

Dunn County Bee Keepers Club
June 13, 2011
Monthly Meeting Minutes

Doug Jensen, President, opened the meeting at 7PM.

Minutes for last month - May 9, 2011 - Doug briefly went over the minutes of the last meeting and asked if the group would like to see them posted on the club's web site. A few responses of yes; no negatives. Jenny will send the minutes to George Adams' for posting.

Treasure report -\$3,346.29 with \$5 dues received thus \$3351.29 balance.

Membership – 27 members were present with two guests. Janet Brisson and Isaiah Grinder came to talk about varroa mites and their products, including the “Country Rubes’ Combo Bottom Boards.”

Club President and Secretary positions are open immediately due to work and health reasons. Doug was stung on May 12 and had a severe reaction so he has sold his equipment and bees. He feels the club should have a president who actually has bees. His knowledge and guidance have been appreciated for the past 2.5 years as president and long before that. Bob Irwin has many work meetings that are conflicting with our meetings, thus he is resigning from secretary position. Anyone interested in either position **should contact Doug soon**. Doug will not ‘abandon’ the group, but would like to have someone to take his place soon. Terms are for two years. In August we will vote for new president and secretary.

Community Gardens / Dunn County collaborative effort – Trevor Peterson, Jenny Gruber, and Jenny Elliott met and discussed the overall project. Trevor will take the lead in drafting the proposal. Trevor has contacts at UW-EC who have a hive and will contact them to see how they addressed the liability concerns. The goal is to get the plan to the city counsel so that a hive could be available next season.

Bill and Marina Folwich are selling their bees and equipment due to health concerns. They provided a list at the meeting of the new equipment they purchased this year. They don't expect to sell it for the same cost as they paid. The phone number is 715-658-1931 and email address is wfolwick@msn.com so you can contact them and get the list of items and prices.

Sugar/veil for sale – Doug Jensen has sugar to sell -- 37.5 cents per lb in ten and four pound bags. His phone number is 715-559-3556. He also has a veil left to sell.

Package wood boxes – no monies have been received for the boxes used to deliver the package bees from Honey Glow Farms. If you still have your boxes, bring them to the next meeting.

Bee reports

Everybody had something to report and many had questions to ask. These are some of the comments and questions:

- Downside to requeening now is it is a little late to get any honey crop.

- Nucs are doing well, but 2nd brood box on
- One colony split itself
- Protein /pollen patty sent with package is used to stimulate egg laying
- Small hive beetle must have at least ¼ inch of oil to drown
- Plexiglas outer cover provides light into the hive so the beetle will leave since it doesn't have a dark place to hide.
- Bear visits hive every night! Efforts to scare off not working. Have not bothered hive. Many reports of bear. Get electric fence up to insure safety of hives.
 - Hive was mauled, puddle of bees moved into the hive once the hive was put back together, so could assume queen survived.
- Bees need water – put out birdbaths, anything to hold some water.
- Feed bees 1:1 sugar/water syrup until they don't take it any more or you put the first super on.
- 15 packages installed; 13 doing well w/honey supers are on; one weak; one went queen less.
- Powder sugar treat to encourage bees to groom themselves and knock off the bees. Treat once a week for three weeks. 21 days for new bees to emerge. Slow the mite population growth now or it can get out of hand. Uncover all hives when dusting so none of the bees rob the other hives while exposed. Get rid of the powdered sugar soon after dusting as it can turn to icing and the mites can walk on it and climb back into the hive body onto a bee. Mites prefer drones since drones have a 3 day longer larvae stage so the mites can have more babies with drone larvae. Uncap drone cells and check for mites. If count is 1 per 100 cells, good hive. Suggest freezing drone cells to kill mites and then putting frame back in hive. Bees will clean it out – lot of work! If you put a medium super in a deep brood box, the bees will build brood comb off the bottom of the frame. These cells, when capped, can be cut off and the mites in the drone cells can be froze and killed. Be sure and mark the drone frame on the top so you know which one to pull. Twenty-one days from the day inserted, pull it out and cut off the drone cells.
- Was working with bees and forgot smoker at an out yard. Bees came through veil at his ear! Left ear and eye swelled. Bear at another yard, two more at neighbors; decided time to put up the fence.
- Two packages arrived in April. One is very strong, the other is weak. Decided to not do anything and see if the workers will raise a new queen. To check for the presence of a queen, hold a frame with the sun to your back and look deep into the cell. If you see a tiny grain of white, there are new eggs. You could also take a frame of fresh eggs from another hive and move it to the queen less hive. It's easier to see the eggs in old dark frames. These tiny larvae are taken to raise queens.
- Two hives over-wintered. One went queen less; other has 3rd honey super on it. Be sure and keep ahead of the brood and provide space.
- New beekeeper got two nucs in May. 2nd brood box is on each. One is active, one not so much. Last Saturday, bees all over, put supers on, cleaned off burr comb.
 - **Question: The active hive in mid afternoon was doing much 'spinning, leaving, and coming.' What is happening?**
 - Answer 1: New babies were hatching and they were orientating themselves to the hive location. They were taking their first flight.
 - Answer 2: Bees could be robbing the hive. Look for 'fighting' at the entrance. There will also be more noise – loud humming from the hive.
 - An hour later, both hives were quiet, so answer 1 was probably correct.
 - **Question: What do you do with the burr comb?**

