Bee BUZZ

NEWSLETTER JUNE 2023

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Announcements

Meeting Schedule for 2023

June Membership Meeting—June 25th a 2 :00 pm. Johnny Murdock is hosting the monthly meeting at 2425 Falcon Place, Waterloo IL. The presentation will be about the different uses for a double screen divider board. Vacant board member positions will be announced during the meeting and nominations will be accepted. There will be a meal at this meeting—pulled pork, slaw, and potato salad. Please bring a side dish or dessert.

July Membership Meeting—July 30th at 2PM Katelyn Hentrich is hosting this meeting at her apiary in Dow. This meeting will also serve as the first nomination for vacant board positions. If a member is not going to be present for voting at the September meeting an absentee ballot should be requested now. I will also ask the membership to form a beginner beekeeper class committee during this meeting. The club needs a Chairman and 5 volunteers to head up the class in Feb 2024, date TBD by the committee. Even if you don't want to teach there is still plenty of volunteer work to accomplish. This year's crew will help get you started. Dennis has taken a lot of notes over the last two years to assist the planning committee.

August Membership Meeting—August 27th at 2 PM. Julie McKinney is hosting the membership meeting at the Old Six Mile Museum in Granite City. We will ask again nominations for the vacating board positions.

September Membership Meeting -September 24th at 2PM. Darla Hsiao and Rich Perkins will host this meeting at their apiary near Freeburg. We will vote on the vacant board member positions. This is last outdoor meeting of the year.

October Membership Meeting—October 27th. We ill meet at the St Clair Farm Bureau at 7 PM. Please note this moves us to the last Friday of the month until spring.

Annual Membership Meeting and Thanksgiving Dinner—November 12th This is more a social meeting with a Thanksgiving potluck. New board members are installed. The location is the Madison County Farm Bureau.

What happens to your hive after your bees swarm?

By Tim Schartung

So, your hive that you have been taking care of over the last two months decides to swarm. Most new beekeepers panic and start to worry about what is going to happen next. Rest assured the bees actually know what they are doing for the most part so let us de-mystify this process so that you can make some informed decisions so you know what you need to do next.

First, I want to provide a disclaimer that what I am going to write about is a typical bee hive response after a swarm and does not fit all situations. The swarm is gone and you know what hive swarmed because you saw it leave. I derived this information from https://extension.psu.edu/an-introduction-to-queen-honey-bee-development, "queen rearing essentials" by Lawrence John Connor, University of Guelph and Honey Bee Suite.
Let's back up about 16 days from swarm day when the decision to swarm in the future was made by the hive. It might be a few days earlier or a little later than 16 days. Why 16 days? Because that is the time it takes for a queen to emerge from the cell from the day the egg was laid. According to several sources the hive will time swarm day to occur about the same day the new queen emerges. There may be more than one queen cell and there may even be some queen cells that are in various stages of development.

For this example today, let's say that she emerged the days that ½ or ¾ of the bees left the hive for greener pastures. The new queen is now walking around the hive seeking out any new queens or queen cells to kill them. Her queen mandibular pheromone (QMP) is very low at this point and the hive may still be nervous about her ability to produce. They may continue to make additional queen cells just in case this new lady does not make the cut and this is the reason why you may see several queen cells in various stages of development. A high level of QMP also inhibits other female workers from laying eggs.

The queen starts to mature so she can take flight and her reproductive organs are also maturing so she is ready for her mating flight in about 5 to 8 days. She takes to the sky in a higher flight path than most worker bees to help spread her pheromones for the bachelors to notice and will make it to a drone zone far enough away from her hive to prevent mating with a drone from her hive. She will mate with about 10 to 12 drones and take in about 10 million sperm in her median and lateral ovaries in one or more flights. She will eventually keep about 5 to 8 million sperm.

When she returns to the hive, she is not able to lay right away and will discard some of the sperm that worker bees take out of the hive. Her reproductive organs are still maturing. The QMP is starting to increase that triggers the bees in the hive to start getting cells ready for her to lay. Beekeepers call this polishing the cells and once you understand this process it may give you some reassurance that all is well in the hive. A hive with a queen that has failed or failing will fill all the cells with nectar and there will be very few cells polished and ready for an egg.

