

Lake Cumberland Beekeepers Association

Lake
Cumberland
Beekeeper



August 2018 Newsletter

LCBA meeting Monday, August 20, 2018

Dorothey Morgan (pictured at right) is guest speaker at the LCBA meeting on Monday, August 20. Dorothey will be discussing Queen Evaluation and Hive Management. She will cover how to check if your hive is thriving or failing, how to choose and replace a failing queen.

A little after 6pm, before the meeting, Dorothey will also show how to light a smoker and keep it lit for hours.

Here is a short biography for those who do not know her:

Dorothey Morgan: Nancy, Kentucky. President of Kentucky Honey Bee Queen Breeders' Association, Treasurer of Heartland Honey Bee Breeders Co-op, instrumental assistant to Krispn Given in his insemination programs, and queen rearing workshops, member of Blue Grass Beekeepers Association, and founding member of Sustainable Genetics Technology Network and D to Z Inseminator Instructors. Dorothey travels the Midwest inseminating queens. She owns Lavender Lane



Honey Bee Farm, which consists of 58 hives, with Purdue mite biters being her specialty.

Doors to the meeting open at 6pm for general discussion, followed by a brief business meeting at 6.30pm, with Dorothey Morgan's presentation at 7pm. Refreshments will be served after the meeting.

News from KSBA about honey designation

Kentucky State Beekeepers Association has some interesting news about the Kentucky Certified Honey Program in recent news updates from the KSBA:

"KSBA is launching the Kentucky Certified Honey Program at the Kentucky State Fair on August 16, 2018. The goals of the program are 'first, to promote local honey that is produced by the beekeepers of the KSBA and is a genuine product of the State; second, to connect the local beekeepers with consumers who are looking to purchase local honey.'"

KSBA is also introducing guidelines regarding the labeling of honey for sale:

"Avoid the word "monofloral." If you designate your honey as a monofloral, and label it as such, the Food

and Drug Administration (FDA) requires that you be able to prove that the required pollen analysis indicates at least 46 percent of pollen from the named label source. KSBA recommends designations such as "Wildflower," "Spring Harvest 2018," or "Local Jefferson County Honey," rather than a monofloral. Monofloral honey is a rarity in areas where bees harvest nectar from multiple sources. Most pollen analysis will show the major pollen source around 18 percent maximum."

Visit the KSBA website at www.KSBAbeekeeping.org to read the latest KSBA news releases in full, and to subscribe for future KSBA news releases.

- Hilary Forsyth

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Mike's Ramblings—A note from LCBA Vice President Mike Wooton

Dog Days of Summer—August 2018

It's been a good summer; health is good, friends are around when needed, and a lot of projects are in the works. Hope I can slow down for some fishing soon when the weather cools. My hives seem to be doing good and I am getting ready to start my fall mite control. Thanks to Doug Brock, I have a few more options to try this year. It is a good idea to switch treatment methods so the mites will not develop an immunity.

My honey is extracted and bottled and ready for friends and neighbors to enjoy local goodness. I think the flavor is as good this year as any I have extracted in the past. Hope everyone has had a good production year.

If you missed last month's meeting you missed a great presentation on essential oils by Doug Brock. Thanks, Doug for the info and the enjoyable presentation.

Dorothee Morgan is our featured speaker for this month's meeting where she will be speaking on queen

bee evaluation and hive management and queen replacement. Looking forward to learning more about queens.

We are asking for suggestions for a speaker in September. Our proposed speaker had other commitments and had to cancel. We usually speak on fall management in September so if anyone wants to speak or can suggest someone, it will be greatly appreciated.

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Check out the LAKE CUMBERLAND BEEKEEPERS web site for information on our club and for additional information about bees.
BEE KIND TO OUR BEES!!!!

Report on Doug Brock's presentation at the July 2018 meeting

At the LCBA monthly meeting held on July 16, 2018, LCBA member Doug Brock presented an entertaining and informative program on using essential oils in beekeeping.

Doug told how he was born and raised in Rockcastle County and has some Cherokee bloodlines. After 20 years as a hairstylist he became a farmer and started raising cattle. He attended the LCBA 2015 Beginning Bee School and started beekeeping with his brother-in-law, Audy, both becoming members of LCBA. On his farms he has six bee lots within a three mile radius and said that the hives in the sun seem to do better than those in shaded areas. His hives consist of two deep bodies and he uses only essential oils to keep his hives healthy and mite free. Doug recommended spending a little more and buying pure cane sugar (Domino) rather than beet sugar which is most of the other brands to feed your bees.

Doug makes the following recipe to add to his sugar syrup three times in the spring and three times in the fall: In a quart jar with 1 cup of honey in it add 1 teaspoon of wintergreen oil, 2 teaspoons of tea tree oil, and 3 drops of lemongrass oil, fill the jar with warm water and shake it up with a lid on the jar until well mixed. Add 3 teaspoons of the mix to a gallon of sugar syrup and feed three times before supers are put on. Again in late summer or fall add the mixture to 2:1 sugar syrup and feed three times to fatten bees for winter. The mixture can be kept in the refrigerator for up to a year.

Another recipe Doug uses is 1.5 ounces of wintergreen

oil and 1.5 pounds of Crisco to make a mixture he spreads on the wooden end of the frames in the hive to control mites. Some people add honey, sea salt to this mixture. You could also make patties of the mixture and put them in the hive on top of frames.

