



Spilling *The* Honey

MARCH 2024

NEWSLETTER EDITORS:
KATHY BOURN & PETER HELFRICH

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We just concluded another sensational conference! Thank you to all those who worked all year, all the weeks since our last conference, and the day of this spectacular Spring 2024 conference. It took the whole GBA board and we were very successful. Our officers and directors deserve credit for sharing their talents and achieving goals within their own areas of expertise. In particular, we thank **Bobby Chaisson, Emily Heath, Drew Harvey, Julia Mahood, Mark Shields, Jonathan Hayes, and Olivia Menard** who all worked before and during the conference to make the conference run smoothly. Many thanks go to **Brutz English** and **Katie Goodman** for managing our first ever teaching honey show and dispensing knowledge and advice to those who entered and were allowed to watch the judging take place.

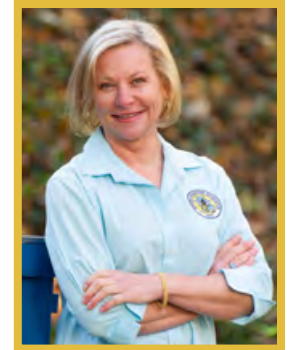
Please take a bow and applaud each other for volunteering the time and energy necessary to make the Georgia Beekeepers Association such a great organization. So many people helped in so many ways. I know I've missed thanking some of you by name, but know that I appreciated what you each do for GBA. Thank you for the privilege and honor of being on this journey with you!

Notably, following his conference keynote address, UGA's **Dr. Keith Delaplane** announced his pending retirement. (See page 8 for more coverage.) In a heart-felt address, followed by a standing ovation, he shared his gratitude for all those he has spent his career with and of course for the honey bees. GBA would not be what it is today without Keith's nurturing support over the decades. On behalf of everyone at GBA, I'd like to wish Keith well as he embarks on the next exciting chapter of his life! 🐝

- *Gina*

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GINA GALLUCCI
President,
Georgia Beekeepers
Association

WHERE'S WAGGLE?

Our mascot Waggle finds great places to hide herself in this newsletter. Watch for Waggle as you read this month's edition. Our hope is as you search for her, you'll find many great articles to read. When you find her, **click here to enter our monthly Where's Waggle contest.**

Remember, the image of Waggle seen here DOES NOT COUNT.



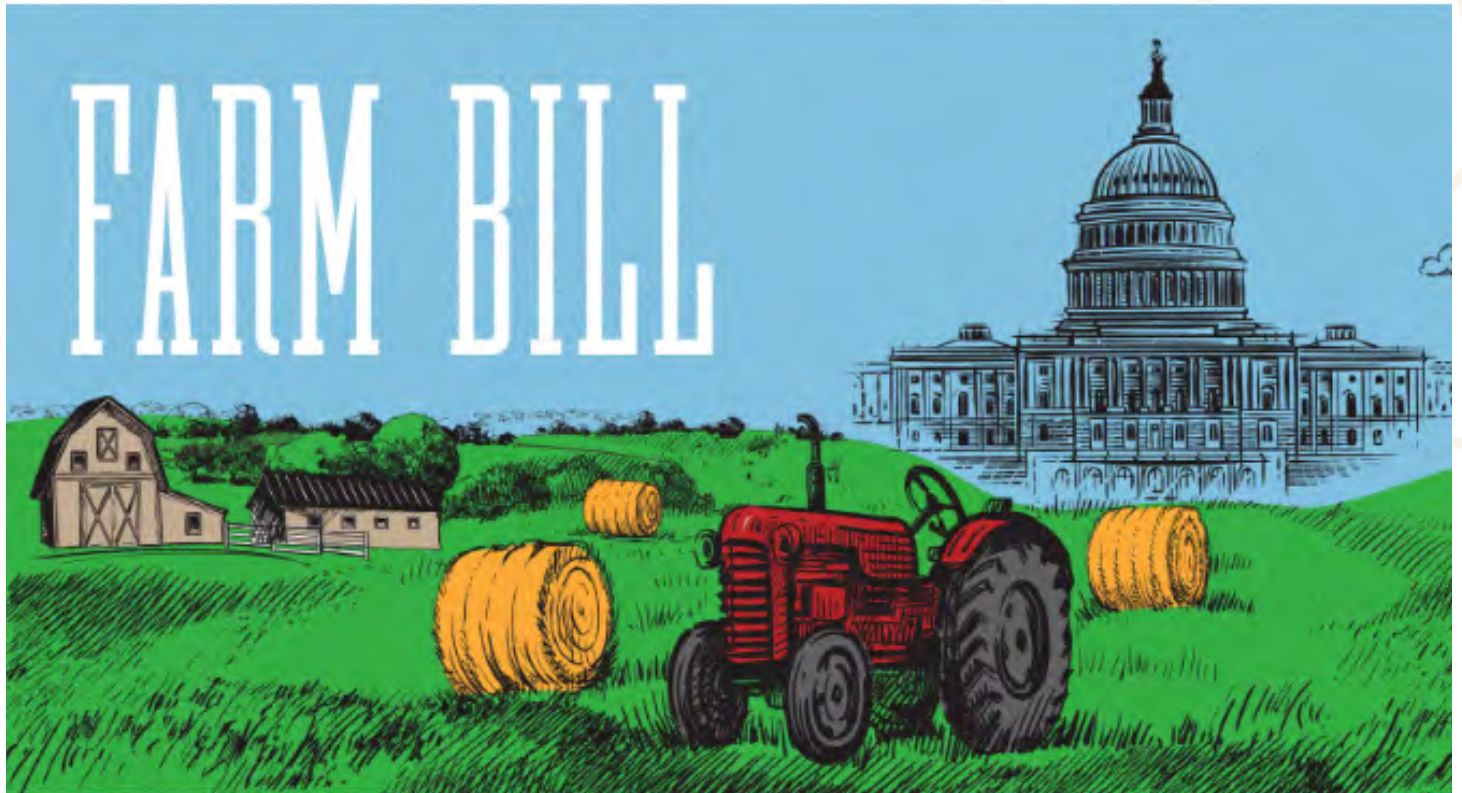
Of the nine readers who correctly found Waggle in February, we randomly selected

Gerald Collins (right), a member of the Northwest Georgia Beekeepers, as our winner. These are the names of all of you who discovered Where's Waggle last month:



Lesla Pierce, Claire Sirmans, Kevin McCraney, Emily Heath, Ernest M Dyck, Gerald Collins, Annika Lundberg, Annie Cheatham, and Maria Moore. Congratulations on all of your sharp eyes.

👉 **Click on the article titles below** to jump directly to that page.



