



Catch The Buzz

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Memphis Area Beekeepers Association www.memphisbeekeepers.com
P.O. Box 38028, Germantown, TN 38183
Meeting Location: 7777 Walnut Grove Rd # C, Memphis, TN 38120

MEETING DATE & TIME: June 8, 2020 at 7 pm – MABA June 2020 Meeting – **CANCELLED** – Y'all, the Agricenter has cancelled this meeting due to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, AKA the COVID-19-causing coronavirus. We will be in contact with our current members in the days ahead. While we weather the days ahead, stay socially connected yet physically distanced, so that we can all come back together when the storm has passed.

JUNE AND THE BEES

- Colonies that did not swarm will be filled with bees and the bees will be foraging for nectar and pollen as they fill HONEY SUPERS.
- Give the bees space by adding Honey Supers. The main honey flow should be happening this month.
- The queen's rate of egg laying may drop a bit this month.

JUNE AND THE BEEKEEPER

- Inspect the hive weekly to make certain the hive is healthy and the queen is present.
- Add honey supers as needed.
- Keep up swarm inspections
- Attend bee club meetings and workshops.
- Time Spent: Estimate 4-5 hours.
- Equipment, bees will need honey supers, that is where they store the honey that the beekeeper can harvest when it is capped.

5/20/2020 National Honey Board Report: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/fvmhoney.pdf>

TENNESSEE: The Covid-19 Pandemic has not impacted commercial beekeeping or the sale or movement of bees into, through or out of Tennessee. It has not impacted inspections for loss, pest or disease issues. It has halted the inspection of hobbyist beekeepers that simply want an inspection. The weather in TN has been interesting this spring. It has either been below 40 degrees and sunny or above 50 degrees and raining. The nectar flow has been good when the bees can get out and fly. Black Locust, Tulip poplar, privet and wildflowers have been the main sources during April. Some beekeepers have needed to feed to the weather patterns in the



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state to keep their bees from starving since they are raising so much brood and can not get out of the hive due to the weather.

ARKANSAS: During the month of April temperatures were normal to below normal. Precipitation was normal to above normal for the month with normal soil moisture. Spring was late arriving this year with temperatures staying below normal most of the month. Temperatures went from below normal to above normal in a couple of weeks. The wildflower bloom was still very good across the region. With the good precipitation this past winter beekeepers are seeing good foraging options for the bees this spring and into summer. Commercial beekeepers are reporting that their bees are looking heavy and healthy. Commercial beekeepers have completed dividing colonies. The nucs and queens seem to be looking good at this time. According to beekeepers, there have been only minimal colony losses this spring so far. In addition, varroa mites seem to be under control. Most beekeepers feel that the varroa mites are still present. In order to keep varroa mites under control most commercial beekeepers plan to treat prior to the main honey flow. Few prices exist to establish a current market price for wholesale white honey. Beekeepers are seeing a spike in prices caused by increased retail sales due to the Corona virus pandemic. Pricing for single load and immediate delivered honey has jumped to \$1.80-\$1.90 with a few loads at \$2.00 as packers try to meet the retail demand. No one knows how long this will last but at this point most beekeepers are happy to get it.

MISSISSIPPI: The honey flow got a little late start but is now coming together. Lots of rain and cooler temps had the bees inside the hives more than usual and towards the end of the month plenty of wildflowers, blackberries, clover and more have them gathering up for a good flow in May. Prices have remained steady.

BEEKEEPING READING LIST

1) **Veteran Mike**, by Becky Masterman, from <https://www.beeculture.com/veteran-mike/>

Over an open colony of bees, Mike Roche told me how thankful he was to be alive. He was a man living past the years that his doctors had predicted. With the time limit on Mike's life, he was grateful for the peace that working bees offered him. It was his wish to share that tranquility with military Veterans. Conversations we had while managing his bees were the foundation of the University of Minnesota Bee Squad's beekeeping program for Veterans.

I met Mike and his wife Diane in 2013. They were founding Bee Squad Bee Network customers. The Bee Network was designed for non-beekeepers to hire the Bee Squad to manage their bees. In return, we learn about honey bee health trends and challenges. The Bee Network program initially served a handful of families and businesses and grew to allow the Bee Squad's beekeepers to manage bees across greater Minneapolis-Saint Paul. While most customers do not manage bees, Mike had been a beekeeper since the 1970's and accompanied us to his hives when he could.

Although he was Mike to us, his military title was Lt Col Michael Roche, USMC (Ret). His concern for US service members and Veterans was one of the three topics we discussed in the apiary. His family, including two active service member sons, and the bees were the other two. I remember Mike holding a frame of bees, hearing



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him talk to the girls and watching him smile, despite getting stung as his large fingers often challenged a worker bee's space.