- Answer: You can collect the keep burr and periodically melt it down and send it to a company in exchange for foundation.
- **Question: When and how much do you move frames around?**
- Answer: First, do not disturb the brood nest. You can move an outer frame closer to the nest to encourage comb building on the outer frames.
- **Question: How do you get the bees off the frames so you can look for eggs, brood pattern, etc.? The bees are so thick it is impossible to see the comb.**
- Answer: You can smoke them gently and push them off with the bee brush. Have to be careful not to brush the queen off onto the ground, so work over the brood box. With many bees, this can be difficult. **AVOID over smoking** so that the workers don't ball the queen in an effort to protect her.
- Answer: Hold the frame of bees up to your face (yes, your face) and gently blow on the bees. They will move away from the 'wind' so you can see a small amount of frame. Blow again, if they don't move after the first blow.
- Suggestion: Work on a sunny day, mid day when most of the workforce is out of the hive.
- Four hives. Lifted cover on one hive and found lots of water on the inner cover.
 - **Question: Why is there water on the inner cover?**
 - Suggestions: The cover is plastic, so the hot air in the hive may have condensed on the cover on the cool day. There is no notch on the inner cover, so ventilation could be improved.
 - **Question: How should the inner cover be on the hive?**
 - Answer: The notch of the inner cover is on the wide edge and it should be up. If there is no notch, which is the case with many inner covers, you can make one. Be sure the 'deep' edge of the inner cover is on the top. If not, the 'bee space' is too deep (more than 3/8 inch) and the bees will make burr comb on the under side of the inner cover.
 - **Question: Why is there a notch on the inner cover?**
 - Answer: First it aids in ventilation and second, it provides a second entrance for the bees. The notch should be on the 'top' of the inner cover, the deep side.
 - Suggestion: hold toilet paper strips at the entrance and at the top near the cover, on a very calm day, and see if the paper moves showing ventilation through the hive.
 - **Question: When do you open the 'cork' filled holes drilled in the hive bodies?** The holes were made to aid ventilation. The holes also provide a second/third entrance. If the hive is weak, close the holes to help the guard bees protect the hive from robbers and other critters – beetles, ants, etc. Also, leave open only when warm. Never put a hole in the supers. When it is warm the entrance reducer can be totally removed. Put it on if the hive is weak, again to help the guard bees due to a smaller entrance to guard.
 - **Ventilation in general** – if you have screened bottom boards, remove the second solid board so that there is plenty of ventilation from the bottom of the hive. With the sugar dusting, the beetles also fall off the bees onto the ground or other surface below the screen.
- Two nucs, one better than other; bear w/3 cubs 1/8th mile away; but up fence. Church has bees in the wall.
- Scientific Beekeeper web site has article on drones that is very interesting. The site has lots of good information.

