

Lake Cumberland Beekeepers Association

April 2017 Newsletter

Next LCBA Meeting: Monday, April 17, 2017

The topic for the meeting is spring hive management and swarm prevention.

Presenter: Bobby Goodin

Doors open at 6.00pm for informal discussion and meeting registration. There will be a brief business meeting at 6.30pm, and Bobby's presentation will start at 7.00pm.

LCBA meetings are free of charge and open to the public. These meetings are a great opportunity to get together with fellow beekeepers in the area.

Venue: Basement meeting room at the Pulaski County Extension Office, 28 Parkway Drive, Somerset KY 42502.



This could be a difficult swarm to collect. How would Bobby Goodin handle it? Join us at the April LCBA meeting to find out

LCBA Swarm Catchers, Hive Report, Mentors

Swarm Catchers

April is the start of swarming season for the bees!

Many LCBA members are prepared to collect bee swarms.

For a listing of these bee catchers, visit the LCBA website at www.lakecumberlandbeekeepers.com, click on "Swarm Removal" under the "Resources" tab.

March 2017 Hive Count

LCBA member Pat Rizenbergs reports the following March 2017 Hive Count results:

LCBA lost 44 hives this past winter with an average loss of 14%. We had 307 hives last October and have 263 hives this March 2017. This is the second lowest winter loss percentage on record. We had 8% loss in March 2011.

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LCBA email: lakecumberland.beekeepers@gmail.com

LCBA website: www.lakecumberlandbeekeepers.com

Photo credits: Imants Rizenbergs, Hilary Forsyth, David Gilbert, Mike Wooton, Dorothey Morgan

Mentors

Spring is the time when new (and not-so-new) beekeepers may realize that having a beekeeping mentor would be a tremendous help.

What better than to have an experienced beekeeper by your side as you check through your existing hives to assess the bees' progress, or to help you install that new nuc. And having an experienced beekeeper available for a quick chat about your beekeeping queries can provide you with important information and support.

Pat Rizenbergs has compiled a list of LCBA mentors—16 to date—who are willing to share their time and expertise.

Phone Pat Rizenbergs at 606-679-5087, or 606-875-3701 (cell), or email her at pat.rizenbergs@gmail.com.

LCBA President: Ginger Renaker

Phone: 606-416-0041

LCBA Vice-President: Michael Wooton

Cell phone: 606-492-5228

Email: mikewooton@hotmail.com

Pulaski/Lincoln 2017 Beginning Bee School Report

Session 4: March 23, 2017

The fourth session of the Pulaski/Lincoln Beekeeping school was held Thursday March 23, 2017 at the Lincoln County extension office.

Long time beekeeper Tim Siler showed how to put a complete hive together from scratch. He explained that beekeepers can save money by building their own hives and frames. New students were able to have an idea of what goes into a complete hive and have explained to them how the bees adapted.

Everyone who participated in the bee school has gained knowledge and an understanding of bee nature and now have an idea what it takes to be a beekeeper.

Session 5: April 6, 2017

The next session will be taught by a noted beekeeper, Dwight Wells. He will be discussing sustainable beekeeping. April 6, at 7:00pm

Mike Wooton, Vice President
Lake Cumberland Beekeepers Association
Mikewooton@hotmail.com



Tim Siler demonstrates putting a hive together at the Pulaski/Lincoln Beekeeping class

Report on the LCBA March 2017 meeting presentation



Spring management

James Foster, president of the Big South Fork Beekeeping Association (pictured at right), gave a talk on spring management, starting with several basic checks to be made:

Make sure the hive is queen right, and that the queen is laying.

Check that there are sufficient food stores in the hive.

Is the cluster of bees too small? Give the hive a frame of brood and the adhering bees (but NO queen cells) from a stronger hive.

Is it too early for swarms? James Foster commented that there may not be enough drones around this early in the season (March 20).

If combs are turning very dark (after 3 years or so), these should be removed. The cells will be lined with layers of old pupal cases left behind by successive emerged bees, and this pupal case build-up will reduce the size of the cells and thus the size of new bees.

Use up your old honey stores by feeding them to hives with insufficient stores; if honey frames have been stored, air these out in bright light conditions to deter wax moths.

Honey supers should not be added until after redbud bloom; redbud nectar is bitter and, while the bees like it, the honey is not really palatable. However, extra brood boxes should be put on now, in preparation for expanding brood.

Prepare a swarm box or two, consisting of a base, deep box plus frames, inner and outer covers.

If you are successful in catching a swarm, it is a good idea to put a queen excluder on the bottom board under the swarm box, to prevent the queen from escaping.

Is it too early for splits? You can split a bee hive if there are queen cells, but variations in the weather may prevent successful mating of the queen.

We can still have cold spells up until Easter (April 20th this year).

Even with the best of plans—bees do what they want to do!

Many thanks to James Foster for a very interesting and useful presentation.

Getting ready for April

From Mike Wooton, LCBA Vice President:

As I write this, March is coming to a close and beekeepers are looking for a great nectar flow for this April

Many beekeepers have inspected their hives, reversed their brood boxes as needed and performed early management chores. We are getting our honey supers ready for the spring nectar flow. If the weather stays relatively warm, it will be a good time to add supers over a queen excluder so the girls can draw out wax for new honey frames. I don't like to use supers for honey production until after the redbuds bloom.

Just had an event with my hives that was a surprise. We had a mini storm a few days ago and hail and wind was prevalent. I have a six frame poly hive that is rather tall and I thought I had it secured to my stand.

