



*Kelley Bee News*

ISSUE 39 • SEPTEMBER 2013

# Modern Beekeeping



Ethiopian beekeeping equipment. Read more about Richard Underhill, a beekeeper from Arkansas who teaches hive management in Ethiopia in this month's Bees Overseas article.

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# The Buzz

September. Really? Is summer already over? Did we even experience summer here in the Ohio River basin? I can't recall a cooler, wetter summer in my lifetime. Our grass is still "April" green—in August! If it happened to be the warmest summer you've ever experienced in your part of the world, my condolences (that was a shout out to Dennis Brown, our Texas connection and *Modern Beekeeping* contributor)—although I'd bet your honey production was better than ours this year! It seems like only a month ago that we were getting ready for "Bee Saturdays" here at Walter T. Kelley—tell me it hasn't been five months!

The buzz around here already involves much talk about fall preparation in the apiary, making sure that we're ready to battle small hive beetles, feeding our bees appropriately using some combination of honey stores and/or sugar water, basically making sure that we're setting our bees AND ourselves up for success as we approach



Kevin Harrub setting up his new hive last spring.

the cooler and then colder months. Be sure you don't miss Dennis' article about how best to address the partially filled honey super in our "A-Bee-Cs" section this month.

In this edition of *Modern Beekeeping* you'll once again find articles meant to educate, fascinate and stimulate—nothing like stinging stories to stimulate folks to wear their veils, even when inspecting the calmest of hives. Yes, it appears that there's quite a bit of venom being distributed with some folks receiving more than their fair share—so many folks responded to the sting survey that we may have to run "sting stories" in several editions of *MB*! Who knew there were so many sting home remedies?

We were even able to combine the most feared stinging insect with a fascinating story about beekeeping on the African continent. Many thanks to Richard Underhill for allowing

Camilla Bee to interview him for a great story about his several trips to Ethiopia, where he was able to observe native beekeeping techniques and philosophies while exchanging his thoughts and ideas with his beekeeping brothers across the big pond.

Lastly, as with every edition of *Modern Beekeeping*, you'll find there's plenty of educating taking place in this issue. Some may be light-hearted "Dronings from a Queen Bee" sharing her success and frustrations as a swarm catcher or the dangers of the Milkweed Trap by the Ol' Drone himself—either way, your beekeeping education continues in this edition of *Modern Beekeeping*.

Bee safe,

Kevin Harrub

Walter T. Kelley Company

Sales and Purchasing Director

[kharrub@kelleybees.com](mailto:kharrub@kelleybees.com)

# Bee Thinking About

## For September, 2013

It's been a very challenging summer weather-wise for many of our readers. We hope this finds you dry, but not too dry! If you're in one of those saturated areas, keep an eye out for chalkbrood. Excessive dampness can promote this fungal infection.

Here are some other things, geographically and weather-dependent, to consider for your apiary about now. As always, your comments and contributions are welcome! Please email [Editor@KelleyBees.com](mailto:Editor@KelleyBees.com).



Walter T. Kelley now carries Apivar.

Things to monitor:

**Brood pattern:** Check that it is good, although its size will be diminishing. If you don't have a good brood pattern, do you have at least 20 pounds of honey in the hive? That's what the queen needs to keep laying. If your area has suffered from the drought, forage may be hard to come by. If you have less than 20 pounds, consider supplemental feeding.

**Hive beetles and Varroa mite:** They can still compromise a hive's health. (See previous issues for suggestions on how to detect and address them. We have an index of previous topics at [www.kelleybees.com](http://www.kelleybees.com) that point you to specific issues.)

Things to do:

**Handle any excess honey on the hive:** Sometime in September is about as late as most beekeepers leave supers that they'll be robbing on the hive. Unless you're in the middle of a substantial nectar flow, by removing supers you'll be encouraging bees to consolidate what they need in the boxes you're leaving for the winter.

What do you do with partially filled supers? Options are discussed in the "A-Bee-Cs" section of this newsletter.

**Reduce space:** As a colony's population declines, remove extra space (like honey supers) to ensure the bees can patrol everything and keep critters in check (South) and the hive warm enough (North).

**Fall treatments:** If part of your apiary management plan, ensure you have the products you need and determine when to apply them in your area.

**Bee thinking about:** Mouse guards! Always best to install them when the critter is on the *outside* of the hive, not already nesting inside because of cold nights. Have them ready in case fall, *falls* early. Visit our website or give us a call to order them.

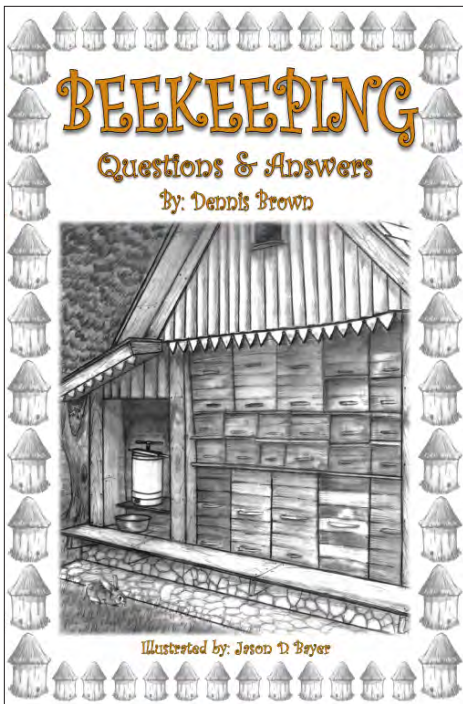


Mouse Guard, Catalog # 279-MG

**In the North:** Continue to keep good notes on brood patterns, production, pest-resistance, etc. You may need to combine weaker hives with stronger ones in the next month or two, so you'll want to know which queens are the best for taking you through the winter. Fall-winter prep is just around the corner.

**In the South:** A southern beekeeper told us that September in the Deep South is one of the few months where the beekeeper can take a breath. Enjoy! For more southern beekeeping considerations, see Dennis Brown's article.

As always, your comments and contributions are welcome, email [Editor@KelleyBees.com](mailto:Editor@KelleyBees.com) or visit [kelleybees.com/blog](http://kelleybees.com/blog). 🍯



# Beekeeping in the South

By Dennis Brown of Lone Star Farms, [www.lonestarfarms.net](http://www.lonestarfarms.net)

*Author of Beekeeping: A Personal Journey and Beekeeping: Questions and Answers, both carried by Kelley's.*

Here in Bryan, Texas as well as most of Texas, the temperatures normally soar into the triple digits in August and September. Our bees work feverishly to keep the hive cool. Make sure you have a good water source close by for the bees to collect water (preferably not the neighbor's swimming pool) so they may take it back to the hive. It is stored inside uncapped cells. The house bees stand close to these water-filled cells and fan their wings. The air movement will evaporate the water which will in turn help cool down the inside of the hive.

In some areas, the aster and goldenrod plants are beginning to bloom and the bees have an opportunity to collect nectar from them that will be stored for their winter food source. Sometimes there will be enough nectar coming in for the beekeeper to add a honey super or two and make a surplus.

