

FEB 19, 2014

New River Valley Beekeepers Association Meeting
Montgomery County Health and Human Services Building
210 Pepper St., Christiansburg, VA
Submitted by Recording Secretary Sam Price

This meeting was held on a Wednesday, a deviation from our usual schedule due to severe winter weather. President Richard Reid began the meeting at 6:30 p.m. and discussed what folks should be doing NOW with their bees.

Bee packages are on order for delivery on April 20. Delivery will be OUTSIDE at the Montgomery County Health and Human Services building, 210 Pepper Street, Christiansburg (our regular meeting place). Be at the site at 10:15 a.m. for pickup.

As a member, you can order bee packages and [order them online](#). Price for current members is \$90. If you are not a member the price is \$100. If you wish to join NRVBA or renew your membership, you may do so through the same site. Annual dues for an individual is \$10 and \$15 for a family.

The annual garden show in Shawsville is May 3, 2014. Member Marie Goodwin is looking for a beekeeper or two to bring bees and other items of interest for display at the event. If YOU would like to spend a pleasant time with fun, interesting people and their guests, to represent our association, please contact Marie Goodwin, margood1010@gmail.com or 540-268-9524.

Past President Mark Chorba is teaching a beginning beekeeper class at the Virginia Tech's Catawba Sustainability Center in Roanoke County on April 3 and 5. If you know anyone looking to take a class, contact Mark at marco@vt.edu.

Richard said there is an apple orchard in Giles County which is in need of pollination. They want 2-3 hives there during the bloom. There is a need to get the bees in and out before and after spraying. Jerry called the county extension agent a couple years ago, who said BT (bacillus thuringiensis) (apparently an insecticide used on apple trees) is not harmful to bees. Contact Richard at rkereid@comcast.net for information if you wish to pollinate this orchard.

This is the time to get and build your equipment. Get it ready now. You don't want to miss swarms, and you want to be ready for the bee packages when they arrive on April 20.

Jerry Borger made a presentation about double screen queen rearing. He suggested newcomers to beekeeping not try this method this year. You will be busy enough with the basics! A handout on double screen use is available for future reference by contacting Jerry at twoltcols@verizon.net. Jerry credits Bill Whitlow, a local beekeeper

who has been instrumental in mentoring him for the double-screen idea. When he questioned Bill how much he was getting from his hives, and got the response "about 300 pounds." Jerry was quite happy for any advice from Bill!

When the queen pheromone becomes weak the bees take advantage in spring and begin to swarm, looking for a new home. As the days warm up, be on watch. If you see a large swarm of bees flying, follow and perhaps you can catch a swarm to start a new hive. They likely will be headed for a resting spot prior to making preparations to move into a new "home." Maybe YOU can provide that "home."

Richard talked about some less complicated methods of raising queens. Bees tend to raise great queens when the "flow" is in -- abundant pollen and nectar production from trees and plants -- nutrition is really important for raising good queens. Even mediocre quality bees can raise good quality queens with sufficient nutrition. If in doubt about natural forage feed your bees! Note: Drones have to be available for mating to be successful. During swarm season in April and May, we will see lots of drones. Drones are male bees and can be distinguished by their larger size and their big eyes.

If you're raising a queen doing a split, you need to have at least one frame of brood comb with very young larva and eggs, and at least three frames of nurse bees. Use a strong colony with attributes you like. When you do these splits, you'll have some forager bees in there -- which may fly away. Make sure you have enough bees in the split to compensate for this.

Several raffle items were on display. These lucky members took them home: Carl Lefko, Lynnette Tobias, Everette Harrell, Doug Hill and Jim Hill.

Jerry Borger showed a copy of a self-published book by the late Bill Cochran titled "Build Your Own Beehives." It's a set of detailed plans on how to make your own Langstroth woodenware. Treasurer Jack Price made a motion that the association buys 100 books at \$8 each for resale and raffle items to assist his widow.