

The ABA Stinger

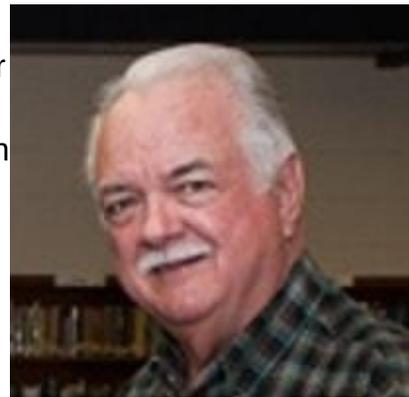


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Letter from the President – August 2019

As summer comes to an end, you are undoubtedly doing your last honey harvest for the year and planning to let your bees settle in for the fall and winter months. The next six months will mean far less activity for the bees and for you in managing them. However, that doesn't mean abandoning your hives. You should stroll through your bee yard periodically, especially on warm sunny days, looking for activity at the entrance of your hives.



Even in the dead of winter, the bees will leave the hive to go on a cleansing flight. They will never defecate inside their house. A lack of activity, indicated by few or no bees going and coming, may mean a problem with the colony. A queenless hive or a colony with a high mite load or brood disease can happen at any time. If you are suspicious, pick a pretty day when the temperature is over 70 degrees and do a thorough hive inspection. You might want to go to my website www.RoseHillFarmLLC.com and review my presentation on "The Hive Inspection".

All beekeepers enjoy the spring and summer months when we have the most interaction with our bees but fall and winter can be nice as well, in giving us and our bees a respite for a bit.

Bill Evans, President, Alabama Beekeepers Association



August 2019 - Letter from the Vice President

Please be aware that next month is our fall conference. There will be a lot going on at this conference. I highly recommend that you preregister as registration at the door will cost more this year.

Speakers this year include; Clarence Collison, Dr. James Two, Donald Downs, Debbie Seib and Lisa Reynes. Additionally, we will have classes on Verona Management, Russian Queen Production, Bee Yard Safety, Lip Balm & Lotions, Setting up a Honey Show, Preparing for a Honey Show, Chemicals in the Hive, Bee Yard First Aid, Diseases and Pests, Backyard Beekeeping, The Master Beekeeping Program, Things to Make with Old Brood Comb, Warming Muscle Rub & Lotion Bars (this is a hands-on class), The Advance of the Africanized Honeybee.

Center stage will be; Queen Biology & Current Problems, Biology Overwinter, Apitherapy Medicine, The American Bee Federation, Thermoregulation... Thinking Inside the Box.

The plan is to have a contest on assembling frames. The assembled frames will be judged by the amount of time required to assemble a given number of frames and the quality of the product. This will be judged by three individuals. Providing there are sufficient number of participants the prize will be worth your participation. If you are interested in this you can email me in order to sign up at gerry@beginnings.com or sign up as you pick up your packet Friday morning.

At this point we have a large area in the exhibit hall that will be used for 240 first graders that will be learning about honeybees. Lynn and Dave Kelton are putting this together with the help of the Master Beekeepers. This is part of the Associations way of giving back to the community of Clanton. You are invited to bring your child or grandchild on Saturday for this exciting activity.

As every year we will be electing officers and board members, you must be a member in good standing in order to have a vote. Also, we will be voting on two Overtures to amend the bylaws. You will be receiving those overtures in the mail.

I hope you can see and appreciate what a busy weekend this is going to be. I'm looking forward to seeing you and wish that you learn from this weekend and that you have a good time.

Gerry Whitaker, Vice President



August 2019 - Letter from the Secretary

Hello everyone! I hope you had an abundant honey crop this year. As the excitement grows about our upcoming fall conference and annual meeting, please keep a check on your email. We will be sending information out to you soon for you to look over before the meeting. If you haven't done so already, go ahead and get registered so you will be ahead of the game when you get to the meeting. We are working hard to make sure you have a great time while getting useful information from great educators. If you would like to volunteer to help just let us know. We could always use an extra hand to help meet the needs of a few hundred people. We will have new T-shirt's available this year and I think you will love them. The price of the new shirts will be \$20.00 each or 2 for \$30.00. Trust me, you will want 2! That's all for now, hope to see you in September!

