



CCBA Meeting Minutes MAR 8, 2021

with VIRTUAL meeting

* Numbers of Executive Steering Committee:

*Dave Sieruta PRES: Apiary, Education/Speakers 904-282-2193, dtussie@aol.com

*Dorie Kline V-Pres & Face Book Organizer: Clay County Beekeepers Association 904-616-2723. rickdori@aol.com

*Sue Gianino SEC: 904-276-5921, smgianino@bellsouth.net

*Ray Vickerman TREAS & MENTOR Trainer: 904-284-5317,

*Susan Welch, MEMBERSHIP Coordinator & DUES Collector, 4H Club 727-204-6626. swelch5210@gmail.com

*Cassidy Dossin AG Rep: 904-284-6300, cdossin@ufl.edu

*Frank Gianino WEB site Claybees.com: 904-276-5921, fwgianino@bellsouth.net

*Christine Nicolodi: Refreshment Coordinator.

ZOOM meeting tonight 11 virtual members with 20 present at JP Hall.

DATES to KNOW:

-- Annual Dues \$15 per voting mbr*: (pay Sue Welch). 2021 DUES DUE every OCT – DEC. Renewal sheet on Website and attached to these minutes to send by mail.

-- MAR 13, Mentor Meeting 10-12 JP Hall Bld Clay Fair Grounds

-- MAR 20, Honey House Clean UP 9 AM

-- MAR 27, Bottling Honey at Susan Welch Barn 9AM bring honey buckets, towels, tools. 3749 Randall Rd, Green cove springs, FL

--MAR 31. Honeybee Pick up from Dave: 1686 Henley Rd, GCS 32043, dtussie@aol.com, 904-466-3613

--APRIL 1-111 Clay County Fair and Honey House will be open, contact Susan Welch or Sue Gianino to volunteer---dates and times will be posted.

-- APRIL Business Meeting TBA because of vaccinations and extensive repairs to the Godbolt building are needed. Date TBA.

--APRIL Mentor meeting changed to 17 will be at the Apiary 10AM

Old Business:-- Our CCBA Association Caps are \$15 see Ray. Our logo embroidered on your Polo shirt \$10 (see Sue G or available at Stich by Stich in the Orange Park Mall). John Boeckstiegel has T-shirts with new logo for S-LG \$10 for XL-XXXL \$15.

-- Mentors are available, call Ray Vickerman or Dave Sieruta. Mentors currently are Huey Forquet (Orange Park and Baker County), Rick and Dorie Kline & Ralph White (Middleburg), John Riley, Dave Sieruta (Lake Asbury & Orange Park), Ray Vickerman (Green Cove), Bob McKenney (Orange Park) and. our newest Mentors Joe Geisel (St Augustine) and Ken Harp (Keystone Hts).

--Register your hives with Mosquito Control Board (904) 417-5884 or Check out Clay County Mosquito Control in the News at

<https://www.firstcoastnews.com/article/news/local/clay-county-uses-aggressive-effort-on-mosquito-problem-after-finding-west-nile-virus/77-577095009>

Or call Jessie (904) 284-6335 to give her your location of your hives esp. if they are at different locations. Be sure to register your hives. Aerial spraying is not currently done in Clay County **Frank has posted the Mosquito Control and Beekeepers info on the Web site.

--Swarm collection; let Frank Gianino know to put your name and phone on the Website. Currently we have Dave Sieruta 904-466-3613, John Boeckstiegel 904-673-8480, Cross Middleton 904-657-6704, Ray Vickerman (904)284-5317

7:00 Dave Sieruta opened the meeting. Welcome 1 new member.

-- Secretary, minutes for FEB meeting approved as emailed with correction of CCF dates from APR 1-11.

-- Treasurers Report \$8388.90 approved as read.

-- President's Report and -- Hive management: Keep feeding your hives with Sugar Water 1:1, esp if you are splitting your hive. Check for Swarm Cells now and add supers if needed to help prevent swarming, give your Queens room to lay. Announced one lady has a swarm for removal, name and phone given to Dorie and Rick.

