide, just two.

"I wouldn't say this proves neonicotinoids are the sole cause of the problems bees face," said Dr Goulson, "but it does suggest they're likely to be one of the causes, and possibly a significant one.

"The use of these pesticides is so widespread that most bee colonies in areas of arable farming are likely to be exposed to them, so there is potential for them to be playing a significant role in suppression of bee populations on a pretty staggering scale."

The French research group investigated the impact of a different neonicotinoid, thiamethoxam, on the number of bees able to make it back to the colony after release.

Using tiny tags attached to the bees' backs, they showed that significantly fewer insects came back if they had previously been exposed to levels of thiamethoxam that they might encounter on farms.

Calculations showed the impairment was bad enough that the capacity of colonies to survive could be severely compromised.

"What we found is that actually if colonies are exposed to pesticides, the population might decline to a point that would put them at risk of collapse due to other stressors," said lead scientist Mickael Henry from the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (Inra) in Avignon.

Dr Henry told BBC News that it was time for authorities to re-design the safety tests that pesticides have to pass.

"To date, the tests mostly require that the doses found in nature do not kill bees," he said.

"But those authorization processes ignore possible consequences for the behavior of bees, and we hope the people in charge will be more careful."

Worldwide business

Neonicotinoids are a multi-billion dollar business worldwide. Even though some countries have banned them partially, a complete global prohibition, as some environmental groups advocate, might be impossible.

May Berenbaum, head of entomology at the University of Illinois and one of the leading US experts on CCD, said the chemicals should be used more carefully.

"There is no question that neonicotinoids are being used recklessly, for want of a better word," she said.

"Fifty years of experience should have taught us that overuse of a single class of compounds is an inherently unsustainable practice, and that pre-treating seeds when pest problems might not even be present is colossally unwise.

"But neonicotinoids could be banned everywhere in the world, and honeybees would still have problems with pathogens, parasites, habitat degradation and overuse of just about every other class of chemical pesticide."

At EU level, the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee has asked the European Commission to increase research and produce an action plan to conserve bees.

"When the action plan is produced, we are ready to give member states a deadline to use or not use a specific pesticide - until then it is up to individual states," said Paolo de Castro MEP, the committee's chairman.

In the UK context, Dr Goulson added, it would certainly be worth re-considering neonicotinoid use in gardens.

"Personally I would ban insecticides completely in gardens," he said.

"There are very few serious insect pests in Britain as far as gardening's concerned, it's too cold; and if roses have a few aphids on, then tough, it's not a big deal."

His research team now plans to expand their study to other bee species, while Dr Henry's group will try to discover exactly how thiamethoxam does its damage.

Meeting

Our next meeting will start at 7:00 pm at the Asa Powell Expo Building. Meeting date is April 9, 2012. Refreshments are being supplied by Jeanie Edwards & Donna Lopes. **Drinks and ice will be supplied by the club!!**

2012 Dues

You can pay your dues for 2012 to Mike Copeland at a meeting or by mailing them to him at P.O. Box 159, Luthersville, Ga 30251. Dues for the 2012 calendar year starting January 1st thru December 31st, are \$15.00 per family. If you would like to receive your newsletter through e-mail please inform Donna, and give her your e-mail address. Dues are used in the following manner: for postage of this newsletter, supplies for our meeting, and the Christmas Party.

Up Coming Events

21th Annual Young Harris Beekeeping Institute, date is May 10 - 12th .

If you are interested in honing your beekeeping skills, I suggest that you enroll in the Young Harris Beekeeping Institutes which will be held May 10-12. It is a very rewarding experience for both beginning and experienced beekeepers.

March 21, 2012 - more than a million citizens signed an emergency petition filed with the US EPA seeking suspension of use of a pesticide linked to honey bee deaths.
info on this link: <http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/mar2012/2012-03-21-092.html>

Here are a few more articles you can find online. If you don't have access to a computer and need me to print them for you please let me know. Thanks Donna

<http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/disease-prone/2012/03/21/you-should-rub-honey-on-your-everywhere/>

<http://www.times-herald.com/local/Swarm-of-bees-stops-for-break-at-Ashley-Park--2135382>

(Guess they couldn't find anyone closer to hive this swarm!!)

This month's Smithsonian has a great article on swarms and can be viewed online. I am not certain I agree with one of the points.

<http://www.times-herald.com/local/Swarm-of-bees-stops-for-break-at-Ashley-Park--2135382>

I'm writing today to submit an article for consideration in your newsletter. It is about EAS in Burlington VT this August and more specifically the EAS Honey Show. Mike Palmer is in charge of the EAS 2012 Honey Show, and I'm his Publicity person.

The Eastern Apicultural Society is an educational organization dedicated to the promotion of bee culture, education of beekeepers, certification of Master Beekeepers and excellence in bee research. Each summer EAS hosts a short course and conference and this year it will be 8/13-17. People can come to the Short Course (2 1/2 days of workshops and bee yard instruction), or the Conference (2 1/2 days of presentations both large and small), choose a single day to visit, or stay the whole 5 days!

Mike Palmer asked me to drum up publicity for the EAS Honey Show, and my idea was to gather high-quality presentations that have been made, and locate them all on a Honey Show page on the EAS site, along with clear rules. That way people don't have to laboriously seek out suggestions for showing extracted honey at one bee club's site, and wax block prep on some other beekeeper's blog, etc. Or worst of all, say to themselves,

"Honey Show? I never enter those; I wouldn't know what to do!"

Our idea is to get many more people educated about how to get ready to enter a honey show. The great thing is that our educational page is not only valuable for the EAS honey show, but for any show a beekeeper might enter! The point of showing is to prove the entrant can produce a super-high quality product, and hopefully, that is the same product as what they sell. It's not just showing off at a show, but learning about providing the highest quality products for the customer. The attention to detail needed to enter a show combined with the careful comments given on the score card by judges, allows a person to improve their skills immensely.

With the help of Karla Eisen of Virginia I'm now alerting as many clubs as possible to the new Honey Show page on the EAS site, so they can tell their members, or maybe use it during a meeting by having a computer and screen right there. My hope is that experienced people in each club will elaborate on the EAS webpage, adding their own tips and experiences. Even if they never plan to go to EAS, the information is valuable.

But we do want to get as many people all charged up about the EAS Show as is humanly and electronically possible. We're trying to excite more beekeepers about the idea of putting entries in

the Show, whether they are honey, wax, gadgets, mead, beer, baked good or photos. Mike Palmer envisions a show reminiscent of those Shows in the olden days, with rooms full of entries, silver platters for prizes, spectacular pyramids of back-lit honey jars, excitement galore, fame, honors, tears of joy....
...at the very least!

OK, so he's infected me with his enthusiasm. I hope you enjoy the article, and check out the new Honey Show webpage on the EAS site and get excited too!

<http://www.easternapiculture.org/resources.html>

Please let me know if you have any trouble with the attachment.

Thanks for your time and for running the article in your newsletter,
Anne Frey