

The Shore Swarm

September, 2015 Vol. 6, No. 8

The Newsletter of the Beekeepers Guild of the Eastern Shore



shutterstock · 163888526

From the President

Greetings, BGES. Alas, this will be my final message as President since my wife and I are moving off the Shore to beautiful Beaufort, SC. Becoming a beekeeper here through taking the class and then diving into beekeeping in a modest way (maximum three hives), has been a real thrill. I have found the comradeship and enthusiasm of my fellow beekeepers to be the best part of my association with BGES. In many ways I've been more of a "bee-haver" than a beekeeper since I only service my bees when I think I have to. That does mean feeding regularly when needed. Our nation, and especially our area, needs to increase our stock of pollinators if many of the crops we depend on are to flourish. Beekeeping is an important service to our neighbors, and we get the fun and some of the honey. I depart BGES with very mixed emotions having made or strengthened so many friendships. I know the Guild will continue to flourish. There is a Beekeepers Association where I'm headed; I'll be sure to check them out. I want to thank all the BGES Board of Directors and key BGES members who have worked so hard to make BGES what it is, and Paul Kist for getting us up and running.

Summer is nearly over and the fall nectar flow should begin shortly; our bees will enjoy a renewed supply as they build their stores for winter – and a few of us may be able to "rob" them of some honey. Let's hope the rains are frequent enough for a good stand of fall blooms. Also, if you have areas that can be left unmowed until November, it would help our foragers to find more of "the good stuff".

You'll see elsewhere in The Swarm the announcement about our GREAT annual picnic, scheduled for Saturday, September 12th. It's sure to be a most enjoyable time. Family and friends are welcome and there are some interesting activities planned. PLEASE RSVP to Carol (zuccarinoc@gmail.com) so we'll have enough chicken, etc. I'll see you there.

John Chubb



shutterstock · 163888526

From the editor (an editorial)

It is indeed a sorrow to me to send out this news of President John Chubb's terribly swift house sale and impending move. We have enjoyed some happy years under his very competent and cheerful leadership. John stepped into the role of president with genuine humility, admitting that he was not the most expert or experienced of beekeepers. But he gave us what was needed – willingness to preside over our meetings, occasionally steer our discussions, redirect our efforts and help keep us on a steady course. So we thank John for his service.

For those who may not know John well, he and his wife Ive moved to the shore following careers in the Navy. John is a retired admiral (as a Navy "brat" I truly appreciate that accomplishment!) Here, both John and Ive have taught hundreds of students mathematics and science at the secondary and college levels. John has been a very active board member of Citizens for a Better Eastern Shore, a very active member of his church, and has served Northampton County as a member of various working boards. This list of some formal activities is just the tip of the iceberg of what John has contributed to our Eastern Shore life. In recent weeks I have listened to some of John's many friends and neighbors talk of how John has helped them and how they will miss him. It is somewhat amazing to me that he found time to fit in his new interest - beekeeping.

BGES is bereft but not at a *complete* loss with John's departure. Thanks to the work of past members, the Guild has bylaws which provide some order in case of the unexpected. Our Vice President, John Long, has always helped when he can, and has presided in John's absence at meetings. He will fill in as able. And Secretary Carol Zuccarino, next in line, will be presiding at our October meeting. Ultimately we will need to nominate and elect a new president. * For the time being, BGES is in good hands.

So, to John, we wish you fair seas and following winds in the future, and we know that Beaufort will be blessed to be your new home! Thank you for your friendship and for all you've done for BGES.

**We ask each member to consider accepting a board positions, or nominating others who have time and talent to share. We understand that many people will choose to retire from active membership after getting their initial start with the class and a little support from members. After all, most of us get into this to be beekeepers, not organization-people! But a Guild has an essential mission to promote bees and beekeeping, and cannot continue without new worker brood to replace the old from time to time!*

Upcoming Schedule of BGES Events

Saturday, September 12	12:30	BGES Annual Picnic	E.S. Chamber of Commerce Melfa – please RSVP!
Saturday, October 3	10:00	BGES Regular Mtg Guest Speaker - Herbert, on German beekeeping. (He is Bettina's friend, a beekeeper for 35+ years,	E.S. Chamber of Commerce Melfa

and involved with bee research at the prestigious Hohenheim Institute. Don't miss this!

Wednesday, October 28	10 – 2	Watershed Festival	Onancock School
Tuesday, November 3	6:30pm	Queen Propagation (presented by BGES members)	Barrier Island Center Machipongo

No meeting in December



The Annual Picnic

Everyone is invited to the annual BGES picnic, to be held outdoors at the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce on Saturday, September 12th, at 12:30 pm. Family members, friends, and other guests are welcome!

BGES will be supplying fried chicken and iced tea, and we ask you to bring a side dish, salad, or dessert to share. Brownie points are awarded for those food contributions that are made with honey!

Bring outdoor chairs for yourself and your guests if you can. There will be Chamber of Commerce chairs available for those willing to haul them! Also, feel free to bring your own beverage (“adult” or otherwise) if you’re not a tea-drinker.

