



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.



President: Ray Hunt

Vice-President: Al Hildreth

Treasurer: Evie Vose

Secretary: Tom Anderson

Program Director: David
Massengill

1st Director Ronnie Fish

2nd Director Janice Turrisi

3rd Director May Markoff

Webmaster & Facebook Adam Pendergrass

Newsletter Ray Hunt

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

March meeting agenda:

The March meeting will feature Will
Hicks discussing a variety of beehive
pests.

There may still be time to enroll in
the Beginning Beekeeper Class. The
class starts March 19 for three
consecutive Saturdays (all day).
Lunch is provided.

We will have reduced rates for
former students of Ray Hunt or
Aimee Newsome, young adults,
spouses. Space is limited. You must
have sent in your registration by
March 4 to ensure a place in the
class.

You can request a registration from
Brandon Parker,
bkparker@ncsu.edu.





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February Meeting 2016

We had to cancel the scheduled meeting for January due to bad weather, a repeat of the January meeting. The meeting was rescheduled for February 22, 2016.

Meeting Attendance: Even though the meeting was rescheduled, and notices were sent out by email, we were pleasantly surprised to see a very good turnout for our February meeting.

Several door prizes were provided by David Massengill.

For March, we will have a visit from Will Hicks, one of the State Bee Inspectors, who will discuss pest and disease control.

NOTE: We have a new director. Janice Turrisi will assume the duties for the remaining term of Kathy Sommese.

Message from the President

Ray Hunt

About 10 months ago, I started working part-time at Bailey Bee Supply in Raleigh. In 2015, I worked over 500 hours from May to December. It has been both educational and a pleasure to work there and meet so many new and experienced beekeepers.

Perhaps the most important aspect of working there was all the things that I learned while helping others with their beekeeping questions.

Questions ranged from the simple to the absurd. Some of the questions were so regular that I incorporated the answers into my bee classes.

Inevitably, the question of “*how long have you been a beekeeper*” and “*how many hives do you have*” seemed to come up on a regular basis.

That got me to thinking.

Tell someone that you have 30 years of experience, and 100 hives, and they respond with a WOW. Tell them you have been keeping bees for a couple of years and have 2 hives and you get a ho-hum.

While it may be true that someone with more years of beekeeping might be more knowledgeable, and someone with more hives may be more of an expert than a novice, that is not always the case.

Let’s start with the number of years of beekeeping. The common belief is that “*practice makes perfect*”, but in reality, “*practice makes permanent*”. Practice beekeeping skills incorrectly, and you





carve that practice in stone. After many years of reinforcement, bad habits are difficult to change. Years of experience do not always equal competency.

Next, we will address the fallacy that the number of hives you have equates to competency.

I've had new beekeepers tell me that they started with two hives last year, split both hives, caught two swarms, so after one complete year, they now have six hives. Based on that logic and those numbers, anyone that has been in beekeeping for 30 years, figuring doubling each year, maybe a 30% loss, should have something near 10 Million hives. No, I do not have 10 Million hives, so I must be an incompetent beekeeper.

Are you a good beekeeper? How many hives do you own? Does the number of hives you own demonstrate your competency as a beekeeper? Some people would say *Yes*.

Are you a good driver? How many cars do you own? Does the number of cars that you own demonstrate your competency as a driver? Most people would say *No*.

So what is the difference?

The years of experience and the number of hives that you own are not indicators of ability or skill. While these numbers cannot be ignored, they should be only a small part of an evaluation of skill or experience with beekeeping.

So how do you tell if someone has the skill and experience necessary to answer your questions? There are three steps to asking questions.

1. Ask lots of questions. Yes, we've all heard that old saw about all the different answers to the same question. That does NOT mean that any of the answers are wrong. What it means is that for that beekeeper, with those hives, during that year, with the

available forage, the current weather conditions, etc, etc, etc., it worked for them. It may not work for you. Often, the success is based on the management style of the beekeeper rather than the facts of the procedure.

