

Minutes

The July meeting of the Toe-Cane Beekeepers Association was held at the United Community Bank in Burnsville, NC. The meeting began at 6:30 pm. It was a Potluck event. President Rick Harty started off the meeting by welcoming all attendees asking everyone to go around the room to introduce themselves and give a brief update of their beekeeping status. The meeting was well attended.

During the business portion of the meeting, Secretary Susan Spruill reminded members that we will be operating a booth and the Mt Mitchell Crafts Fair August 5th and 6th from 8 am to 5 pm. Susan asked members to consider donating some honey to be sold at the fair. Rick also noted that this year is resulting in low or late honey flow, so if members would rather sell their honey, the club will purchase it at a reduced price. Susan made a motion that the purchase prices be ½ that of the planned sell price at the fair. The motion was seconded and the approved prices will be as follows:

Size/Type	Club Purchase Price per unit	Fair Sell Price per unit
1 pound jars	\$5	\$10
1 pint jars	\$7.50	\$14
1 quart jars	\$10	\$20
½ pint jars	\$4	\$8
8 oz. Bears	\$4	\$8
Ross Rounds	\$5	\$10

Programs Coordinator Deborah Palmer introduced speakers David George and David Fotey from the Henderson County Beekeepers Association. David George was the main presenter with David Fotey assisting in demonstrations and answering questions. They referenced their website HCbeekeepers.org and Facebook page <Henderson County Beekeepers Association>.

David George's talk was about using oxalic acid (OA) as a treatment for managing varroa mites. Here are some facts he cited throughout his talk:

- The key to managing varroa mites in control. It is not possible to eradicate them completely.

- Many nonchemical methods have been used with some success. These include drone trapping (least effective), HopGuard 2 (a hops derivative), formic acid (found in fire ants) and Apiguard (thymol)
- Oxalic acid is found naturally in many plants and in honey
- 2 lbs. of carrots contain about 2 g of OA, enough to treat 2 deep hive bodies
- Varroa have become resistant to other treatments like Apistan, but are not able to build a resistance to OA because it is a naturally occurring acid
- OA has been used for mite treatment in other countries for decades. Brushy Mountain Bee Supply largely funded the research on OA to gain approval for use in the US. They are now the exclusive distributors of OA kits
- OA can be purchased in hardware stores as a “wood bleach”, but it is not recommended that you use it to treat bee because the purity and concentration will not be known.
- One packet of OA (just the product) cost only \$6 and will treat 15016 double deep hive bodies.
- Treatment with OA will kill about 95-99% of mites on bees. It is not effective on mite inside capped cells. Therefore, you will want to treat when there is no capped brood.
- It also seems to be effective in killing tracheal mites, although there is no good research on that yet.
- There are 3 ways to treat with OA:
 - Drip method, using a syringe to drip OA in between the frames
 - Spray method, using a squirt bottle to douse each frame
 - Vaporizer method, using a vaporizing tool to aerosolize the OA and “gas” the hive from the landing board

David passed around several vaporizers that he had machined out of a small block of aluminum, a Volkswagen diesel glow-plug and some wire with alligator clips to attach to a 12V battery. He demonstrated how to at 1g of OA crystals to the vaporizer per deep hive body and how to place it in the entrance and cover the entrance with a towel to keep vapor from escaping. Each hive takes only 3-5 minutes to treat.

He stressed the need to wear protective clothing (gloves, goggles and an acid approved respirator).

His recommendation was to use the vaporizing method in winter (around winter solstice) when the weather was warm enough to allow bee to break cluster, but not forage. Winter was important because the bees would be indoors, there would be little to no capped brood and the temperatures would be agreeable to vaporizing.

He also recommended to use the spray method in new nucs or caught swarms to reduce the mites load before there was brood. He recommended removing the queen box before

spraying a nuc to reduce the risk of stressing the new queen. However, he indicated that all established queens had survived ever hive we treated by vaporization.

At the end of the presentation, Deborah Palmer pulled 3 winners to receive a door prize. The prizes were gift certificates to Wild Mountain Bees. Winners were Loree Capps, Sheliah Sockwell and Robert Stinson.

The next meeting will be held on August 23, 2016 at the United Community Bank in Burnsville, NC at 6:30 pm. The guest speaker will be Bryan Fisher and the program is not yet finalized.