

Sussex County Beekeepers Association Newsletter April, 2012

President's Message

Beekeepers,

We had our Beginner's beekeepers course in March and I would like to welcome all the new Beekeepers to this wonderful adventure in keeping bees, or as I like to say we are "bee tenders" as the bees do what they want. We look forward to sharing with you what we have learned along the way. A very huge thank you also goes out to Leeann Coleman who pulled together the power points with updated photos and information. A big thank you also goes out to the Fair Administration for their continued support.

What an incredibly unique winter this has been! From what I understand March experienced over 6000 weather records broken across the United States and of course this really had an affect on our honeybees here in Sussex County.

A large number of hive deaths were being reported in January due to starvation from the very mild temperatures and no available foraging sources. The first reported sighting of pollen in Sussex County was early February. From there the food supplies exploded and we were still feeding our hives. Some of these very early food sources are maple trees. In an average winter March is generally too cold to allow the bees to forage this early food source. This was not the case this year. The perfect foraging conditions with an abundance of pollen and nectar sources found hives packed with brood, nectar and pollen. These very strong hives got honey supers added and some even needed brood chambers reversed. This was

against the general northeast beekeeping beliefs. The thought of doing any kind of hive manipulations let alone reversing brood chambers was unheard of in March. From general observation it would seem the hives are about three weeks ahead of average hive development. I would not be surprised to see swarms as early as the middle of April for Sussex County.

Our next meeting will be a field day May 19th in a yard to be determined. Since the hives seem to be way ahead of spring management we are going to have to reevaluate our topics.

The committee to explore hosting the Fall 2012 New Jersey Beekeepers Association meeting has found suitable facilities and spoken to a couple of potential speakers. The committee headed by Candice Thompson has suggested Medicine of the Hive as a topic and Hidden Valley in Vernon as the location. The tentative date is October 27th. We will be looking for vendors and or demonstrators for outside locations very soon. If you would like to volunteer your assistance please contact Candice or myself.

Looking forward to very an eventful Beekeepers season with lots of exciting events to come!

Happy Beekeeping

Christopher



SCBA Calendar

Next Meeting: May 19, 2012

Field Day – Spring Management

June 2-3, 2012

(rain date – June 9-10)

Field Day – Queen Breeding

July 7, 2012

Fair Prep/Honey harvest demo

July 22, 2012

SCFH Booth setup 1

August 2, 2012

Booth setup complete

August 3-12, 2012

Fair!

September 16, 2012

SCBA/SENY Joint Meeting

October 16, 2012

Honey Festival (Fairgrounds)

October 27, 2012

NJBA General Meeting

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Profiles in Sussex County Beekeeping

Editor's Note: We are beginning a new feature with this newsletter. Each newsletter will feature a different member of the club and profile some of his or her experiences as a beekeeper in or around Sussex County. We begin this month with Tom Webb. In a buzzy garage in Wantage filled with packages fresh off the trailer and excited beekeepers picking them up, Tom was kind enough to share a few minutes with us...

DP: When did you start beekeeping?

TW: 1937.

DP: How old were you? No, wait, forget I asked!

TW: I was nine.

DP: How did SCBA get started?

TW: Floyd Hildebrandt was instrumental. He worked at Picatinny Arsenal and lived in Andover. I was President of Northwest N.J. Beekeeper's Association at the time, and it was a long drive to Phillipsburg. I wanted something closer to home. Our first or second year, Walt Richards was running the club. We taught a short course in beekeeping. There were 92 members at that point.

DP: When did SCBA start up?

TW: 1970 or 1971.

DP: How many hives are you running now?

TW: A couple hundred. At one point I was running around 1,300.

DP: What is your biggest challenge as a beekeeper?

TW: Black bears.

DP: How do you manage?

TW: You have to keep them out with an electric fence.

DP: Do you have a good beekeeping story to share with us?

Helen Webb (from the back of the garage): I do! When I was a little girl, my father nicknamed me Honey. The name stuck with me, and everyone called me Honey. Little did I know I'd marry a beekeeper. Now I tell people I'm the queen bee!

DP: Tom?

TW: My uncle put up a ladder to get a swarm. The ladder knocked into the branch, and the swarm fell on his head. A couple weeks later, I caught my first swarm. I was home alone.

DP: What advice can you give to a new beekeeper?

TW: Don't be afraid. Sometimes I'll take a handful of bees and ask people to shake my hand.

DP: C'mon, you've never been stung doing that?

TW: Well, only if I pinched a bee between my fingers.

