

# JOCO BEEKEEPERS



A monthly newsletter brought to you by the  
Johnston County Beekeeper's Association



*If it helps beekeeping, it is good for ALL beekeepers.*

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### Meeting information

JCBA meets on the **third Monday of each month at 7:00 pm** at Johnston County Agricultural Center  
2736 NC 210 Hwy  
Smithfield, NC US 27577

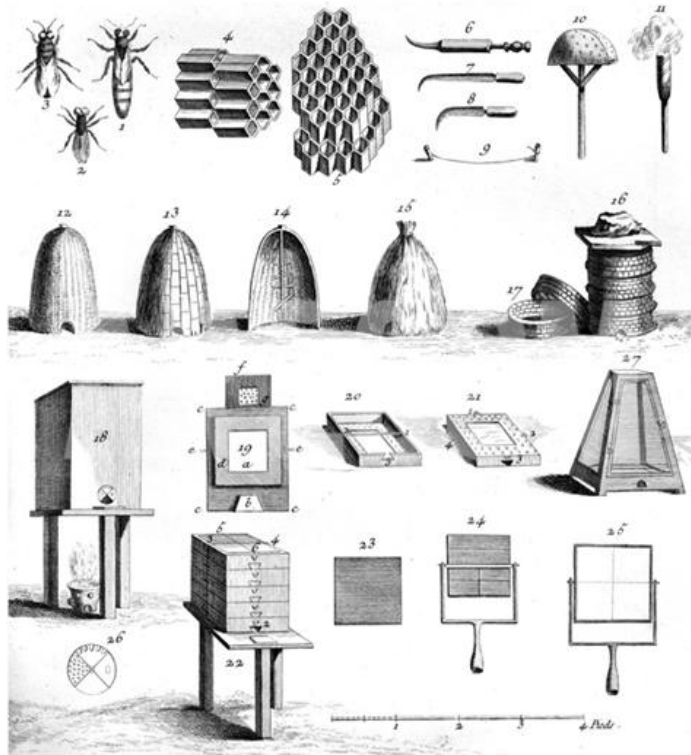
**April meeting agenda** -The April meeting will feature our very own Evelyn Vose discussing mite counts to monitor if your mite treatment is working.

Ronald Lassiter is donating a NUC and David Massengill is donating the NUC box as a door prize for the April meeting. There will be other door prizes as well.

Come to the meeting and score a great door prize.

### March Meeting 2016

**Attendance:** We had 39 attendees, with several new members signing up for membership. This month marks the beginning of membership for each of the recent bee school graduates. Be sure to introduce yourself to each of them and make them welcome.



*Some classic images of beekeeping equipment*

March Meeting 2016 ..... 1

Message From the President ..... 2

Guest Contributors ..... 2

**Against The Flow** ..... 2

**Another View on the Flow Hive** ..... 5

**JCBA Bee School** ..... 7

Just for Your Information ..... 7

Agenda for 2016: ..... 7

**Training for Leadership** ..... 7

**Enhance the Bee Schools** ..... 7

**Promoting a Stronger Bond** ..... 8

**Updating Bylaws** ..... 8

**3636 Mentor Program** ..... 8

Programs for the Year ..... 9

Events Coordinator ..... 9

**Howell Woodstock** ..... 9

**Pig Pickin'** ..... 9

Hive Map ..... 9

Member Businesses ..... 9

**Bee Related Businesses** ..... 10

**Non Bee Related Businesses** ..... 10

**Message From the President**

This month, as the nectar flow is beginning in full earnest, we have two articles on the Flow Hive. You will recognize one of our contributors, Hawley Prindle. In addition, we have added a special article from another contributor, for which we have obtained reprint rights. These articles are presented as information, not as endorsements or criticisms of any author, procedure, tool, or equipment.

As any of you know that have attended my bee classes, I am always a strong proponent of knowing "both sides of the story". The individual beekeeper must decide if the Pros outweigh the Cons, and there are always Pros and Cons.

