

The Newsletter for The Capital City Beekeepers April 2017

March's Program: Bee Packages and their Installation

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Cover Picture: A forager collecting nectar from peach blossoms. Picture taken and submitted by Jack Kuhn, from his orchard on Sulfur Lick Road in Franklin County.

With many of new beekeepers having ordered their packages and to be delivered on either the first weekend of April or later, a program on the subject of packages and their installation was timely and useful at the March meeting of the Capital City Beekeepers. Wes Henry presented the program. He began with a brief checklist of preparation—hive-body, frames with foundation, feeder, feed and site for the bees to come- with the examination of what makes up a package of bees – screened box, 3# of bees, a mated

moving the cork on candy end of the cage, as in the shake method, and remove four frames, set the package inside the hive



An actual package of bees ready for installation.



A detailed explanation of the parts of a package was made during the program.

queen, and feed can. An actual picture of the package was also presented before an informative video of the most common method of installation was presented. Wes calls this method the “shaking method” ([click here to view](#)). Another system for installing a package is to install the queen cage between two frames after re-

body and then remove the thin cover to allow the bees come out of the screened box on their own before closing the hive body. This method requires the keeper to return a few hours or the next day to remove the box and install the remaining frames and replenish feeder with syrup. A useful tip from Vice-President John Antenucci was to make sure that the screen in the queen cage did not face the foundation or comb allowing the bees to feed the queen while she was in her cage before being released. Wes also suggested if a keeper had a colony and was able to spare a frame of brood, to install that frame in the center and next to the queen cage. The use of some “pulled comb” (not too old or from diseased hives) to hasten build up of the colony was given too. The bees then do not have to completely build all the comb and the queen could begin to lay immediately. Q and A followed.

Bee-Lines

*“The old
skopists
called the
second
swarm a
“cast”,
the third
was a
“cost”,
and the
fourth a
“filly”. “*

*— Tickner Edwards, “The
Lore of The Honey-Bee”*

Swarms Galore! Free bees for the taking

“It is sheer jubilation melodised...”, wrote Edwards of the swarm, “...a wild glad song of freedom, as though not a bee amongst them had ever before set eyes on the sunshine...” This year’s

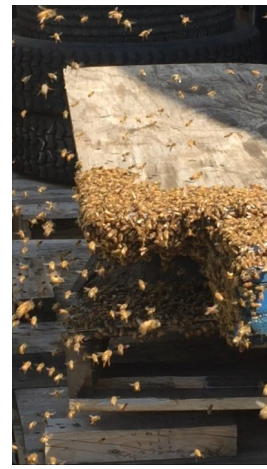
swarm season has been an active one. I was fortunate to be a witness to one just issuing and was able to not only to help catch it, but also collect some still pictures and video of the entire process.



The swarm swirled singing that “wild glad song of freedom” Making their way to an alighting place. Was it to be the corner of a pallet? It seemed so.



The decision became obvious and the wonder of the age old urge began to take shape- the siren-song seemed to go forth and little by little the winged throng gathered.



Before, a mad escape, but then a somber silence of peace and togetherness. It is then the beekeeper makes a sharp rap and collects nature’s bounty in the hopes they will stay.



Bee-Lines

“...one of the first things a bee keeper should ascertain is what is your long term goal for the hive...”

Find Back issues of the Bee-Lines on CCBK's website:
<http://capital-bees.weebly.com/>

To Swarm or Not To Swarm By JACK KUHN

Nearly every one of the 16 hives I have managed over the past two weeks have swarmed or are in the process of swarming. Having honey bee hives, one of the first things a bee keeper should ascertain is what is your long term goal for the hive: Business or pleasure? Static number of existing hives, or growing the apiary with more hives? No interest in honey (love to help the bees), Honey for one self, neighbors and family, or honey to sell?

Once you know the answers to these questions, you can better react to the natural propensity of the bees to swarm this time of

year. As honey stores flow into the hive and the population of the bees in the hive will increase, the bees know it's time to promote their species and they swarm in order to replicate their hive and genetics. The worker bees build queen cells, add royal jelly, and the queen lays an egg in 5 to more than 15 of these cups.