FARM BILL UPDATE

Voice Your Support For Beekeeping In Georgia

By Virginia Webb

Our nation's Farm Bill is an omnibus, multi-year law that governs an array of food and agriculture programs. Over 80% of the Farm Bill is to fund nutrition, which includes SNAP, WICK and other smaller nutritional programs, but it also includes conservation, commodities, rural development, agriculture research, forestry, energy and other items.

In the next few weeks, each local Georgia beekeeping association will receive a letter from GBA President, Gina Gallucci. This will be a template for your local association to utilize when contacting with your congressional representatives in support of these important items within the Farm Bill.

program and to provide increased funding for our USDA-ARS Bee Labs in order to ensure we are ready to combat any new threat from any invasive pest like the Yellow

Legged Hornet or *Tropilaelaps* mite.

It will also include a segment called the *HIVE ACT – H.R. 4764: Honey Identification Verification and Enforcement Act*. This bill requires the USDA to set a standard of identity for honey in the U.S.

In the next few weeks, each local Georgia beekeeping association will receive a letter from GBA President, Gina Gallucci. This will be a template for your local association to utilize when contacting your congressional representatives in support of these important items within the Farm Bill. It is important that our representatives know the seriousness of passing this bill. Lawmakers make decisions on behalf of their constituents, and when hundreds of Georgia citizens speak out on one important subject, they are certainly more willing to pay attention and work to support that issue.

This bill will impact our entire industry and it is important that we work together in letting our legislative representatives know the importance of this bill to beekeeping and agriculture. 🐝



How to apply for **GBA License Plate Funds**

The best way to fund your club projects, research interests, or educational programs is through the GBA license plate grant program. A few examples of what beekeepers have used this funding for:

- Beekeeping short course materials
- Displays for clubs to use at events
- Observation hives
- Research projects
- Participation in the BIP Sentinel Apiary Program
- Club speaker fees
- Books for club libraries
- Educational materials to hand out at honey stands
- Equipment for club apiaries

Applying for a license plate grant is easy! **Click here to access the application** and read more about the process.

(Note, since grants are only available to current GBA members, you will have to sign in to access the form.)

Please follow the instructions carefully so that your request will not be held up.

If you receive a grant we will ask you for photos of your project (if applicable) so please take and keep lots of pictures. 📷

GBA License Plate Proceeds Committee

Committee Chair Julia Mahood

GBA President Gina Gallucci

Bob Binnie

GBA Treasurer Drew Harvey

Gail Dean

GBA Secretary Mark Shields

Katie Goodman

FEATURED GRANT RECIPIENT:

Paulding County Beekeepers Association

Paulding County Beekeepers Association (PCBA) welcomed 96 new and experienced beekeepers to their Bee College held at Chattahoochee Technical College in Dallas, GA. Throughout the day, participants selected courses ranging from beginning beekeeping, advanced bee care, or using by-products from the hive. Bob Binnie was the keynote speaker. PCBA would like to thank the Save The Honey Bee License Plate program for their help in funding this college. GBA was on hand to share the purpose of the program and to talk about GBA. 🐝

The Georgia Save The Honey Bee License Plate Bill reads:

40-2-86 (m) (14) A special license plate promoting the conservation and protection of the official insect of this state, the honey bee. The funds raised by the sale of this special license plate shall be disbursed to the Georgia Beekeepers Association and shall be used to increase public awareness of the importance of the conservation of the honey bee and for funding and supporting numerous association programs, including but not limited to the training and education of both new and experienced beekeepers, prison beekeeper programs, grants to beekeeping related nonprofit corporations, beekeeping research facilities in this state, and projects that encourage public support for the license plate and the activities it funds. Such special license plate shall include the phrase "Save the Honey Bee" in lieu of the county of issuance.



Plants for Bees:

🐝 Mahonia (*Mahonia* spp.) 🐝

By **Kathy Bourn**

Often mistaken for a holly bush, the mahonia plant has the spiked leaves that a gardener can love as a privacy hedge or hate as a painful ornamental. They are in the barberry family so some call them a holly-leaved barberry. The large foliage catches our eye but it's the early spring flowers that attract our honey bees.

The yellow (rarely red) flowers emerge from racemes that are two to eight inches long. They hold an abundance of nectar in the early days of the honey flow. Our bees can also start early pollen gathering from mahonias.



These upright shrubs offer year-round interest. They provide something for both pollinators and birds. The fragrant yellow flowers are for the bees and butterflies while the birds enjoy the berries and the thick foliage as a nesting place. An added bonus is that the deer won't touch them. They are also pest and disease resistant.

Mahonia is native to North America yet there are also Asian varieties. The genus name is derived from **Bernard McMahon**, one of the plant stewards from the Lewis and Clark Expedition. They are hearty in zones 5 to 9 but flourish in the southeastern and northwestern regions of the United States. Many people in these areas know the Mahonia as Oregon Grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*). It is just one of the 70 species of mahonia. Some species like the leatherleaf mahonia (*Mahonia bealei*) are considered invasive in southern states. Readily available varieties include: Marvel mahonia, Creeping mahonia, and Fremont's mahonia.

It is a very slow growing plant and can take 20 years to reach five feet like the one in my yard. Of course that depends on if it's planted where it likes, which is in partial to full shade and moist acidic soil. They require little to no maintenance but they don't like to be moved. It's best to plant mahonia during mild weather in the spring or fall. This plant is drought tolerant and can usually handle temperatures around five degrees fahrenheit if kept out of the wind.

You'll want to avoid the spiked leaves, but let your bees enjoy mahonias. 🐝





2024 SPRING Conference RECAP



Top: Always an engaging speaker, the University of Florida's Dr. Jamie Ellis delivered a fascinating keynote on *The Science of Using Pollen Substitutes*. Above Left: GBA board members and club presidents gathered on Friday afternoon for the association's business meeting. Above Right: At Friday's dinner, Cariolan queen breeder Megan Mahoney recounted her many varied experiences in beekeeping.

You Can Help Plan Next Year's GBA JamborBEE!

Next year instead of a spring conference, GBA is having a JamborBEE and we are SO EXCITED! Of course, you must be wondering what in the world is a JamborBEE?

It's a party! And we need your help to plan it.

The committee in charge of your JamborBEE includes: **Mary Cahill-Roberts, Bobby Chaisson, Gail Dean, Dan Long, Jason Palmer, and Linda Tillman (Chair)**. Like any good party, we can use your help with ideas and wishes for how to make this a very fun one-day party.

Please fill out our JamborBEE survey by clicking [here](#) and share with us any ideas and preferences or wishes that you think would make the JamborBEE a success. 🐝



Linda Tillman updates the GBA board of directors meeting on plans for next year's new JamborBEE.