Heather Sinyard, Secretary

August 2019 - Letter from the Treasurer

I am done with my honey harvest. Of course, I always think I should have more. Glad I got done before the hot days set in. Now working on the annual meeting.

Looking forward to the seeing everyone at the meeting. The cost of the meeting is 45.00 for 2 Days. Bonnie has been working on the menu for the meeting. She does an outstanding job on the meals. Bonnie has a request, if possible, when you come to the meeting will you be willing to bring a dessert. We can use any kind of dessert. We usually serve cookies and brownies or bars at our lunch on Friday, we serve pies at our Banquet, and whatever else we have we serve with Saturday lunch. Cakes, pies, cookies, whatever. This really helps us to keep the cost lower for the meeting.

Gerry has some awesome speakers lined up for the meeting. He also has a good selection of vendors coming too. If you need some supplies give them a call. They will bring your order to the meeting with no shipping charge. Something new this year, he also has a frame building contest lined up for the meeting.

Heather is getting some new shirts for the meeting. They are going to be my favorite color. You will have to wait til the meeting to know what the color is.

You can go online to register for the meeting www.alabamabeekeepers.com

Wynelle Milstead,
Treasurer

Pre-registering for the 2019 Fall Conference on the Internet is fast and easy. Do that [HERE](#). Knowing the number of participants for which to plan really helps with name tags, programs, seating, meals, snacks, etc.

Would you like to help? Bonnie asks that you please bring a dessert!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!



Finding the Queen with a Shaker Box by Bill Miller

"Find the queen."

Those three words bring up visions of the frustrating task of looking through a colony frame by frame, trying to spot one particular bee out of the several thousand in the colony. Frequently repeat searches are needed before the queen is finally found.

Finding the queen doesn't have to be that way. At the 2018 Eastern Apicultural Society conference, noted Vermont beekeeper Mike Palmer demonstrated a method for finding queens that is as near surefire as I have ever seen for finding queens. The basic idea is that all the adult bees in the colony are shook into a shaker box with a queen excluder nailed to the bottom. The colony's frames are replaced in hive bodies underneath the queen excluder. The bees in the shaker box go through the queen excluder onto the frames underneath, leaving the queen on top of the excluder.

The big advantages of the shaker box method of queen finding is that the method is as surefire as any I have heard of for finding queens. Luck is not a factor – repeat queen searches become a thing of the past. Also, should the colony have multiple laying queens, this method will find all of them.

The shaker box method does have a few minor disadvantages. You will need a piece of special equipment (the shaker box). Putting all the bees in a colony through a shaker box is a major disruption to the colony, but fortunately, the bees sort things out very quickly. Also, if you don't have a good reason for finding the queen, you shouldn't go looking for her. The last disadvantage is that nonlaying (virgin) queens can frequently go through a queen excluder and be missed.

You will need to build a shaker box (photo 1, next page). This is simply a hive body (preferably a deep) that has a queen excluder nailed to the bottom. Putting duct tape around the inside upper edges of the shaker box will help keep the bees in the box, as bees are reluctant to climb on the duct tape.

Other items you will need for the shaker box method are an empty hive body for the colony being searched, a bee brush, and your normal hive working gear. The frame rests on the hive body must be clean as you will be sliding frames along them; scraping may be needed.

Photo 2 shows the initial setup before doing any shaking. The outer and inner covers of the hive have been removed. The hive boxes of the colony to be searched are stacked in reverse order (bottom box on top) on the outer cover. The bees on the inner cover and on the bottom board have been shaken into the stack of hive boxes.



An important point here is that the hive boxes are stacked in the outer cover. You don't want to stack the boxes on the ground, lest the queen bee run off into the grass.

The hive bottom board returns to its original location, and the empty hive box is put on the bottom board. The shaker box (queen excluder side down) goes on top of the empty hive box. Note the gap between the empty hive box and the shaker box. You will use this gap to insert frames into the empty hive box after you shake them.