So, rather than go into a long presentation, I will let the authors speak for themselves.

**Guest Contributors**

**Against The Flow**

*Maryam Henein, Founder, HoneyColony*  
[www.honeycolony.com](http://www.honeycolony.com)

Originally published 13 April 2015

*NOTE: This article is reprinted with the express permission of Maryam Henein. It gives another opinion about the Flow Hive. There are several links in the original online edition that could not be linked here. If you want to see the full edition with online links, you can view the article at [www.honeycolony.com](http://www.honeycolony.com). In the last few months, and in the future, we will be getting "up close and personal" reports about this system from May Markoff, one of our member beekeepers.*

Frankly, I am tired of people raving about how wonderful the Flow Hive invention is and posting it on my Facebook wall every other day. The virality of this fundraising campaign has been astounding. During my travels in Central America, I even had a Belgium restaurant owner in Nicaragua ask me whether I'd heard about it.

*"I love honey. This is amazing," you read over and over again in the comments from people worldwide who have no clue about beekeeping. The gadget allows you to harvest honey without opening the hive, and Australian inventors Stuart and son Ceder Anderson promise that there is "no mess, no fuss, no expensive processing equipment, and [that] the bees are hardly even disturbed."*

But just because no disturbance is seemingly occurring to the naked eye doesn't mean it's not happening. How arrogant humans can be.

The Flow Hive has already raised upwards of \$9 million and counting. Perhaps folks genuinely want to help the bees and think this gadget is the answer. Meanwhile this is

a testament that urban beekeeping is thriving.

Supporters argue that by simplifying (or automating) the most time consuming part of beekeeping—the harvest—more people may want to take up beekeeping. More beekeeping may lead to greater support to save bees and therefore Flow Hive is a positive thing.

At first glance, I too thought Flow Hive was a genius invention that honors the bees, but after looking under the proverbial lid, I've concluded that it takes the beehive and reduces it into a beer keg. It's animal husbandry with a negative twist.

*"One wants to see this be successful, easy to use, and contribute to the world of improved beekeeping,"* adds Kim Flottum, beekeeper and editor of Bee Culture magazine. *"But there's the concern, far in the back of my mind, that it may appear to make things too easy, fostering not improved beekeeping, but reduced attention to maintaining healthy bees."*

Here are three reasons (there are many more) why many folks think the flow hive just adds another level of separation between bees and beings.

### **1. Non-Existent Communion Between Bees & Beings**

The Flow Hive is touted as a *"beekeeper's dream."* But in my opinion, it's a wannabe's fantasy. The point of beekeeping is to commune with the bees, not be removed even further. There's nothing like peeking into a hive, slowing down with reverence and care, observing these virgin sisters of toil. Bees work themselves to death. Why should we have their food so easy?

Beekeeping involves putting on a bee suit (or not) and tuning into the bees to ensure that no harm is done. And if you happen to get stung once or twice, you can choose to see it positively. It's medicinal.

As Italian photographer and fellow beekeeper Renée Ricciardi writes,

*"Beekeeping involves respect, patience, and attention to the natural world. After years of beekeeping you become attentive to humidity every time you step outside, you start noticing which flowers bloom first, you stop hating pesky dandelions, and when it rains you think of the bees."*

Just like there is an indescribable satisfaction about eating food that you've grown, there's something magical about beekeeping. And it doesn't involve turning on a tap. Actually many hobby beekeepers will tell you that honey is not the main attraction. Stewardship is. And that entails checking on the health of the colony, observing brood patterns, examining the queen, making sure there aren't any parasites or pathogens, and observing the honey flow so you know what to leave behind.


With an automatic honey appliance, you get none of that. So even though there's a window and you can see the bees, you are clueless as to what is going on with the hive. As a friend recently stated, *"Flow Hive promotes the emotional detachment of factory farming."*

Commercial beekeeping meanwhile is a whole other ball of wax. It arduous work, involving long hours and a lot of casualties. You may likely have to

- 1) Get suited up
- 2) Smoke the bees
- 3) Open the hive
- 4) Remove the honey-filled frames
- 5) Brush the bees from those frames
- 6) Use a knife to remove the capping from the wax cells
- 7) Use a centrifuge to get honey out of the frame.