Just before the queen cells are capped, the bees chase the queen around the hive for 2-3 days to get her in flight shape, the bees that will go on the swarm flight engorge themselves with honey, the queen then flies out and 1/3-1/2 of the bees follow her to a tree branch, side of a barn, fence, etc. Scouts search for a new home. The swarm could be there for an hour or two days, but once they select the scout to follow, they all head to the new home. Catching a swarm will reveal that engorged bees can build a lot of comb in just a few days.

So back to the questions above, some brief items to ponder. I always recommend that a bee keeper have two hives, that way you can compare them and know when one is

weak or strong, you can pull capped brood from a weak hive and place them in the strong hive, and if your queen fails, you

can pull a frame of eggs and young larvae and the hive can make a new queen. If you now have one hive, this is a good time to make a split and have two (the following discussion pertains to hives established last year or prior and carried through the winter).

If you want to enlarge your apiary, now is the perfect time. How to do it in a nutshell: Set up a new hive with one brood box. I like to put in a division feeder on the end (use one with



Note the capped queen cell at the bottom of the frame. Generally, swarm cells are at the bottom of the frame, and supercedure cells are off the side of the comb.

ladder tunnels or put in a piece of 1/8" hardware cloth to prevent drowning) filled with some 1:1 syrup. From your exiting hive, pull a frame with eggs and very small larvae (it takes two day old or less larvae for the bees to make a queen - a "piece of snot" at the bottom of the cell - and all the bees on it (these are the nursery bees). I make sure I have one frame like this left in the old hive and one in the new hive (that way, if I accidentally take the queen, either hive can make a new one - this is called a "walk away split"). Pull two frames of capped brood along with the bees on it. Pull one frame with honey/pollen. In the donor box, place fresh wax or plasti-cell frames in the blank spaces. No queen needed, they can make their own, or you can purchase one. Ideally, you would shake some bees in from the outside frame (these are worker bees) and move the hive to a new location at least three miles away. But if you can't do this, the new hive will recruit some of the young nursery bees to foragers.

Is this risky? I have done six so far this

Bee-Lines

“What if you did nothing? Your hive will most likely swarm...”

Frankfort's Yester-Swarm Catchers

Almost forty-two years to the day of our next meeting The Frankfort Beekeepers were asking for those precious swarm calls. A Tuesday evening article of The state Journal from 1975 (see right), found among the papers and information of the dated and brown folder of Frankfort's beekeeping history, begins with the famous lyrical rhyme of yore— of a swarm of bees and their worth in May, June, and July. A brief teaching about swarming and the thrift of catching them is concluded with who to call in Franklin and Anderson county if a swarm is found. It's a brief and “older-read” that'll just make ya smile.

To Swarm or Not To Swarm By JACK KUHN

year and five have been successful. This can often prevent your hive from swarming since you have created some new bee space by putting in empty comb for them to draw.

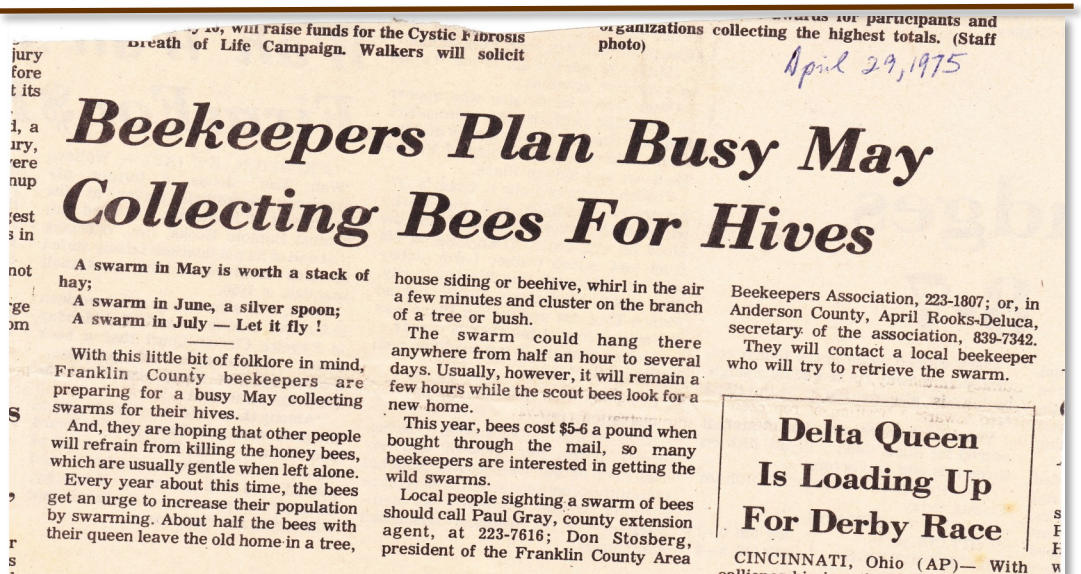
What if you did nothing? Your hive will most likely swarm if it's "queen right". In any swarm situation or in the situations above, it necessitates the in-hive rearing of a queen, and yes, there is one big risk . Once the first queen hatches (there will be several queen cells) she will go through the hive and kill all the unhatched queens. After a day or two, she will make two to three mating flights over the course of a day or two. She flies about three miles away to a "Drone Congregation Area" in the sky and is mated in flight by several different drones (she is NOT mated in the hive- Huh??!!) It is estimated that up to 30 percent of these queens never make it back from their mating flights; eaten by birds, downed in a rain storm, or swept away in heavy winds. So it's important to inspect your hives every ten days to confirm there are eggs and young larvae in the hive. No need to hunt for the queen. When you have a hive this time of year with no eggs, there is probably no queen. That's where the second hive comes in, pull a frame with egg and larvae, shake off the