It's time to start shaking. Remove an end frame from the original hive body on top of the stack, and shake the bees off it into the shaker box (photo 3). You don't need to shake the frame completely free of bees, just enough so a visual inspection of the shook frame confirms the queen isn't on it. Insert the frame in the slot



Photo 1

Photo 2

Photo 3

between the shaker box and the empty hive body (photo 4) and push the frame under the shaker box. You may have to scrape burr comb off the top of the frame to get it to slide under the shaker box.

Continue to remove the frames from the hive body, shake their bees into the shaker box, and slide the frames into the hive body under the shaker box. If you remove the frames in sequence, the under the shaker box will also be in sequence.

The worker bees in the shaker box will begin to go through the queen excluder onto the frames below. You can help push them through with a little smoke and the bee brush (photo 5). The drones will mostly fly off and return to the hive. Since laying queens don't like to fly, the queen will remain in the shaker box.

When the first original hive body is empty, scrape its frame rests clean, shake its bees into the shaker box, then put the empty hive body under the shaker box ready to receive the next batch of frames. Keep removing the frames from the original hive boxes, shaking their bees into the shaker box, and slide them under the shaker box. Don't forget to shake the bees from the original hive boxes into the shaker box.



When you have finished shaking the frames and the original hive boxes, shake the bees on the outer cover into the shaker box. The now-empty original bottom box becomes a spare hive body.

With all the shaking done, it's time to start looking for the queen. She will typically be in a dark corner of the shaker box looking for a way to get through the queen excluder (photo 6). The number of bees in the shaker box will decrease with time, making the queen easier to spot. You can also check the shaker box for multiple laying queens.



Photo 4

Photo 5

Photo 6

Photo 7

But you say you did all this but didn't find a queen? I assume you looked at your frames as you shook them. If you didn't find any eggs, I would say your colony doesn't have a laying queen. If you did find eggs, check the queen excluder on the shaker box for bent wires (photo 7). Should the queen find an enlarged gap in the queen excluder wires, she will go through it onto the hive frames.

The shaker box method is now my "go to" method for finding queens when I have to find them. The method is straightforward, and as surefire as any I have ever seen. It is disruptive to the colony though, so I only use it when I absolutely have to find the queen (e.g.; for requeening).

Bill Miller is a 1996 Eastern Apicultural Society Master Beekeeper. He has been keeping bees since 1981, first in Maryland and then continuing after moving to Dothan in 2006. He is a member of the Wiregrass Beekeepers Association, where he edits their newsletter "The Wired Bee" and teaches their annual beginning beekeeping course.

BEEKEEPER OF THE YEAR: Please mail your nomination for Beekeeper of the Year to Gerry Whitaker (gerry@beeginnings.com). Be sure to include the reasons for the nomination.



KIDS & BEES

At this years ABA annual meeting we will be introducing and presenting a fun new program on Friday and Saturday. There will be several different stations for children to visit to learn about honeybees and their importance in our everyday life.

As of now there will be 14 different stations for the groups to visit. The children will not only be learning, they will be also be interacting and making crafts. Just to list a few stations and to give you an idea of the program there will be, The Hive (no live bees), beeswax, planting seeds, honeybee life cycle, Honeybees role in the hive, ultra violet station, making bee crowns, making a bee finger puppet, face painting, observation hive and much much more.

The Kids and Bees Program is presented each year at the American Beekeepers Federation Convention for a local Elemertery School in the area and members children and grandchildren to enjoy and learn. David and Lynne Kelton volunteered at the ABF convention kids and a Bees program in January 2019 and realized this would be a fun and exciting event to bring to ABA. We will have children from a local school attending the program on Friday and programs for our ABA members children and grandchildren on Saturday. (Times will be announced)

Our children are our future and our future Beekeepers, so bring your children, grandchildren and their friends to enjoy this fun and exciting program. **Help is still needed** and if you would like to volunteer please contact David or Lynne Kelton, 256-523-4767 or email: honeybees60@gmail.com.

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*Two professional beekeepers went to lunch at McDonald's. While they were in line they started talking about what they needed to do with their Russian nucs. Everyone else in line stopped talking and stared at them.*



**Survey: U.S. beekeepers report record rate of colony loss over 2018-19 winter  
6/19/2019**

AUBURN, Ala.—Beekeepers across the U.S. lost 40.7% of their managed honey bee colonies from April 1, 2018, to April 1, 2019, and experienced the highest rate of winter loss in 13 years, preliminary results of the annual nationwide colony loss survey show.