--Apiary Report: continues to do well. There are 6 active hives and 8 NUCS with Supers. Planning to do splits this Sat at the mentor meeting. Lottery winners bring your clean NUCs with 5 clean frames and a quart jar with sugar water 1:1 for your bees to be inserted and leave for 1 month for a Queen to develop. Price \$55, must attended Beginner Bee Class and have a Mentor assigned before applying.

--What's Blooming: citrus, wild plum, Dogwood, Red Bud, Blueberry, Red Maple and Pine. There will be a major nectar flow by months end.

-- Mentor Report: Ray Mentor meeting this Saturday 10am. We have 2 new mentors; Joe Geisel and Ken Harp, making 10 mentors that will cover the Clay County, St Johns Macclenny and Keystone Hts.

-- Membership Coordinator noted we have over 130 members and most are paid up. And as our Superintendent for the Honey House in Old Florida she asks for patience during all the COVID restrictions. Good news is we are planning for the Clay County Fair this year and we will be having Honey for sale, tasting and 2 raffles.

* Work day to clean the Honey House is MAR 20 at 9AM

* Honey Bottling for the Fair is MAR 27 at 9AM at Susan W. home

7:20 Rick Kline is our 1st speaker tonight on Installing Package Bees into your hive, we will post the Zoom when available. Remember to feed your bees 1:1 sugar water after installing to help them accommodate and feed the queen. Spray sugar water on the package bees, remove the canister of food and the queen then knock the bees into their new hive, replace the frames and attach the queen cage.

7:50 Mike McCally is our 2nd speaker tonight on making a swarm trap. The Handout will be attached to the minutes.

8:23 OLD BUSINESS:

--Package bees 3# with Queen are \$99 and sold out. They will be here MAR 31 after 5PM at Dave Sieruta home: 2686 Henley Rd, Green Cove Springs. Call First. 904-282-2193

NEW BUSINESS:

--10 Raffle winners for the NUCS drawn:

Kevin Booth

Marlene Strube

Leah Chesser

Robert O'Linn

Shaun Johnson

Molly LaRocca

Katherine O'Meara

Betsy DeCandis

Jill Leggett

Val Stranger

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No Orange Park Market for April

--Dedication for Lou Ivey will be announced.

--Sue Welch will pick up the badges and tickets for the CCF and let us know when to pick them up.

8:45 Adjourned.

Sue Gianino,

Secretary

Honeybees, otherwise known as the Angels of Agriculture, are the strongest link in the chain between food producers

Clay County Beekeepers Association – Swarm Trapping Presentation

Michael McCalley – 3/8/21

Gerry Hayes used to say there was nothing more dangerous than a 3rd year beekeeper who thinks they have it all figured out. For the record, I am a 4-year beekeeper. I have taken the CCBKA intro course, I am a prolific reader of bee related books and magazines, I practice everything I present tonight ... but I certainly do not think I have got it all figured out.

Focus of this presentation: Swarm Trapping ... but first a bit of background!

A Bee is an organism: Bee's reproduce by creating a queen, who mates with drones and lays eggs to produce new bees.

A Hive is a super-organism: Hives reproduce by swarming to produce new hives.

While our goal as beekeepers is to prevent swarming (and keep our bees), swarming an instinctive and totally natural process. Triggers for swarming include:

- Tight on space (outgrowing their hive space, or honey bound) ... which we can control by adding frames, an additional deep box, or a honey super (or two)
- Hive condition/disease (swarming or absconding to avoid a bad situation) ... which we also have some control over via hive inspection, treatment, frame replacement, pest control, etc.
- Instinct beepers have been "selecting" for desired traits, including lower tendency to swarm, since humans began keeping bee's but we still cannot control this instinct, only mute it.

Ideally the swarming process is intended to take one hive and create two.