The cycle continues in the hive and during the last week many of the capped cells are now open, there will be no eggs and very little if any larva in the hive because the queen left and there was no mated queen in the hive to accomplish this work. Hopefully in about 7 to 10 more days she will be mature enough to lay eggs and the cycle is complete.

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So, from the day the hive swarmed it can take 12 to 21 days before you start to see eggs. There are a lot of variables in this process and let's discuss them now.

- ⇒ The queen may not develop well or may have varroa mites in the cell and be disfigured, have a virus, or the bees started too late to make her a queen and she's just not going to be a good queen.
- ⇒ Maybe she was not fed enough royal jelly
- ⇒ Not enough heat in the hive or too hot
- ⇒ The weather may not have been good for her mating flight keeping her in the hive. There is a window of about 5 - 14 days after emergence that she can mate and then after that her chances of successfully mating decrease
- ⇒ On her mating flight she may have failed to make it back to the hive due to many reasons like a bird ate her, too windy, bad weather, or she got lost.
- ⇒ Once in the hive maybe her reproductive organs did not mature correctly

So what can you as a beekeeper do? Well, that depends. You can go through the hive and try to find the new queen. If you don't see her there is still no need to panic. In my opinion I would never cutout queen cells in the hive because of all the reasons above. I want to give the hive all the chances I can to produce a good queen. If you see queen cells you could just wait and see. Look in about two weeks. You could move a frame of eggs and larva to the swarmed hive. Or you can order a queen. I used to order a queen right away but anymore since I have several hives I have options and parting with $35 or more for a queen is not #1 on my list and I will wait two weeks to see what happens and if needed move a frame of brood to keep the numbers up in the hive.

Hopefully this helps to understand the lifecycle and will help put you at ease when that swarm flies away.

A Little Bee Humor

:Q Who protects the Queen Bee?

A: Her Hub-bee.

Q: How many bees do you need in a bee choir?

A: A humdred!

Q. What's the last thing to go through a bees mind when it hits your windshield? A. Its bum.

Q: Why did the bee go to the barbershop?

A: To get a buzz-cut.

Source: http://jokes4us.com/animaljokes/beejokes.html

Okay new guy, you better get busy. The Queen is back from hanging out at the DCA and now she's busy laying eggs every-where.

June in Southern Illinois

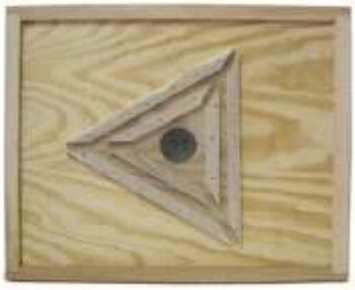
by Ken Kloepper

DISCLAIMER: The most important thing to remember is that you cannot manage honey bees by a calendar. Location, topography, climate, weather, floral resources , and management goals are all factors to consider.

The latter part of June in Southern Illinois generally marks the end of the spring honey flow. Small roadside flowers like chicory may begin to bloom. The supers hopefully by now are full of nectar and once the moisture content of the honey has dropped to about 18%, the bees will start applying a fresh coating of beeswax known as cappings to seal the cells.

- Beekeepers use an instrument known as a refractometer to measure the moisture content to assure it has reached 18% or less moisture, as too much moisture can result in the honey fermenting!

- IMPORTANT: since small hive beetles arrived in Southern Illinois around 2006, beekeepers must extract honey combs removed from the hives within 48 hours or risk finding small hive beetle larvae contaminating the honey.
- Once the supers are ready to be extracted, the beekeeper will remove the combs to be extracted generally by on of four methods.
    - Manually brushing the bees from the combs with a bee brush.
    - Mechanical bee escape boards which when placed under the supers of honey prevent the bees from returning to the supers.
    - Chemical fume boards can be placed over the supers and the fumes will drive the bees downward and out of the supers.
    - Bee blowers use high speed air similar to a leaf blower to drive the bees out of the supers.