2024 SPRING Conference RECAP

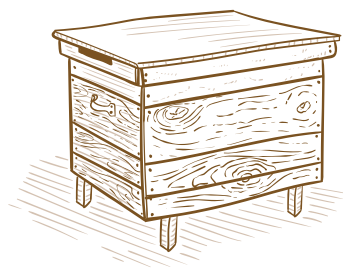
Right: Members of the GBA board and regional directors (back row): Brutz English, Olivia Menard, Ray Jones, Peter Helfrich, Stephanie Scott, Linda Tillman, Emily Heath, Kathy Bourn, Mark Shields, Drew Harvey; (front row) Gina Gallucci, Julia Mahood, and Bobby Chaisson. Below: Prime advertising space on the GBA website was auctioned off in between keynote speakers.



Right: GBA Spring 2024 Conference Keynote speakers were Dr. Jamie Ellis (University of Florida); Carniolan queen breeder Megan Mahoney (Mahoney Bees & Queens); and Dr. Keith Delaplane (University of Georgia).



Photo: Mark Shields





2024 SPRING Conference RECAP

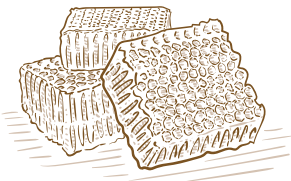
Photo: Bobby Chaisson



Above (clockwise): Georgia Bee Removal generously supplied the conference lanyards and name badges. Harold Lanier of Lanier Bee Barn explains the benefits of an insulated hive. In the vendor area, Dan Long discusses the EZZP queen cages he manufactures using 3D printers. Vendors offered all manner of beekeeping related products from the practical to the whimsical. One of the recovered Yellow Legged Hornet nests displayed by members of Georgia's Department of Agriculture.

Left: Carniolan queen breeder Megan Mahoney describes her travels and adventures with bees in Slovenia.





2024 SPRING Conference RECAP

Dr. Keith Delaplane Announces Retirement



Following his keynote address on *The Geographic Natural History Of Honey Bees: How We Got The Races We Use In Beekeeping*, the University of Georgia's Dr. Keith Delaplane announced that he will soon be retiring. Not entirely unexpected, the announcement was bittersweet nonetheless. Delaplane has been a powerful force in beekeeping research and studies at UGA for decades. In his remarks he thanked his parents who helped set him on the path of beekeeping, his longtime associates at UGA – especially laboratory manager and researcher Jennifer Berry (above right) – Dr. Lewis Bartlett, the University administration for its years of support, and his wife Sonja, with whom he looks forward to embarking on the next chapter of his life. Delaplane received a standing ovation from conference attendees. Ever generous with his time, Delaplane visited many of GBA's local clubs every year, sharing his knowledge and the latest in apiculture research. We wish him all the best! 🍯



2024 SPRING Conference RECAP



Above (clockwise from top left): Teaching Honey Show judges confer and discuss their opinions of baked goods with conference attendees. Senior Honey Judge Mary Cahill-Roberts talks about what judges are looking for in the category of extracted honey. This year's Teaching Honey Show gave conference goers the opportunity to "peek behind the curtain" and observe the ins and outs of the judging process as it took place. Ribbon winners in the mead division. The clarity of the mead is examined using a powerful light that allows the judges to detect even the smallest imperfections. Senior Honey Judge Brutz English discusses what criteria make for a winning mead entry. Holly Bayendor shows off her ribbon winning entries in photography and baked goods. Judges carefully review the presentation of a photograph. First place winner in the photography division Edward Morgan with his winning composition.



2024 SPRING Conference RECAP

Georgia Beekeepers Association 2024 Spring Honey Show Official Results

Best in Show Trish Tuttle – Amber Extracted Honey

INDIVIDUAL CATEGORY WINNERS

Class	Place	Name
Amber Extracted Honey	1st	Trish Tuttle
	2nd	East GA State College
	3rd	Paul Cerpovicz
	Very Highly Commendable	Tim Langford
Dark Extracted Honey	2nd	Trish Tuttle
Creamed Honey (soft set)	Commendable	Olivia Menard
Black Jar	1st	Trish Tuttle
Beeswax Block	1st	Virginia Webb
Six Matching Pieces of Beeswax	1st	Virginia Webb
	2nd	Edward Morgan
	3rd	Doug Shanks
Beeswax Candles	1st	Jay Parsons
	3rd	Virginia Webb
Artwork Related to Beekeeping	1st	Christy Jones
	2nd	Patti Parsons
	Highly Commendable	Cindy Hayes
	Commendable	Emily Heath
Crafts Related to Beekeeping	1st	Paul Cerpovicz
	2nd	Melissa Rowland
	3rd	Cindy Hayes
	Very Highly Commendable	Jay Parsons
Crafts Related to Beekeeping	Highly Commendable	Virginia Webb
	Commendable	Emily Heath



2024 SPRING Conference RECAP

Notions, Potions, & Lotions	1 st 2 nd	Robin Speer Edward Morgan
Photography	1 st 3 rd Very Highly Commendable Commendable	Edward Morgan Holly Bayendor Doug Shanks Mary Douglas
Meads (sweet)	2 nd Commendable	Jay Parsons Laurie Gray
Meads (dry)	1 st	Jay Parsons
Honey Beverages	Highly Commendable	Robin Speer
Honey Cake (pound cake)	1 st 2 nd 3 rd Very Highly Commendable	Lindsey Griffin Sharon Stewart Robin Speer Holly Bayendor
Honey Breads	2 nd Commendable	Robin Speer Doug Shanks
Honey Confections	1 st 2 nd 3 rd Very Highly Commendable Highly Commendable Commendable	Holly Bayendor Laurie Gray Lisa Black Mary Douglas Doug Shanks Robin Speer

HONEY SHOW OFFICIALS:

Sheryl Brousseau, Senior Honey Judge
 Mary Cahill-Roberts, Senior Honey Judge
 Brutz English, Senior Honey Judge
 Keith Fielder, Senior Honey Judge
 Rodney Garney, Honey Judge
 Steve Genta, Senior Honey Judge
 Robin Cahill-Roberts, Show Secretary
 Katie Goodman, Show Secretary



The Hornet Hunters

By Kathy Bourn

I've never had the opportunity to be an exchange student until now. Susan Jones, president of the South Carolina Beekeeper Association attended our GBA conference in exchange for a GBA representative going to their conference in Columbia.

I wasn't the only Georgia representative invited. Brad Cavin, the Clemson Apiary Inspector, asked the people from the Georgia Department of Agriculture's Plant Protection division to do an impressive show and tell about the Yellow Legged Hornet (YLH) and the nests they have found.

