



The Shore Swarm

The Newsletter of the Beekeepers Guild of the Eastern Shore

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www.bgesva.org

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Presidents Message

Greetings BGES.

It's that hot part of the summer when your bees are probably "hanging out on the front porch" hoping it gets cooler just like the rest of us. Your Board of Directors met to plan the way ahead for the BGES year, July to June. Elsewhere in the Swarm you will find a schedule of when and where we plan to hold our regular meeting. Of course, the next is on Tuesday, August 5, at the Barrier Island Center in Machipongo at 6:30PM. One of our objectives as a guild is to reach out to both attract additional beekeeping enthusiasts and to acquaint the general public with the importance of having plenty of bees in our environment. Read about our activities at the New Roots Garden in Cape Charles. August 9th will see BGES busy at Farm Day at Ker Place in Onancock; if you're in the neighborhood, please stop by. We will have other opportunities to showcase beekeeping.

It is our objective to bring important lessons at both the beginning beekeeping and intermediate beekeeping levels to our members as part of our regular meeting. You should always leave knowing better how to manage your hives and about bees in general. The August presentations will focus on bee predators, including those that can infest a hive. Come and hear what others have encountered and what they did about it.

The BOD has recommended granting Honorary Membership to several long time major contributors to BGES. These include Bob and Janet Messenger, Mary and Evan Clements, and Angela Barnes. I would expect Paul Kist to join these when his dues run out! Speaking of dues, remember, BGES runs on a July to June fiscal year..... So dues for 2015 are due now; see the plea elsewhere in the Swarm.

Now, about the annual BGES picnic (also a good place to pay your dues). Mark your calendar for Saturday, September 6th. We will have a great time. See the details later in this Swarm.

You have probably read a lot in the press about how some pesticides used in agriculture may be affecting bee populations. This is not the time or place to go into details, but one course of action you can take is to have your hive locations in our database. That way we can alert the aerial sprayers where hives are and they can take steps to avoid overspray or to alert the beekeeper to cover their hives. In case you

have not yet provided location info, I've provided directions on how to "locate" your hives and report that info in another article.

BGES is your guild and your first-line resource for info about bees and beekeeping. It is only as good as your participation makes it. Please share the word, come to our meetings and be prepared to be helped or help others with this exciting and fun undertaking.

Keep buzzin',

John Chubb, President

Next Meeting
Tuesday, August 5th
6:30 pm

Barrier Island Center
Machipongo

Panel Discussion:

Varroa Mites, Hive Beetles, and Other Pests
What do you do when you find an infestation? What are some "tricks of the trade?"

Schedule for the Upcoming Year

The BGES Board of Directors met recently to plan the year's programs and opportunities as much as possible. There are plenty of holes remaining in the schedule, so if you think of a program or speaker we need, please let us know! So far, this is what we have:

August 5	BIC	Beetles and Moths
Sept. 6		Picnic at Mary Walker's
Oct. 4	C of C	(Open)
Nov. 4	BIC	Winterizing the Hive, Feeding Bees
December		No meeting
Jan. 3	CofC	Swarms
February		Class for Beginners, Heritage Festival
Mar. 3	BIC	Queen Rearing
April 4	CofC	Hive Management
May 5	BIC	How to Get Honey
June 4	CofC	(Open)

Picnic!!

Location: Herman and Mary Walker's home ; 9721 Church Neck Road, slightly past Chatham Vineyard, on the left- long dirt road .

When: first Saturday in September (9-6-14)

Time: 4:00 PM

Pot Luck (salad, veggie or dessert) or sign up to bring drinks- club will furnish entre.

We'll have some chairs, but if you have chairs that are handy to bring, please do so.

Features: honey contest, smoker contest and bee plant exchange. Also, for those interested, we will take a look at Mary's bees.

For those who haven't been to Mary's house, it's in Northampton County on the bayside. Church Neck Road is off the Bayside Road between Franktown and Machipongo, near the ancient village of Bridgetown.

Friends and family members are welcome!

A rain date will be announced, and more information will be forthcoming.

Questions? Reach Mary at mwalker@esva.net.



The Onancock Market

We've had a request from Janet Fosque, manager of the Onancock Market (a Saturday morning Farmer's Market), to consider selling honey. If our club wishes to participate, there is no fee as long we offer something in the way of education about bees, honey, or beekeeping.

For the past 2 years we've had a booth on one Saturday during the season. Those who have participated (Ann Snyder and Matt Cormons) have sold a lot of honey to very enthusiastic customers. Last year Matt had a booth for an extra day and sold around \$1000 worth of honey.

There are a few rules with which we must comply, but if there's sufficient interest, this is a good way to meet the public and collect some very loyal customers. If you're interested, contact Ann at bleakhouse@verizon.net.



Farming Life on the Eastern Shore

Brittany Hayward of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Historical Society has invited BGES to participate in this very special program featuring farming on the shore during the mid-twentieth century – a time that many of us old folks still remember quite well!