At Lone Star Farms, September is usually a slow work month because we rarely ever place honey supers on our hives for the fall flow. We believe that it is better to leave the fall flow for the bees. We run each hive in two brood boxes and allow the bees to fill both their boxes with the fall nectar. That is one reason we don't have to feed our bees very often. Remember, honey is much healthier for the bees than sugar water. Besides, the bees have already provided us with a good early spring and early summer surplus.

If you take care of your bees first, they will take care of you. Enjoy your bees.

If you take care of your bees first, they will take care of you.

—Dennis Brown

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## Beek Hint

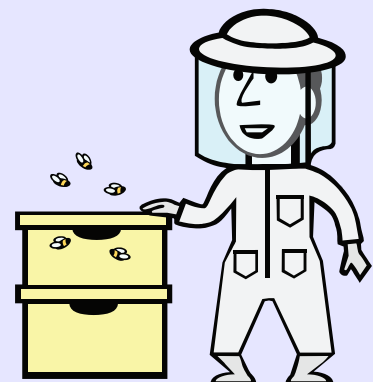
I wished I'd known in the beginning to leave more honey on in the winter than you think you need to and people tell you to. Since moving to three-deep systems we do not need to feed sugar syrup, our winter losses have dropped and the colonies are stronger than ever.

—Steve L., Indiana

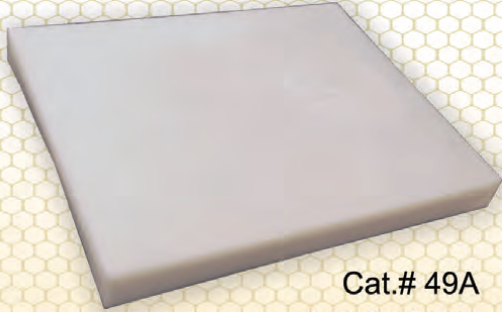
If you're working bees on a sunny day (which hopefully happens), as you remove a hive body, put it atop an inverted top cover (or some other capturing device).

SHB hate sunlight. If there are any in the hive body, they'll go to the top cover or darkest place they can find—making it easier for you to get rid of them.

—S. B., Kentucky



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# Healthy Bees

## Tracheal Mite Concerns

By Camilla Bee, Editor

The Varroa mite gets plenty of attention these days when it comes to honey bee pests, but there's another mite that also will wreak havoc on a colony's health, productivity and viability—the tracheal mite. This mite, *Acarapis woodi*, clogs the breathing tubes of adult bees, eventually killing them by blocking the flow of oxygen.

Because the honey bee tracheal mite (HBTM) seemingly resides on the back burner of mite issues, we recently caught up with Diana Sammataro, Ph.D., Research Entomologist with the USDA-ARS Carl Hayden Bee Research Center. We asked for her insights into the threat from this microscopic insect. Sammataro has researched the HBTM extensively, and recently helped complete the “Standard methods for tracheal mite research<sup>1</sup>.”

“HBTM is still out there, but with all the Varroa controls, they are probably not seen as much. Though, if folks are starting to go ‘natural’ with no treatments, they MUST start looking for this mite.”

—*Diana Sammataro*

“HBTM is still out there, but with all the Varroa controls, they are probably not seen as much,” she commented. “Though, if folks are starting to go ‘natural’ with no treatments, they MUST start looking for this mite.”

Sammataro noted that “the mite is found on honey bees throughout North and South America, Europe, and parts of Asia. Chances are, they're also located in your colonies. Eradicating mite populations is not practical—any approach only suppresses mite populations temporarily<sup>2</sup>. Knowing about the tracheal

mite, watching for symptoms, and taking actions to disrupt the mite life cycle while concurrently keeping colony populations strong and healthy are helpful actions.”

### What To Look For

Symptoms of tracheal mite infestation include:

- A large number of crawling bees outside the hive as they are unable to fly; they're often wandering aimlessly
- K-wing: the abnormal, “disjointed” position of wings
- Poor clustering: if you open the hive on a cool day, the bees may not be clustered at all, or poorly clustered in a disorganized fashion

“Knowing about the tracheal mite, watching for symptoms, and taking actions to disrupt the mite life cycle while concurrently keeping colony populations strong and healthy are helpful actions.”

Unfortunately, these symptoms are not unique to a HBTM infestation. The only method to positively identify the HBTM is by dissection. Helpful videos on dissection, as well as information for collecting bees for examination, may be found throughout the Internet.

### Impact of a HBTM Infestation

A colony may appear to be strong and successful in the summer; the toll of tracheal mites is more apparent in the fall and the spring when there are fewer young bees to replace the prematurely dying worker bees. HBTM

1 SAMMATARO, D; DE GUZMAN, L; GEORGE, S; OCHOA, R; OTIS, G (2013) Standard methods for tracheal mites research. In *V Dietemann; J D Ellis, P Neumann (Eds) The COLOSS BEEBOOK: Volume II: Standard methods for Apis mellifera pest and pathogen research. Journal of Apicultural Research 52(4)*: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3896/IBRA.1.52.4.20>

2 <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/2000/2164.html>

are passed from bee to bee, and the confines of a colony increase this transmission. The result is fewer adult bees for foraging—meaning diminished critical winter stores, and fewer bees for clustering in cold weather. As infested bees tend to cluster poorly regardless of number, HBTM often leads to chilled brood and colony death.

## Treatment Options

There are various methods for controlling these mites. Which one(s) to use is a function of your apiary management plan. Options include:

**Mite-resistant genetics:** Russian and Buckfast bees have been shown to be less susceptible to tracheal mite infestations<sup>3</sup>. As colder winters are harsher on colonies with HBTM, these races of bees, also a preferred stock for overwintering in northern climates, may be a better choice.

**Oil/grease patties:** A white sugar and vegetable shortening patty in each hive, combined in a 2:1 ratio, has been shown to be effective in reducing the mite level. The shortening seemingly interferes with the transfer of mites from bee to bee. As new bees are constantly emerging in the fall and winter, the patty must be present in the hive for an extended period. The University of Delaware site is one of many Internet resources providing comprehensive information on creating and using this non-chemical approach<sup>4</sup>.

**Menthol:** When weather conditions are right for its use, menthol has been shown to be effective in controlling mite populations. As the menthol evaporates, it enters the bees' trachea, killing HBTM.

**Harsher chemical treatments:** HBTM have been controlled with Apivar, as well as formic acid. As many of these chemicals could have a negative impact on both the bees and the honey, Sammataro and others do not recommend them, instead preferring the non-toxic vegetable shortening and resistant queen stock alternatives.

The tracheal mite is unfortunately, practically everywhere, and has been for a long time. Your goal as a beekeeper is to control their level, which is possible. A combination of some or all of these options is likely the best approach. Good luck!



Mite-A-Thol, Catalog # 621-S  
A safe and simple treatment of tracheal mites.



Mite-Away Quick Strips, Catalog # 421-Q  
This is an easy to apply plant-based gel biopesticide.

