

# Spilling the Honey

GBA Monthly Newsletter

Editors: Gina Gallucci and Linda Tillman

November 2015



Honey Judges for the Georgia National Fair Honey Show held in Perry Georgia in October. Left to right: Marcy Cornell, Bear Kelley, Brutz English, Rozalyn Todd and Kevin Baker

## *President's Message*

It's Turkey month and Thanksgiving will be here soon. In October the third annual honey show was held at the Georgia National Fair in Perry, Georgia. We had a great turnout with over forty entries. The show just keeps growing. I'd like to give a big thanks to the Heart of Georgia Beekeepers who donated \$250 prize money for the show. Next year I challenge all of the clubs to donate money. If the prize money were \$1000, I wonder how many people would enter.

Thanks to the hard work of Brutz English, we have found a great location for the spring GBA conference at Gordon State College in Barnesville, Georgia near Griffin. At the spring meeting on February 13, we are expanding the mead and beer show to include baking. You'll find that information in this edition of the Newsletter. The spring meeting is shaping up to provide us with a lot of good beekeeping information and the opportunity for networking with fellow beekeepers.

I am closing up my hives for the winter and trying something new. I will let you know how it works out in the spring. The weather reports indicate that *El Nino* is going to give us a wet gray winter. I hope our bees will get some flight time and that we beekeepers will have some time to intervene if we need to make changes to help them survive the winter.

Keep your hive tool handy, your smoker lit and your fire extinguisher nearby when you are out with the bees.

***Mary Cahill Roberts, GBA President***

## Varroa Field Day

by John Wingfield

The first Varroa Field Day was held on October 17th at the Liberty Hill Ranch. This event was hosted by Brutz English of Liberty Hill Honey and his family. It was originally scheduled for September 26th, but this date had to be cancelled because of bad weather. Brutz invited us to visit his new honey house while we waited on those who were delayed by traffic. He explained the process of building a honey house to the twenty-five beekeepers gathered there. He made visits to many other honey houses to get recommendations of what to do and what not to do when building a honey house. He had to determine how to make certain it would pass state inspection. His new honey house did pass. He stated that the inspectors were very helpful. He added that if you are constructing a honey house, build it larger than you need as you will later need the extra space. We had a good lunch of hot dogs and hamburgers, drink, chips, and a cookie.

After lunch the varroa mite presentations began. Brett Nolan, a UGA doctoral candidate, started with the varroa history, biology, and life cycle. Nathan Beach, a UGA Bee Lab employee, made a presentation on the approved methods for treating varroa. He discussed each of the hard and soft chemicals approved to treat Varroa and also non-chemical methods.

After his presentation we were divided into three groups and walked several hundred feet to the demonstration areas near the honey house. Each of the three areas had about ten hives with supers. This was the main event of the program. Here we saw each of the chemicals installed in an active hive. My group was led by Nick Weaver, a UGA Bee Lab employee. He described each treatment along with several methods for determining the percentage of varroa in the hive. His favorite was the powdered sugar method:

- Shake 300 bees into a glass jar.
- Scoop 1 tbsp. of powdered sugar into the jar.
- Close the jar with a screened lid. Roll jar until all bees are white and then let the bees sit for a minute.
- After one minute shake the mites and sugar out through the screened lid onto a white surface (1 full minute) Threshold: 7-19 mites

If you'd like to see photos of Noah Macey, youngest Master Beekeeper in Georgia, employing this same process at a hive inspection at Chastain Park in Atlanta, [click here](#).

**Happy Thanksgiving**

Many GBA members have not renewed their dues. If you haven't paid yours just before or since the fall meeting, **YOUR MEMBERSHIP HAS LAPSED!** We are a great bargain - only \$15 for an individual membership and \$25 for a family membership. Pay your dues today and continue to enjoy this newsletter and the other benefits of membership.