The reality is that every answer should begin with "*It depends*"...

2. Evaluate the credibility of the answer. Does it sound reasonable? Is it logical? Has this person actually done this procedure, or is it just another "*urban legend*?"
3. Pros/Cons. Ask what are the pros and cons of one technique versus the other. Only by knowing BOTH sides can you make an informed decision.

Contributors

Another installment from Hawley

Feeding My Bees

Hawley Prindle

As you know, I didn't win the power ball. I bought \$100.00 worth of tickets and won \$12.00 because I had one power ball. You would think that with all those numbers I would have had at least two numbers and a power ball number and get back my investment. Playing the Powerball Lottery is a lot like beekeeping.

Most beekeepers in the North would give their eyeteeth to keep bees in North Carolina. They think that everything is roses down here. My friend Billy has a friend that lives in Ohio. That friend in Ohio talks about snow – lots of it. His bees are confined in the hive most of the winter. He reports that he lost over 70% of his bees and he is getting sick and tired of buying package bees each spring to start over. He wants to move his bees south so he can take advantage of our great climate. He was complaining about it being cold (around zero degrees F).





I am not an expert, but let me tell you, *“The grass is not so green on this side of the fence.”* Our bees have been flying a lot. Did you know that when a honeybee flies, it takes energy to search around for food, just like my car needs gas to move? The warmer the weather the more flight days bees in this area have. Thus, they are going to consume a lot of surplus winter honey just trying to find minimal food sources that may or may not be available.

I was in Costco the other day and found 25 pounds of sugar for a little over \$11.00 a bag. Now let me tell you, I bought that bag of sugar and took it home. I know my *“girls”* are hungry and the guy at the bee meeting told me to feed my bees or I would most likely find them starving to death about now.

I did get about two five gallon buckets of honey last fall so I guess I can give each hive about eight pounds of sugar this spring. The problem was how to do it. The Beekeeping Bible I bought at the bookstore in Raleigh wasn't much help. It says, *“Don't allow the level of stores to drop below 8 to 10 lbs. (4-6 kg), or two full brood frames.”* I hefted the hives like I read in the January newsletter. One of my hives was a bit light but the other two seems to have some weight to them. Then I read, *“If there is no sealed honey touching the bees you may need to feed the colony.”* It also says, *“Avoid opening the hive until the temperatures rise above 57 degrees F (14 degrees C).”*

Now I am no dummy. How do I feed my bees if I cannot open the hive? I also read somewhere that it is bad to put moisture into a hive when it is cold. I called Sparky who lives a few miles away. He said to use a jar of sugar syrup 50/50 - sugar to water by weight not volume. He said, *“Place the jar over the inner cover hole where the bees should be located at this time of the year and add an empty super over the inner*

cover to protect the jar from attracting bears or coons.”

Then another beekeeping friend, Willy, told me to dump sugar around the inner cover hole. That sounded a bit easier. I asked, *“Any particular way to dump sugar around the inner cover hole?”* Willy replied, *“Yea, don't pour it down the hole.”* But I wanted to know, *“How are they going to eat the dry sugar?”* Boy did Willy give me the eye. *“Moisture”* was the one-word answer. His look was something like, *“Listen dummy, don't you know that moisture collects inside a hive!”* *“Well, yea, I guess it does!”* was my answer.

By then, I was afraid to ask, *“What if the bees are not up around the inner cover hole?”*

Holly cow, do you have any idea on the various methods used to feed honeybees! A check of the bee supply catalogs gave me many choices. None of them seemed to put the food where it should be according The Beekeeper's Bible (sealed honey touching the bees). Just then, an idea popped into my head. I went out to my bees and looked inside the hive. It was only 37 degrees. I could see and hear them nestled between the frames in the center of the hive. I did read somewhere that the bees don't heat the hive but the cluster. So, I guess opening up the hive doesn't cause the bees to freeze.