Saturday, August 9th
11 – 3 pm
Ker Place, Onancock

John Long and Chris Merritt are coordinating our exhibit and all members are invited to come join John and Chris as they meet the public and answer questions. If you are a new beekeeper, this is a wonderful place to learn from others as well as share what you do know. All are welcome. There will be a display hive and many interesting aspects of beekeeping to share.

This event is open to the public. It actually begins on Friday the 8th, with Music on the Lawn, featuring big band style music and a presentation on oral histories of farming during the 1930s and 40s.

On Saturday at 10am, there's a panel discussion on the Ker Place lawn about farming life, and then at 11:00, the Fair begins.

There will be many other interesting exhibits there besides ours: Ten Good Sheep, Shine and Rise Farm, Farming Equipment Display, Farming Book collection from the Book Bin, a 1930s Radio Show with costumes from the North Street Playhouse, games, and other activities for all ages.

If you can come and help, please contact Chris at cmpens@hotmail.com or John at thetrawler@msn.com.

New Roots Youth Garden Event

On July 17th, some of our Northampton County members participated in an event held in Cape Charles at the lovely New Roots Youth Garden. This event was planned to show children ages 3-13 healthy activities related to gardening.

3 groups of children (divided by age) were to rotate through various stations offering hands-on activities. Donna Fauber, Mary Walker, Carol Zuccarino, John Long (with son Nathan and niece Madison) and Ann Snyder represented BGES. The day was beautiful and the event well attended and fun – and a little loose!

We had the usual set up of hive bodies and extractor, and an exhibition hive of John's, which was fascinating to all. Donna planned a great learning activity for demonstrating why honeybees are so good at pollinating.

A container filled with cheese doodles and Starburst® candies was dressed up to resemble a flower. Children were instructed to imagine their hands were “bees” and to reach into the container to take a sweet Starburst. Naturally, when they pulled out their starbursts, their hands were covered with that delicious pollen-like cheesy powder, just like the honeybees.

Children were also offered graham crackers spread with honey from local bees. It was fun to watch Donna interact with them, and to hear her “carding” the little ones to make sure they were old enough to consume honey legally!*



Here, Mary helps one of the participants try on the costume. In the background are Madison and Donna, standing by next to the giant Starburst flower.

*Remember, “Honey should not be fed to infants under one year of age.”

Tips for August

- ☒ Provide a water source such as birdbath or basin of water with shallow sides. You might help the bees by arranging stones in the water so there are safe landing places for them. Bees will deposit this water throughout the cells in the hive, and its evaporation will help cool the hive.
- ☒ Ventilation seems to be helpful to a hive year-round but especially during the heat of summer. Prop the top cover up slightly, but use a screened cover to prevent pests from entering the hive. On the hottest days the colony will “beard” on the hive front.
- ☒ Be more cautious approaching your hives at this time of year, as the bees tend to be more defensive than usual during a nectar dearth.
- ☒ If your bees swarm, both the original hive and the swarm will need extra care to survive. For the swarm, there is not time for many brood cycles to build up a colony before cold weather, and for the original hive, there is limited time to raise a new queen, and begin brood production again.

Mary Walker writes:

Who are these robber bees?

A month or so ago, I went out to my little bee yard to find a buzzing attack going on at the entrance of one of my smaller hives. The attackers were larger than my honeybees, and it quickly became apparent that these bullies were able to intimidate my bees and walk right into the hive. These unidentified bee-like creatures have similar markings to my bees but are darker and somewhat larger. They have not turned their aggressive behavior on me but have stay focused on entering the hive and stealing the honey.

The worst of the story is that since I discovered these flying devils, they have attacked all five of my hives quite regularly in the late afternoon. They move around seeking the most vulnerable openings and possibly the most available honey. The only way I know to inhibit the robbing is to narrow the entrance to each hive as much as possible while still allowing a tiny space for the honeybee occupants to come and go. This has been a challenge! I am finding lots of empty cells in my hives, so this activity is taking a toll on their well-being.

I am wondering if other local beekeepers are familiar with this situation? I have several "bodies" in the freezer and plan to take them to the August meeting. I am hoping to get some help with identifying these bad girls and hope also to get some advice on stopping the attacks.

A reminder to all our members: Our August meeting will be a good time to make contact with the treasurer, Chris Merritt, if you haven't already paid your annual dues. Dues remain a very reasonable \$20.00 per member (or family) and an additional \$10.00 will gain you membership in the Virginia State Beekeepers Association as well. If you join the VSBA, you have discounted registration fees for state meetings, and receive regular newsletters informing you of educational programs, research, statistics, best practices, and state legislation affecting us.

This month we're featuring pests of different kinds in our program at the Barrier Island Center on August 6th. Mary has mentioned a mysterious insect that steals honey. My own hives seem to be under siege by thousands of menacing, predatory dragonflies each evening. I think hive survival so often is simply a matter of numbers - hoping that new brood comes along faster than pests can destroy. One of my hives seems to attract ants...they're harmless and I can't see that they bother the bees, but they bother *me*! They've really junked up the screened inner cover with their messy white nests.

I hope you'll be able to make it to the meeting, and bring your questions and opinions to share.

Ann Snyder