Flow Hive promises to remove all that *"messy hard work."* Which commercial beekeeper wouldn't be intrigued? Yet without some sort of communion, doesn't the process kind of look like honey robbing? Hands-off beekeeping? Free honey? Come on, it's fast food honey that cuts corners.





Incidentally, honey has its own flow depending on the season and is usually harvested only once a year. Will wannabe beekeepers be mindful of nature's rhythms or gorge on honey all year round? Most beekeepers, including myself, will tell you that honey is just a bonus. I keep bees because I love having them around. It's bee-centric. It's not a honey-centric endeavor. That's why they called their movie *More Than Honey*.

And consider this. In her six-week life span, one single bee will only produce a quarter of a teaspoon of honey. Honey is sacred.

*"I always tell beginners in my workshops, there is only one real reason to keep bees, and that is because they are fascinating. If you just want honey, make friends with a beekeeper,"* says a beekeeper in Australia who goes by Adrian the Bee Man.

## 2. Plastic Comb

This newfangled honey-collection system is comprised of plastic. It's basically the Langstroth hive on steroids. The bees build their own wax on top of plastic frames, fill the cells with nectar, and cap per usual. When you turn on the tap, presto — honey squeezes through the center of a plastic double-walled comb construction. Once draining is complete, you can reset the tap, and the comb goes back to its original position. Automation is in full effect.

Bees don't particularly like plastic. Ask any organic beekeeper. They don't need it. They fashion wax — a living substance — out of their own abdomens. Wax stores their food (nectar and pollen) and houses their young. Wax vibrates and changes with temperature.

*"...Comb is far more than a Tupperware container for somebody else's lunch; it is the tissue and frame of the hive and as such it forms multiple functions,"* writes Beekeeper Jonathan Powell, who has a long family connection with bees, and is a partner with a UK Charity called the *Natural Bee-keeping Trust*.

In his blog, he writes, *"Cells have wall thicknesses of just 0.07 mm, and are made from over 300 different chemical components. Wax removes toxins from the honey. The resonant frequency (230-270 Hz) of the comb is matched to the bees' vibration sensors and acts as an information highway between bees on opposite sides of the comb. Bees manage the temperature of the cell rims to optimize transmissions of these messages. Wax holds history and memory via chemical signals put into it by the bees."*

Instead of working with the wax comb they've created, the Flow Hive forces bees to deal with hormone-disrupting plastics that off-gas.

*"Honey bees are able to recognize the smallest differences in wax composition but not polypropylene,"* adds Powell.

Additionally, the best honey is fully capped. It's like putting a lid on a jar; honeybees ripen nectar by removing the moisture and sealing it off with wax. Honey that has been harvested with moisture content above 20 per cent and isn't capped is considered unripe and may ferment. Traditional beekeepers slice honey caps off with a knife and use a spinner, which removes honey from wax frames. They then reuse the wax in their hives once more.

Meanwhile, in colder climates honey often crystallizes, which means the Flow Hive may clog and require heating, killing the healing properties.

Incidentally, a Langstroth hive can be managed without any comb (so you let the bees make their own). It's how the backward beekeepers like Kirk Anderson and Dee Lusby run their hives.

## 3. Expensive Gimmick

*"The Flow Hive is now the largest international campaign ever on Indiegogo,"* announced Slava Rubin, CEO of Indiegogo.

They surpassed their goal of 70,000 in less than 10 minutes and raised \$2.1 million in

one day, setting a record for the most funds raised in 24 hours.

For \$600, you get a full automatic bee farm. But many beekeepers I've spoken to believe that it's overpriced and unsustainable. Flow Hive actually costs more than a standard Langstroth hive.

Flow hive campaign statistics show that about 10,403 products have been ordered for \$5,017,410. Total campaign funds total \$9,775,109. Product sales account for 51% of the total. The other \$4,757,699 appears to be contributed for no product. Where will the rest of the money go?

