

Minutes BGES April 3, 2018 BIC

Our monthly meeting opened at 6: 10 pm with George Brown, president of BGES, giving big Welcomes to our Guest Speaker, Keith Tignor, Apiarist for the State of Virginia and to the New Beekeepers in attendance.

George thanked too Steve and Kasey Jones, from Hands on Beekeepers living in Chesapeake who came early with their truck bringing beekeeping equipment to our club.

For brevity sake, Carol Zuccarino, our secretary, gave a summary of the February meeting and encouraged members to check the web page for detailed happenings. Phil Harris, our treasurer, reported that the treasury holds \$ 1058.74.

With no further ado, Keith took over the evening as he presented Sustainable Beekeeping. The pollinator population has many factors affecting their lives beginning with the environment, nutrition, genetics, pathogens and toxicants. Keith and our “founder”, Paul Kist, remembered “the yesteryear days” when the SHB was not as prevalent and hives were not necessarily “managed’ as they must be today.

Keith asked us to Learn from the bees by **Listening** to them! The bees “disposition” changes when there is a dearth in the nectar flow, when there is no queen or when something is not going right. Have we all heard a “piping queen”? (Virgin queens make a curious high pitched noise to assert their position to their rival sister queens)

We learned that the swarm survival rate is only 25 %. Bees fly 1.5 miles from the hive and we should not put our hives in a straight line. Swarm traps should be 10 feet or more off the ground keeping predators away. It is best to replace 2 frames from each hive box every year. Leaving the frames in year after year results in the bees themselves growing smaller as the cells get coated with wax and other matter, thus reducing the space in which the larva grow.

Other points that Keith made were to stop swarming before it starts try reversing the brood box to stretch out the worker population and add another super before the nectar flows to give them more room. Try making splits.

The final points were about the diseases and mite control where Keith said Angela Barnes will be doing some training on alcohol washes and sugar shakes. Sugar dusting should be done in the Spring and Summer and months in between. (1x a week for 1 month and then monthly.) The bees need to look like ghosts! The mites will fall from the bee's bodies or be scratched off by other bees.

Caution must be taken using chemicals for the bees and for the keeper. Alternative varroa control is by brood-breaking or requeening, drone traps and using screened bottom boards.

Keith gave a few web sites: beecheck@vdacs.virginia.gov, va.beecheck.org, fieldwatch.com . Bee check is an apiary registry by Field Watch where the GPS of each hive is listed.

The final minutes of the evening were dedicated to requests by George for volunteers to form a nominating committee for next year's elections, for experienced beekeepers to sign up on a sheet to be mentors and not to forget to send him your hive GPS as George is making a map of the ESVA with the BGES hive locations.

We briefly gave hive reports with the sad news that EVERY beekeeper had lost hives this past winter and many of us were down to a single hive! But our spirits are "Spring-time renewed" and we will keep at this necessary hobby ...for the Bees.

Refreshments were enjoyed by all and the meeting closed at 8:35.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Zuccarino, Secretary BGES