- 3 SAMMATARO, D; DE GUZMAN, L; GEORGE, S; OCHOA, R; OTIS, G (2013) Standard methods for tracheal mites research. In *V Dietemann; J D Ellis, P Neumann (Eds) The COLOSS BEEBOOK: Volume II: Standard methods for Apis mellifera pest and pathogen research. Journal of Apicultural Research 52(4):* <http://dx.doi.org/10.3896/IBRA.1.52.4.20>
- 4 <https://agdev.anr.udel.edu/maarec/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/TRACHEAL.PDF>

Questions or comments about this article? Please go to [kelleybees.com/blog](http://www.kelleybees.com/blog). 🍯

# Bee-Havior

## Lessons Learned

*Bees sting. It's a reality of the species, but we humans sometimes forget about it, or perhaps don't give it its appropriate consideration.*

*In July we asked readers to share insights on stings—how many you average a season, how you protect against them, how you treat the inevitable, how they've happened to you.*

*You wonderful readers haven't let us down. Emails are still wandering in, and we will be sharing your insights in a variety of ways over several issues. With humor, blunt honesty, and frank words, you've provided some fabulous advice that may prevent suffering and even fatalities. Thank you.*

Camilla Bee, Editor



### The Importance of Safety

By Tim Conley, Southeast Indiana

I would like to share a stinging story that I believe embodies the importance of safety. My wife (Remy) and I had been keeping bees for about four years. During that time Remy had been stung about eight times with only mild reactions. During a hot summer day I had just buttoned-up a colony and was walking away.

We learned that it may not be the first, second or third sting—it could be the fourth, fifth or even tenth. Maybe never but who knows? We learned that whoever is working the bees should remain cognizant of those who are not working the bees and/or not properly protected. We learned that safety should always be on your mind and the mind of others while around bees.

One bee was particularly upset and trailed me for about 40 feet to where Remy was standing and working near our garden. The bee left me and went to her.

She shook her head once to flip her hair back and the bee got caught up in her hair. It took little time in stinging her on the top of her head. I scraped the stinger away. Within 30 minutes she began to feel itchy—describing it as itching from the inside out and she could not scratch it. Soon after that her eyes became so red they appeared to be bleeding. Before my very eyes I watched blotches form on her arms and legs. We knew it was serious and we immediately went to the local hospital emergency room. They quickly admitted Remy into the hospital and began an IV with antihistamines and cortisone. She seemed to have little control of her body as it twitched while yelps came from her mouth. It was scary!

After about three hours of treatment the venom was flushed and she was fine. She is now an EpiPen carrier. We learned that it may not be the first, second or third sting—it could be the fourth, fifth or even tenth. Maybe never, but who knows? We learned that whoever is working the bees should remain cognizant of those who are not working the bees and/or not properly protected. We learned that safety should always be on your mind and the mind of others while around bees. Most people will not have an allergic reaction that severe—but please don't think it could never happen to you because it could.

We'd still appreciate your sting photos and experiences; please send them to [Editor@Kelleybees.com](mailto:Editor@Kelleybees.com).



## A New Wedding Band? Or More Bee Equipment?

By Tracey LaForge, Texas (Tracy notes “Hot Texas! The worst place to have to suit up is Texas!”)

I have learned to listen to my girls’ “tone” of voice. If they sound happy and are busy I will wear a pair of shorts and a denim long sleeve shirt.

After a year and a half of head stings (usually that ONE cranky one), I came to the conclusion that it is best to wear a veil at all times around the double deeps.

I don’t wear makeup and “botox” treatment on only one side of my lips was not attractive—several people told me so. I tried to set a trend with the “botox” eye but it was not a successful either.

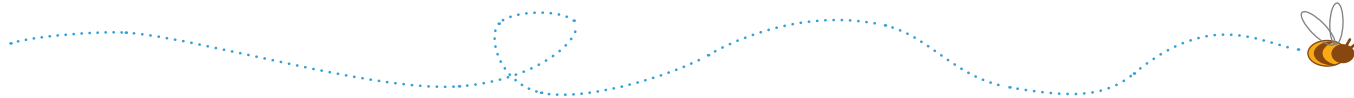
The one thing I cannot use is gloves; gloves make me clumsy beyond belief. However, DO NOT WEAR YOUR WEDDING BAND! I was stung on my ring finger and it wasn’t but a few hours later that I noticed my finger turning light purple and my ring would not twist around my finger. UH-OH.

I have laid out the events in time line format:

- 3:30 p.m. Stung
- 5:00 p.m. Finger swelled to width of ring
- 5:30 p.m. Finger getting numb and slightly purple
- 5:45 p.m. Palm turning bluish
- 5:46 p.m. Every hand tool in house, truck, and junk drawer that EVEN looks like it may work to chew through the ring was tried and rejected
- 5:47 p.m. Hand and finger not getting better or worse, refuse offer to emergency room—takes too long
- 6:00 p.m. Husband dispatched for a tool to cut ring
- 6:30 p.m. Husband returns with a small Dremel tool
- 6:40 p.m. Dremel being used, gets hot, stick hand in bowl of water, repeat
- 10:00 p.m. Ring chewed down enough to stick small needle nose into and break
- 10:30 p.m. Mom calls, says should have tied a string around finger in front of ring



Had money to replace wedding band but needed some frames and brood boxes. Oh yeah, and some gloves.



## No Amount of Macho is Worth It

By Stephen D. Neff, Freedom Hills Farm, Indiana

I get stung a dozen times or more during the year. I wear protective gear, (veil, gloves, and full suit), but haven’t found an effective way to protect my lower legs so bees eventually find their way up my suit or hit my ankles.

When I get stung I immediately get the stinger out, usually by scraping or rubbing my suit leg back and forth briskly. Anymore it’s so routine the whole process is automatic. If I get multiple stings I leave the site and let the girls calm down.

The best prevention for hobbyists is to only work their bees when the time is right. Pleasant weather conditions and a nectar flow makes bees much more workable. Avoid crunching bees and work calmly but with purpose. Either use smoke or sugar spray in warm weather. I run almost 100 hives so I can’t be choosy but if you have only a few hives and are doing it mostly for fun, enjoy a sunny warm day in your hives every 7 to 12 days.



No matter what behavior you observe in others, please remember that no amount of macho is worth the loss of an eye.

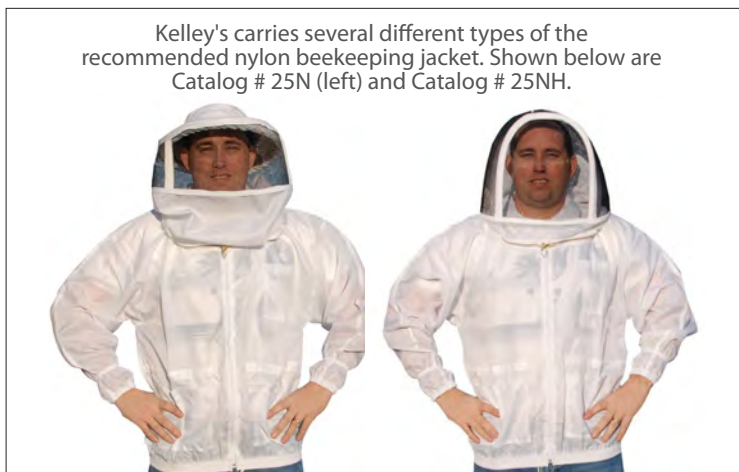
## Managing the Inspection is as Important as Managing the Colony

Don Miller, President, Sangamon Valley Beekeepers Association, Decatur, IL

My worst encounter was 4 or 5 years ago, I decided to inspect a colony not far from my home. It was a typical day, early/mid July and the nectar supplies were starting to wane in our part of the country.