Flow Hive has been described as a possible "key" in keeping the world's bee population from further decline. Really? How so? This just makes honey collection simpler and easier. How does it help bees survive the issues they are currently grappling with? Like systemic pesticides and loss of habitat?

To quote Richard once more, Flow Hive invites *"lazy, hungry honey-eaters who are also terrified of being stung. It will create a generation of oblivious people who don't know the delicate mechanics of the beautiful hive."*

Don't get wooed by the hype and the mesmerizing images of honey. If you really want to help bees, why not support activists like myself who works our bee hinds off for very little pay. Or, get involved with Center For Food Safety or show *Vanishing of the Bees* to your children. Or, take up real beekeeping.

Please note that no one is saying that these people are bad. But as they say, the road to hell was paved with good intentions and "good inventions" too.

Not everything that has to do with bees is good for the bees.

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## Another View on the Flow Hive

*Hawley Prindle*

I often think of Clem Billy Talliver when spring comes around. He is gone now but he would tell me about the beekeeper that always seemed to be one step behind his bees. According to Clem there was this beekeeper who had all kinds of plans to do better this year than last and this year there was no way the bees were going to get the upper hand on him. Clem made fun of this guy all the time. He told me that if I kept bees like Mr. Ken Lie-a-lot the bee season would be over before I got around to lighting my smoker. All of us know that the bee season is well underway by the time April comes on and the season of ***gullibility begins***. You did know that April starts with April Fool's Day.

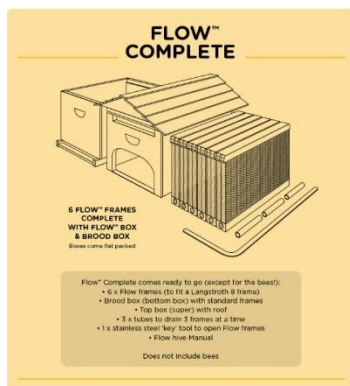
It caught my fancy when I saw ads for the Flow Hive being touted as the end all of beekeeping. I am an old beekeeper and the passion to open my hive, look inside, pull frames, and see if the bees are progressing as they should is rewarding for me. In fact, it is almost intolerable to wait until March to see those girls flying and bringing in nectar and pollen. I have never worried if I lost a hive over winter; I could always make a split to make up for any loss. I get a number of swarm calls in April. I could if I wanted, add a lot of new hives to my apiary but I am getting old and it is sometimes difficult to keep up with the three I have.

I am not sure what beekeeping is coming to? The Flow hive is a mystery to me. Just to remind you, if you missed all the fuss about those guys making 12 million dollars with this wonderful hive that requires no mess, no fuss, no expensive processing equipment, and [that] the bees are hardly even disturbed.

The remarkable thing about this hive is the way it is being marketed. You cannot get it at your local bee supply store. You order it online with some kind of promise that it will arrive sometime this year. "The Flow Hive has been described as a possible "key in

keeping the world's bee population from further decline. Really? How so? This just makes honey collection simpler and easier. How does it help bees survive the issues they are currently grappling with?" quote from www.honeycolony.com.

"Flow™ is the most significant innovation in beekeeping since 1852."



Turn a tap and watch honey Flow directly out of the hive! This makes the honey harvesting so much easier and saves lots of effort and time.

Well this reminds me that Mr. Ken Lie-a-lot is at work convincing everyone that there is a way to take money from people who have money to spend. *"Step right up folks, the medicine man would shout. This fine bottle contains all that will fix your ills - everything from gout to cancer to mental illness."*

Here is what is hyped on the hive. And what beekeeper wouldn't like something like this?