- As the hive prepares to swarm there is a laying cycle both to supply newer/younger/hardier bees for the swarming process, and to also to "restock" the hive as a portion of the bee population leaves.
- Drone laying also increases during swarm season to support the queen mating process outside the hive.
- One or more queen cells are also (ideally) capped and prepared to hatch after the swarm and old queen have left the hive.

The swarm will need to setup a new home, pulling comb and laying eggs to establish itself. To pull comb, feed itself and feed brood, bees require honey. As such, in preparation for swarming the queen quits laying, slims down, and prepares for flight, and the rest of the bees engorge themselves and take as much honey as they can haul with them when they leave.

Carrying a heavy load, they are a bit less maneuverable and generally less aggressive. While a swarm looks like an angry mob, they are actually quite docile and easy to handle. I have experienced far less aggression when handling swarms than when doing regular hive inspections where there is always that one guard bee that determined to make a nuisance of herself.

Honeybees are cavity nesters. In nature, they will most often nest in tree hollows, but also in other cavities like the walls of homes and sheds, abandoned barrels and drums, caves or rock overhangs. While not common, bees can nest in the open, building comb and laying brood in it hanging from a tree branch or in other less protected location.

Swarm retrieval (or swarm collection) is going after a swarm, often up in a tree, where the goal is to gain access (via use of a ladder, climbing or long pole with collection tool at the end) and get as much of the swarm (and hopefully the queen) into some form of container for transport back to your apiary. Swarm retrieval can also involve opening the wall of a home, or other cavity, to extract bees and comb.

Swarm trapping is understanding the bee's natural tendencies and needs when swarming and creating the environment they are looking for, so they come to you (or your swarm trap).

- Create a cavity: Larger or smaller cavities may be required based on swarm size, but studies have found that 2 cubic feet (+/-) is a good cavity size so they can manage cavity temperatures.
- Have an entrance below the frames (entrance size must be defensible, ~1-2 square inches)
- 1-2 frames of old dark comb allow for immediate laying and will smell familiar to bees.
- Remaining frames should be waxed and ready to pull. Make it easy to move in and set up shop.
- Propolis smeared inside the swarm trap also adds bee familiar smells.
- Lemongrass oil (smells like nasonov) or a commercial swarm lure (swarm commander) can be used as an attractant.
- The goal of the attractant is not to 'lure' bees from an established hive, but to make the swarm trap appear to be the best available option for a swarm looking for a new home.
- Don't use frames with honey in them, this simply attracts ants, beetles and other pests when there are no bees to keep them out.
- Deploying swarm traps (setup as above) early in the swarming season allows them to be discovered by foragers doing their thing. Then, when a swarm needs a place to go, hopefully your swarm trap gets a look.

Placement of swarm traps is also important to making them attractive:

- 10'-12' off the ground (in nature natural hive locations are elevated to avoid – to the greatest degree possible – pests and predators that would like to eat bees and/or honey)
- Trap entrance facing the AM sun (East, SE or South)
- Near water helps the trap be found by foraging bees
- I nail/screw a PT 2"x4" to a tree at 10'-12' and ratchet strap my swarm traps to the tree
- Not too close to your hives/apiary*

* Bees attract bees. Swarms caught in close proximity to your apiary may not be your bees.

Once the queen starts laying, they are unlikely to abandon the hive, but if the swarm is queen-less it cannot produce the eggs from which to make a queen:

- Once a trap is occupied, I do not disturb them immediately. Allow them to setup shop and get into a routine (a few days to a week)
- Inspect the hive for the bees coming/going behavior. Bee's simply "hanging out" but not coming and going with purpose likely do not have a queen. Foraging bees coming and going with purpose likely means you have a queen.
- If a queen suspected I generally give them 1-3 weeks to lay brood and begin to build up their numbers before attempting to move them. I have left bees in the swarm trap for 4-6 weeks due to weather, busy life, or short on wooden ware into which to move them. (not ideal, see below)
- If a queen is not suspected, prepare to lower the trap, and do an inspection. If possible, have a frame from another hive handy that has fresh eggs and larvae. If no queen is found and there is no sign of any laying after a few days to a week, they do not have a queen. Providing a frame from another hive with eggs/larvae will allow them to make a queen and anchor the hive to the trap.
- Given inspections are done during daytime (and foragers are returning to my trap site while I am inspecting) I generally return the trap to its perch after supplying eggs/larvae.