David Williams and Chris Adams, part of the group now known as "The Hornet Hunters," brought two of the YLH

nests along with samples of the hornets. They explained the methods they used to trap the hornets and how they employed bee-lining techniques to find the nests. Most of the nests were close to 100 feet above the group in the treetops.

The size of the nests are close to three feet in diameter. One attendee asked how long it took the hornets to build a nest that size and the hornet hunters said it was probably about three months.

For more information about the Yellow Legged Hornet and how you can report a sighting to the hornet hunters, go to the **Georgia Department of Agriculture website.** 🐝



Georgia Department of Agriculture "Hornet Hunter" Chris Adams



Georgia Apiary Inspector and "Hornet Hunter" David Williams speaks with Ben Powell of Clemson University Extension



2024 Short Course Guide

MARCH 9, 2024



Saturday, March 9,
2024

8AM—5 PM

East Metro Beekeepers Beekeeping Short Course

The East Metro Beekeepers Association will be hosting a Beekeeping Short Course! The course will include a club membership for 2024. There will be an hour break for lunch on your own. Fee will be collected during registration via cash or check.

\$30/INDIVIDUAL
\$40/FAMILY

Rockdale County Extension Office
1127 West Ave SW
Conyers, GA 30012

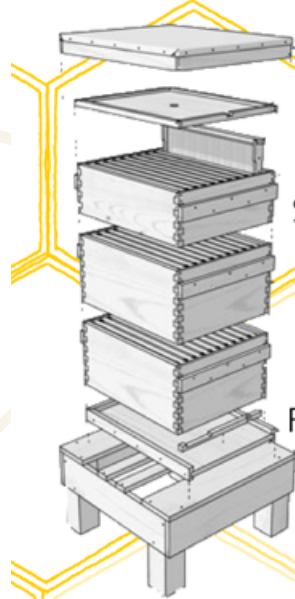
Registration will begin at 7:30 AM

Please send an email to: EastMetroBeeks@gmail.com if you plan to attend so we can make sure to have enough materials for everyone.



MARCH 16, 2024

BEEKEEPING 101



Saturday March 16, 2024
Argene Claxton
Canning Plant
1701 Houston Lake Rd.
Perry, GA
From 9:00am to 12:00pm
Then 1:00pm to 3:30 pm
in the Apiary.

Cost \$35 per person

To register for the class use the link or QR code:

<https://forms.gle/tfQMCKgih35goeBXA>

Heart of Georgia
Beekeepers
Association



MARCH 16, 2024

Beekeepers Club of Gwinnett County

March 16, 2024, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Hebron Christian Academy, 775 Dacula Rd, Dacula, GA 30019

The 2024 Bee School of the Beekeepers of Gwinnett County will take place on March 16th. The class is geared to the beginner beekeeper, but anyone is welcome. Included in the cost is the presentation material, *First Lessons in Beekeeping* book, one-year club membership, vendor catalogs, lunch, and gifts from the hive. We will also have door prizes and a chance to win a nuc.

We will have a live bee demonstration, so please plan to wear protective clothing.

\$65 for non-members and \$40 for additional family members.

\$40 for members and \$40 for additional family members

We are limited to 40 attendees. Payment is due by March 2nd.

Please scan the QR Code at right or email us at

gwinnettbeekeepers@gmail.com for more details.

Beekeeping School for Beginners

Presented by the Beekeepers Club of Gwinnett County

Have you ever wanted to learn the art (and science!) of beekeeping? Join us on March 16th for our 1 day beekeeping school to learn all the basics of beekeeping!

Registration ends March 2nd!

When:

March 16, 2024
8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Cost:

Members: \$40
Non-Members: \$65
Add additional family members
for \$40!

Where:

Hebron Christian
Academy
775 Dacula Road,
Dacula, GA

To Register: Email gwinnettbeekeepers@gmail.com or attend the February 13, 2024 meeting at 7pm (Hebron Christian Academy, 775 Dacula Rd).

OR

Scan the QR Code to Register:



Honey Bees At The Jarrell Plantation

By Steve Jones

After the GBA Spring Conference in Macon, my wife Christy and I decided to stay Saturday night for a less hectic and safer drive back home. With a daytime and state road drive, we usually find interesting places along the way. This time we made a side trip to Juliet, Georgia. There you can have lunch at the Whistle Stop Cafe, made famous in the movie “Fried Green Tomatoes.” As an American history enthusiast, another attraction for me is the nearby Jarrell Plantation.

The **Jarrell Plantation State Historic Site** is a former cotton plantation that was founded in the early 1800s by John Fitz Jarrell. The site is well preserved and an example of what life was like on southern plantations. The Jarrell family, and the people they enslaved, farmed the land for over 140 years.

The now 200-acre site features artifacts from the Jarrell family along with 25 original buildings, including the farmhouse, cotton gin, sugar cane press, and gristmill. You can see many of the structures needed for working on a 19th century plantation. It was added to the National Register for Historic Places in 1973.

Along with cotton, the farm raised livestock and grew food crops. As was common at the time, the plantation also had honey bee hives. The pictures show some of the beehives that have been used by the Jarrell family over the years. They also used barrels for hives. Although we saw some barrels, we were not able to determine if they were used as hives. We asked the ranger if we could see the inside of the television hive, and he removed the top.

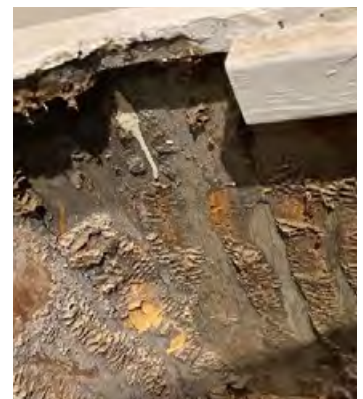
The first structure was built on the farm in 1847 and Jarrell enslaved close to 40 people to work the 660 acres. After the Civil War, the farm continued to operate with the help of formally enslaved people. The Jones County plantation grew to over 1,000 acres before John Fitz Jarrell died in 1884 and his son Dick took over.

In 1974 John Jarrell’s nine surviving grandchildren donated the plantation site to the State of Georgia to create a state park and historic site. **The State of Georgia’s Department of Natural Resources** operates the now 200-acre site and opens it to the public Thursdays through Sundays.

Many times it’s worth it to take the long way home. 🍯



According to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the Jarrell family kept bees for honey and beeswax candle making. As an example of how inventive they often needed to be on the plantation, they converted their first television set into a beehive after it quit working (below left). The photo below right shows the inside of the set. They also kept beehives in small barrels when not using more traditional hives.



