

June 2015



St. Clair Beekeepers Association

Bee Buzz

Monthly Newsletter of the St. Clair Beekeepers Association

Special points of interest:

- ISBA meeting 6-27 in Effingham
- Library books need to be returned
- See you in St. Rose on the 28th!
- Lost: demonstration hive box and the video projector
contact officers

Our Next Monthly SCBA Meeting Is...

Sunday, June 28th at 2:00 pm

The meeting will be held at the home of:

Kevin Wilke

17818 Spanker Branch Road

St. Rose, IL 62230

Kevin's phone is 618-780-3227

Bring a side dish/dessert, the club is providing the meat

What is happening in your Apiary?

What a lot of weather we are having! First it would not warm up. Then finally we did manage to get in a bit of Spring. The Black Locust trees were able to get some nectar out for the bees. I am sure they were happy to see that coming in. That honey flow is long gone now that we're in June. We're seeing clover all over. White Dutch, red and sweet. The blossoms are there, although the bees have to dodge a lot of rain to get to them and the nectar is pretty watered down.

Do go in and check your hives. Make sure they are dry. They should be level or tilted just a bit towards the front entrance to have the water naturally run out of the front. Things settle quickly when it gets wet, you want to make sure the bees only have to worry about taking moisture out of the nectar, not dodging puddles or floods in the back, mold and such from water accumulating in the bottom. We still have our bottom board covers on. It's gotten warm, but not sustained a lot of heat. Soon enough we'll have our Midwestern sultry summer, but we're keeping them in to keep it harder for hive beetle to get in. Mite treatments are on our to-do list. You should be watching the numbers and getting treatments in soon. Just make sure you don't put any chemicals on hives you want to collect honey from. Watch for signs of your bees preparing to swarm. Do splits, cut out swarm cells. Make sure you see fresh eggs and hopefully the queen. Make sure they have plenty of ventilation and plenty of room to grow. The hives should be bursting with new bees as the queens are laying at full production now (about 2000 eggs per day). Give them lots of room.



Presidents letter to the membership June 2015

Follies of a Beekeeper
Volume 3

Friday afternoon, the heat of the day was upon us as the afternoon sun moved across the sky.

"Billy, your bees are swarming" Barbara called as she entered the kitchen seeking a drink of water. "They're in the tree above the shop" she continued after a long draw on her glass of water.

Immediately I went into action moving the ladder, catch box and other articles needed to capture the swarm. Just as I completed my preparations it began to sprinkle. Soon the shower turned into a full-blown thunder storm.

After a full hour the rain ceased and the sky began to clear. Up on the roof of the shop I went, catch box in hand. After surveying the situation a little closer I realized the angle of the tree branch in conjunction with the slope of the roof was not compatible, thus keeping me from putting a ladder on the roof with the top against a limb.

With an unworkable plan 'A' it was on to plan 'B'. Out came my electric pole saw, extension cords and all. The first task was to cut all the small branches surrounding the limb containing the swarm. Next I contemplated the best course of action to procure the swarm intact. After reviewing several options the decision was made to cut the swarm branch just below the bees allowing it to fall atop the pile of previously cut limbs.

The swarm came down with a thud sending bees in all directions. I quickly began scooping up bees by the handful putting them inside the catch box hoping the queen was among them. For three hours I collected bees filling the box. By supper time I was quite warm and appreciated the break.

With supper completed I returned to the task only to find a line of bees stringing from the box entrance to the 3 1/2 inch space between the bottom board and the shop roof as I had used a 4x4 to level the box. After another frustrating hour of trying to scoop up the bees and put them back in the box, I gave up.

Then it happened. The big beekeeper in the sky whispered in my ear, "Detach the catch box from the bottom board and sit it alongside."

Carefully I removed the screws securing the box to the bottom board. I then set the box full of frames alongside the bottom board. As darkness gathered I retired for the night.