Bring a jar of your best honey to enter in our **honey contest. Picnickers will sample the honeys and vote for the best tasting.**

We also invite you to bring your unwanted and redundant beekeeping equipment to get rid of in our **“yard sale;” (*please, beekeeping related stuff only!*) Mark items with the price you’d like. You may donate proceeds to the club, if you like.**

We are also having a beekeeping **“show and tell.” If you’ve learned a new trick, devised a new tool, helped create a new product, or have any other skill or item you’d like to share, now’s the time and here’s the place. We especially welcome examples of homemade bee vacuums and solar wax melters, pest control techniques, ways of calming bees and avoiding stings, and hive products.**

Be there!

**And don't forget to pay your dues for 2015 – 2015!
Our treasurer Chris Merritt will be at the picnic and can let
you know if you owe dues.**

**Dues are \$20.00 / individual or family
Additional \$10.00 for membership in the VSEA.**

Or be square!

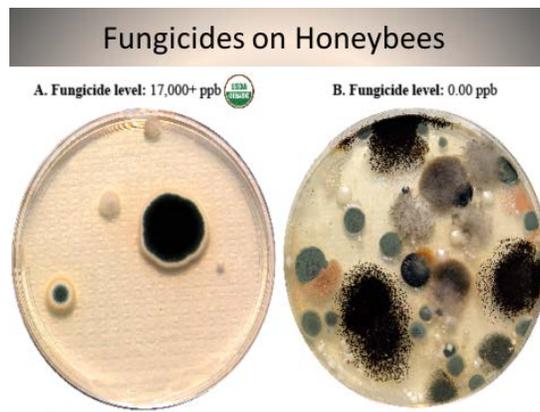
My Two Favorite Topics

Russell Vreeland

Over the years my two favorite topics of conversation have been microorganisms (you know bacteria, fungi, diatoms - that live stuff you can't see) and bees. Whenever I am out and Susan hears me start talking about one of these she can roll her eyes and know that I won't be ready to leave any time soon. Well in this month's column I get to talk about both of them at once. Yup bees and microbes – hah they run the world! Now don't worry I am not talking about all microbes and all bees just one group in relation to another. We'll get to others later.

Today's topic is fungi and bees. First you all need to realize that no creature on Earth is (or ever has been) devoid of microbes. We need them more than they need us. In fact more of you is microbe than you are of you. I have often said that microbes invented us simply because we can move them around faster. Okay, so how are microbes tied to our bees? The microbes I am going to talk about here are Fungi. So what appears to happen is this: as our bees forage on flowers, drink that dirty water they like so much or do whatever it is they do, they pick up fungal spores along with their desired material. They carry these spores back into their hives. At the same time there are natural fungi that are part of the normal hive environment. Just to keep this column short I will cut to the chase. All of you know or have heard of "bee bread" that is the pollen they put into cells to feed the babies. To make that, the workers mix the pollen with a bit of water, some honey from their honey stomach, some salivary enzymes and they get some of the fungi into the mix. These fungi then do what fungi do: they ferment the mixture. This does several things: first it makes the pollen easier to digest, at the same time fermentations also increase the nutritional value of the ferment (leavened bread is more nutritious than un-leavened bread). At the same time these beneficial fungi produce compounds that inhibit the growth of harmful fungi; they take up space and prevent the harmful organisms from growing.

In fact some recent research I read showed that hives with healthy fungal populations are less impacted by fungal diseases like chalk brood and stone brood. All good things.. but here is the rub. Lots of people (including us) are worried about pesticides harming our bees but we don't think about other things like – yup Fungicides. These are sprayed on grapes, almonds, stone fruit, maples and a host of other plants. Just like pesticides the foragers carry this back to the hives and voila the fungicides attack the bee bread fungi. Here is a picture of that:



The image on the left is from the hive of an “Organic beekeeper” whose bees forage in Almonds. The image on the right is from a hive that is not exposed to fungicides. You don’t need a PhD to see the difference.

So in addition to pesticides watch those fungicides. One last comment... have you ever tasted real bee bread? It tastes exactly like a good San Francisco sourdough! It is really good but leave some for the babies. This article is excerpted from a chapter written by Dr. Jay Yoder et al (2016). The full article will appear in my next book about honeybee science (sorry for the shameless plug).

Some final notes...

New beekeepers might be surprised by unexpected defensiveness from formerly sweet natured bees now. The drought we are in is exacerbating the usual “nectar dearth” that comes in late summer. Bees who might otherwise be foraging, are idle at home, protecting the hive and the honey supply. In addition, VDOT road crews are doing a superlative job mowing down goldenrod and other late season wildflowers on the roadsides that normally supply bees with a fall nectar source. Be ware!

This is the pest time of year, so try to stay aware of the condition of your hives. A late season swarm can leave your hive underpopulated and unable to defend its space from hive beetles and wax moths. One sign that a swarm has departed is a distinct reduction in the amount of honey in a hive. A late sign of pest infiltration is a very demoralized hive with little coming and going. It’s important to reduce the number of boxes to match the diminished population of bees in your hive. (This summer my luck ran out and I lost my first hive to wax moths. I had added a box to give the numerous bees more space in spring, in order to prevent swarming. But they swarmed anyway, and the moths soon took advantage of the undefended hive. A tragic mess!)

There are very few brood cycles left before the cold weather comes. Make sure your bees have adequate honey reserves, and be cautious about over harvesting at this point.

See you at the picnic! Don’t forget to RSVP to zuccarinoc@gmail.com.