PRODUCT PROJECTS:

Never Fail (Almost Never!) Swarm Lure

By Linda Tillman

TWhile an old hive or old comb can serve as a swarm lure, this recipe was given to me years ago by someone in Italy who was commenting on catching a swarm on one of my blog posts. I use it every year and it works almost 100% of the time. This recipe is good for one bee season because the lemongrass oil loses its umph, its attraction abilities, by the end of bee season.

Recipe:

- 1 one-inch cube of beeswax
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 15 - 20 drops of lemongrass essential oil.

Take one one-inch cube of beeswax and melt it in ¼ cup olive oil. I do this by putting the olive oil in a glass measuring cup sitting in a saucepan of heated water. Drop the beeswax cube into the olive oil. Heat the whole thing slowly until the beeswax is melted. I like to help it along by stirring with a wooden chopstick. When the wax has

completely melted, remove the measuring cup from the hot water. Let it cool about a minute. Then use the chopstick to stir in 15 - 20 drops of lemongrass oil.

Then pour it into a container with a lid and put it in your inspection equipment box.

To use it effectively in a bait hive, spread a smear of the stuff around the hole in the inner cover. Wipe it on the tops of a couple of frames in the bottom box of your hive. Get some on the tip of your index finger and spread it on the top of the entrance to the hive (not on the landing - don't want those bees to have messy feet).

It can also be used in a hive box in which you are housing a captured swarm to help them want to stay.

One year I caught a swarm in every hive in which I used this (three of them) - no effort and truly free bees! 🐝



Beeswax melting in olive oil



*Stirring with a tongue depressor
(generally I use a chopstick)*



Lemongrass essential oil



Container waiting to be used



Smear around the hole in the inner cover.



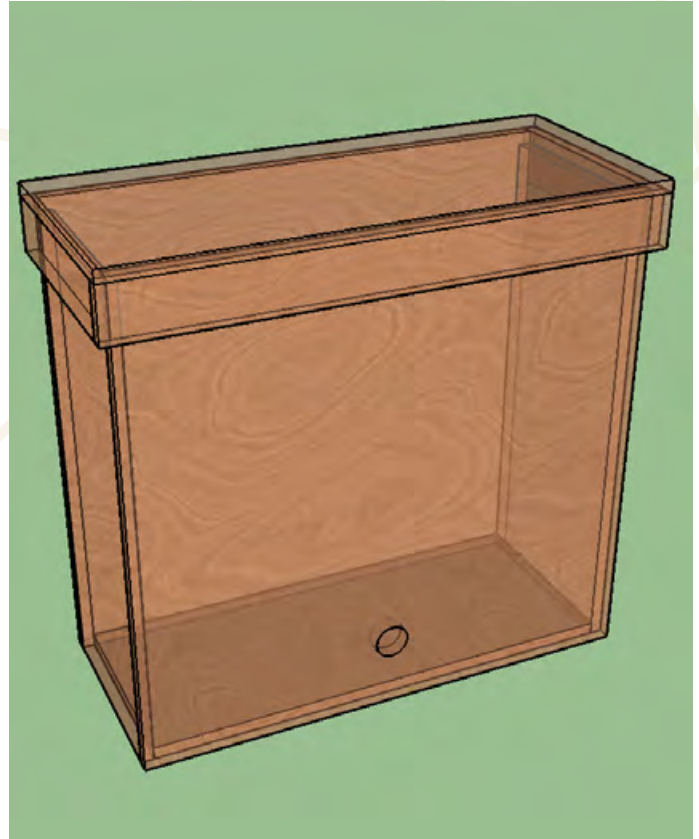


THE BEEKEEPER'S WORKBENCH: Swarm Traps

by **Kathy Bourn**

Beekeepers are generally industrious, ingenious and definitely frugal. That is why when it comes to making swarm traps we tend to find the cheapest method. Kevin McCraney found this plan for building three swarm traps out of one sheet of plywood. It shows the way to lay out the cuts so that there is little waste.

Clubs like Metro Atlanta Beekeepers and Lake Hartwell Beekeepers have held sessions that allow the members to see how to put a good swarm trap together based on similar plans.



Daniel Tompkins demonstrates how he assembles swarm traps using these plans at a Lake Hartwell Beekeepers meeting.

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

A single 4x8 sheet of plywood is enough material to make 3 traps. Everything is held together using Titebond III wood glue and 18-gauge finishing nails.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- 15/32" sheet of CDX plywood or exterior rated sheathing
- Exterior grade wood glue
- Finishing nails

CUT MATERIALS

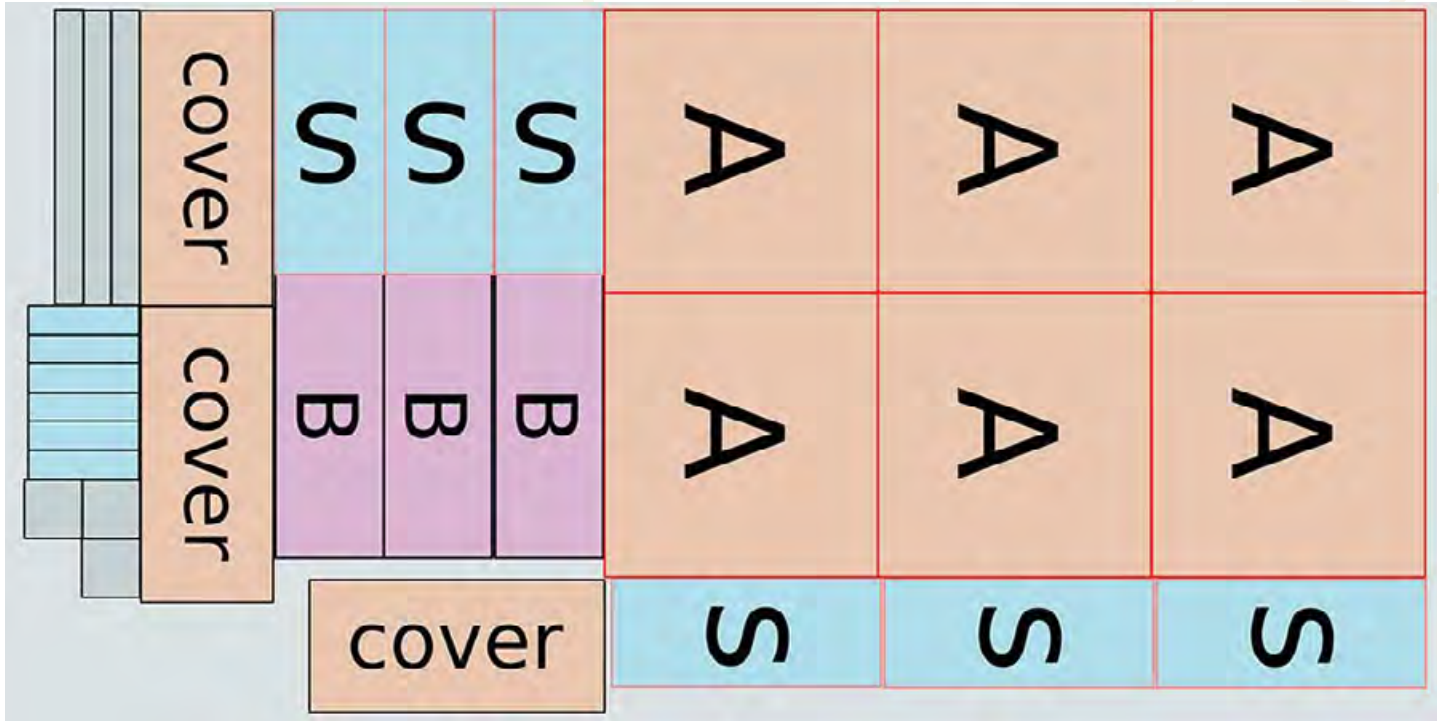
Start by ripping down the plywood into the appropriate sizes. The following table shows the cuts that need to be made, and the diagram shows how the stock was broken up.