# Club News and Notes

## Altamaha Beekeepers

On Saturday, October 3rd, members of the Altamaha Beekeepers Association visited the facilities of Wilbanks Apiaries in Claxton, Ga. Seventeen members, spouses, and kids were given a tour of the operating offices, warehouses, assembly areas, and syrup canning facilities. Reg Willbanks, the third generation of the Wilbanks family to run this business, hosted the visit and gave members a history of the apiary.



Wilbanks Apiaries is one of the largest honey-bee package businesses in the world, each year delivering up to 20 thousand bee “packages” and 60 thousand queen bees. A bee package is a box containing up to 30 thousand individual honey-bees and one queen bee, used to start one new hive of bees. Individual queen bees

are sold to replace dead or non-producing queens in an established hive. Wilbanks helps supply the needs of the 2000 commercial beekeepers in the United States, and also ships to buyers in other countries. There are approximately 3.2 million honey-bee hives in commercial use in the United States contributing \$14 billion dollars to the economy each year.



Wilbanks started business in Claxton in 1948, moving there after a fire destroyed the family home in North Georgia. Starting from four hives given as a wedding present to Reg’s grandfather, the business has grown to 7 thousand hives and 15 thousand queen mating boxes, employing up to 20 workers during the busy spring mating season.

The Altamaha Beekeepers Association is an educational organization dedicated to the promotion of the art and science of beekeeping to hobbyist beekeepers, commercial beekeepers, and the general public in the area of southeast Georgia through member cooperation and information exchange via meetings, programs and projects. The ABA has members from Toombs, Tattnall, and surrounding counties and meets on the first Monday of each month at Chatters Restaurant in Lyons at 6:00 p.m. For more information on the club contact President Holly Nielson at [nielson.holly@gmail.com](mailto:nielson.holly@gmail.com) or visit their Facebook page.



**Heart of Georgia Beekeepers** held our monthly meeting on October 20th at Camp John Hope between Perry and Fort Valley. The guest speaker for the evening was Steve Page of Coweta Beekeepers from Coweta County, GA.



Steve spoke extensively on nectar management, aka, checkerboarding. He brought a hive and supers of frames to provide a hands on demonstration, making it easier to grasp the concepts. Steve also spoke on rearing queens and making splits. The powerpoint presentation was thorough and informative. The packed audience was anxious to put the principles into action.



### **Blue Ridge Honey Company Field Trip**

Metro Atlanta Beekeepers Association members were treated to a tour of Blue Ridge Honey Company's commercial operation in Lakemont, Georgia, on Saturday, October 31. Bob Binnie was our host and tour guide.

We were taken from the store front where gifts from the hive, and beekeeper supplies are sold, to the bottling room, the extraction area, and the hot comb and wax rendering rooms are. We also saw the storage areas where the nucs and woodenware, and honey barrels are kept.

Bob answered lots of questions and shared stories of how he came to set up his shop as he has, and we all got to see for ourselves how a commercial beekeeping operation works, the equipment and scale of the venture, and the bottling, labeling and packaging aspect as well. Bob's extensive 30-plus years of experience in the industry makes



him a valuable resource for any beekeeper, and it was a privilege to see behind the scenes as we did. Thank you, Bob!



**Holly Bayendor McConnell**  
Metro Atlanta Beekeepers Association  
Board of Directors



**Jonathan Hayes:** After placing third in the GBA honey show I entered in the Georgia National Fair and won second place in the medium honey category. Jonathan belongs to Heart of Georgia Beekeepers.



**Pine Grove Middle School** in Valdosta Georgia is starting a Beekeeping Club! We have had SO much support from the community of beekeepers so far! The students will be doing 100% of the work while the teachers facilitate. So far we have 30+ members.

**CANDLE MAKING CLASS:** Bob Binnie's Blue Ridge Honey Company will offer a two hour class in Candle Making on December 5th at 1:00 PM at his new facility in Lakemont, Georgia on Highway 441.. Call Diana at 706 782- 6722 to reserve your seats!! (There is no charge.)



