



Appalachian Beekeepers

June, 2020

UPDATE FROM DON REYNOLDS, Club President:

Even though "Summer" is not officially here yet (another 7 days to go), our bees have been remarkably busy. In my location, the Tulip Poplars had a reduced bloom due to the last very cold snap we had. A lot of the flower buds must have been cold damaged, so the blooms were sparse. Our hives are still doing well as they are getting nectar/pollen from other sources. I am hoping swarm season is over since it started early this year.

So, what are some of the things you should be doing for your bees in June? If you have not treated for varroa mites yet, you need to do that asap. Once again, it is hot so be incredibly careful about applying the treatment depending upon the temperature (closely follow the instructions). If you have treated already, you should do some mite counts to be sure your treatment was effective. If your mite count is still too high, treat again.

It is still time to make splits if you are so inclined. You should also occasionally check on your queens to make sure she is laying well or is, in fact, still there. I had to buy two queens last the first week of this month. One for a hive that had a swarm (they tried to hatch a new queen, but she did not make it back to the hive). Too many fly catcher birds and dragonflies on our property. The other queen was for a hive that had been doing great, but when I checked them, there were no eggs nor brood.

This is also a really good time to plant wildflowers, clover, etc. for your bees if you have the space. I will mention again, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and their "pollinator planting" program. This year we have planted large areas of a wildflower mix and different types of sunflowers (sunflower pollen is good for honeybee immune systems).

You also need to keep up with the rate your bees are filling up the honey supers and have some extras to put on your hive(s) when needed. The Tulip Poplars are about done blooming and I can see the Sourwood trees beginning to put out their flower panicles. They generally bloom from late June through mid to late July depending upon your particular area. This is another large honey flow, so be sure to have those supers ready. The other trees that will bloom soon are Mimosa's. Though considered a nuisance tree, the bees do like them. I also believe the wild persimmons are in bloom now as well. Everyone probably has clover blooming and as much as a problem Kudzu is, the bees do like it and it makes purple honey.

It is probably a good idea to make sure your extracting equipment is clean and ready to go and you have sufficient containers/jars for this year's honey. Because of the COVID-19 issue, you may have to search for jars. For those of you that do two extractions (spring honey, then sourwood) it is probably time (or very close to it) for that first extraction. On our property, it will be another several weeks before the sourwoods will bloom, but I have seen others starting to bloom as I drive around the Tri State area.

Steve Juhlin went out and put another super on the Club's 8-frame hive as the deep and medium supers are full. I have to go out and check on the new queen I placed in the 10-frame hive to see if she is laying okay.

One of our members suggested we start a queen rearing operation, so there would be queens for any club member that may need one. I will do some reading about that at some point later to see if that may be feasible as a club and we can discuss it.

As far as resuming meetings, I personally would like to see how the COVID-19 infection rates go as the states get back to more or less normal business. That being said, please let me know how you all feel about starting up meetings again.

I hope you all are doing well as well as your bees.

Don