*"Minimal Disturbance During Harvesting = Less stress = Happier Healthier bees"*

*Potentially more honey can be harvested. No wax, no filter. It is pure fresh unprocessed honey, ready for the table.*

*Taste all the different flavours of the season! Less chance of stings! We have built the Flow Frame to accommodate a pneumatic system allowing for the possibility of automated harvest and remote harvest. The options are endless. Put a hive on your roof and pipe honey right into your kitchen at the press of a button. This will be an available upgrade in the future."* quoted from their web site: honeyflow.com. The cost of the complete hive is US \$699.00 and it does not include the cost of the bees or shipping cost or taxes. According to the

literature, it will be shipped in April. That is right, you pay for it now and they will manufacture it and ship it to you.

Wow! They even picked a remarkable shipping date! How long does it take a package shipped from the other side of the world to reach you?

And more hype!

**"Flow™ Hive - Western Red Cedar**

*You can expect the sustainably sourced western red cedar used in the Flow™ Hive to last much longer than pine timber in traditional bee hives. It comes with everything you need to get started – except for the bees.*

*"Apply a coat or two of tung oil to bring out the lustre of this beautiful timber, and help it last even longer."* I guess this is saying it isn't painted to protect the wood from the weather. I also found out they have Terms and Conditions of Sale all subject to the laws of New South Wales, Australia. Evidently, when you purchase one on line, you agree to a contract. Lawyers have terms and conditions of sale all in favor of the seller.

*"There's a sucker born every minute"* is a phrase most likely spoken by David Hannum, in criticism of both P. T. Barnum, an American showman of the mid-19th century, and his customers. The phrase is often credited to Barnum himself. It means *"People are foolish, and will always be fools."*

Now don't get me wrong, if you bought one of these things, I would sure appreciate if you would let me know how good it is. My mind thinks of such negative things such as:



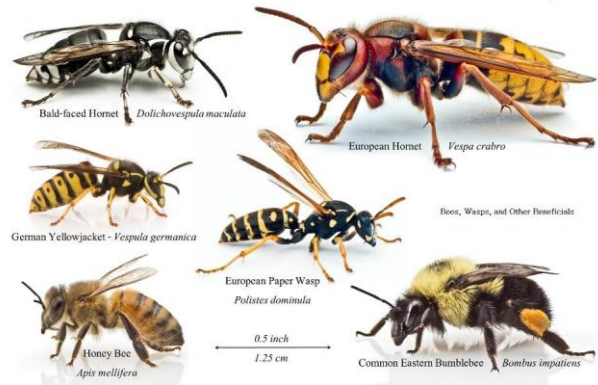
- What happens to these plastic frames that drain honey into tubes to flow directly into bottles if the honey granulates in the comb?
- What happens if the queen lays eggs and brood is raised in any of the cells in the frames?
- What happens if the beekeeper tries to harvest honey before it is ripe? Certainly, the high moisture honey will flow but one harvesting honey should know that the honey in the comb is capped over and ripe.
- What about stewardship of a hive? I like to know that my bees are healthy and evaluate the job my queen is doing. There is a need to open a hive to determine so many things about its condition.

As a friend recently stated, the Flow Hive promotes the emotional detachment of factory farming. Think about that: emotional detachment from keeping bees! I guess if they put jars being filled with honey next to the beehive - the ants, yellow jackets, hornets and other prey will not have to fight the bees for the golden harvest. We have enough problems with those critters now. I don't know how many beekeepers have asked me, "*What can I do about those ants crawling on or around my bee hive?*"

### JCBA Bee School

March 19, 2016, the first JCBA beginning bee school of the year started in Johnston County. The first class was held at the Livestock Arena. Remaining classes were held at the Johnston County Ag Center. Twenty Nine students attended the class.

### Just for Your Information



Bees, Wasps, Hornets

### Agenda for 2016:

#### Training for Leadership

When I first initiated this proposal, I thought it would be seen to be as a way to enhance the association by training members to become more active in the association.


I witnessed what happened to the first JCBA and how it slowly died without any training for future officer positions. The original JCBA eventually dried up and was inactive for several years. I had hoped that could be avoided with the current association, and that this program would be a way to train and ease members into positions of authority.

I believe that this program is essential to the long-term survival of the association.