bees, place it in the center of the hive and let them make a replacement queen. It takes 16 days for the hive to rear a queen and about a week for her to get bred, acclimated, and laying again. So if you're in a hurry, you can buy a bred queen.

Other swarm management techniques include removing some capped brood from a strong hive, shake off the bees, and place them in a weak hive for a quick population boost (see why it's good to have two hives).

You can also place supers on your hive now. Generally, I like to wait until the Redbud tree blooms to place on my supers. It has been reported that nectar from these trees taste terrible, like dirt or musty. But this year, the bees are rapidly expanding in their hives, so another swarm prevention method is to place honey supers with mostly undrawn comb onto the hive. I suggest at least two on a hive, three on a really strong hive.

The ever so sweet, delicate, highly prized light honey from the black locust tree is just around the corner. You don't want to lose your bee population right when these trees bloom in early May. Catch the honey flow!



Bee-Lines

Dates To Remember:

Next CCBK Meeting-
April 25th, 2017,
6 p.m., Franklin County Extension, 101 Lakeview Dr., Frankfort, KY

Guthrie Naturals Package Bee Pickup 4/28 and 4/29 at Dadant's. Last School Hive will be Auctioned.

CCBK Saturday Farmer's Market Booth
May 13th, 7:30-12

HAS Evansville, IN July 13-15
[Click for registration.](#)

CCBK Minutes March 28th, 2017

Vice President John Antenucci opened meeting at 6 pm

February minutes were called to the floor from the newsletter and approved.

Marsha Bezold gave overview of BFF.

Gave report on activities of Honey Princess activities

Bee Jam and Bee hive hairdo contest also reported on.

Marsha thanked everyone who helped with the BFF activities and Princess.

John Antenucci gave report on Bluegrass Bee School.

Mentioned his appreciation for all the volunteers that help with the school. He spoke about how instrumental CCBK was this year to the Schools success.

He reported 270 paid attendees and 330 people total at the school.

28 speakers taught and @ 150 attended the beginner's class.

Treasurer's Report given by Jack Kuhn.

Jan Rafert made motion to accept, Dan Ramey second and motion carried.

Jack also reported on the hive contest. High bid was 210.00, total bids was 755.00 and that one more is to be auctioned 4/29/17 at Dadant during package bee pickup.

Also the KSBA dues were up from previous years.

John made the club aware David Hensley had his equipment for sale.

A call for volunteers to work the Earth Day booth on 4/19 was put forth.

Volunteers to help at package pick up days (4/7-8 & 4/28-29) at Dadants. It was emphasized that it is good way to learn and become more comfortable around bees and interact with other beekeepers.

George Fowler spoke on the 2017 Franklin County Fair.

Edits are to be made on entry instructions, also a tasting is to be scheduled this year and a possible judging event.

Discussion on beginners classes, or "field Day" at KSU Farm, possibly later than Bluegrass Bee School is being considered for next year.

There was Q and A from the floor before the program.

A ten minute fellowship break was enjoyed before the program.

Program was given by Wes Henry on Package bees and their installation.

John Antenucci announced the next meeting 4/25/17, 6 pm, at Franklin County Extension Office to close the meeting.