A third recipe is food for the long winter when bees may run out of stores. Instead of cooking a fondant and putting in the hive you can stir together in a large kettle the following:

20 pounds of sugar, 3 cups of hot chamomile tea, 1 tsp of fresh lemon juice, 1 tsp. sea salt (canning salt works), 4 drops of lemongrass oil, 2 drops of peppermint oil, 2 drops of wintergreen oil, 2 drops of tea tree oil, and 2 teaspoons of vegetable glycerine. Spread in cookie sheets with edges to harden. You can score the mixture to make small portions to add to hives. You can also cut the recipe in half if you have only a few hives.

Doug showed how he uses a fogger and an oxalic acid mixture to kill varroa mites fogging once a week for 3 weeks for a 100% kill. He reported that thymol essential oil is effective 75% of the time and mineral oil fogging is 50% effective.

In closing, Doug reminded members that if you have a hive of dead bees and honey, varroa mites have probably killed them. If you have a hive of dead bees without any honey, the bees probably have starved to death.

- Pat Rizenbergs, LCBA Secretary

Increasing pollinator habitat: how to provide more food for more bees

It's been a great year so far for our bees! Despite the freezing winter (remember that?) and the early summer heat, we've had plenty of rain, and the vegetation around here is lush and green. Lots of plant growth equals lots of flowers for all the pollinators.

Early August, and a few goldenrod plants are already in flower, and promise of a bountiful goldenrod season. Shining sumacs are also blooming, with separate colonies of these plants flowering in sequence, extending the nectar flow from these plants over several weeks. These sumacs flower much later than their kin, the staghorn and smooth sumacs; all sumacs are pollinator magnets, and provide bountiful supplies of nectar and pollen.

Our piece of property up here in Casey County is pretty typical for the area: about half of the acreage is meadow, surrounded by woods which spread down into the ravines. The mowing practice here is to cut the meadows right up to the tree line; which is fine if you need every last inch of space to grow grass, but we are more interested in providing as much plant diversity as possible.

Our aim is to provide a buffer zone between meadows and woods, where annual and perennial wildflowers as well as tree seedlings can establish. Too, we noticed that the meadow grasses growing immediately adjacent to the tall trees was often sparse and of poor quality, and thus not all that valuable as a grass crop. Wildflowers are far more adaptable than grasses, and will quickly colonize in the poorer soils and take advantage of the varying shade/sun conditions along the woodland edge.

To establish this buffer zone, we used wooden stakes to mark out an area some 20 feet in from the wood's margins, where the meadows would no longer be mowed. At first we worked on areas where the meadows were particularly sparse, or the topography of the land perilously steep for mowing. Every year, we have expanded the buffer zone areas to include all of the meadow margins. It has been interesting to observe the transformation in the plant cover in these zones.

The first year, all that happened in the unmowed zones was that the grasses grew taller—and the weeds did, too.

The second year with no mowing, spring wildflowers were evident—violets, beardtongue, ox-eye daisies. In summer, a whole new array of wildflowers emerged, such as brown-eyed susans, mist flower, passion flower, bee balm, along with a scattering of goldenrods and Joe Pye weeds. A few tree seedlings were also starting to appear: mostly tulip poplars, but also pines, junipers,

nuts, maples, oak, and ash trees, plus the aforementioned sumac colonies.

By 2018, our fourth year into this project, the perennial goldenrods have established strong populations, and the annual partridge peas join in the mix. The meadow edges are tall with wildflowers and humming with pollinators. Purple Iron Weed (perhaps too much of that) and Joe Pye Weed are having a good year, both very popular with the big Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterflies, wasps of all shapes and sizes, solitary bees and bumblebees.

In this year, too, the tree saplings have flourished, and they are already establishing a new treeline along the edge of the woods. In a year or two, these saplings will start shading out the sun-loving annuals and perennials, as the forest reclaims the land.

Of course, not all of the wildflowers that grow so eagerly in this newly established habitat are the ones we would welcome, and some management is necessary. Japanese honeysuckle, for instance, will take over and smother any emerging plants; brambles positively leap up the slope from the woods, out-growing everything in their path. And not all trees and shrubs are welcome: *Ailanthus* (Tree of Heaven) is a vigorous invasive that will quickly out-compete the hardwood saplings we want, and shrubs like European Buckthorn are similarly unwelcome. Trees and invasive plants such as these could be controlled to some extent by mowing or bush-hogging the buffer zones annually in the fall, once the wildflowers have dropped their seeds and nesting birds and insects have moved on for the winter. However, the resulting cut material would need to be gathered up and removed, or it will smother any emerging plants the following year.

We have not mowed the buffer zones at all, preferring to let the vegetation die back naturally in the fall, and choosing our battles with the more aggressive plants. Too, we want to encourage tree saplings to grow, and mowing would take these out.

The result is that the woods are fast re-establishing themselves, which is wonderful for the trees, but what about the pollinator habitat? Well—there is nothing for it but to move those wooden stake goalposts ever inwards into the meadows, to keep that natural rejuvenation cycle going. We figure that by the time we are too old to get out there to do battle with the aggressors and move stakes about, our robot-controlled pollinator landscape management system will take care of it all while we sit on the porch and admire the view!

- *Hilary Forsyth*