Conducted by the nonprofit Bee Informed Partnership with Auburn University and University of Maryland entomologists collecting and analyzing the data, the survey pegs Oct. 1, 2018-April 1, 2019 losses at 37.7%, which is the highest rate since the survey began in 2006-07 and 8.9 percentage points higher than the survey average.

Geoff Williams, Auburn assistant professor of entomology and apiology, said “Just looking at the overall picture and the 10-year trends, it’s disconcerting that we’re still seeing elevated losses after over a decade of survey and quite intense work to try to understand and reduce colony loss.” The Bee Informed Partnership team said multiple factors likely are responsible for the persistently high annual loss rates and this year’s jump in winter losses. Williams and the other researchers on the survey team said a multi-pronged approach that encompasses research, extension and smart management is needed to combat the problem. They urged beekeepers to stay current on and implement science-based best management practices.

Beekeepers can find best management practices on at [beeinformed.org](http://beeinformed.org). The survey’s preliminary results are available there as well.

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**CLASSIFIEDS**

1. We sell packages, nucs, beekeeping equipment, Ventilated suits, etc. Thanks for your time. Ted and Angie LeMay, LeMay Enterprises, Inc., DBA T&A Bee Farm, (256)331.2337, [www.tandabees.com](http://www.tandabees.com)
  2. 5x12 Bee trailer for sale, \$500. 256-507-0262.
  3. We have 5 frame Nucs for \$200 with 4-5 frames of brood, Ten frame brood box with 6-7 frames of brood and 1 honey super for \$300. All for September pickup. Lookout Mountain Honey Bees, 256-523-4767.
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**The next ABA Stinger will be published October 15, 2019.**

**The deadline for submissions is October 1, 2019.**



ALABAMA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

2019 Conference Registration Form

Annual Meeting September 20th and 21st 2019. Location: Clanton Conference Performing Arts Center in Clanton, Alabama. "Online" Pre-Registration must be received on or before September 12, 2019. If you prefer NOT to use "online" registration you may fill this form and mail with your check to: Wynelle Milstead, 1495 Sandcut Rd., Nauvoo, AL 35578. If you have any questions regarding registration contact Bill Evans at Bill@RoseHillFarmLLC.com or Wynelle Milstead at wmilstead@me.com or call 205 300 0511. Thank you for pre-registering. Knowing the number of participants to plan for really helps preparation of name tags, programs, seating, meals, snacks, etc.

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Children, or other (under 12 Free)

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Beekeeping Organization you belong to: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you object to this information being included in the ABA Membership Directory? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

2020 Annual Dues to Alabama Beekeepers Association \$10.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Registration - Annual Meeting until September 12th \$45.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Friday evening Banquet only for non participants \$15.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Saturday Lunch only for non participants \$10.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Donation: Alabama Master Beekeepers Program \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Donation: American Beekeeping Federation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Donation: Alabama Young Beekeepers Program \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Donation: Alabama Beekeepers Association \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL Make check payable to Alabama Beekeepers Association \$ \_\_\_\_\_



## FALL CONFERENCE VENDOR LIST (so far!)

- |                                        |                                    |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ABA - Membership and Clothes           | Miller Bees Mfg - Equipment        |
| AU-Bees - Information and Clothes      | MJ Miller - Books                  |
| Dadant - Equipment                     | OxaVap - OxaVap                    |
| Foxhound Bee Co – Equipment            | Petals from the Past - Plants      |
| GreenHives - Thermal Treatment         | Pigeon Mountain - Equipment        |
| HiveButler – Hive Butler               | Rock Bridge Trees – Plants         |
| Honeycomb Hives – Equipment            | Rossman - Equipment                |
| Kelley Bee – Equipment                 | Silveus Ins. Group - Bee Insurance |
| LeMay Bees - Equipment & Hive Products | Tew Publishing - Books             |
| Lookout Mountain - Equipment           | Tri-Bee - Products from the Hive   |
| Mann Lake - Equipment                  | Wyatt Auctions - Books and Shirts  |

