**Lake County Beekeepers**

Meeting Minutes – Thursday July 7, 2016

**Opening**

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. on 7/7/16 in the Lake County Agricultural Extension Office by President Billy Fussell.

**Present**

See member sign-in sheet for the list of 53 people in attendance which included 6 new people. The families that visited the club for the first time were from Winter Garden, Apopka, Leesburg, and Clermont. It’s good to know where other member’s live so you can get together and mentor each other.

**Meeting Discussion Topics**

Most backyard beekeepers honey flow should be winding down and capped honey should be pulled, now that we are headed into summer. Spread out the uncapped frames of honey between your hives for your bees to eat if they need it. We are finding that if they can use their stored honey instead of sugar water the bees tend to be healthier. It’s your decision to make on how you want to feed. But either way, keep an eye on your bees to make sure they have enough food and feed accordingly so they don’t starve. Temperature or the amount of rain fall can make each year’s pollen and nectar flow different.

Average price of honey is $8 per pound but can vary depending on your market and type of honey. Keep that in mind when you’re giving away your hard work!

Palmetto’s nectar flow and Gall Berry, right behind it was good this year. These 2 flowers produce a similar tasting honey and is a good blend.

Cabbage Palm tends to produce a wet honey (anything over 18%) usually due to the amount of rain fall during its nectar flow. Leaving this for the bees makes sense or maybe this year with the lack of rain it may produce good honey to pull.

Giles mentioned that Crepe Myrtles are a good summer pollen source, but has very little nectar and bees tend to prefer the lighter flower colors. He doesn’t see much activity on the red. Mexican clover is also a good early morning forage flower.

Make sure your bees have a water source close by because they really need it to keep the hives cool in the summer heat. Bev suggested putting a shallow pan with rocks in it so the bees can reach the water and not drown. Judy said her bees prefer their water in the shade so it stays a little cooler. Remember bee bread is a 1/1/1 combination of water, pollen and nectar and is required for larval development.

Mite loads will peak in July & August so make sure to treat as necessary to avoid a crash. An alcohol wash of 250 bees (representing about 1% of the hive) in a pint jar, powdered sugar roll of the same quantity of bees, or sticky bottom board are all ways to ascertain your mite load. Count before and after treatments to confirm that the treatment worked. The biggest problems the mites cause are the viruses they vector.

Whatever method you choose; natural, synthetic, IPM , best case would be to use an assortment of all, to keep the mite load below a few percent. The goal is to avoid creating resistant mites to the treatment and to keep the bees and their comb healthy.

Apivar is an extended release synthetic miticide that is left in the hive for 42 days.

Oxalic acid is an organic treatment that kills the adult (phoretic) mite using a vaporizing tool and 1gr of oxalic acid per colony. Use 99.9% pure oxalic acid for treatment, (found on the internet) not wood bleach that is only 95% oxalic acid. Treat late in the day to have as many bees back to the colony as possible.

We are finding that in Florida our winter temperatures do not stay cool enough for the treatment window for Apiguard (thymol slow release gel) and can lead to bee mortality, queen loss and absconding.

Some feel sprinkling the bees with powdered sugar during each hive inspection (with an open screen bottom or sticky board) helps keep the mite count down. The sugar causes the bees to clean themselves therefore knocking off mites. When the mites fall through the screen bottom (or get stuck to the sticky board) they can’t bounce back up to attach to another bee.

Make sure you protect your drawn frames (wax) from wax moths. They will prefer to lay in brood wax with pollen before honey wax as they need the protein for larval development. This is just one option that works. Para-Moth with the active ingredient para-dichlorobenzene to store with frames with as air tight as possible. *Do not* use moth balls which contain naphthalene and will not air out of the wax and will kill the bees. Bev finds using a damp rid hung between the frames limits/prevents mold from forming. Check back every 3 weeks or so to make sure make sure the crystals are not gone, and add more as needed. After storage, when frames are needed plan on a through airing before putting back on the hives.

Seriously consider surrounding your hives by an electric bear fence. We are in bear country and several members without fences have had the sad experience of losing hives to bears.

Take care when doing hive inspections, Black Widow spiders are lurking.

Queens prefer to lay eggs in brand new wax, as it is healthier. Old frames and wax should be rotated out and discarded at least every 5 years. Mark frames with the date put into service to keep track.

Often people wonder what equipment they should buy. Use what you’re planning on doing with the bees to be your guide for what equipment you’ll need. Also ask fellow beekeepers what they have found works and see how that fits into your long term goals.

The next “Day in The Bee Yard” will be held on July 23, Saturday at D&J Apiary where the club will be conducting a full day of training. It will be covering beekeeping A-Z, beginning and advanced topics with hands-on experience. One of the state Apiary inspectors will be heading the hive inspection class. The club will be providing lunch.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m. by Billy Fussell. The next general meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. on 8/4/16 at Lake County Ag Extension.

Respectfully submitted by Communications & Publicity secretary: Kris Gehman