**Chattooga County Beekeepers**

Bee My Honey won second place in the Whimsical Category of the Chattooga County Scarecrow contest. Sophia Price of the Chattooga County Beekeepers made this scarecrow.



**GBA SPRING 2016 MEETING**

The spring meeting of GBA will be held in Barnesville, GA (near Griffin) at the Gordon State College campus on Saturday, February 13th. The evening before there will be a reception near the host hotel after the GBA board meeting. The members of our speakers committee (Andy Bailey, Jennifer Berry, and Keith Fielder) are working hard to get speakers and breakouts arranged. Among the speakers who have agreed to come are Jim Tew, Roger Simonds, Kerry Owen and David Westervelt.

Save the date and look for more information about the meeting in next month's newsletter.

**GBA ANNUAL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE**

After much thought and information gathering by meeting committee, the GBA board has decided to have our Spring and Fall meetings on the same weekend and hopefully at the same place every year. We are doing this to keep impact to individual clubs own programs at a minimum, to avoid the large state Bee schools dates and help our GBA Conference management team have the tools necessary to make these meetings better than ever. Please mark your calendars.

In 2016 the spring meeting will be on the second weekend of February, the 13th. Going forward spring meetings will be held the third weekend in March and we hope to secure the Barnesville location for this meeting. Our fall meetings will be held the first weekend in October in Milledgeville.

## Upcoming Club Meetings

For club speaker ideas, GBA maintains a speaker list. If you would like to speak to clubs, [click here](#) to be added to the list. As a speaker, plan to know what your honorarium request will be if you are asked to speak. If you have invited speakers for your club, [click here to read an article](#) first published in *Bee Culture* about how to treat your speakers well.

Club Name	Speaker/Topic	When	Where	City
Altamaha	TBA	Mon 11/2	Chatters Restaurant	Lyons, GA
Coweta Beekeepers	<b>Bobby Torbush:</b> Nectar Plants	Mon 11/9 7:00	255 Pine Road	Newnan GA
Effingham County	2015 Honey Tasting and discussing	Thur 11/12 6:30		
Gilmer County	<b>Bud Champlin:</b> That Amazing Bee	Mon 11/9 7:00	Gilmer County Civic Center,	Elijay GA
Gwinnett Beekeepers	<b>Sergey Volzhskiy:</b> Apitherapy	Tues 11/10 7:00	202 Hebron Church Road	Dacula, GA
Heart of Georgia	Elections for 2016	11/7	Camp John Hope	Fort Valley, GA
Lake Country	<b>Bruce Morgan:</b> Beekeeping Throughout the Year	Mon 11/16 7 PM	County Extension Office	Sparta, GA
MABA	<b>Dr. Keith Delaplane:</b> Analysis of Neonicotinoid Effects on Bees & Crops	Wed 11/11 7PM	Atlanta Botanical Garden	Atlanta, GA
Tara Beekeepers	Honey Show and Tasting Honey Contest	Mon 11/16 7 PM	GA Power 752 Main St	Forest Park, GA
West Georgia	<b>Richard Littleton:</b> Pests in the Hive/Varroa	Mon 11/ 23 6:30 PM	Douglasville American Legion,	Douglasville GA

## Georgia Beekeepers Association Spring Honey Show

Welsh Judging rules will apply

**Categories Include:** Mead, Beer, Non-Alcoholic Beverages, Honey Cake, and the Queen's Own Banana Bread Recipe

**When:** February 13, 2016

**Where:** Georgia Beekeepers Spring Meeting, Gordon State College

**Time:** Entries due in between 8 AM and 12 noon

## Street Cred

Purdue bees biting off the legs of varroa mites:

<http://www.onearth.org/earthwire/backyard-honeybee-breeders-fighting-varroa-mites>

from Steve Page

Apimondia 2019 announced:

<http://www.apimondia2019mtl.com/>  
<http://www.apimondia.org/>

## Honey and Rosemary Sweet Potatoes

Prep 15 m Cook 1 h Ready In 1 h 15 m

Recipe By:Coco

### Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil  
1/4 cup honey  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
3 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cut in 1-inch cubes

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) Line a baking sheet with foil or parchment paper.
2. Mix the olive oil, honey, rosemary, salt, and black pepper together in a large bowl, and stir the sweet potato cubes in the mixture to coat. Remove sweet potato cubes with a slotted spoon, and arrange in a single layer on the prepared baking sheet.
3. Bake in the preheated oven until tender,



about 45 minutes. Turn oven heat up to 450 degrees and bake until browned, another 15 minutes.

