

# The Shore Swarm

The Newsletter of the Beekeepers Guild of the Eastern Shore

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## President's message

Shiver and shake!! Old Man Winter has definitely come to visit our area of Virginia. I had seen the forecast for a colder winter in the Farmer's Almanac. My sister in West Virginia wrote that pipes are freezing all over the place, in her town. Of course, beekeepers up there wrap their hives with insulating materials to hold in some of the bees' warmth and to keep drafts out.

Andy Westrich, who was our January Intermediate Class lecturer, wraps his hives with two inches of Styrofoam to hold in heat. He has recorded a 20 degree difference in his hives. It is still all right to help your bees because we have another month or two of cold coming our way. Those 30 plus BGES members who came to hear Andy give a very fine talk on raising your own local queens and making Nucs with them, got rewarded with a ton of great beekeeping information. Andy is one of the best teachers in our area and he will come to teach another Intermediate Class in the spring.

Suggest some topics you want to accelerate your bee knowledge and we will cover those as we present more classes. Email them to Mary and Ann. Our next big

project is to teach a new batch of beginning beekeepers in February. Come on out and help us do a great job.

See you there.

Paul

## Schedule of Events

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Saturday, January 25 <sup>th</sup>  | Short Bee Program at Eastern Shore Public Library, 1 pm – 2 pm                        |
| Saturday, Feb. 8 <sup>th</sup>      | Beginning Beekeeping Class, first part ES Chamber of Commerce, Melfa 9 am – 1 pm      |
| Saturday, February 15 <sup>th</sup> | Second part of Beginning Beekeeping Class, ES Chamber of Commerce, Melfa 9 am – 1 pm. |
| Saturday, March 1                   | Regular BGES meeting ES Chamber of Commerce, Melfa 10 am – 12 noon                    |

## 2014 Beginner Class

February, 2014 marks the fifth year that BGES will offer a Beginning Beekeeping Class to the public on the Eastern Shore. We estimate that well over one hundred people have taken our classes and have become better informed in the ways of bees. While it is hard to know how many of our participants have set up apiaries, we are sure that our efforts have brought many people into the beekeeping fold and hundreds of thousands of bees to the area.

In response to the 2013 class exit survey and to our own personal observations, there will be a few changes in the 2014 class. The class will run three hours longer in total and will be limited to 25-30 participants. This will give our presenters more time to cover materials, more time for student questions and more time for interaction with our BGES members. Additionally, we plan to have an opportunity for hands-on participation following two of our presentations.

As spring approaches, we hope to match each student to a mentor from our club who has some bee raising experience. Again, we plan to offer open hive activities late in the spring and will need our BGES members to make these possible.

We encourage all of our BGES members to participate in the class in one way or another. If you would like to be part of a presentation team, please email Mary Walker at [mwalker@esva.net](mailto:mwalker@esva.net). We have a list of people bringing refreshments, but we could use more volunteers to make ham and turkey rolls for the break or add to the refreshment table in any way.

Most importantly, our members can help by putting out the word through social media (thanks Donna!) or by word of mouth. We are encouraging on-line registration which can be done from our website, [www.bgesva.org](http://www.bgesva.org).

So remember our class will run on February 8 and 15, from 9:00 until 1:00 PM. Linda and Chris Goldstine are handling pre-registration through the website. A class agenda will be going out to you soon, and remember, we will be appreciative of your participation on any level.

*(Mary Walker)*

### **Upcoming Program at the Public Library**

We are arranging a different sort of program to be held this Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, at the public library in Accomac, to help publicize bees, beekeeping, and our upcoming class.

One of our members noted that many who have taken our 2-part beginners class have been discouraged to learn of the commitment and costs beekeeping entails, and have been overloaded by the information presented.

So this short program seeks to just present the basic facts in a lightweight way, to those who are just beginning to consider beekeeping. Perhaps some who attend this program will realize that beekeeping is not for them. Perhaps others will find their interest piqued, and will see that they want to go further, and will sign up for the more serious class.

John Chubb sent out a request to our members to help with this program, and so far we are a group of six. Bob Good has put together a slide show, and we'll serve refreshments. The "Friends of the Eastern Shore Public Library" will be assisting us. Come and join us at 1 pm if you're able to.

## Bees around the World

W.T. Nottingham recently traveled to the Bahamas, and like many of us, couldn't help but notice the bees of this different land. W. T. writes:



*Being a beekeeper I know I notice them more often. I was visiting a place (Preachers Cave) on the island of Eleuthra in the Bahamas and noticed them ....If you look closely you can see them in the top left hand corner. I believe there was another hive or hives further around to the right but didn't want to walk through the bushes to get their picture.*

### **Andy Westrich and the January meeting**

At our January 4<sup>th</sup> meeting we enjoyed a very informative talk about aspects of making new colonies from our beehives in the spring. Some of us definitely experienced information overload!

Andy listed many advantages of making our own "splits." Among them:

- We become more self-sufficient
- We can bank or trade our nucs
- We encourage colonies with better and more desirable characteristics.

- We can avoid colonies with undesirable characteristics, and bees poorly adapted to local conditions.

Andy, Paul, and Angela Barnes all stressed the importance of assessing the honey stores in our winter hives, and feeding the bees if necessary.

## Beehive Grant Program

At the meeting, members Dave and Donna Hartley mentioned that they had sent in required paperwork according to the instructions of the Virginia Beehive Grant Program. They were recently astonished to receive a check from the state. This is the first success that we have heard about in this promising program. Dave and Donna emphasized the importance of asking for receipts when purchasing beekeeping equipment, because these must be submitted in order to obtain the \$200.00 per hive grant.

**\$\$\$ SAVE THOSE RECEIPTS \$\$\$**

As this newsletter is being written, the world outside is snowy and white and the ground is hard as stone. If our hives are in good shape, the temperature inside the honeybee cluster is a balmy 90 ° . What wonderful little insects we keep!

It won't be long before we will be able to detect the first faint red blush of maple flowers in the woods, then the shadbush, redbud, and all the other harbingers of the nectar flow.

In the meantime, look for camellias, daphne, sweetbox, and the small ground flowers in your yard that provide some exciting nectar for honeybees on the rare mild days of January and February.