As soon as I cracked open the colony the bees were on me as if to say “NOT NOW!”

I forged militaristically on. I was looking for signs of the queen, a man on a mission, marching headstrong into this routine inspection and nothing was going to stop me. I had to know, was she or wasn't she healthy; was she placing those eggs side by side, was she or wasn't she making me a proud apiarist with only the highest quality queen in my apiary?



I pulled out the first frame; the bees were pelting my gloves like tiny laser guided missiles targeting an enemy aggressor. I pulled out another frame, and bees were pounding the netting around my face; I pulled out another frame and there were bees in the air everywhere, stinging my clothing; buzzing me; bumping my veil, warning me to GET AWAY; it was insane. I quickly finished my inspection, closed up the hive, and made my get-a-way. Before it was over, I had well over 200 stingers in my clothing—one of them penetrated my skin but I can only imagine what I would have felt like had I not been wearing proper protective gear.

In retrospect, I learned a great deal from that experience. Had I determined before doing my inspection to listen to the little ladies, I would not have been so ravenously attacked. They were quite nervous that day, uncharacteristically so. I needed to slow down my inspection technique. The key takeaway: FOR SAFETY'S SAKE, MANAGING THE INSPECTION IS AS IMPORTANT AS MANAGING THE COLONY.

My advice:

1. LISTEN to the LADIES (accept the occasion when the little ladies say “not today”).
2. ALWAYS wear protective gear (yes, there is always a rogue bee somewhere in the colony).
3. When the inspection HAS to occur today; use plenty of cool smoke and be patient after using your smoker and allow some time prior to your inspection.

I routinely wear gloves, a nylon jacket and veil. The nylon jacket seems to be less prone to having bees rest on it after an inspection, reducing the odds of catching you off-guard and subsequently, you getting stung when removing the gear after an inspection.



Questions or comments about this article? Please go to [kelleybees.com/blog](http://kelleybees.com/blog). 

# Robbing Behavior

By Dana Stahlman

**Editor's Note:** *It's that time of year, and we've heard from various beekeepers that it seems to be more problematic than usual this year. Regular contributor Dana Stahlman shares some insights into and a scary story about this behavior. The accompanying photos show some of the behavior, although not the frenzy that can occur.*



Bees licking out a honey bucket, photo courtesy of M. Beachler.

Robbing bees become manic and when the source of food runs out, they continue the manic behavior for quite some time after the food is gone.

Robbing is bad usually in mid-summer and about this time of the year. Hives have big populations with little nectar and pollen for them to gather—which means any weak hive that cannot defend itself is in a fight for its life. To see robbing, all one needs to do is set a frame filled with sugar water out in the open near your bee yard. The bees will be all over the frame. The bees landing on top of the bees with access to the sugar water will work hard trying to push the bees below out of the way. Just remember once the robbing starts it is hard to shut it down. Beekeepers need to reduce entrances if it become a problem, or, on weak hives, shut the entrances down so only one or two bees at a time can come or go.

Here's a true story about what happened to a beekeeper friend of mine. He was a new beekeeper and just brought home his first two or three supers to extract in his garage. His bees were located on a farm he owned and his house was located in a rather upscale part of town.



A plate with a few dribbles of crystallized honey attracted insects of all kinds, photo courtesy of M. Beachler.

As with most of us, we often are tired when we get back from working with our bees and don't take care of things right away. My friend moved the supers into his garage where he had set up his extractor. He left the garage door open and went into the house for what might have been an hour or so. He was aware something was wrong when a fire truck pulled up in front of his house because a neighbor called about a huge swarm of bees flying about, scaring almost anyone living within 100 yards of his house. Bees were flying about bushes, near windows, wandering around in search of something.

My friend found his garage filled with flying bees who had almost emptied all the honey in the supers he had brought home. His first thought was to close the garage door and he did. Now he had a garage full of bees, but compounding the problem (at least for his neighbors)—the outdoor bees did not leave! Many were still showing up at the garage entrance and evidently were searching for food at his neighbors' houses as well.

He was suddenly cast into the spotlight of all the bees flying around. He knew he was responsible for what was happening and mentioned to me that he just wanted to disappear. It took well over an hour for the swarming bees to give up the search for more food. He decided that the only way he could get bees out of his garage was to get an insect bomb to kill them. His wife was none too happy with the bee poop all over everything. What started out as a great day with high hopes of enjoying the fruit of his labor ended up with a robbing experience he will never forget. But his garage did get a good cleaning up which he had not planned on!

Questions or comments about this article? Please go to [kelleybees.com/blog](http://kelleybees.com/blog). 

# Bee-Yond & Bee-Hind the Hives



Milkweed surrounding an apiary attracts honeybees.



At least three honeybees, a Japanese beetle and some other pollinators share a milkweed.

small flies and even bees are occasionally killed by being stuck in the trap. When the bee does pull loose, the sticky pollen as well as a part of the pollen strap adheres to the bee legs making it difficult for her to continue to forage. These pollen clumps and multiple straps can be observed hanging on bees while pollinating milkweed. Bees pollinate milkweed at their own risk.

## Milkweed Bee Trap

By Ol' Drone

Wandering through the meadow early one rare sunny morning, I was aware of the heavy perfume coming from a large patch of milkweed in full bloom. The tennis-ball-sized clusters of pink blossoms are composed of small, five-pointed stars exuding a heady fragrance. Honeybees, hummingbirds, butterflies and an assortment of hundreds of other insects share in the ample feast of nectar and pollen from this common plant.

Following the bloom, the plant forms large four-inch pods that contain feathery seeds blown by the wind in the fall. During WW2 these fluffy silken seeds and their feathery parachute were used in life jackets and a fluffy pillow can be made by collecting enough silken seeds. The immature pods (less than one inch) are edible by cooking with a few changes of boiling water. Flower buds are also edible. The stems and leaves contain a thick sticky white sap when bruised that is toxic and should not be eaten raw.

The beautiful orange and black monarch butterfly depends on milkweed for its survival as their huge black and yellow caterpillars feed mostly on this plant. The monarch is not eaten by most birds as it is bad-tasting and birds avoid it. It is thought that the bitter, toxic milky sap gives the bad taste to the butterfly predators. A similar orange butterfly called the "viceroy" looks like the monarch and enjoys the same predator protection.

Monarchs do not like cold weather and fly thousands of miles south to Mexico only to return again in the spring. They are one of the only northern butterflies that survive the winter by migrating.