## Hive Notes

by Ricky Moore

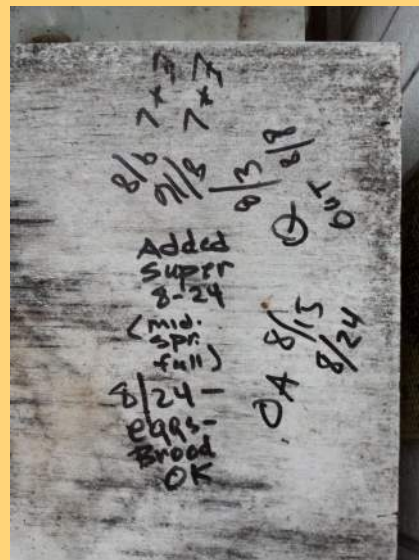
Whether you have three hives or thirty-three, it can be difficult to remember the conditions of each hive and what tasks you did on each hive on each work day. I use to keep a journal, but it was hard to remember what I saw in each hive to write it down. I thought the next natural progression was to use my smartphone and leave myself a voice message detailing each hive. But that required transcribing all those notes.

What to do,  
what to do...

My latest step backwards, is the easiest and most satisfying to

date. I write on the telescopic cover the details I want to remember. Then when I'm back to inspect or open a hive, all the pertinent information is right on the lid.

When the hive changes, or the lid fills up, simply repaint the top and start over!



## *Georgia National Fair Honey Show*

by Bear Kelley

The show was organized by Brutz English and Broadus Williams. The show was held on Saturday, 10 October, 2015. Entries were accepted on the 9th and 10th. There were 41 entries this year (up from 27 last year). Judging began at 1 pm. The show Secretaries were Broadus and Marybeth Kelley. Senior Judge was Bear Kelley and other judges were: Brutz English, Kevin Baker, Rozalyn Todd and Marcy Cornell. There were 4 categories: Light Extracted, Medium Extracted, Dark Extracted and Black Jar. The winners were:

### **Light Extracted**

1st - Melissa Bondurant  
 2nd - David Tolar  
 3rd - Gail Dean  
 Very Highly Commendable – Johnathan Hayes  
 Highly Commendable – Jay Parsons

### **Amber Extracted**

1st – Jay Parsons  
 2nd – Johnathan Hayes  
 3rd - Brutz English  
 Highly Commendable – David Tolar  
 Commendable – Melissa Bondurant

A check in the amount of \$250 (donated by the Heart of Georgia Beekeepers) was awarded to Melissa along with the best in show award. Ribbons were awarded for all other categories. (It should be noted that the Georgia National Fair donated the ribbons and judging room.) The winners are displayed in the Heritage Bldg at Jessie McCurdy's honey booth.

### **Dark Extracted**

2nd – Jay Parsons  
 3rd - David Tolar  
 Highly Commendable – Broadus Williams

### **Black Jar**

1st – Jennalee Bruce

### **Best of Show -**

Melissa Bondurant (Light Extracted)







Linda Tillman's dog, Hannah, dressed up as a bee for Halloween!

### ***Dear Aunt Bee,***

I'm trying Warre style quilt boxes on my Langstroth hives this year. I have #8 hardware cloth "inner covers" on my hives that I use year-round. In the winter it allows me to use it as a feeder for syrup or bricks. This year I put weed block material within a super and then filled it with cedar shavings. This allows me to still use it as a feeder and I'm hoping it will draw moisture from the hive. There is also a small upper entrance on the inner cover. I have the drain pipe in there so I can remove the jars without dealing with the shavings. I'm also hoping it keeps the syrup warmer.



