



Bee Biz

**President's Message
Coweta Beekeepers Association
President Jerry Edwards
Saving the World, One Bee at a Time
October 2012**

Greetings to you, my fellow beekeepers. It is hard to believe that summer is a memory and it is time to prepare the hives for winter.

The care given the colony, or colonies, in the fall is crucial to the hive's success the following year, and fall management can be the starting point in providing strong colonies for next year's honey crop.

Each colony should have enough honey and pollen to last until spring. This means 40 to 60 pounds of honey and as many combs with areas of stored pollen as possible. A well-filled deep hive body with some empty space in the center combs provides enough stores for a strong colony wintered in two hive bodies. It is more difficult to rate the pollen supply, but colonies with a shortage can be given combs from other colonies or given stored combs that contain pollen. Colonies without sufficient honey should be given full combs saved for the purpose, or fed enough sugar water or diluted honey to make at least 40 pounds of stored food.

Bees winter best on combs that have been used for brood rearing. If possible, do not winter bees on all new honey combs, and be sure that any frames of foundation are replaced with drawn comb. Remove the excluder and all empty, supers. Empty combs can be stored on the hive above an inner cover with the center hole open. However, it is better to store combs where they cannot be damaged or blown over by the wind.

Weak or queenless colonies should be united with stronger colonies that have queens, but to keep the individual small colonies rather than unite them, consider putting the small colony above a double division screen on a large colony. A double screen is a wooden frame holding two layers of wire screen, usually 8-mesh. The screens are sufficiently far apart that bees on either side cannot touch. A rim with an entrance cut in one end lets the division screen serve as a bottom for the top colony while the heat from the colony below

helps to keep the smaller colony warm. To use the screen, remove the cover and inner cover of the large, colony and put the division screen in place with the entrance toward the back of the hive. Put the small colony above the screen after making certain it has a good supply of stored honey of at least five or six full frames.

Good management includes a careful inspection for disease in the fall. To establish a program of disease prevention with drugs and antibiotics, the beekeeper should treat each colony after the honey crop has been removed and while the bees are still active.

As the weather becomes cooler at the end of summer, field mice look for warm places to spend the winter. A nest in the lower corner of a bee hive is just such a place. For this reason it is necessary either to use the 3/8-inch entrance or to restrict any deeper entrance used during the summer. An entrance block, a piece of lath with an entrance slot, or a metal entrance reducer can be used. Do not make the entrance less than 4 inches wide or cover it with hardware cloth because the bees that die during the winter may block the entrance.

The colder the winters, the more the bees benefit from a top entrance to the hive. This entrance permits the escape of some of the moisture produced by the bees. The top entrance also lets the bees get out of the hive more readily during brief spells of sunny and warmer weather during the winter and spring when it is still too cool to allow the bees to move down to the main entrance of the hive.

A top entrance is constructed by boring a 3/4-inch hole in the top hive body near the front hand hold or cutting a 3-inch by 3/8-inch slot in the front lower rim of the inner cover. Push the telescoping cover forward to provide access to the opening. Similar entrances can be made in one-piece covers by cutting a slot with a dado blade on a 'saw.

A large number of beekeeping experts say that strong colonies of bees do not need special protection but only plenty of stored honey and shelter from the wind. Each beekeeper must decide what works.

Remember these three important club events. The first is the honey show at the next meeting. Procedure and rules were in last month's newsletter. Next is voting for Beekeeper of the Year so please give this some serious thought and vote accordingly. Last is the Christmas party, Dec. 6, which is a Thursday, not Monday, but it was the most suitable date as the second Monday was not available.

Just a reminder this meeting is the Honey Show, rules are on the web site. Win the bragging right of the club by having the best honey in the area. Make sure you enter the black jar which is for taste only.

I look forward to seeing you all at the next meeting.

Jerry Edwards
678-333-6889

Meeting

Our next meeting will start at 7:00 pm at the Asa Powell Expo Building. Meeting date is October 6, 2012. Refreshments are being supplied by (Lynn McElreath will get in contact with you!!). **Drinks and ice will be supplied by the club!!**

2012 Dues

You can pay your dues for 2013 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

None at this time.