#### Enhance the Bee Schools

Last August, there was a considerable scuffle in the JCBA about how and who would run the JCBA bee schools.

There were two factions with very different views about how the schools should be run. One faction believed that it should be a 100% multi instructor volunteer operation. The other faction was of the view that the schools should continue under Ray Hunt as the instructor as it had been for the past year. The JCBA board voted in a 5/4 decision to cancel a scheduled school that was slated to start Jan. 30, and voted for an



all volunteer school, but so far as I know, no one volunteered to teach the school.

It followed over into the JCBA elections in November, with Ray Hunt running as President against another board member that was in favor of the all-volunteer instructor format, supported by several other board members of the association. There were some very contentious disagreements, primarily among JCBA board members, about how the association would be operated in the future. Even the NCSBA got involved.

The association voted to elect Ray Hunt as President, and many of the conflicting board members either resigned, were defeated in the election, or decided to become inactive in the association. As is commonly mentioned during an election year, *Elections have consequences*. The bee school was voted on by the new board shortly after the election, and it was a unanimous decision to allow the school to proceed in the same style as in the previous year, with no cost to the association either financially or concerning personnel. The school was rescheduled for March 19, and had high attendance, a few applicants were turned away due to class capacity.

In an effort to allow some of those members that expressed an interest in being a volunteer instructor in the bee school, I presented a program to help train anyone that wanted to be an instructor shortly after the election. My background and skills of 20 years as an instructional designer and trainer would be used to assist any members that wanted to develop skills that could assist in the bee school. This program has been posted in every newsletter since then.

I had expected a large number of applicants, considering the scuffle for volunteer instructors, and I stood ready to assist and train anyone that was interested in doing so.

After actively seeking out all those volunteer instructors for the past four months, the

results have been the loud sound of “*crickets*”. I have had zero response from anyone that wanted to be a volunteer instructor, or to even be trained as a paid instructor. Apparently, all those *volunteers* volunteered not to do so. I will no longer ask for volunteers to train as paid instructors for the bee school.

### **Promoting a Stronger Bond**

Several members of the JCBA are also members of other local associations. It is highly recommended that current members of the JCBA attend or even join other local associations. We can all learn something from other associations.

We hope to have several cooperative projects with these other local associations.

### **Updating Bylaws**

Some of the things that we are working to update:

- The option of paid up membership.

We will vote on this at the April Meeting. There is a poll on the website under the Members Only Section. This poll will close April 4. You can see how other members of the association are reviewing this option.

- Term Limits for All Officers.

This is a proposal for a term limit of three years for all officers, with a two-year hiatus for that same office for that person. This is essential to ensure the long-term survival of the association. Voting in May on this proposal.

### **3636 Mentor Program**

Are you interested in being a paid mentor for new bee school students or other beginning beekeepers? If you have at least one year experience as a beekeeper, you may be eligible to participate in a pilot program to assess the effectiveness of a formalized 3-tier mentorship program.

Do you want to work with a mentor to develop your beekeeping skills? Be a part of



the 3-tier mentorship program. There is a small fee to participate in this program. If you have an interest in being a mentor or working with a mentor, contact [jacobee@earthlink.net](mailto:jacobee@earthlink.net) for more information.

If you have at least one year of experience as an active beekeeper and think that you could also benefit from a mentor, if you participate as a paid Tier 1 mentor, you will have priority access to Tier 2 mentors in the program.

Each T1 mentor is assigned to two local students. There are three T1 mentors per T1 team. The T1 mentors work as a team to assist students.

If you have more than 5 years of beekeeping experience, you may qualify as a paid Tier 2 mentor. Each T2 mentor is assigned to three T1 teams.

There are record-keeping requirements to participate as a mentor in this program. Working as a mentor will enhance your beekeeping skills, while assisting students to upgrade their skills..

Each of the mentor students work as a first contact level to resolve most issues as part of the requirement for participation in the program.

Mentors are eligible for specialized training and additional beekeeping seminars, as individual training or team training.