- Dane County has a contacts page listing people who are willing to catch swarms. Jenny Elliott is the only person on our web page currently. Anyone else interested can call George Adams. [715 455-1652](tel:7154551652)
 - **Question:** My garden is 50 feet away from the hive and the bees are ‘head butting’ me. They don’t sting. Wife is hanging up clothes and is also ‘head butted.’ Why?
 - **Answer/Suggestion:** Bees are short-sited and finding their way around.
- Four hives came through the winter. Skunks took one; one doing well. May 8th got 2 packages; 4 days later one went next door since hive was empty. Coon took two hives last year. Now has a solar fence!! He used Premier Fencing and caught 32 coon and 2 skunks last year.
- To keep skunks, etc from the hive, tack/nail on a piece of carpet tack strips to the ‘landing board/ramp’ on the front of the hive stand.
- An idea to try to get comb honey is to leave a frame without foundation between two frames with foundation. The bees will build comb from the top of the frame to the bottom perfectly straight having the two frames one on either side. If you leave more than one frame empty of foundation, they will create a surprise.
- North Western District Honey Queen, Sara Rushfeldt reported that she had a pallet of equipment in another location waiting to be cleaned up. When she went to work with it she found 8 swarms had moved in.
- Swarm traps can be placed a good distance from the apiary. Scout bees looking for a place to swarm to, may find the swarm trap and lead your crowded bees to the trap. Lemon grass scent is used to lure the swarm/scout bees to the trap. Use a nuc box with 5 frames. Can place it in a tree, or some other place where rodents can’t destroy it.

Marla Spivak will be the key presenter at the Eau Claire Master Gardeners (ECMG) Spring Conference on Feb 4, 2012. Marla is a researcher at the University of MN and a great speaker. Her keynote address will be on the topic of how we can assist bees as gardeners and how bees help us. She is also a speaker at another session immediately following the opening address and is looking for topics of interest to beekeepers. Jenny asked the club for ideas to take to the ECMG president who will give them to Marla.

Ideas that were offered include:

- Plants for bees
- New advances in diseases and pests
- Information on her current research projects
- Guidance on how to identify a good vs. poor brood pattern, drown cells vs. worker cells, disease/pests in a colony, best practices in controlling mites, etc.
- Simply hold a Q & A session.
- Jenny offered to pull others ‘questions’ that were asked in the reports given tonight.

Sara Rushfeldt, Northwestern District of Wisconsin 2011 Honey Queen was present at our meeting. She is available to attend meetings, fairs, and other events. To contact her use: 402-689-0317 or saranator@gmail.com.

Country Rubes’ Combo Bottom Boards - Janet Brisson and Isaiah Grinder were present. Janet gave a slide presentation on varroa mite control using screened bottom boards, sticky boards, and the powder sugar treatment. Randy Oliver, beekeeper and scientist in California, has a web site ScientificBeekeeping.com where he posts information on his research. Randy helped Janet put together her presentation and tested the Country Rubes’ Combo Board. Isaiah Grinder

is in Sand Creek and is a local distributor for the boards and other products. You can learn more by visiting www.CountryRubes.com , calling 530-913-2724, or emailing at rubes@countryrubes.com. Isaiah can be reached at ijgmco@yahoo.com or 715-869-8809 in Sand Creek. Treating for mites now is critical!!

Information gathered after the meeting:

Quilt – Jenny Elliot is piecing a quilt to be raffled off and proceeds to help support the Northwestern District of Wisconsin Honey Queen, Sara Rushfeldt. Raffle tickets and the quilt are expected at our July meeting.

Next meeting: **The next meeting is our picnic on July 11 at 6:00 pm at Wakanda Park on Lake Menomonie.** From North Broadway take Pine Ave East to the park. The picnic is a potluck with the club providing hotdogs. More information will be in the next meeting notice.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jenny Gruber