

Southern Arizona Beekeepers Meeting

DATE: 4.12.2017

LOCATION: Eckstrom Library @ 22nd Street and Columbus

ATTENDEES: (33 people) Jaime de Zubeldia, Lucas Schvindt, Will Fitz, Mitch Anderson, Richard Clark, Hannah Clark, Kai Goodwillie, Wally Goodwillie, David Fales, Robert Dillon, Liza Smith, David Brown, Susan Evans, Mark Doumas, Jim Wood, Jason Wood, Diana Lara, Norman Cochrane, Mark McCarty, Nate, Tanoue, Yelena Fomenko, Doug Miller, Any Peralta, Michael Hobbs, Emily Scobie, Sean Whitsitt, David Owens, Emily Rockey, David Benton

FACILITATOR: Will Fitz

Sign in and Introductions –

Discussion Topics

1) Hive Types

Top Bar – simulates horizontal tree

Pros- easy to make, relatively inexpensive, do not need extractor (crush combs and strain to extract honey), bees make fresh combs so no buildup of contaminants, no heavy supers to lift

Cons – more affected by heat, needs a cover or roof to protect from heat and sun, needs more shade, comb is more likely to melt/collapse, air circulation is poor due to horizontal orientation, more sensitive to brood being pulled apart. If comb overheats it can melt and drip honey, bees die.

Langstroth Hive

Pros-consistent size of boxes and frames (interchangeable), better air circulation (vertical flow), comb is reused (bees don't have to make new comb each season), easier to extract honey (with centrifugal extractor).

Cons- more expensive initially, however can reuse hive bodies and frames.

Flow Hive

Mentioned but not discussed. No one has used enough to make determination, though they are much more expensive than either Langstroth or Top Bar hives

Warre Hive – not discussed

2) Protective Clothing and Tools

Jacket with attached hood – attached hood keeps bees from face and neck, can gap at waist

Complete suit with attached hood – good for removal of swarms and feral colonies, hotter than jacket. Some are mesh and breath better

Jacket with separate hood – potential for bees to get inside netting

Gloves – some don't use gloves for working calm hives, but everyone agreed that gloves are necessary for aggressive hives or swarms or feral colonies

Smoker – everyone uses smokers

Hive tools (J-hook or crow bar) – personal preference

Brush –

Queen Excluders – Will Fitz uses these when he splits a hive.

3) Obtaining bees

Nucs- box, usually cardboard containing five frames of brood with bees and a queen

Package – screen package with predetermined weight of bees, with queen in a queen cage

Swarms – not advised for beginning beekeepers. Captured from various locations, unknown genetics and characteristics. Usually Africanized, no comb attached.

Generally remain in location 1-2 days

Colonies – Only experienced beekeepers should capture these. Usually captured from various locations, containing comb and brood. Have to do “cut out” to remove these. Unknown genetics and characteristics, usually Africanized.

4) Installing Bees -

Package Bees – check to see if bees are “wet” when you receive them. If they are this is “bee vomit” and they have been overheated or “cooked” and will die. Refuse and return to sender.

Top Bar – Open space between top bars, spray bees with sugar syrup spray, dump or shake bees into area. Hang queen cage toward the top of the hive with candy end down. On day 3 check to make sure that comb is being formed straight, without cross combing or burr com. If queen is not released, poke tiny hole in candy plug. Discussion whether splines or wedges are preferred to encourage bees to make better comb. No consensus, seems to be personal preference.

Langstroth Remove 2-3 frames, spray bees with sugar syrup spray. Set whole package into space. Attach queen cage between two frames with candy end down. On day 3 check to determine if queen is released and bees forming comb. If not released, poke tiny hole into candy plug.

Nucs

Top Bar – not designed for nucs

Langstroth – Remove 5 frames from hive body, transfer nuc frames to hive body, keeping the nuc frames in the same relative position when you transfer to hive body. CHECK FOR PRESENCE OF QUEEN! Tap or brush extra loose bees to hive body.

5) Feeding Bees

ALWAYS have an available source of fresh water. Otherwise they will use your neighbors’ swimming pool or a pet’s dish. Various types of water were discussed, i.e. fountains, bowls with rocks, buckets with wood or Styrofoam floats, garden drip emitters, Boardman feeders. All have various pros and cons, seems to be personal preference.

Sugar Syrup – Use 1:1 ratio water to sugar, no need for more sugar here in Southern Arizona. Different types of feeders were demonstrated, Boardman feeders, small inverted bucket feeders, frame feeders. Each has different benefits. Seems to be a matter of preference depending on number and types of hives managed. **Need to feed during dearth of pollen and nectar in order to keep bees healthy.**

6) Swarm Prevention

Monitor bees frequently to observe conditions in hive. Jaime suggested every 10 days is good interval. Heck to ensure that when bees begin to beard up on outside of hive there is enough ventilation. Keep brood comb frames in center of hive, honey comb frames to sides. When brood combs seem to be 60-70% full add more hive bodies above (for Langstroth) or more bars (for top bar). “Checkerboarding” – when weather is consistently very warm, move honey frames to higher hive body. Then alternate frames with foundation or comb between filled frames. Bees will usually build comb and fill between the filled combs. Keep brood in center so it will stay warm, move empty frames to higher hive body.

The planned Power Point presentation will be available on the website <http://southernazbeekeepers.org>

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm

Next meeting will be May 10, 6:00 pm at Columbus Eckstrom library.