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NEWSLETTER

QUARANTINE SPECIAL #1 (AUGUST 2020)

Although meetings have been interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Southern Arizona Beekeepers Association's leadership wants to offer additional content in newsletter format.

We hope that you find the information to be educational and entertaining, and welcome feedback to the editor at treasurer@southernazbeekeepers.org

The newsletter is planned to be released every other month, on the date of the cancelled meetings, until quarantine ends. If there is enough interest, the newsletter may continue even after meetings resume.

ABOUT SAZBA

Our goals are to teach and encourage better methods among the beekeepers of Southern Arizona (Pima, Cochise and Santa Cruz), to promote cooperation and sharing, to reach a common understanding regarding our problems and their solutions, and to stimulate the interest of the general public in the advantages and benefits of beekeeping.

We encourage the study and research in Apiculture with an eye towards better methodology, increased production, public safety, and improved marketing.

We participate in outreach activities including special events and visiting schools to teach and inform the general public relating to honey bees and the beekeeping industry.

If you have any questions about what we do, our mission, or just general beekeeping questions, please [reach out](#).



OFFICERS

President
Monica King

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Tom Chester

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Cecilia Anderson

Treasurer
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Will Fitz

Sergeant-At-Arms
Randy Wells

Webmaster
Peter Underwood

Directors
Alan Hillhouse
Liza Smith
Hannah Clark

MEETINGS

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Southern Arizona Beekeepers Association is postponing all member meetings until further notice.

Your officers are looking into potential outdoor meeting locations starting this fall, when temperatures cool off a bit, dependent on the state of the pandemic and public response.



CALL FOR CONTENT

The objective of this newsletter is to provide timely access to local information on beekeeping. This newsletter will not contain the type of content (precise scientific research) that you will find in American Bee Journal or Bee Culture.

The content of this newsletter will focus on individual experiences, lessons learned, local conditions, personal reflections, and other subjective experiences.

Therefore, if you'd like to contribute to the newsletter, email the editor at treasurer@southernazbeekeepers.org.

Regular columns will also be maintained by your officers.

STATE OF THE HIVE

AUGUST

By Monica King

Seen in bloom:

Yellow thimble head
Prickle Poppy
Tamarisk
Texas Ranger

Watching for:

Wildflowers

Recommendation:

Watch foragers – may need protein and syrup

My bees in the Altar Valley just west of Tucson are still hitting the dry protein supplement really hard. I'm giving them internal feeding of protein and syrup. While driving, I do see some of the yellow thimble head and some prickle poppy, though I am not seeing much of anything noteworthy blossoming yet. We are not getting very many of the much-needed wildflowers. The monsoon season has not been particularly great so far.

A curious exception: I noted (on a bee removal that I recently did just south of Tucson between Amado and Arivaca) the forage bees were stumbling over top of each other bringing in just baskets full of pollen. I don't know what the source was. That area was a small strip of agriculture so it could be anything, though more than likely it was not a native species.

Continue feeding and making sure that the hives are strong enough to stabilize their internal temperatures and provide them with shade and water (especially weaker hives). In this heat, only do checks early in the morning and make sure that there's enough water provided. Depending on stock line, some of the queens may be shut down; they only brood up when there's a natural source coming in. I've had a few hobbyists inquire about that thinking that their queens may be bad when the lack of natural protein source is to blame.



EXPERIMENTS AND EXPERIENCES

RE-THINK IT

By Cecilia Anderson

I am a new beekeeper, and I thought I had the best bee yard property. It is a piece of land with a beautiful mesquite basin near a wash at 5,200 feet of elevation, a half mile off the main road: no neighbors within sight.

So, I set up my three hives in this private setting and thought little more of it. However, I later began to enjoy spending time camping on the land and chose a little hillside; trouble was, it was only about 50 feet from the bee yard. The bees were soon just a little too curious as to what we were doing there. To make matters worse, one of my hives had likely been superseded with Africanized bees.

I did not want to move my campsite, so I decided to move my bee yard 50 feet further into the mesquite thicket. This turned out to be... not as easy as I had imagined. Despite making the move under the light of the full moon, wearing my complete bee suit (my smoker was not working well), the bees got very upset with me. I was stung multiple times on the ankles. Bees, when disturbed, do cover and crawl on the ground to look for ways to stop any assault to their homesite. In the end, the bees did get relocated and now I can camp without unappreciated bee visits.





“Don’t try this at home boys and girls”

BEE-MUSINGS

A CORNER OF REFLECTION

Author: Tom Chester

Notes:

A **skep** is a traditional beehive made of woven straw. The term derives from an Old English word meaning a straw basket that holds about a half bushel. Although the word skep may not be familiar, its image is a common representation of a beehive—it shows up on honey labels, as tchotchkes at garage sales, and even on road signs for the state of Utah.

To protect the bees from the elements, skep makers daubed the woven straw, also called **wattle**, with mud. Further, beekeepers often placed their skeps in niches in stone walls. These niches are called **boles**.

Beekeepers often placed a smaller straw cap, called an **eke**, on top of the skep. The word likely originates from the verb eke or eke out, meaning to increase, add to, or stretch. According to legend, if a beekeeper banged on a metal pot, the sound would attract the swarm so that it could be placed in a hive. This banging was known as **tanging**.

In the days of skep beekeeping, removing individual combs from a hive full of bees was not practicable without damaging the comb, so beekeepers typically killed the bees to obtain their wax and honey. This was often done using burning sulfur, also known as **brimstone**.

SKEPS

By Tom Chester

Skeps, mud-wattled, topped by ekes,
Snug in timeless, stone-bound boles,
Tended by their keepers, our ancient forebears
Wise in the ways of the honey-bee.
They who tanged to lure errant swarms
To be captured for increase.
They who burned the fabled brimstone
To sacrifice hives for honey and wax,
Sweet food in a world without sugar,
Sweet light in a world lit only by fire.

And when those ancient ones died
The living went to the hives
To drape them in mourning,
To tap on them to tell the bees
Their keeper was dead,
For untold, the bees would flee.
What do we husband today,
Gleaning sweetness and light,
And wisdom by the way?