Be a part of a pilot program that could influence other mentor programs throughout the state. The program becomes active in April.

We are actively seeking participants that are interested in advancing their own skills while helping others.

This program may be presented at a future NCSBA Convention to demonstrate the value of a paid three-tier mentor program compared to the usual one-on-one mentor systems.

## Programs for the Year

In May, Tim Briton, pesticide manager at the agricultural center and Ronnie Parker (farmer) are going to discuss the use of pesticides and the potential damage to honeybees and other native pollinators.

In June, William Cooley will have a program on the different types of mead.

## Events Coordinator

### Howell Woodstock

April 23 marks the date of a fun event at Howell Woods in Four Oaks. This is an opportunity to talk to many people interested in bees and beekeeping, especially good for all those new bee school students. David Massengill and I plan to be there. We could use a few volunteers to assist from 12-5. If you are not familiar with Howell Woods, check out <http://www.johnstoncc.edu/howellwoods/>

### Pig Pickin'

For you long-time Johnston County residents, you are most likely already familiar with a Pig Pickin'. If not, you need to put this one on your *bucket list*.

In July, the JCBA is planning a real Johnston County down home *pig pickin'*. Stay tuned for more details as we get closer to July.

**The Pig Pickin' will substitute for our July meeting. There is no planned regular monthly meeting for July.**

**Hive Map.** This is located on the *Members Only* section of the JCBA website. You are encouraged to share your hive location information.

## Member Businesses

All members are eligible to list their businesses in this newsletter. It does not need to be *bee related* for listing.



### Bee Related Businesses

**D&R Bee Farm** David  
Massengill

672 Go Cart Rd, Four Oaks

919-820-0319  
[machevy1@aol.com](mailto:machevy1@aol.com)

Nucs, Packages, Queen  
Bees, Custom Built Bee  
Hive Parts

**Terms:** Cash, Check

**Discount:** 10% to  
members

**Bailey Bee Supply**

1724 South Saunders Street, Raleigh - 919-977-0901

<https://baileybeesupply.com>

147 Boone Square Street, Hillsborough - 919-241-4236

**Business or Services Provided:** Full range retail beekeeper's  
supplies. You can put your hands on our wares, rather than just  
looking at a picture.

Hillsborough store pick up date for package bees April 21-22.

**Terms of Payment:** Cash, Credit, Debit Card, Check, VISA, M/C,  
Amex, and Discover.

### Non Bee-Related Businesses

**Donald & Doris Kidd**

265 Garner Road, Selma

**Business or Services  
Provided:** Elephant Garlic  
Growers and Market  
Farmers

In season prices March-  
November

**Terms of Payment:** Cash

Discount: 10% for members

Farmer retains right to limit  
quantities.

**Todd Tingler, AIA**

64 Kyle Drive, Garner - 919.418.5620

Architectural Design, Residential Design, Interior Design,  
Renovation Design

Services are unique and can be provided hourly or as a  
percentage of the Project with or without a guaranteed maximum.

**Terms of Payment:** Cash, Check or services

**Discount:** Yes, negotiated for members

Services limited to small projects

Design and construction documents are prepared electronically

*Recently there were some important changes to the NCSBA Bylaws at the Spring Convention concerning the Master Beekeeping Program. This was a response to a series of complaints that I put forward to the MBP Director and to the President of the NCSBA during 2015, concerning the fact that the President / MBP Director were creating Fiat procedures that were outside the guidelines and duties of office and proscribed responsibilities in the bylaws for this program.*

*The response was to make modifications to the NCSBA Bylaws that would bypass the complaints, and allow the director to continue to do anything that the director considers necessary for the MBP, including significant basic program modifications, credit guidelines, and major revisions to the certification processes. There is no peer review, no input, no oversight, no feedback, no recourse, no appeal, and no control over any changes the Director may deem, on his own merit and recognizance, as being necessary. I have always been a strong proponent of the MBP, as it has many valuable components, but I believe these changes will have a negative effect on the MBP. This is a disaster looking for a place to happen.*