What if I mixed up some of that sugar water and put it into my garden sprayer? Bernice, my wife, thought that was a terrible idea – she is a bee lover and with all this talk of insecticides and herbicides advised me to go out and buy a new one if I had made up my mind to use the sprayer. *“How in the hell are you going to spray those bees with sugar anyway?”* she asked.

“Not going to spray the bees,” I replied. Off I went to the hardware store to buy a two-gallon garden sprayer. I mixed up my





sugar water 1:1 and poured it into the sprayer tank, pumped up the pressure and poked the nozzle into a jar to see if this would work. Nothing. Dang, the mixture was too thick to get thru the nozzle. I had to make the sugar mixture a bit thinner. I emptied about a gallon of syrup into several jars and added a gallon of hot water. What a difference that made. The sprayer was working fine. Now how do I get this food supply next to the bees – touching them?

I spent the night thinking about it. About three in the morning, I woke with the answer. The next morning, out I went with my sprayer full of warm sugar water. I tested the nozzle to make sure the syrup would spray out. That weak hive was still alive and clustered between three frames. I started taking out frames next to the cluster. I guess it stirred up the bees a bit because they hummed louder and a few came to investigate. I shifted strategy. I started removing frames from the sidewall furthest from the cluster. Out came two or three. The first one had some honey in it but the rest were empty. By the time I got to the fourth frame, the bees were moving about quite a bit – not flying mind you but crawling all over the place. I just backed off. In no time, they had clustered again and quieted down. I took the removed frames into the house. My bees were again buttoned up with the cover on the hive but missing those four frames I took out.

I got some newspaper and laid it on the kitchen table. Bernice got involved then. *“What kind of mess are you going to make?”* she kept asking. *“I will clean everything up, just make no mind, everything is under control!”*

It was. I laid out each frame on the newspaper and because Bernice kept an eye on what I was doing, I took the extra precaution to get some plastic to lay on the kitchen table and placed the

newspaper on top of that. The real operation was to spray a fine mist of sugar water into the cells on both sides of each frame. It worked great. I returned to the hive. The bees were settled and quiet. I quickly took the frame with some honey in it -- filled with sugar syrup and placed it next to the bees. I added the other filled frames and closed up the hive.

I checked back in several days when the weather was a bit warmer and bees were flying. They were working on the combs that had the sugar syrup next to the cluster. The other sides of the cluster with empty comb were bee-less. I marked my garden sprayer – **bee feeder!**

My bees were happy! Bernice was happy! When my girls are happy, so am I. Update – sure glad I fed the bees before that cold weather hit in mid-February. I heard from Sparky that he lost two hives in that cold snap. He found a large number of bees clustered on frames just inches away honey in the comb next to the cluster. The bees were head first in the cells and dead as door nails. Mine are still alive.

A note: The sugar water had to be hot and some testing to determine how much sugar I could get into the syrup and still have the nozzle work. I made it as thick as I could and still have enough flow to go through the nozzle.

Agenda for 2016

In the January Newsletter, I laid out an outline of some of the things that we hope to accomplish during 2016.

Training for Leadership

We are currently looking for assistants to work with the Treasurer, Secretary, and Program Director to train for potential officer positions.





Master Beekeeper Program

Are you currently enrolled in the Master Beekeeper Program? Would you like to move up in the program? We can help you. Contact jacobee@earthlink.net for more information.

Bee Schools

March 19, 2016, the first beginning bee school of the year starts in Johnston County. Classes are 8-5 Saturday, lunch is provided. You may still have time to sign up. Contact Brandon Parker to see if there is a space available. You can also request a copy of the registration from bkparker@ncsu.edu.

3636 Mentor Program

We've finalized the details for this program. If you are interested in having a mentor or being a mentor, send an email to jacobee@earthlink.net, subject 3636.

This is a formalized three level, multi-tier mentor project similar to a help desk system.

There is a fee for this program. Mentors will receive a small stipend for their participation to cover required documentation and travel.

Community Outreach

While this is not exactly local outreach, I hope that many of you had the chance to go to the State Association meeting in New Bern. I'm sure that there will be lots of info about the meeting on the NCSBA website, so we won't do a repetition here.