Honeybees are attracted by the fragrance and the sweet nectar reward but they do not purposely collect milkweed pollen. So abundant is the nectar that a field of milkweed is actually humming with the sound of honeybees enjoying nectar harvest. The milkweed flowers have a unique design that is called the "pinch trap" mechanism. Certain clumps of very sticky pollen are supported on strap-like stalks that can actually adhere to the legs and mouthparts of a bee or other insects that come to collect nectar. It takes considerable effort for the visitor to pull loose from this flower trap and some

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# 19TH ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



## SEPTEMBER 25–28, 2013 • CLARKSON, KENTUCKY

### Saturday, September 21

Beauty Pageant ..... 12 Noon

### Wednesday, September 25

Decorating Contest..... 4:00–6:00 pm  
 Carnival (\$10 Armband).....open at 5:00 pm  
 Honeyfest 5K Race & Walk..... 6:00 pm

### Thursday, September 26

Carnival (\$10 Armband).....open at 5:00 pm  
 Gospel Singing ..... starting at 5:30 pm  
 Kids Run for the Honey (*location TBA*)..... 5:00 pm  
 Cooking Contest (*at City Hall*) ..... 6:00 pm

### Friday, September 27

Bed Turning (*at Sew Much More*).... 10:00 am & 2:00 pm  
 Carnival (\$12 Armband).....open at 5:00 pm  
 Food Booths Open.....open at 5:00 pm  
 Hat Show (*cash prizes*)..... 6:00 pm  
 (*Beside Bank of Clarkson*)  
 Silent Auction (*at City Hall*)..... 6:30–7:30 pm  
 Live Music & Dance (Jack Thomas Band) 6:30–9:30 pm

### Saturday, September 28

Craft Booth Set-up ..... 6:00 am  
 15-30 mile Bike Ride (*Clarkson Elem.*)..... 7:00 am  
 Craft Booths Open (*all day*) ..... 8:00 am  
 Parade Judging ..... 8:00 am  
 Annual Clarkson Honeyfest Parade ..... 9:00 am

### After The Parade:

Carnival Open All Day (Armbands available)  
 Dinner at St. Elizabeth Church  
 Car Show • Antique Tractor Show  
 (at Clarkson Elementary School)

Tae-Kwon-do Martial Arts Demonstration  
 will be held in the Bank of Clarkson  
 parking lot after the parade.

Sign-ups for Karaoke at City Hall 11:00 am–12:20 pm

Karaoke Contest..... starts at 12:30 pm  
 Bed Turning (*at Sew Much More*) ..... 2:00 pm  
 Pedal Tractor Pull ..... 3:00 pm  
 Live Music and Dance ..... 7:00–11:00 pm  
 (*Bobby Joe Bratcher Band with Kelly Casey*)

### Other Events On Both Friday And Saturday

Nightly Hay Rides (Sponsored by Clarkson Fire Department) • Food Booths  
 Games • Carriage Rides by Logsdons • Lots of Honey to buy • Much, Much more!!

# Make plans to BEE with us!

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**COORDINATOR**  
 Vanda Ray  
 (270) 242-3981

**GENERAL INFO**  
 Beverly Harrison  
 (270) 242-7162

**GENERAL INFO**  
 Joyce Bell  
 (270) 242-7642

**CRAFT BOOTHS**  
 Maxine Edwards  
 (270) 242-6494

**GENERAL INFO**  
 Mary K. Franklin  
 (270) 242-7528

GENERAL INFORMATION Mary K. Franklin: franklin620@windstream.net

## www.clarksonhoneyfest.com

# Upcoming Events

## SEPTEMBER 2013 EVENTS

### Arkansas State Beekeepers Fall Meeting

September 20-21  
Ozark Folk Center State Park in Mountain View, AR  
<http://arbeekeepers.org/events.html>

### Georgia State Beekeepers Fall Meeting

September 20-21  
Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center in Buford, GA  
<http://www.gabeekeeping.com/events.html>

### 19th Annual Honeyfest

September 25-28  
Kentucky's Official State Honey Festival  
Clarkson, KY  
For more information, please contact  
Mary K. Franklin: [franklin620@windstream.net](mailto:franklin620@windstream.net)  
[www.clarksonhoneyfest.com](http://www.clarksonhoneyfest.com)

### Tennessee State Beekeepers Fall Meeting

September 27-28  
Hyder-Burks Agriculture Pavillion in Cookeville, TN  
<http://www.tnbeekeepers.org/2013-tba-conference/>

### Alabama Beekeepers Association Annual Meeting

September 27-28  
Taylor Road Baptist Church in Montgomery, AL  
More details to come.

## OCTOBER 2013 EVENTS

### 2013 WAS Conference

October 16-19  
Santa Fe, NM  
More details to come.  
[http://ucanr.edu/sites/was2/Conference\\_Information/](http://ucanr.edu/sites/was2/Conference_Information/)

### 17th Annual Field Day at the USDA Honey Bee Lab

October 19  
At the USDA Honey Bee Breeding, Genetics and Physiology  
Laboratory located at 1157 Ben Hur Road, Baton Rouge, LA  
For more information please contact  
Beth Holloway (225)767-9288, Sandra Hineman (225)767-9280  
or Joe Sanroma (225)346-2805.  
Walter T. Kelley will not be attending.

### Michigan Beekeepers Association Fall Meeting

October 25-26  
Flint Gateway Holiday Inn  
More details to come.

### Annual Northwest Corner/Oregon Beekeepers Convention

October 31- November 2  
Seaside Convention Center, Seaside Or  
Walter T. Kelley will not be attending.

## NOVEMBER 2013 EVENTS

### Wisconsin Honey Producers Fall Meeting

November 1-3  
Racine Marriott in Racine, WI  
More details to come.

### Iowa State Beekeepers Fall Meeting

November 1-2  
Best Western Regency Inn in Marshalltown, IA.

### ILSBA Annual Meeting

November 9  
Illinois Department of Agriculture State Fair Grounds,  
Springfield, IL

### Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Fall Meeting

November 8-9  
Best Western Inn in Lewisburg, PA.  
More details to come.

## DECEMBER 2013 EVENTS

### The Louisiana Beekeepers Association 52nd Annual Convention

December 6-7  
Clarion Inn and Suites Conference Center,  
501 N. Highway 190, Covington, LA  
Please contact Joe Sanroma at (318)308-5000,  
Sharon Hebert at (337)937-6722, or  
Jimmy Dunkley at (225)610-2628 for more information.

## We'd love to share news of your upcoming events.

Please send the event name, date, website and/or contact information to me by the 10th of each month for inclusion in the following month's issue. [Editor@KelleyBees.com](mailto:Editor@KelleyBees.com)

## You can save shipping costs by meeting us at industry meetings.

We note on our website which meetings we'll be attending, and we'd love to meet you there to hand-off your equipment.

# Bees Overseas

## Beekeeping Training in Ethiopia

By Camilla Bee, Editor

In July, I spent a few very enjoyable hours on the phone with beekeeper Richard Underhill, of Arkansas. Richard claims to just be a “bow-legged beekeeper,” but he’s such a source of beekeeping information, as well as inspiration for beekeeping and life in general, that it’s a real challenge to capture just a bit of what he’s done with and for bees. We could write a couple of newsletters on his insights, but we’ll focus on his recent experiences in Africa. Here are a few highlights:

### From Arkansas to Africa?

Highly credentialed and experienced<sup>1</sup>, Richard is often invited to share his knowledge. Thus, the phone call he received about a year ago, when the caller wondered if Richard would travel for bees, was par for the course. Richard, a resident of West Memphis, Arkansas, thought “travel” perhaps meant journeying to Little Rock, or a bit further.