Retrieving your swarm trap

- Like any hive, bees have generally returned by dusk.
- When ready to remove the swarm trap from its perch and relocate it, I generally do this before dawn when I expect most bees are present. During late spring and during warm weather, it is not uncommon to find some bees on the outside of the hive, even when dark outside. The queen and nurse bees are safe inside and they are the nucleus of this hive which you are trying to retrieve.
- I block the entrance to keep bees from leaving while being moved, and any on the outside can come along for the ride, or not.
- I take the loaded swarm trap to where I intend to be their permanent location and open the trap from whatever I blocked it with. I let the bee's orient to the location and then (in the exact same spot) setup a deep box and move the frames with the bee's, brood, and queen into that deep box. I keep the frames in the same order and add additional frames to the outside of these. (my swarm traps have 6 deep frames; my deep boxes take 10). Small swarms can have their frames loaded into a NUC instead of a 10-frame box.

It is sometimes deceiving, simply by looking at bee traffic at the trap, to know how big a group you have captured. If you know or suspect you have captured a large swarm, know that they are building quickly:

- They will quickly fill 6 frames in a trap and fill them with brood, honey/bee bread, or both, and they may swarm again for lack of space.
- They will start pulling comb off the bottom of frames (sometimes at connecting frames at weird angles) making it harder to pull the frame and get them into a deep box.

- And your swarm trap is getting heavier each day. If you are climbing a ladder in the dark to retrieve your swarm trap, you do not want to be retrieving a 40lb+ swarm trap.

BE PRAPARED, when transferring frames from your swarm trap, for managing comb on the bottom of frames. That comb is often loaded with eggs and larvae.

- Have assembled frames with no foundation and an ample supply of rubber bands are a quick and easy way for managing this comb in quantity.
- "Square up" the comb as needed to fit into the frame (or arrange multiple smaller pieces) and stretch rubber bands top to bottom and side to side to hold it in place. Once in the hive the bees will glue it all together and glue it to the frames with wax.

Once in a box in your apiary, these new bees can be managed like any other hive. Know that this hive likely has the "old" queen from wherever it left and will generally be replaced (superseded) by the hive. While still in the trap, or just into your box, if you see eggs/larvae/brood but no queen, this is likely happening. There is no need to panic and go buy a queen, they are doing what bees do. Simply give them time.

If you are worried about the unknown feral genetic stock of your newly acquired swarm you can requeen them yourself from a known genetic source. I have found captured swarms make strong hives and tend to embrace them as survivor stock and I do not requeen as a practice unless they appear queen less.

Russian "Scions"

A new (and untested) tool in my swarm trapping inventory is a Russian Scion. This is a tool for use in your apiary that provides a swarming hive in your apiary a place to land and gather once leaving your hive box. It has bee-friendly smells, is out in the open as a place to gather (as they would on a branch) until they decide where they are going, as it is designed such that it makes retrieval easy (if you are there and know you have a swarm gathered on it). Display/discuss my Scion.

Other display items: Swarm bucket, queen hotel, queen/frame transport box Whatever else I pack in prep for this presentation.

Helpful Links:

Swarm Trap 101: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1e-5v0GP9I>

Swarm Trap Plans: <https://horizontalhive.com/how-to-build/swarm-trap-free-plans.shtml>

Attracting Swarms: <https://horizontalhive.com/honeybee-swarm-trap/bait-hive-how-to-catch.shtml>

Russian Scion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdWMJdjeVc4>