Continued on next page >



THE BEEKEEPER'S WORKBENCH: Swarm Traps

> Continued from previous page



ENTRANCE

An entrance was created by drilling a 1 1/4" inch hole 2 5/8" from the bottom of the trap in the center. A galvanized nail was hammered into the edge of the plywood from the inside of the trap to keep out critters like birds. 🐝



An entrance gate can be added for transporting the bees. The entrance gate was created by drilling a 2" hole in the center of a 4" x 4" chunk of plywood, and then covering one side with screen.

CUT LIST (see diagram above)

Qty	Piece	Length	Width
3	Cover	20 1/8"	9 1/2"
6	Font/Back (A)	18 15/32"	19 3/16"
3	Bottom (B)	18 1/4"	7 1/2"
6	Sides (S)	7 1/2 "	18"
6	Side Rails	2"	8 7/16"
6	Front Rails	2"	20 1/8"
3	Entrance Gate	4"	4"

Do you have a beekeeping idea to share?

Please send us your submissions for our *Beekeeper's Workbench* column to newslettereditor@gabeekeeping.com



How I Challenge My Beekeeping Craft

By George Andl

Editor's Note: George Andl keeps bees in the Morningside neighborhood of Atlanta. George works in science and thinks as a scientist does. He is very interested in scientific research on the honey bee. He has worked on the Metro Atlanta Beekeepers Association project of building swarm traps. Long before that project began, George caught many, many swarms in his neighborhood. He is a prolific reader of bee books, articles, and Internet sites. He also listens to beekeeping podcasts. George keeps a blog about his bees called **BeeSurprised**. George will be bringing us a series of articles about how he gathers information from these and other sources.

recognize, pool is commonly used with liquids that fill upwards from the bottom of containers.



In email conversation, Derek recommends adding more hive insulation above the hive compared to the hive sides to discourage condensation from raining down on the bees. I currently use insulated hive wraps in winter and plan to close my top vent moving forward. 🍯

Editor's Note: To learn more about how bees manage in the winter and what the effects of insulation and ventilation are, **see this article** in *Bee Culture* by William Hesbach.

Perhaps it was Linda Tillman's survey, "Do You Insulate Your Hives In Winter?," that turned my intention to the topic or maybe I have always been obsessed with using insulated hive wraps in winter? Forty-four GBA members responded to the survey of which only five said they fully insulated their hives in winter. I find myself in this minority tribe - that's what I love about beekeeping, the diversity of beekeeping management opinions, or should I say management options.

If you turn to page 116 of Seeley's book *The Lives of Bees*, you'll find a reference to **Derek Mitchell** a PhD Candidate in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Leeds. With a web-based search, I discovered Derek's 2017 article in the *American Bee Journal* (Vol. 157 No. 8) **Honey Bee Engineering: Top Ventilation And Top Entrances**. The article illustrates that adding top ventilation significantly reduces humidity and the depth of the heat pool when compared to an uninsulated hive. Why? Warmer air is more buoyant and flows faster through the top vent.

Providing hive insulation in winter reduces bee-generated heat loss and this increases the temperature of the heat pool found at the top of the hive - see the image (below) from Derek's article. I'm using the word heat pool as temperatures measured relative to the top of the hive - I

Let us know what's buzzing with you!

Please continue to share your stories and photos with us. We appreciate your articles and updates on all your club activities. Thanks for taking the time to contribute to *Spilling the Honey!*



Kathy Bourn

Peter Helfrich

– Your Editors
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IT'S TIME TO...

March: The Most Critical Month

By Steven Page

Author's Note: All beekeeping is local. This article's dates to perform certain tasks and other recommendations are for the Piedmont of Georgia; your dates and recommendations will differ if you are in the coastal plain or the mountains.

What month of the year should your colonies be the strongest? March. Why? Because the main nectar flow starts in late March or early April, only strong colonies produce a surplus of honey, resulting in a honey harvest.

What month of the year do colonies produce reproductive swarms? March. Why? Because a March swarm can grow and become established and store plenty of honey during the main nectar flow to survive the coming winter. Most swarms in a hollow tree or wall do not survive a year.

If you produce nucs or packages, March is easy. If you produce honey, March is much more complicated.

Your colonies have been working to produce offspring since January. We call that offspring a swarm. It's the survival of the species. Honey bee colonies and the beekeeper producing honey are at cross purposes in March. The colony's and beekeeper's honey production goals will align in April.

Honey Production

March is when all your skills are required to prevent swarming, resulting in honey production in April and May.

Compared to February, March is warmer, with longer warm spells and more nectar and pollen; the worker population is larger, and the queen is laying prolifically. Manipulation of the hive (moving frames and supers) is acceptable in March.

Swarm prevention in March includes the following techniques:

- Opening the brood nest;
- Making a swarm prevention split;
- Opening the honey cap
(**checkerboarding**, another [link](#));
- Adding empty drawn comb (EDC); and
- **Equalizing brood.**

Open the Brood Nest

One deep super – Reconfigure the deep frames with brood in the middle, EDC next to the brood frames, then pollen, then honey on the outside (the frame next to the wall of the super). In a strong colony, EDC frames can be placed

between brood frames. Brood frames must be in pairs or triples with only one EDC frame between brood frames.

Two deep supers – All the brood frames are moved to the bottom deep. A frame of pollen is moved to the outside, keeping the brood away from the cold wall. Additional frames of brood go in the middle of the top deep. Then, alternate EDC and honey frames between the brood and the outside.