Enhance the Bee Schools

Are you interested in becoming an instructor in the bee school?

Would you like to receive training to become an instructor or an effective presenter?

Promoting a Stronger Bond

Several members are members of several local associations. It is encouraged that members try to visit with as many local organizations as practical. We can all learn new techniques, methods, and operations that could be of value to our group as well.

Updating Bylaws

Recently, there was a poll posted on the website concerning the Paid Up Membership for JCBA. Please go the Members Only section and answer a two question poll about making this change to the bylaws. If you want your voice heard, then vote on this poll.

The Association will vote on this change in April.

Just for Information



Laying Worker – Position of Several Eggs

Member Activities

On Friday February 19th, 2016, David Massengill and May Markoff co-presented a bee show-and-tell to the entire 4th grade class of the West Smithfield Elementary School. There were 90 students in attendance. For the full report, see our website.

Programs for the Year

David has been busy lining up some good programs for the year.





In April, we will have Brandon Parker, Ronald Parker, and Tim Britton discussing pesticides for home and garden use and their proper usage to reduce the chances of damage to native pollinators and honeybees.

Sunshine Club/Refreshments

The Refreshments Committee provided plenty of good choices for the February meeting. Members are encouraged to bring an item for the group.

On February 18, our Treasurer, Evelyn Vose was involved in an automobile accident that gave her a banging and a bruising. She is up and around now, and even spent a couple of hours as an instructor at our “barn raising” on Saturday, February 20. We all send out our best wishes for a speedy and complete recovery.

Events Coordinator

On Saturday, February 20, there was a “barn-raising” class at the Livestock Center from 1PM-4PM.

The hands-on class helps new and inexperienced beekeepers in assembly of frames, reworking existing frames, installing wax, assembly of hive bodies, and lots of information about bees.

Frame assembly, foundation assembly, and hive body assembly is not brain surgery, but there are a few tips and tricks that can save you time and effort, and make sure that your equipment is sturdy and properly assembled.

Instructors were David Massengill, Evie Vose, and Ray Hunt.

Attending were Bob / Janice Turrisi, Steve Wales, Darlene Lee, Roy Fair, and Mariyam / Asgar Hussein.

Bob / Janice are students from the Spring 2015 bee school; Steve, Darlene, and

Mariyam are planning to attend the March 2016 bee school.

There are pictures of this event on the website.

If you missed this one, we will try to schedule another one in the Fall. This session has been added to the bee school as one of the scheduled class sessions.

Hive Map

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

The Newsletter

This is the third issue of the 2016 newsletter.

We have retained the services of several experienced beekeepers to present their opinions and knowledge about bees and beekeeping. We always welcome the contributions of members in the newsletter.

The first JCBA member to accurately identify the number of times that the word *beekeeper* or *beekeepers* occurs in this document will win a \$50 gift certificate to Bailey Bee Supply. R Hunt.