A bit further—the caller meant Africa.

Farmers in sub-Sahara Africa, recognizing the value of honey, wax, and other hive products to an international market, sought assistance on how to better manage bees to produce quality and quantity. As Richard shares in his blog<sup>2</sup> “The farmers explained that when they harvested honey and beeswax, their product was judged to be of low quality—and added little to their income.” Ethiopia, where Richard would eventually travel, is the top producer of honey and beeswax of all the African nations.

Winrock International, a global nonprofit organization that addresses rural development and sustainable resource management through education and empowerment programs, was seeking knowledgeable beekeeping volunteers to work on a USAID-funded initiative to help these African farmers. They recruited Richard and others, and coordinated the experience.



All photos courtesy of Richard Underhill.

### Traditional Beekeeping

In Ethiopia, beekeeping has historically consisted of placing long cylindrical traditional hives in trees or high places, to attract swarms—many as high as 100-120 feet in the air. This height also protects the bees from most pests, and the beekeeper from thievery. There is interest in and a move toward more modern hives, but *97% of the hives in Ethiopia are of the cylindrical type.*

Once these hives are inhabited and filled with honey, beekeepers harvest by driving the bees out of the hives with smoke, and destructively cutting and crushing the comb to remove honey. If brood comb isn't

1 Beekeeper since 2003, Beekeeper/Owner of Peace Bee Farm in Proctor, Arkansas, Vice President of Arkansas Beekeepers Association, Former President of Memphis Area Beekeepers Association and Tennessee Beekeepers Association, recipient of the President's Volunteer Service Award for 2012.

2 [Peacebeefarm.blogspot.com](http://Peacebeefarm.blogspot.com)



Richard and Gebeyehu.



well separated from honey comb, the intermingling diminishes honey quality.

Mainly due to hive location, most Ethiopian beekeepers do not actively manage their hives through activities like checking for a queen, brood patterns, or manipulating resources, etc. Their intervention into the hive is minimal and destructive.

### Other Emerging Hive Options

Use of two other types of hives, both of which allow for more management, is increasing. The Kenyan model of the top bar hive (TBH) accounts for about 1% of Ethiopian hives. The Zander model, comparable in many ways to a Langstroth, accounts for 2% of the hives. A few differences between it and a Langstroth are:

- A bottom board nailed onto the bottom body
- A lip around the upper edge offering rain protection
- A smaller opening, typically about three inches, instead of the Langstroth hive-width entrance
- A hinged landing board that may be folded up to enclose the bees in the hive

Of these two types however, Richard found more than half are empty because of high rates of swarming

and absconding. While that behavior is partly characteristic of the bees, Richard suspects it is amplified by beekeeping habits, especially the ventilation-poor Zander hives.

### A Vastly Different People-to-Bee Ratio

Richard shared some interesting figures that bring several questions to mind. Consider that Ethiopia is slightly smaller than two Texas-sized states, with a population of approximately 80 million people. The more expansive United States has about 330 million people.

The number of managed colonies in the USA? Between two and three million. Ethiopia? About ten million.

Considering the saturation of this important insect in Ethiopia versus the USA, are the scary stories about Africanized bees warranted?



## Living in Harmony with Bees

The people-to-bee ratio in Ethiopia is significantly higher than in the USA, and Ethiopians are obviously working with true African bees. Yet, in Richard's experience, their behavior isn't as aggressive as we might expect. He explores their behavior, characterizing it as "defensive" rather than "aggressive" in his July 17 blog entry. But, as pictures are worth thousands of words, please see photo at right.

The upper story is smaller than the lower, providing an elevated gallery all around the house under a broad, overhanging tin roof. This gallery, surrounding Gebeyehu's second-story bedroom, holds dozens of outward-facing hives. Bees exit in all directions from the second story, flying above the heads of children and adults in the yard. The broad, tin roof above the hive gallery shades the hives from the tropical sun. Richard notes in his July 20 blog entry "A small child tends to her infant sibling snuggled in her backpack while bees fly overhead. People and bees live in harmony here."



This is a typical, sturdily constructed Amhara region farm house, with eucalyptus poles plastered with mud. Its owner, a beekeeper named Gebeyehu, designed his house to accommodate his family and his bee hives. It is two stories instead of the usual one.



Richard noted that this is one of his favorite photos: "My host in Southwest Ethiopia wanted me to see how gentle the African bees can be, so he took me to this house. The children play under bee hives surrounding their home every day."

## Addressing Some of the Challenges

Richard's team worked with several Ethiopian beekeepers at the agricultural training center. After studying their methods, conditions, and challenges, many improvements were suggested. For example, with a four-month rainy season, covering a TBH with a thick layer of leaves does protect it from moisture, but also holds moisture in, promoting the fungal disease chalkbrood. A simple water-resistant protective top addresses this issue, as does locating the hives under a roof. Adding a screened hole to the back of the Zander hive addressed the ventilation issue for this type.

## True African Bees, Near-Equatorial Heat—Sign Me Up?

While Ethiopia is a semi-tropical nation close to the equator, Richard, who sounds like the type of person who would find the sunny side of having a hive overrun with Varroa mites, said he found the climate quite pleasant. He reminded me though that he's "a beekeeper in the Arkansas delta, where the temperature is often comparable to the surface of the sun, except with humidity." He found Ethiopia a spell-binding country, with multiple areas of diverse climates, ample nectar sources, and beautiful, unique geography.

After a three-week stay, Richard has returned to beekeeping in toasty Arkansas. His work locally continues, as he's active in various bee organizations and working his own bees. And, his international efforts continue as well, as he uses his connections and experience, via phone and computer, to link others in the field with helpful resources.

Questions or comments about this article? Please go to [kelleybees.com/blog](http://kelleybees.com/blog). 

# A-Bee-Cs

## Options for Partially Filled Honey Supers



A partially capped honey frame.

The season for foraging—and thus making honey, is winding down.

For many climates, September marks the month for pulling those honey supers. Reasons include consolidating the area the dwindling population needs to patrol and keep warm, and motivating the bees to focus on filling the frames where they'll be overwintering.

What do you do with one that's only partially filled, or partially capped? Here are some options:

### **If you have multiple colonies:**

- Give partially filled supers to stronger hives before the fall honey flow or last blooms. Let them finish them up.
- Distribute to those hives that need extra honey or extra nectar that can finish them for winter stores.

### **Other options:**

- Make the appliance store really happy. Freezing supers is a great way to store honey that may not yet be fully cured, and keeping all that labor-intensive comb safe from wax moths, mice and the like until needed again. Most of us though don't have the room or funds to have enough freezer space to store all our drawn comb (and critical stores of ice cream).
- Make other insects really happy. Set the frames in a hive body out in the open, away from any hives so you don't set off a robbing frenzy (about 60 feet or more), and let Mother Nature clean them out. It's a great way to meet every wasp, hornet, and bee in the area. They'll appreciate the buffet.