My question is, is the weed block OK to use considering they have to suck on it to get the syrup out of the jars? I'm not sure what it's made of but it's standard garden weed block that allows moisture through.

If I put sugar bricks on, I'll put them in between the weed block and the hardware cloth.

Any suggestions are appreciated!

***Out of the Box Thinker***



### ***Dear Out of the Box Thinker,***

I had no idea how to answer this, so I consulted my friend, Steve Esau, who researched this question and came up with this response:

*From what I have researched, the typical weed block fabric that can be purchased at your home improvement center is made from polypropylene. Polypropylene is a synthetic resin that is a polymer of propylene, used in fabrics, ropes, and molded objects. We come in contact with polypropylene everyday in our daily lives.*

*This product appears safe and does not leach any chemicals into the soil or water that it comes in contact with. This would also hold true when used as described between the feeder and the #8 hardware cloth to where it would not leach chemicals into the hive or syrup.*

*The purpose of the cloth being used in a Warre Hive is to allow the bees to control airflow by use of propolis and thus controlling temperature and moisture in the hive. If weed block fabric works for you and your bees, I would not be afraid to continue to use. Only caution I would throw out would be to make sure the fabric does not "wick" the syrup out of the feeder faster than the bees can consume to avoid syrup dripping on the cluster and chilling your bees. Remember as the syrup chills below 50 degrees F, consumption of the syrup will drastically decrease. As we move into cooler nights using a sugar brick may be a better feed alternative to a hive that is short on winter stores.*

Thanks to Steve Esau, we have an answer!  
Hope that helps,

***Aunt Bee***





Young summer queens lay prolifically into the fall resulting in a strong colony entering winter.

From Steve Page

## Lazy B Farm Beekeeping

Hard to believe but we are getting ready to start our seventh year of teaching the Lazy B Farm Beekeeping Series! When I look back over the years and think of all the women and men who have been introduced to the incredible world of honeybees, I'm overwhelmed.

I remember my very first hive 12 years ago and I was scared to death to "check my bees", and also wishing there was someone to go into the hive with me. It's been amazing to watch our students progress from timid and a little scared to confident and no gloves!

I think the biggest positive from this series is the privilege I've had to work with Bill Owens. I've listened to him teach in our series for 6 years and every time I learn something new :-)

We love our bees and we love introducing new students to them!

<http://thelazybfarm.com/beekeeping-series-2016>



## City of Dunwoody Accepts the Legality of Beekeeping in your Backyard

Frank Self, Atlanta beekeeper who lives in Dunwoody, meticulously researched the laws before he got his beehives. An active participant in the hive inspections offered by his local bee club, he started beekeeping by babysitting a neighbor's hives for a summer. Frank attends GBA meetings, the Beekeeping Meetup in Atlanta, MABA meetings and the Beekeeping Institute at Young Harris. He is a Certified Beekeeper. He has tried to learn everything he can about the bees to be a good steward of his hives.

Recently Frank was notified by the City of Dunwoody that a complaint had been lodged about the legality of his hives in his backyard. He was caught by surprise and shocked, given all the research he had done. Frank's case created a community uproar and resulted in a new ruling that beekeeping is an allowed use in the City of Dunwoody, with a few common sense restrictions.

Cindy Hodges, Master Beekeeper and President of Metro Atlanta Beekeepers, and Julia Mahood, Master Beekeeper, contributed greatly to the effort to support the voice of the beekeeping community. We congratulate and thank Frank, Cindy and Julia for their leadership.

## Honeybee research and educational activities – January 2015 to September 2015

In mid February the Middle Georgia State University honeybees started to emerge from their winter dormancy. Since then, Dr. Gloria Huddleston and Dr. Clint Ready have inspected the beehives approximately every two weeks. Two of the six hives didn't make it through the winter.