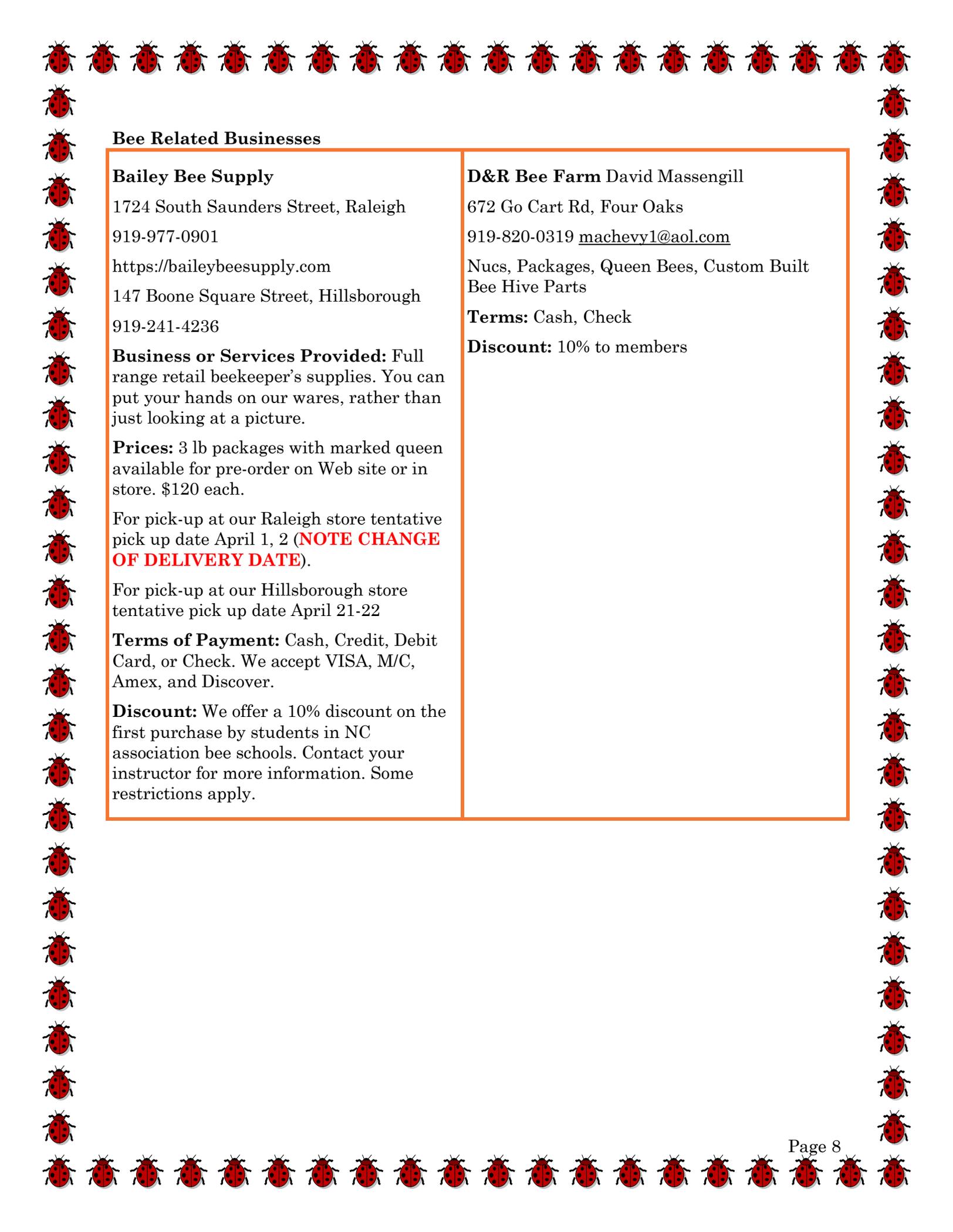
The editor (that would be me) reserves the right to edit for grammatical and technical clarity, without affecting the intent of the article.

Member Businesses

If you are a member of the JCBA, and have a business, whether bee-related or not, we will try to include it in our newsletter each month.

If you are a member and have a business that you want to include, contact the Newsletter Director for inclusion: jacobee@earthlink.net.





Bee Related Businesses

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.

Prices: 3 lb packages with marked queen available for pre-order on Web site or in store. \$120 each.

For pick-up at our Raleigh store tentative pick up date April 1, 2 (**NOTE CHANGE OF DELIVERY DATE**).

For pick-up at our Hillsborough store tentative pick up date April 21-22

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

Discount: We offer a 10% discount on the first purchase by students in NC association bee schools. Contact your instructor for more information. Some restrictions apply.

D&R Bee Farm David Massengill

672 Go Cart Rd, Four Oaks

919-820-0319 machevy1@aol.com

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

Terms: Cash, Check

Discount: 10% to members

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

*Please forward any additions, corrections, modifications or errors to
jacobee@earthlink.net. Changes will be noted in the next newsletter.*