Make a swarm prevention split

If a colony is very strong and will probably swarm, make a swarm prevention split with the queen, 2-3 frames of brood, and a frame of honey and pollen in a nuc box.

Notch some of the young larvae in the hive. Feed the nuc.

Equalize The Brood

The brood in a strong colony can be moved to a weak hive after locating the queen; ensure she stays home. Up to a few frames of capped brood can be moved from a very strong colony (8-10 brood frames) to a weak colony. All the nurse bees go with the brood frames to continue incubating the brood. 🐝





BEE SHORTS

100-word answers to *Spilling The Honey's* monthly question.

At this time of year, in Georgia, there are many new beekeepers, ready to get started with their new interest in beekeeping after their short courses. We asked our members: **What would you have done differently as a new beekeeper if you knew then what you know now?** Our members have interesting takes on this subject. Here are some answers we received:

Kathy Bourn (*GBA Newsletter Co-Editor and member of Lake Hartwell Beekeepers*): What I would have done differently is take a beekeeping course *before* I got the bees. I wanted honey bees, so I joined the Lake Hartwell Beekeepers Association and ordered two nucs with the club. When the bees arrived at midnight in the church parking lot, the guys got out of the truck and all they said was, "The bees aren't happy." My protective gear had not arrived yet, so LHBA beekeeper, Condle McKenzie, lent me a veil and then instructed me on what to do with the bees. He also told me that I had the veil on backwards!

Jim Harris (*Beekeepers of Gilmer County, three years experience*): I would have spent the year learning about bees and beekeeping by attending the club's apiary on Saturdays whenever they had the hands on training before I invested in bees, equipment etc. I would also have borrowed the club's observation hive to see what the bees were doing and equate that information in my mind whenever an experienced beekeeper would speak about something specific. Also, I would have had my mentor more involved in my "training."

Mickey Anderson (*Metro Atlanta Beekeepers; 54 years experience*): I started keeping bees in 1970 and was responsible for about 25 UGA colonies my first year working them daily, usually by myself. The first year, I never put on gloves with hands and arms exposed. I learned to take watches and rings off, because I sweated more in these areas and was stung a dozen times around the watch, and got stung in very few places on the rest of my body. Use a flashlight to see eggs on dark, cloudy or shady days. Use bird-watchers binoculars to observe bee activities or swarms high in trees.

Terry Moore (*Lake Country Beekeepers*): I don't have many regrets as a beekeeper, but these three things come to mind:

1. I would have done my spring splits more diligently.
2. I lost one large swarm within 45 minutes of catching it because the bucket I had it in was not properly ventilated.
3. I would have been more vigilant to avoid wax moth damage.

Brian Fahey (*Charleston Area Beekeepers, SC; six years experience*): It was emphasized time and again, but it just didn't land until I was well into my second beekeeping season: You have

to manage for varroa mites! The disastrous results aren't always acute. Sometimes it takes an entire season to lose a colony. And then you're inclined to blame something else, like wax moths, which really are nothing more than opportunists cleaning out an already dead colony. Also: Keep your colonies strong and manage your space tightly to prevent pest infestation (especially small hive beetles). I like to keep boxes "bubbling with bees." Kinda' on a knife's edge between crowded and swarming.

Kelley Campbell (*Forsyth Beekeepers; 11 years experience*): I'd have asked, "Why?" I was a "Why?" kid....drove my parents crazy. Over time, I learned to stop bugging people with the constant questions and requests to explain everything. As a questioning beekeeper, we are usually given three answers from two people when posing one question. It's confusing. Asking WHY? would have cleared up many confusions and misunderstandings, and kept guidance transparent. Maybe advice is for commercial/sideliner goals, or lines the pockets of someone, or avoids having specific/single use equipment... ask why and understand the different methods of doing things.

Jonathan Hargus (*new GBA member, 21-plus years experience*): Even though I apprenticed under a commercial beekeeper for the first 15 years, what I would have done differently is twofold:

1. Started earlier. Like high school age as a freshman or something.
2. Take beekeeping as a business more seriously, earlier rather than later.

Despite these things, I am incredibly happy and content about my beekeeping journey, especially where I am now and where I am going with it! 🍯

This Month's Question:

We are about to be in the middle of swarm season. For April's newsletter, we want to know:

What is your best/worst/funniest/most difficult swarm catching experience?

Send your piece of advice in 100 words or less (*and a photo, if you have one*) to beekeeperlinda@gmail.com Please include your local bee club's name, if you belong to one. — **Linda Tillman**



SURVEY SAYS...

How Do You Prepare For Swarm Season?

By *Linda Tillman*

The bees are excited on our warm days and swarm season is nearly here. In the southern part of Georgia soon beekeepers will be chasing their first swarms. So in February we asked you about how you get ready for swarm season. We heard from 29 of you and this is what we learned:

APRIL'S SURVEY QUESTION:

When you read this, it will likely be the beginning of March. It's time in some parts of Georgia to make splits and almost time in other parts so:

How Do You Split your Hives?

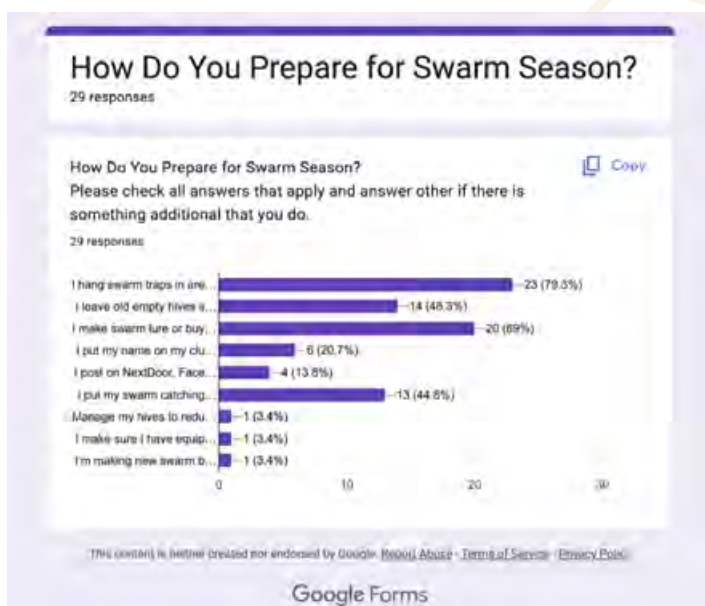
Now's the time to start thinking about splitting hives, if you want to increase your apiary size. There are so many ways. All have to include for each half of the split: a queen or resources to produce a queen, brood and larvae, food (honey and pollen)

What type of split do you do? Check all that apply. *

- Walkaway split
- Vertical split using a double screened board
- Overnight split (Queen excluder used on top of brood box)
- Artificial Swarm split
- Other
- Other: _____

If you have a secret to make a successful split, please write it here.

