

Beekeepers Gazette

beekeepersgazette@bellsouth.net

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Again, I'm amazed

Those of you that have subscribed to our publication for very long have heard me, time and again use the above phrase. Whether we're talking about the unusual behavior of our beloved honeybee or possibly something outside of our main subject matter, I'm never ceased to be amazed.

When discussing honeybee biology we have learned that our insect of choice, *Apis mellifera*, the honeybee is eusocial, as well are ants, termites and some species of wasps.

Eusociality is mostly found in the insect Hymenoptera (ants, wasps and bees) and Isoptera (termites). Very recently, I found that eusociality is also found in two species of vertebrates.

The Naked Mole Rat (*Heterocephalus glaber*) and the Damaraland Mole Rat (*Cryptomys damarensis*) are the only two mammals considered to be eusocial.

They are found in East Africa in underground burrows in clusters of 20 to 300 individuals. The average cluster is around 75.

There is only one queen and up to 5 males to handle the reproductive work. The rest of the colony completes various labors of keeping the colony healthy, much like the honeybee. The workers are born temporarily sterile. If something happens to the queen, one of the workers can be chosen to fill her void.

Continued

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Amazing, continued

They are remarkably long lived for a rodent, with the queen living 13 to 18 years and the rest of the caste living up to 31 years. Another interesting item is they, like our honeybees, are *thermoconformers*, meaning they maintain their body temperature by clustering.

The reason for my interest in this remarkable creature is that science has proven them resistant to cancer.

Scientists are looking into the whys and how's of this phenomenon. Who knows where that will lead?

If you have a few minutes, read about this remarkable creature. They are in no way what we  expect from a mammal.



Photo of a Naked Mole Rat

Comments from the Editor



Hopefully, your hives are strong and growing stronger.

In the past few issues, we have discussed the basics of promoting growth as well as sustaining the hive strength. In this issue we talk more on that subject in hopes that you can keep your bees healthy during the dreaded summer dearth.

I am hoping this issue will be helpful to each of you in some way.

With the summer heat, I cannot stress enough, due diligence is important.

Until next month,

Happy Beekeeping

Ray

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Summer Dearth, What to do?

Here we are, in the heat of the year and no recognizable nectar source. I have had a few of you tell me you have a nectar flow in your area; however it hasn't been identified and may not be consistent among us.

The majority of us are in a dearth. There is an anticipated nectar flow toward the end of August, but that will be contingent on what is in your area and that will only last for a few weeks. Two of the prominent sources that come to mind are Goldenrod and Spanish Needle. There are others, but they aren't as prominent in our area. Don't get over zealous weeding and landscaping, because if you only have a couple of hives and some of these fall weeds are growing along the fence lines, take advantage of them. Another thing to consider is that often, whenever we talk of nectar sources, we talk of those that are attractive to Sidelineer or Commercial beekeepers.

Those of you living in suburbia will have sources not available to others.

So, please check frequently for the presence of nectar. This can be done by simply holding your frame horizontally over the hive and giving a sharp downward thrust, one time, thereby shaking some of the newly collected nectar from the cells. The nectar that comes out will be very recent indicating the presence of a flow. If the nectar is more than a day or so old, the bees will have dried it out by fanning it with their wings and it will not shake out. You can even taste the droplets to discover the sweetness (or lack of) the fall flow. Sometimes, fall honey has a less than desirable flavor. If there aren't droplets falling out, it is doubtful you have a flow.

Whatever you do, if there isn't a presence of a nectar flow, feed your bees.

Several of you have inquired as to the viscosity of the syrup.

Continued

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Summer Dearth, What to do? (continued)

I prefer syrup mixed at a ratio of 1:1 or less. Syrup of .75:1 (3/4 to 1) will likely replicate a nectar flow, thereby stimulating your queen to continue laying throughout this dry spell.

The ideal scenario will be for our hives to continue to produce brood, therefore maintaining their strength in preparation for the winter months, as well as to be strong enough to resist mites or SHB.

Reality is this; the bees communicate throughout the hive the presence of or lack of a nectar flow. The queen will cease to lay if there isn't any means of the hive supporting the young larvae, i.e. pollen and nectar. If you neglect your bees during this dearth, the queen will possibly cease to lay until the  fall nectar flow begins, thereby leaving a gap in the brood cycle.

This will ultimately weaken the hive going into the winter months, causing problems with Varroa mites and Small Hive Beetles.

In the past months, I've said time and

again, you have the ability to control the outcome of your hive. This is more evident now as  ever.

Now is the time to do mite counts, check for excessive SHB and check for any other problems you may have. Varroa and SHB grow exponentially during the heat of the summer. If your hive needs attention, now is the time to give it.

I am about to confuse you, although, it's not my intent.. I try to teach holistic methods of controlling problems. Sometimes, that simply isn't an option. You have to resort to more extreme measures. If you have a high mite count, one of the options you can consider is to cage the queen and break the brood cycle. Whenever you have a break in the brood cycle, the mites will have lost their source of sealed brood. As we have learned, the mites feed on the hemolymph of capped brood. If we break that cycle, it may have positive results.

Please, believe me whenever I say, the worst thing to do in these hot weeks ahead is nothing. Good luck..

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And Finally

JaxBees will host

Dr. Jamie Ellis

Dr. Jamie Ellis will be speaking on Queen Genetics at the Jacksonville Beekeepers monthly meeting on Monday, August 18th. If you've never had the pleasure of listening to Dr. Ellis, then you need to mark your calendar.

Q&A

Questions are scarce this month, so the Q&A section is lacking.

Hopefully, we will have interest next month.

If you have a subject you would like to see in a future issue

If you have something going on in your bee yard or club you would like us to consider

If you have questions that you would like answered, let us know.

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Online at
www.unklerays.com

Clay County / NEFLHBA Beekeepers Short Course

Saturday, September 20th, the Clay County Extension Office and the Northeast Florida Honey Bee Association will host a Beekeepers Short Course. It will be at the Clay County Extension Office. For information contact David Nistler at dnistler@ufl.edu

Our web page, www.unklerays.com will have the current issue of the Gazette as well as back issues beginning with issue 2. (Issue 1 has been retired)

Remember, your participation is important to the success of this newsletter.

If you have questions, please submit them.

If you can contribute to the plant calendar, please do so. What is blooming in your area?

The Editor
Ray Claxton