



# THE HONEY POT

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec 9, 6:30pm

#### **MCBA Holiday Party**

Home of Jill & Frank Mccowen  
13305 Cleveland Dr, Rockville

Main entrees and drinks to be provided by MCBA.\*

Please bring your favorite dish of food to share according to the first letter of your last name:

A-K Appetizers  
L-N Salads and Sides  
O-Z Yummy Desserts

This is a BYOB event at a home, so please drink responsibly.

For those interested, we will be having a Gift Exchange, if you want to partake please bring a wrapped gift of around \$10 in value.

\*We are looking for volunteers to bake a turkey, a ham, purchase drinks and bring a cooler of ice. The cost of these items will be covered by MCBA. We will also need volunteers to help cleanup....many hands make light work. If you can fill any of these positions, please contact Jill McCowan via email, [jillnewburger@yahoo.com](mailto:jillnewburger@yahoo.com)

### *It's Wintertime*

by Tim McMahon

It's full-on winter for beekeepers now. We've done everything that we could have and now we hope our girls make it through the winter. There are several small things that we will be doing to our bees in the winter, like checking on feed, maybe treating with oxalic acid or checking on the location of the cluster. For me, this is the planning time of the year. This is the time I want to sit back and rethink all the things I did with my bees this past year and think about what I will keep the same and what I will change in the upcoming year.

Every year I do something different and I like to reflect on how it turned out. Did I really execute my plan the way I should have? Did I get the results I wanted? Did my work have any real effect or not? These are just some of the questions you should ask yourself. Some things I've tried are: making nucs before the nectar flow, making nucs after the nectar flow, making comb honey, collecting pollen, collecting propolis, making walk-away splits, raising queens. Some of that worked and some did not. Those that did not work mostly did not work because I was not meticulous enough with the details. I'm a big believer that you can get almost anything to work as long as you take the effort to work through all the issues that come along.

The wintertime is also the best time of the year to do some reading. There are many great books and journals out there and I like to read through several of them during the winter months. I use the wintertime to plan my bee trips for the coming year. Next year, I have plans to go back to help with the research project in Costa Rica for two weeks and plan on attending the EAS weeklong conference in July at Stockton University in NJ (close to Atlantic City). There are lots of great trips that you could do and incorporate a bee conference into the trip; you need only look for these opportunities.



**MCBee-ography Spotlight:  
Janice Andrews (Silver Spring,  
MD)**

by Marty Hindel

**WHAT'S YOUR DAY JOB?**

*I am assistant manager at As Kindred Spirits, a boutique at Congressional Plaza in Rockville. Also have 2 part time gigs - Administrative Assistant for Women Business Owners of Montgomery County and assistant to the CEO of Worksite Health and Safety Consultants.*



**HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A BEEKEEPER?**

*This is my first year. Got 2 nucs in May after taking the MCBA class this winter (and the DC course also!)*

**WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN BEEKEEPING?**

*I've been interested for a long time; read a few books and magazines, but it wasn't the right time. A friend at work encouraged me to take the class this past winter.*

**HOW MANY HIVES DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE AND WHERE?**

*Two hives in my back yard.*

**HOW DOES YOUR FAMILY FEEL ABOUT YOUR HOBBY?**

*I think they think I'm weird! My husband took quite a bit of convincing, and he still won't venture anywhere near the hives. My daughter, who lives in Philly, asks a lot of questions. And she went to the Phila. Honey Festival this fall!( I like to think she was influenced by my bees) My sister came over when the bees first*



*arrived to film the installation. :)*

**WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT BEING A BEEKEEPER?**

*I love watching the bees coming and going, especially when they're loaded down with pollen.*

*The orientation flights are fascinating - could watch them all day!*

*And I like the fact that beekeepers are so generous with their advice! that's 3 things...*

**WHAT'S THE SILLIEST MISTAKE YOU EVER MADE IN BEEKEEPING?**

*I put the entrance reducers on upside down at first. And when I added mouse guards, left the reducers on (this one is yet to be fixed). I have a lot of time to make more silly mistakes though I hope they won't be too bad.*

**NAME ONE FUN FACT YOU'VE LEARNED ABOUT BEES.**

*That they can maintain the temperature of the hive even in the coldest weather.*

**DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER QUIRKY HOBBIES? WHAT ARE THEY?**

*Quirky? No, though I knit and hope to start making soap again. I belong to a book club and read a lot (and they chose a beekeeping related book for one of our meetings.) If my hives allow me to take a harvest next year maybe I'll try making mead.*

**ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH OUR READERS?**

*Just that I appreciate the people who teach and administer the course, Tim for all the club bee yard teach-ins, the experienced beeks who share their knowledge and mentor us new-bees.*

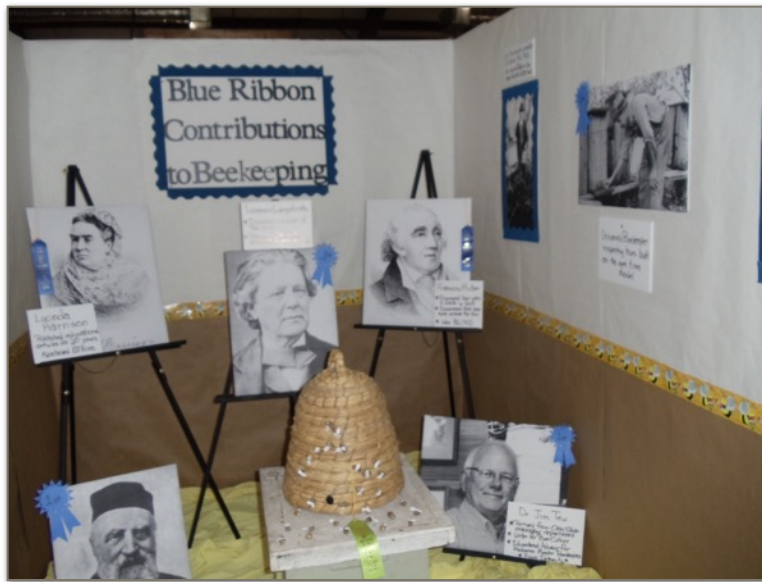
## Letter from the South

by Bill Miller

Early November is National Peanut Festival time in Dothan, which is our local Fair. Why is it called the National Peanut Festival? Well, a lot of the peanuts grown in the United States are grown in the region, in fact the peanut butter you have in your cupboard probably had its origin within 25 miles of my house. Peanuts are the crop that saved local agriculture after boll weevils made growing cotton nearly impossible in the early 1900s. The boll weevil can be controlled today, but peanuts remain an important area crop. Late October through early November is peanut harvesting time, and hence time for the National Peanut Festival.

Like any local fair, the National Peanut Festival covers all of the local agriculture, including the beekeepers. I've included two pictures, one of our honey competition display, and the other of the Wiregrass Beekeepers Association's Festival Theme booth.

I'll start with the festival theme booth. All the local agricultural organizations (e.g.; Cattleman's, 4H, Future Farmers of America, and the Wiregrass Beekeepers) are invited to construct an exhibit booth based on the year's Peanut Festival



theme – Blue Ribbon Memories being the theme for this year. We chose to honor some of the people who have made blue ribbon contributions to beekeeping over the years – see how many of the people honored you can name. I'll start you off: the person in the lower right is Dr. Jim Tew. Not only is he a notable contributor to beekeeping, but he also grew up in south Alabama not far from where I live today.

One other notable detail on our booth: in keeping with the Peanut Festival, the "bees" all around the skep were made from peanuts.

Now on to our honey competition – Even though this year was an absolutely miserable year for local honey production, many folks did put together Peanut Festival Entries.

Personally, I entered three categories, amber honey, wax, and frame of honey. I won in wax and frame, but didn't place in honey this year. Two blue ribbons out of three entries isn't bad, and as for

that third entry, there's always next year.



There is one peculiarity about honey in the Peanut Festival. While every other honey competition I know of specifies honey jars be filled to the top of the jar bead, Peanut Festival rules specify jars be filled to the bottom of the bead. The difference is

about ½ teaspoon, but the fact that the difference exists underscores the need to read the rules for any competition that you plan to enter.

Changing subjects – the local goldenrod nectar flow is about over. Only one hive of mine looks like it will be needing feed anytime soon – it is the one I started from the swarm I caught in August so I expected that hive would require feeding. It's been getting 1/1 feed; I'll be shifting over to 2/1 feed for it. It will also be getting my prize honey frame.

And in not-so- local news, I just finished up the November EAS board meeting (I'm the Alabama EAS director). The 2016 EAS meeting will be July 26 -> 29 at Stockton University just outside of Atlantic City NJ, and it sounds great. I'm planning on attending, and I hope to see many of you there.

And that's the November news from the South.