Returning to the task at hand the next morning I found that all the bees had moved from their roost below the bottom board to the interior of the box. Upon removing the bottom board I discovered a large clump of bees hanging in that 3 1/2 inch space below the box. I knew if I lifted the box and set it atop the bottom board I would surely crush a lot of bees, and with my luck, the queen would be one of the casualties.

Again, a whispering in the ear, "Put another box on top" it counseled. The only box I had left was a super full of drawn comb. Within 30 minutes of installing the second box every bee was inside allowing me to set the two boxes atop the bottom board.



The colony is doing well and will remain on the roof of the shop until winter. Moving it to the ground and the bee yard will be another story.

I have spoken to a number of beekeepers across the area. In every case the report is honey production is some what behind with many swarms coming later than usual. The cool weather and the rain appear to be contributing factors. So all you new people, have patience. Good things will come.

I, as well as others, have noticed that the brood frames are only lasting 2 or 3 years before needing to be changed. Five years has always been the norm but now the comb is becoming darker quicker and the bees are leaving large areas without brood or honey. It is my feeling that with the systemic insecticides that are now being used, the brood comb is experiencing a quicker build up of pesticides. Thus the hygienic bees are steering clear of these areas of the comb. So now I change my brood comb more often.

In closing, remember 28 June, Kevin Wilke's for the June Summer meeting. Hope to see you there.

Billy,
bembam99@yahoo.com
910-3149

Swarm Catching

Tom Simpson shares with us a swarm he caught in May This one was on North Maple in Roxana Ill. His dilemma was deciding on the best way to get the bees off the fence. Shake or Vacuum? He placed a hive body on a tarp jammed against the fence. Misted the swarm with water, then shook the hard in a sideways motion to get bees into a big trashcan, then he dumped them right in the top of the box. The hive body was prepared by spraying some light sugar syrup on most of the foundation. With a lot of luck he looked up and



saw the queen running under the top bar on the fence. Tom picked her up by her wings and tossed her in box. He shook the fence one more time and then used his bucket-vac three times for the rest. Took him about an hour in all. A lady came by with a notebook and showed him a picture of a swarm in her dogwood from Saturday that someone sprayed with sugar and it flew off before they could cut the limb. It was a big swarm in a beautiful blooming dogwood.

There was a large bee tree just across the street that was probably the source of this swarm. He then had another call about 4 days later for another swarm just across the street. Afterswarms are very common, so if you've been called for one, you may want to check the area a few times for more lurking in the nearby trees.

The club lost an amazing and long time member on June 2, 2015. Norma Meyer, wife of Udell Meyer (dec.) passed away after complications after a stroke. She always referred to herself as a "Beekeeper's Wife". She still knew a lot about beekeeping and how to keep the club going and sharing knowledge with the community. She came early to get the coffee on and stayed late to clean up after the meetings. I'm sure there was a lot of club business taken care of in the kitchens with her around. She was well loved and will be sorely missed.

Bees Being Cut-out of a Farm House

Tom Simpson shares with us another way he has increased his bee population, by doing what is called a Cut-out. This is removing bees from a structure, usually they are in the walls between the studs, under the rafters or even under the floors of the building.



House Before



Tom Simpson preparing his Vacuum Box

This was an old farmhouse about to be demolished in Hamel . Newlyweds wanted to build a home on the nice 14 acre farm. The owner was very helpful and did almost all of the demolition. We loaned him a jacket. He is interested in bees in the future. He had a up close experience to help him finalize that decision. My wife Gay and a New-bee named Ann were the rest of our crew.



Ann is from Sorento, a new member, and went home with a feral hive. There were two separate hives, about eight foot apart. There was about six feet of comb between studs and then the bees went into the ceiling of the first floor. I could just reach it all. The hives were old, most of the comb was black. The hive on right had a lot of crystalized stores in the ceiling.. The mice had cut tunnels through it. This cut-out took place on May 3rd. Ann is from Sorento.