- Beekeepers should remember when extracting and bottling their honey crop that since 2010 the law in Illinois prohibits additives of any kind in honey and limits the amount of honey that may be sold in Illinois to 500 gallons(6000 lbs.) that was processed outside of a commercial kitchen!

The Club has an extractor and some of the tools needed to extract honey. If you would like to borrow this equipment contact —

Ray Chapman Passes Away

Recently Ray Chapman a long time member of the St. Clair Beekeepers Association passed away.

Raymond Allen Chapman, long-time SCBA member and active participant in the club, died on May 12, 2023. Born in Alton in 1941, Ray lived most of his life in Bunker Hill where he and his wife Cookie raised 4 children on their farm at the edge of town.

Ray was a licensed plumber and worked for several local plumbing and heating companies before becoming the building maintenance supervisor at SIUE where he worked for 25 years. While at SIUE Ray discovered beekeeping through a co-worker and acquired his first hives in 1972. For the remainder of his life Ray pursued his passion for beekeeping with the calm, patient, and thoughtful manner that was a hallmark of his personality. He sold his honey from their home, at craft shows and fall festivals, and for many years was a key exhibitor at the Illinois State Fair with the SCBA. Ray was recognized throughout the state for his superior comb honey and consistently won blue ribbons at the fair.

Ray served multiple terms as the Southern District Representative for the Illinois State Beekeepers Association and was a key player in the St. Clair Beekeepers Association. He and Cookie frequently hosted outdoor club meetings during the summer months. With his patient and calm way Ray was excellent at demonstrating how to work a hive, respectful of the bees but not fearing their potential to inflict pain. I remember watching and listening to him talk as he sat in his short-sleeve shirt and hat-veil on a stool next to a hive, bees flying around and occasionally landing on him. As a relatively "new-bee" it was a lesson for me in staying relaxed, thinking before acting, and always respecting the bees. Ray's "honey shed" was an excellent teaching tool in itself, illustrating the various pieces of equipment it takes to run a clean and well-organized large-scale hobby beekeeping business. Taking a tour of the shed with Ray was always a highlight of his outdoor meetings.

Ray and Cookie loved their community of Bunker Hill where Ray served as an Alderman for 22 years and Mayor for 10. Active in the Lions Club and St. Mary's Catholic Church, they helped with many activities and events. The lovely landscape surrounding their home was a clear statement of their passion for gardening and their appreciation for living on their own little piece of heaven on earth.

Cookie pre-deceased Ray by 2 years and he was lost without her. He also lost his honey shed in a tragic fire last summer. But the shed is being re-built and Ray was heartened to know his nephew Ben (along with wife Meghan and the help of several grandsons) will continue the Chapman beekeeping tradition into the future. He passed away with that knowledge which surely sweetened the journey.

(Thanks to Mary Chapman May for providing information for this article)

CLUB GROUP ORDER OF Honey Bottles....

At this time it doesn't appear to be enough interest to place a group order for honey bottles. Only four people responded and everyone had tdifferent for size, shape and glass vs plastic. We were trying to keep this simple and only have 2 sizes and styles. Bottomline—we won't be placing a group order at this time.

St. Clair Beekeepers Association

Promoting interest in bees and beekeeping in Southern Illinois.

Email: stclairbees@gmail.com

The purpose and function of the St. Clair Beekeepers Association is the promotion of interest in bees **and beekeeping by such means as encouraging…**

- Good beekeeping practices
- The utilization of bees for pollination of agricultural crops
- The dissemination of information about bees and beekeeping

NEXT MEETING DATE

Our next membership meeting will be held outdoors on June 25th at 2:00 pm

Johnny Murdock is hosting the monthly meeting at 2425 Falcon Place, Waterloo IL. The presentation will be about the different uses for a double screen divider board. Vacant board member positions will be announced during the meeting and nominations will be accepted. There will be a meal at this meeting—pulled pork, slaw, and potato salad. Please bring a side dish or dessert.

QR CODE FOR MEETING PLACE