Your answer _____



To see the detailed full spreadsheet of responses, [click here](#).

Please [click here to answer our survey](#) so we can learn more about beekeepers and beekeeping practices in Georgia. 🐝

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Club News

Send the news about your club (description of a speaker's talk at your club's meeting, short course announcement, photos, events, etc.) to newslettereditor@gabeekeeping.com

Heart of Georgia Beekeepers

The Heart of Georgia Beekeepers met Tuesday, February 20th at the Argene Claxton Canning Plant in Perry. The program, "Every Beehive Tells A Story," was presented via Zoom by Linda Tillman, past president of GBA. Linda is a very talented speaker; her presentation included several videos of bee behavior. She also provided tips such as quiet boxes and using drapes when doing an inspection. It was a very informative program and there was a Q and A session afterwards. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, March 19, 2024. The program, "A Year in the Bee Yard," will be presented by Olivia Menard, UGA Master Beekeeper. You can view our activities at hogba.org.

Whitworth Bee Club

February 19th was the first class for the beginner beekeepers at the **Whitworth Women's Facility** in Hartwell, GA. The 18 women in the program decided that they will be known as the Whitworth Bee Club. **Drew Harvey** and **Kathy Bourn** will facilitate the program. Both the Georgia Department of Corrections and the GBA License Plate Fund contributed woodware, protective gear, tools, and the bees to the club. The ladies will start off with six Langstroth hives in April and learn the beekeeping craft throughout the year. The goal is to have each woman achieve certification from the UGA Master Beekeeper Program.



Metro Atlanta Beekeepers Association

On March 11, MABA will welcome featured speaker **Olivia Menard**, who will discuss some notable, but lesser known, bee scientists and their important apicultural discoveries in her presentation "How Did They Figure That Out?" Olivia is a UGA Master Beekeeper in Lawrenceville, GA. An Aerospace Engineer by trade, Olivia began keeping bees to better practice mindfulness. Bees have since become an integral part of Olivia's path to more local and sustainable food. Olivia is the Metro Atlanta Regional Director for the Georgia Beekeepers Association, and a member of the Beekeeping Clubs in Gwinnett County, Athens, and Gillsville. Olivia shares the craft of beekeeping with others through writing, speaking, and mentoring.



MABA Secretary **Linda Tillman** and club Swarm Commander **Dave Marshall** will lead a mentoring session on Swarm Management and Swarm Catching at 6:30 p.m. The featured speaker's program follows at 7 p.m.

MABA meets in Heritage Hall, inside Peachtree Road United Methodist Church, 3180 Peachtree Rd., Atlanta, GA in Buckhead. Our meetings are open to all who are interested in learning more about bees and beekeeping.



Rome Floyd Beekeepers Association Meeting

This month's meeting will be all about supporting the "New-bee Keepers"!

Bring your experience to the table and let's support the foks who are new to the hobby of keeping bees!

March 7th at 6pm @ Westcott Building at Berry College

Magnet Winners

By *Linda Tillman*

The people listed below were the first 25 of the 96 people who responded to our survey. A few of these winners were at the recent GBA Spring Conference. We will be mailing the magnets to those of you who were not there. We appreciate each of the enthusiastic and helpful responses of these first 25, along with the responses of the rest of the 96. We have made improvements and changes to the newsletter as a result of your feedback. Thank you to all of you who participated. This is your newsletter and we are trying to make it reflect all of the wishes that were included in your answers.



GBA magnet proudly displayed on Brian Fahey's vehicle.

Brian Fahey's friend, Susan Jones, who attended the GBA conference, took Brian's magnet prize home to him in South Carolina. Brian immediately put the magnet on his car and was so happy to get it. He also wrote us a note and said, "Apparently my tailgate isn't made of ferrous metal so I had to settle for the quarter panel. Thanks again. Y'all operate a helluva program and I'm proud to be a member. I'm originally from Tybee Island, so GBA has my heart."

Winners List

- Betsy Friedman
- Rodney Garner
- Ryun Forsman
- Sophie Raburn
- Beth Arechiga
- Michelle Brandy
- Cheryl Wolfinger
- Bobby Thanepohn
- Kat Moore
- William Conlon
- Georgia McPeak
- Kevin Ryan
- RV Dude
- Steve Garriga
- Susanna Capelouto
- Trish Tuttle
- Brian Bryant
- Dan long
- Brian Fahey
- Bobby Torbush
- Danny Harvey
- Bobby Chaisson
- John Hurley
- Paula Lane
- Tim Hoffman



Buzzle Page Answer Key



Certified Beekeeper Testing Opportunity May 4 in Decatur

This spring, **Metro Atlanta Beekeepers Association** will again offer beekeepers with one full year of beekeeping experience the opportunity to sit for the Certified Beekeeper test. Certified Beekeeper is the first level of the University of Georgia's Master Beekeeper program. The examination consists of two sections: a written test based on the content of Dr. Keith Delaplane's book *First Lessons in Beekeeping*; and a practical test including identifying beekeeping equipment and tools, diseases of the hive, and conducting a brief, basic inspection. The test date is May 4, 1-5 p.m. (rain date May 11). You must register in advance. Testing will be held at Academe of the Oaks, 146 New St., Decatur, GA 30030. The cost is \$75 per person. **For more information and to register, CLICK HERE.**

CERTIFIED BEEKEEPER TESTING

Take the first step towards becoming a Master Beekeeper.

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences

Buzzle Page

Stumped?
The answer
is on
page 23.

Catch A Swarm Word Find

D S S H A K E G Q E B J S F R
U H Y S S B S C O O P X T H A
I E N M B R A N C H R A B K M
A E E V E N T I L A T I O N P
E T N K W L O P E R S N A B D
B U N G E E C O R D H A U R S
X N F Y J S F H F Q Z S K U S
R D A F H Y Q Y X U A O I S L
B R N E H R S R E E A N N H O
T Z N N X U H A I E M O E P W
E V I C K P E Z X N U V Y I G
P V N E J D E M A R C H I N G
X E G E E Z T P Y H Z F F O F
C I I N O I N D Y C N U C O J
C L M V T Q S C O U T S T D H

- | | | | |
|-------------|------------|----------|------|
| Ventilation | Bungeecord | Marching | Nuc |
| Scouts | Fanning | Lopers | Slow |
| Queen | Shake | Branch | Veil |
| Scoop | Brush | Syrup | |
| Sheet | Fence | Sheet | |
| Nasonov | Ramp | | |