Later in the spring, fearing the loss of a third hive, they experimented with ways to save it. The hive did not have a queen or brood but did have workers. Dr. Ready and Dr. Huddleston transferred young brood and bees from other vigorous hives to the queen-less hive in the hopes that the bees would turn one of the young larvae into a queen. They did. That hive is now one of the strongest hives.

Students from the art department kindly agreed to decorate hive boxes, and the current students will be painting additional boxes. A queen name and corresponding images have been and will be painted on each of the boxes, such as Queen Amidala (Star Wars), Queen Beatrice, Queen Elizabeth and Queen Cleopatra.

In August, Dr. Huddleston recruited some of her students to work with the bees. They helped with the honey harvest from preparing the honey to be removed from hives, to extracting and jarring it. Another faculty member, Tina Mahaffee has generously donated her time and effort to help the honeybee program be successful.

Soil testing on unused land near the beehives showed that the soil should be ready for planting flowers for the bees and other pollinators. In August, Mr. Keith Lockerman (Multi-campus Plant Operations Director) arranged for an acre of that land to be plowed. In September, Dr.



Photo by Julia Mahood, Master Beekeeper in Atlanta. She says:

*I tried this propolis trap a few years ago when I first got it, but didn't have any luck. Thought I'd try it on this hive because they are such prolific propolizers and wow— did they ever use it! I put it in the freezer and then gently flexed the plastic, most of the propolis fell right off. Much easier than using scrapings since it's relatively clean.*

Huddleston, Dr. Ready and Ms. Mahaffee planted Durana clover seeds by hand. Hopefully the honeybees will have clover nectar and pollen to feed on in the spring and summer.

Middle Georgia State University's bees are doing great – making honey, collecting a variety of pollen and producing new bees.

Also in October, Dr. Ready and Dr. Huddleston held a formal class for MGSU students, taught them about beekeeping, life in a bee hive and problems associated with beekeeping. Afterwards, they took students for an inspection of MGSU's bee hives.



**Wanted:** all of your articles on any aspect of your beekeeping - 500 words or less!  
gbanewsletters@gmail.com



## **Upcoming Events**

**Sat, February 13 , 2016**

**GBA Spring Meeting at Gordon State College in Barnesville, GA**

**Sat, March 19 , 2016**

**Welsh Honey Show, Rockmart, GA (part of the Welshfest)**

## **Honey-and-Spice Cranberry Sauce**

by Bonnie Bennett, Westerly RI [Bon Appétit](#) November 1998

Yield Makes about 2 1/2 cups

### **Ingredients**

1 12-ounce bag cranberries  
1 3/4 cups apple cider or juice  
3/4 cup honey  
2 cinnamon sticks, broken in half  
1 tablespoon grated orange peel  
6 whole cloves  
1 bay leaf  
Pinch of salt

### **Preparation**

Combine all ingredients in heavy large saucepan. Bring to boil over medium heat. Simmer until berries burst and sauce thickens, stirring occasionally, about 15 minutes. Remove cinnamon sticks, cloves and bay leaf. Refrigerate sauce until cold. (Can be made 3 days ahead. Cover and keep refrigerated.)

## **The Final Buzz**

*We are very sorry for the lateness of this edition. We are quite a team and one of us can't function well without the other. Linda's mother died on November 4, the day before we planned to put the newsletter together. While she was in Mississippi taking care of family matters, we were no longer a functioning unit. Please forgive us and enjoy this edition now that you finally have it.*

*We are very **thankful for all your contributions** and sharing in the **Spilling the Honey** newsletter. It really "takes a village" to make it turn out well. A special thanks to **Gail Albrecht** for her help as copy editor.*

*Next month we are going to list all our clubs offering one day **Beekeeping Short Courses** so please make sure to get that info to us.*

*Happy Thanksgiving to all!*

**Linda and Gina**