## *Honey Bee Power Plants*

by Marie Rojas



Gold and Silver Chrysanthemum *Ajanía pacífica* (*Chrysanthemum pacificum*)



A band of silver outlines the grey-green leaves of this perennial, making it a beautiful addition to the garden even before it begins to bloom.

The golden yellow, button-like flowers bloom late October through November. At just around 18 - 24" tall, it has a nice rounded habit that can be easily incorporated into the mixed border. Other attributes include:

- 3 star nectar and pollen source for honey bees.
- Bumble bees, hover flies, and lady beetles also visit the flowers.
- Reportedly deer resistant.

Plant them in full to part sun in average soil with excellent drainage. They are drought resistant, but may die if the soil is too wet in winter.



## ***October Meeting Recap: Wayne Easias & MD Nectar Flow Trends***

by Dara Ballow-Giffen

Wayne Easias started keeping bees in 2006 when his son's boy scout troop leader moved and his son volunteered to adopt his hive. He kept the hive on a scale and sent his son out nightly to record the hive's weight. So, 15 years later, when he wanted to track the nectar flow, he had 15 years of data to start with.

Hive scales provide data to quantify the nectar harvest. Wayne collected data from volunteers and measured the beginning, peak, end and duration of the flow each year. Post 1965, he saw a decrease of .58 days per year in the honey flow in central Maryland. This correlated with warmer winter temperatures. The warmer winter also correlated to an earlier peak of the nectar flow. Each increase of 1 degree Fahrenheit in the average minimum temperature in winter brought a 7 day advance to the honey flow. An earlier nectar flow means less honey since the colony population isn't built up yet. This also means that supplies need to last longer. The dearth after the flow will be longer when the flow starts early.

### **Other interesting conclusions from Wayne's analysis:**

Nectar flow east of I-95 (coastal plain) is 2 weeks earlier than west of I-95 (piedmont).

In 2015, May 15-16 was the peak of the nectar run for central Maryland.

Most of the nectar comes in within 1 week. 26% in 1 day!

Eggs laid after mid-March will not contribute to honey harvest. Get hives ready/built up early.

Foragers from weak and strong hives travel the same distance. Hive strength does not impact nectar flow data.

Based on hive weight data, bees evaporated 1:1 syrup down to 16% in 2 days!

### **Resources**

*Want to check out the data for yourself? Or get a scale and start contributing your own data? (See the November Meeting Recap for a \$7 scale option.)*

[www.HoneyBeeNet.com](http://www.HoneyBeeNet.com): volunteer hive scale data

[www.hivetool.org](http://www.hivetool.org): network of hive scales

## ***November Meeting Recap: Allen Hayes & his Beekeeping Gadgets***

by Dara Ballow-Giffen

Allen Hayes, an EAS Master Beekeeper, has an impressive array of beekeeping inventions. It's hard to say whether his designs or his carpentry and welding skills are more impressive. For those of you who missed it, I'll share a few favorites:

### **Hive Scale from a \$7 Bathroom Scale**

Using an analog hive scale, a couple mirrors and a periscope, you can build a hive scale. Full instructions available online: <http://www.carrollcountybeekeepers.org/using-a-bathroom-scale-to-weigh-honey-bee-colonies.pdf>

### **Tie-on Mouse Guard**

Allen tied string to either end of a piece of hardware cloth. When it's time to add the mouse guard, he sets it into place and ties it around the back of the hive. Easy on. Easy off.

### **Home is Where the Blue Circle Is**

To prevent hive drift, Allen takes aluminum and paints different shapes. The aluminum is bent to hang off the side of a super. Each hive has a different shape/color identifier so foraging bees know where to return. Tags can be switched around to balance hive population.

### **Hinged Frame**

So you've found yourself a swarm. Now how are you going to get that cut-out comb into a frame and into a hive? If you're as handy as Allen, you make 2 skinny frames and attach them with hinges. Wires on either side hold the comb once the frame is shut. A similar plan is here: <http://www.beesource.com/>

[build-it-yourself/removeable-swarm-catching-frames/](#)

### **Honey Spigot Lid**

Rather than manage any number of buckets with spigots when filling honey jars, Allen uses solid buckets and puts the spigot in the lid. The lid can be transferred from bucket to bucket. He uses 2 pieces of plywood, attached to each other with chain to allow the bucket to be securely set on it's side during filling (see photo).

There were many more that I haven't captured here. Be sure not to miss his next presentation!



<b><u><a href="http://www.MontgomeryCountyBeekeepers.com">www.MontgomeryCountyBeekeepers.com</a></u></b>		
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