Evidently I had not. The wind toppled the hive and it laid there on its side for two days before I noticed. I stood it back up and secured it. The bees had an opening in the side where the boxes had separated. They were defending that opening very well. Wasps were trying to rob but weren't having much success. I left them for a couple days and opened the hive. All is well: many bees and plenty stores of honey and just waiting to bring in lots of nectar.

As soon as the weather stabilizes I plan to do splits to prevent swarming and to help some new beekeepers get a start. I also plan on trying "super hives" using the double screen board.

Happy beekeeping to all!!!

- Mike Wooton, Vice President
Lake Cumberland Beekeepers Association

Spring inspections and reducing swarms

Mike Wooton and David Gilbert worked with LCBA member Bill Vanhooser to inspect an apiary of five hives. The hives had a huge number of bees. In anticipation of a probable swarm, the boxes were rotated and two hives were swapped with frames to equalize the number of bees in the apiary.

Some beekeepers recommend checker boarding (replacing full frames with empty ones) to ease overcrowding while trying to prevent swarming.

Making splits is always a technique to provide new space for overcrowded hives.

- David Gilbert



Mike Wooton and David Gilbert are working with LCBA member Bill Vanhooser inspecting five hives in an apiary. (March 2017)

Keeping records



In his presentation at the March LCBA meeting, James Foster described how, when checking hives in spring, you could take brood frames from one hive to supplement a weaker hive.

But when you are checking through several hives during an inspection, do you remember which of your hives had plenty of brood: and on which frames?

A willing scribe (pictured above) is a useful asset! Even if you don't have assistance on hand as you check the bees, it is important to keep a record of the bees' progress and activity levels. Reviewing your detailed notes will help you understand the bees' year and help you plan for their future.

- Hilary Forsyth

Plant Native!

What's the best way to nurture wildlife and encourage pollinators onto your property? Plant native! Not only do native plants adapt better to our environment, but they are a vital food source for all our native pollinators (Monarch butterflies, for a start) - and honey bees as well.

Lake Cumberland Master Gardeners are helping to get a bulk order together for native plants. These plants are grown by the UK Horticulture Club members and proceeds benefit their club. These native plants are rarely available from local garden outlets, so this is the perfect opportunity to add some real natives to your landscape.

The order form lists all the available plants and is posted on the LCBA website,

www.lakecumberlandbeekeepers.com
click 'News' under the 'Resources' tab.

Prices are \$4 each for perennial plants, and \$7 each for trees and shrubs. Just put the quantity you'd like beside each plant on the order form, add your name and a contact number, and turn in the form plus the money to the Pulaski Co Extension office. Checks should be made payable to LCMGA. Orders and money are due April 26. Plants will be distributed from the Extension office



Great Spangled Fritillary Butterflies perfectly match the orange flowers of butterfly milkweed, just one of the important pollinator plants available from the Master Gardeners

the first week of May.

-Beth Wilson,
Pulaski County Agent for Horticulture
PO Box 720
Somerset KY 42502
(606)679-6361
(606)679-6271 (fax)
ISA Certified Arborist® KY-0853A
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[Pulaski County Horticulture Facebook page](#)

Casey County Bees : Bee Math

Bee math is one of the fundamentals of beekeeping. Bees keep to a strict timetable when it comes to their life cycle, and knowing the bee math helps you figure out what to expect in your hives.

The queen bee, for example, hatches from egg to larva at 3 days, grows in the larval stage for just under 4 days, becomes a pupa and is sealed into her queen cell for 8 days, and emerges as an adult queen on the 16th day. Hard to remember? Think: 'sweet sixteen'. Similar life cycles are followed by the worker bees and the drones, though on a slightly longer time scale: worker bee adults emerge on the 21st day (think 'legal drinking age!'), while the drone bees take their time and only emerge as adults on the 24th day (what can I say?!).

Why is all this relevant? Well, if you split your bee hive into two, with the queen in the original hive deep box and only brood and eggs (no queen cells) in a second deep box, it will take the queenless bees 12 to 16 days to raise a new queen from a very young larva or an egg laid by the queen before the split. This new queen will gain strength in the hive for a couple of days before

going off on her mating flight; a few days after that, about 23 days after being an egg herself, she will start laying eggs.

So, all being well, and allowing time for suitable weather conditions, you should see eggs in the new box within 4 weeks of the split and (if, like us, you find eggs hard to see), young uncapped brood by the end of the 5th week—that is, 35 days after the split.

You can carry this bee math along even further: if the split was made at the end of March, you should have a laying queen by the end of April. The queen only lays a few eggs at first, but will soon be laying over 1,000 eggs a day. Worker bees remain in the hive for 3 weeks before 'graduating' to become foragers, which brings you up to near the end of May. The math is: will this new forager workforce be in time to make the most of the nectar flow?

- Hilary Forsyth

Nucs wanted / for sale: Check the LCBA website for a listing of local beekeepers who have nucs for sale, and people who are interested in purchasing nucs. Go to www.lakecumberlandbeekeepers.com, click "Resources".



Kentucky Queen Bee Breeders' Association



Dwight Wells's Sustainable Beekeeping and Queen Rearing classes were a roaring success! Both events were packed with enthusiastic beekeepers. KQBBAI has several more grafting and beekeeping topics planned for summer and fall. Join our network to be informed on what is going on in Kentucky's honey bee world. For more info, send an email to Lavenderlanefarms@gmail.com subject: network

Dorothy Morgan, President