Hints: Scratch open caps for efficient removal. And, you may want to put a queen excluder on either side of the hive body to deter mice, possums, etc., who will destroy the comb.

- Leave them on the hive, for a while. See Dennis Brown's companion article, "Addressing the Partially Filled Honey Super."

Questions or comments about this article? Please go to [kelleybees.com/blog](http://kelleybees.com/blog). 

# Addressing the Partially Filled Honey Super

By Dennis Brown of Lone Star Farms, [www.lonestarfarms.net](http://www.lonestarfarms.net)

If you're a first year beekeeper who started from scratch, your bees may not have produced enough honey for you to take some this initial year. They might not have ever even needed a honey super (if you are using Langstroth equipment). That's very normal for first year colonies starting on new equipment. Drawing comb consumes plenty of resources unto itself. Hopefully they've gathered sufficient stores for overwintering (if not, we'll address options in next month's issue). Drawn comb will kick-start their spring activities.

*Author of Beekeeping: A Personal Journey and Beekeeping: Questions and Answers, both carried by Kelley's.*

Sometimes a beekeeper finds him/herself facing what to do when they run across a partially filled honey super in their hives. It truly is only a problem when you don't have an available solution, so we will cover the different scenarios now.

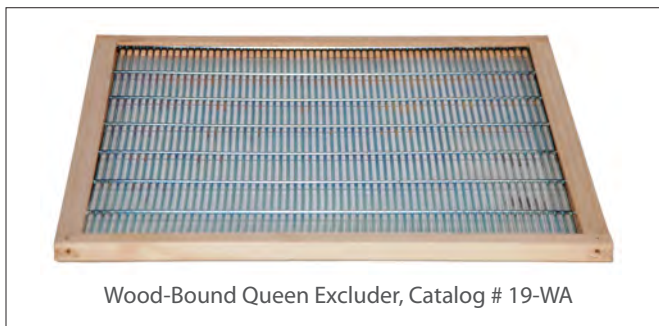
## When extracting:

If you are in the extracting room and you run across a honey super that's only partially filled, chances are good that the honey isn't even capped over. You should set that box aside and locate some capped-over frames and uncap them. Then run these freshly uncapped frames in with the

frames the bees did not fully cap. When doing this you are mixing a lower moisture content honey from the capped frames with a higher moisture content honey from the uncapped frames, thus bringing the moisture content to likely an acceptable level.

## When it isn't worth extracting:

If the honey flow is over and you don't have enough honey in the honey super to make it worth extracting, then you can either freeze that partially filled super or you can place a queen excluder under the super and leave it on the hive for a while. The queen excluder will keep the queen from getting in the super and laying eggs. The bees will protect the super from wax moths and beetles.



You can leave this super on until the next flow or you can wait until approximately six weeks before winter sets in and then put it on the bottom of the hive. Don't do what most books tell you to do and leave it on top. If you do, the bees will be moving into the upper boxes during the colder days for warmth (winter cluster) and the queen will begin to lay eggs in your super in January/February.



Then your super will not be available for you to use during the spring flow because it will be full of brood.

By placing the super on the bottom of the hive approximately six weeks before the cold sets in, the bees will remove all food stores from the super (lower boxes) and take it up into the upper boxes where they will ride out the winter in their cluster. Depending on where you live, you can remove this now-empty super at your first hive inspection and store it. Now you will have this super for the spring honey flow.

I do hope that this management technique will help you become a better manager of your bees.

Honey the first year is usually a bonus.

Questions or comments about this article? Please go to [kelleybees.com/blog](http://kelleybees.com/blog). 

# FAQs

**Editor's Note:** Because if you ask ten beekeepers the same question, you may get at least ten different answers, we're sometimes walking on controversial ground with this regular feature. Our recommendation is to read, research, and discuss to figure out what's best for you and your bees. There are few black and whites in beekeeping.



**Q.** Are these honeybees?! Driving all my hummingbirds away—what can I do about it? The feeders have been out all summer but they never bothered them until now.

—Julie, Michigan

A: Yes, they're honeybees. The lure of sugar water is probably too enticing. (Turns out Julie lives in the midst of hundreds of acres of corn and there isn't much else available for honeybees in late August.) Our June, 2011 issue lists lots of suggestions for handling this situation. Obtain it, and any back issues, from [www.kelleybees.com](http://www.kelleybees.com).

**Q.** I'm a first year beekeeper. Our bee club was talking about wet supers. What's that?

—Nate

A: Generally, a "wet super" is one that's been extracted but still contains honey. Extracting doesn't pull it all out.

Honeybees will clean it up however, as will wasps, native bees, hornets, etc. It is impressive how they'll remove any traces of liquid gold, leaving a "dry super."

To prevent mold, leaking honey, and attracting ants and other critters, most beekeepers like to store their drawn comb "dry."

**Q.** I have a small hive setup in Pasadena, Maryland. This is my second year of beekeeping. Recently I have witnessed a handful of large wasps actually grabbing a bee, landing in a tree and eating the bee. I also noticed a large amount of dying bees around the hive.

Any advice on getting rid of the wasps? I attached a picture of one of the wasps that I killed along with one of my dead honeybees for size perspective. Any help would be appreciated. Thanks.

—Mark E.



A: Reduce the entrance to the hive(s) so the bees can most easily defend it. You may also want to screen over the entrance with something that doesn't allow wasps in, but does permit bee access. Our mouse guards allow bees to pass, but perhaps not those sizable wasps.

Readers, other suggestions?

Questions or comments about this article? Please go to [kelleybees.com/blog](http://kelleybees.com/blog). 

# Sweet as Honey

## A few more interesting facts about our favorite insect:

- 70 out of the top 100 human food crops, which supply about 90% of the world's nutrition, are pollinated by bees.
- A single bee colony can pollinate 300 million flowers each day. Grains are primarily pollinated by the wind, but the best and healthiest food—fruits, nuts and vegetables—are pollinated by bees.<sup>1</sup>

While you're out in the heat and humidity pulling honey, it might be physically beneficial to pop some in your mouth! Ross S., of Indiana, sent us Joan and Lydia Wilen's *Household Magic Daily Tips* from July 22, 2013:

“During the dog days of summer, when you have to do something physically taxing in a location that is not air-conditioned, chew a chunk of honeycomb (available at health-food stores). You can chew it like chewing gum. (It's also OK if you swallow some.) The honeycomb actually causes a drop in body temperature, keeping you from feeling the heat.”

**The authors do caution folks to NOT chew honeycomb if they have asthma or a known or suspected sensitivity to bee products.**

“My stepson helps us with bees as his college career and part-time jobs allow. Thanks to that experience, he now finds himself looking for bees and taking pictures of them. He recently texted me this picture with the message “I am officially a bee nerd. Do I need a badge or something?”

—C. H., Michigan



Photo by Lucas Beachler.

1 <http://ecowatch.com/2013/worldwide-honey-bee-collapse-a-lesson-in-ecology/>

**Amy R., of Bloomington, sent us a link to a great, thought-provoking article on one person's thoughts on mental attitude while working bees. Amy notes that it is**

“An article that excellent local poet and IU Creative Writing Professor, Kettlebells instructor, Guggenheim Fellow and fanatical Community Orchardista, friend to many: Ross Gay, wrote for Sun Magazine.”

Enjoy: [http://thesunmagazine.org/issues/451/some\\_thoughts\\_on\\_mercy?page=4#UfK\\_XNGZbdo.facebook](http://thesunmagazine.org/issues/451/some_thoughts_on_mercy?page=4#UfK_XNGZbdo.facebook)

“I enjoy reading the “Kelley News Letter” and wanted to add my 2 cents worth.



Photo courtesy of Daniel Burruss.

I've only had bees for four years and don't claim to be a good beekeeper. I read all I could about bee problems and cures before I received my first two hives. One problem I read about was winter kill from condensation dripping on the winter cluster. It was suggested that venting the hive with shims or misaligning the hive boxes as a cure. I believe I have a better idea for the hobbyist beekeeper with only a few hives.

My top covers are homemade “A” frames, with 1½ inch vent holes at the peak on both ends, covered with ½ inch wire mesh to keep birds out. The inner cover is nothing but window screen.

I cover the screen with a towel or light weight cloth in the spring and fall. Uncover the screen in hot weather.



When cold weather arrives I put an empty medium box on the screen. Instead of a towel I use an old pillow case stuffed full of dry leaves. The leaves hold the heat in and let the moisture pass (an arched wire mesh separates the towel or pillow case from the screen to avoid propolis). With this setup there are no cold drafts or condensation drips of cold water, just warm and dry bees.

We all know warm air rises. In the hive this air carries the sweet smell of wax, brood, bees and honey with it. When it rises up and passes out the holes in the “A” frame it attracts moths and SHB there instead of to the hive entrance. I believe this setup helps control SHB and wax moths by attracting them to the top where they are denied entrance by the screened top cover. If you find and kill them there they won't be a problem for you or your bees. I didn't keep a body count but I killed a bunch of SHB and both types of moths this passed season. Moths were found on the screen and everywhere, but the SHB were found only on the screen.

I added the empty quart feeder jar to illustrate how I feed in cold weather. The jar has a convex lid that allows bees to take syrup. The jar is held up by 1/8" screen. The rest is covered with window screen. When the feeder isn't in use the 1/8" screen is covered with a lid to block SHB and moths from getting in hive from top. You notice hive has on a medium super. They were low on reserves so I gave them a super of honey I had saved. I only use syrup when I don't have stored honey. I'm not doing this for the honey. I'm in this for the bees. Photo courtesy of Daniel Burruss.

I hope someone else will try my idea and have good results too. Good luck.”

—D. Burruss

“This is the first Kelly newsletter I've read and I like it very much. Hope you plan to continue it. Good job!”

—F. Marro

**Editor's Note: Yes, we do! Thanks for the kudos, and please let us know what you'd like to see, and share pictures and beekeeping successes, and challenges: [Editor@Kelleybees.com](mailto:Editor@Kelleybees.com). Thanks.**

# Dronings from a Queen Bee

## Not What They Want Them To Bee

By Charlotte Hubbard, [www.hubbardhive.com](http://www.hubbardhive.com)

When folks have a swarm of bees they don't want, they can find my name, phone number and email on an area beekeeper swarm list.

I'm still confused about folks not wanting a swarm of bees, but that's another topic for another time.

Being on the list has yielded many calls over the years and allowed me to pick up a few swarms. I'd have picked up more, except bees around here check my datebook and swarm mainly when I'm out of state or unable to leave my house because I'm on day six of waiting for the cable repair guy.

The swarm list isn't the concept I originally thought it was. I was hoping it was a place where bees shared their plans and sought tips from other bees on locations, weather and the best time of day to swarm. Like checking my kids' Facebook, I was hoping to look at the swarm list to see what my bees were really doing.

Instead, the swarm list is where people who have bees they don't want connect with people who want them. Well, most of the time anyway.

"Are you the person that will come get these bees?" demanded the caller, a very irritated-sounding woman named Beth.

I assured Beth I would try my best, if they truly were bees. "But first—"

"Well of course they're bees! You think I don't know what a bee is?! My husband thinks they're wasps, but he doesn't know anything."

In late July and early August, wasps, hornets, yellow jackets and the like are everywhere. Most of the bee calls this time of year are not, well, to bee. I asked Beth what the insects looked like, if they were hanging in a cluster or living in a nest-like structure, etc.

Beth replied that the "bees" had been there a couple of weeks, built a home out of mud, and that they were black and skinny and sort of looked like wasps but that she knew they were really bees, and how soon would I come get them?

"They sound like wasps," I responded. "Honeybees are typically shades of amber and brown, and they're more broad, not thin, and—"

"Just because your bees are fat doesn't mean these aren't bees," Beth retorted stingingly. "Y'know, maybe you don't know very much about bees. Maybe you should just get in your car and come get them."

Wow. Granted, Beth had at least one point: maybe I don't know very much about bees. The longer I keep bees, seemingly the less I know.

America's obesity crisis aside, I'm fairly sure my bees' weight is appropriate for their, um, height? I was also fairly sure that Beth's "wasps" weren't really just tall bees slimming down for a career in modeling. And I was *really* sure that I wasn't about to drive 26 miles to confirm my suspicions. Never mind that her husband thought they were wasps also—because of course, he doesn't know anything.



Beth, this is a wasp nest. It is not a home for tall honeybees with runway aspirations.

A few days later I received another swarm list call, this time from Jon. Jon lives in an old log cabin. The guys he'd hired to stain the cabin had completed three sides when they discovered honeybees living in the fourth. They refused to go further until the bees were gone. Jon wanted to know if I had some way of getting the bees out of the wall if he drilled a small hole in it for me, two small holes if he absolutely had to, and oh yeah, could I get them out by the weekend? His grandkids were coming.

I know of trap-outs, and cut-outs. Neither option was ideal for Jon's situation—especially by the weekend. (I also know about pleading with bees to move from their current location into an empty hive. I've done it dozens of times. It's never worked, but I remain hopeful.)

I knew of nothing else to do, and suggested Jon contact someone else on the swarm list, maybe someone else with more experience and insight—and lots of free time before the weekend.

"There's no one else," sighed Jon. "You're the last person I called."

Ouch. That stung a little bit. I never felt good about getting picked last in grade school gym class, and being the last person called for a swarm—that wasn't even a swarm—didn't feel great either. But, a cut-out wasn't allowed per Jon, and without a month for a trap-out, or a magic hive tool to wave, all I could do was wish Jon luck.

"Well, thanks for thinking about it," he said. "Hey, I got bats living in the top of my barn. Maybe you want those?"

Bats?

I work with words for a living yet sometimes—like this time—words fail me. I don't know anyone who keeps bees *and* bats, and didn't want to be the new-bee, er, new-bat, for that set of hobbies.

Plus, I've never fully gotten over being picked last in grade school. If you're going to call me about your bat problem, at least have the decency to call me first.

## What Swarm Calls Turned Out To Bee, 2013

Honeybees: **|||||**  
Wasps or Hornets: **|||||**  
Cicadas: **|** (yes, really)