Mike asked the Bee Squad to create a program that would support Veterans through beekeeping. The Bee Squad delivered a proposal to him and Mike generously funded Bee Veterans. Modeled after our Mentoring Apiary, the yearly budget for the program has been between \$10,000-\$15,000. The Bee Veterans Apiary was established in the fall of 2015 and we held the first season of free Veteran beekeeping classes in 2016. Mike passed away in the spring of 2017.

From donating bees, boxes, land for an apiary, and seeds, our community has enthusiastically supported Bee Veterans. The Metropolitan Airports Commission provided an apiary space at the Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport. Our 5000 square foot apiary is home to 20 colonies. Pollinator gardens with abundant flowers share the space with the hives that are arranged in a large U shape so students can gather easily around them. People have responded with enormous generosity to the idea of using honey bees to assist Veterans.

The Bee Veterans program has supported over 100 Veterans since 2016. It is still funded by donations, many from Mike's family and friends, and by the sale of honey. Some of the connections we make with Veterans are brief while others have had long lasting impacts. One of the first participants was Christian Dahm. A University of Minnesota undergraduate and retired Marine Corps service member, Christian joined the Bee Squad and managed the Bee Veterans Apiary. He then founded the Propolis Hive Company (<https://www.propolishive.com/>). Mike's vision was for Veterans to have an opportunity to be inspired by honey bees. I have witnessed that the outcomes from Bee Veterans classes range from a memorable family outing to a career working with bees or beekeepers.

We are now responding to COVID 19 related program restrictions. Bee Squad mentors meet online to plan distance beekeeping education. Unable to bring Veterans into our apiary this season, we decided to replace the hive tools that we put into their hands with gardening tools. Instead of working bees, we are going to focus on establishing bee habitat. Through planting challenges and shared photos, we will encourage Veterans to promote bee-friendly flowers. We aren't able to open up colonies together, but planting flowers is another way to get close to the bees.

Bee Veterans was not the first beekeeping program for Veterans and it does not have the biggest reach of the multiple efforts that exist. Because of a recent generous and anonymous \$200,000 donation, we have the honor to create a space with the other groups that support Veterans in beekeeping. We initiated this collaboration with a roomful of Veterans and beekeepers at January's American Beekeeping Federation meeting. Everyone shared their visions for how beekeeping can help Veterans. Some ideas, like using beekeeping as a therapy, still need to be examined with formal research studies. Other ideas, like educational programs and business support, will benefit from sharing resources across groups. We are committed to continuing these connections, exploring critical research, and building support for Veterans. Interested in being a part of Lt. Col Mike's vision? Please sign up and join us. <https://www.beelab.umn.edu/bee-squad/bee-squad-programs/bee-vets>

Read or heard of good, science-based beekeeping articles? Please let us know, we will get them into the MABA newsletter. webmaster@memphisbeekeepers.com



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UNIT HONEY PRICES BY MONTH

Retail-Average Retail Price per Pound across all reporting regions - Data from <https://www.honey.com/honey-industry/statistics/retail-honey-price> used with permission. Based upon average price across all reporting regions. Assumes various sizes sold at the same rate.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2020	\$8.03	\$7.88	\$7.95	\$7.90	\$8.09							
2019	\$7.28	\$7.54	\$7.86	\$7.66	\$7.66	\$7.72	\$7.68	\$7.62	\$7.89	\$7.71	\$7.85	\$8.08
2018	\$7.57	\$7.22	\$7.34	\$7.28	\$7.03	\$7.23	\$7.37	\$7.41	\$7.17	\$7.34	\$7.51	\$7.46

Average Wholesale Case Price Per Pound across All Reporting Regions. Data from <https://www.honey.com/honey-industry/statistics/wholesale-honey-price> used with permission. Based upon average price across all reporting regions. Assumes various sizes sold at the same rate.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2020	\$4.89	\$5.12	\$4.91	\$5.01	\$5.05							
2019	\$4.16	\$4.32	\$4.33	\$4.41	\$4.41	\$3.55	\$4.51	\$4.42	\$4.46	\$4.52	\$4.62	\$4.64
2018	\$5.30	\$5.18	\$5.22	\$5.31	\$5.21	\$5.31	\$5.12	\$5.42	\$5.24	\$5.26	\$5.42	\$5.44

To subscribe to the National Honey board newsletter visit: <https://www.honey.com/signup>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plan now for National Honey Bee Day 2020, which is Saturday August 15, 2020

July 13, 2020 – MABA July 2020 Meeting – Speaker and subject TBD. See y'all there!

August 10, 2020 – MABA August 2020 Meeting – Speaker and subject TBD. See y'all there!

September 14, 2020 – MABA September 2020 Meeting – Mike Studer, Tennessee State Apiarist, will present the state of beekeeping in TN and how to keep our bees healthy and thriving. You will want to attend this meeting!

September 15-16, 2020 – TN Apiary Inspector Course with Mike Studer, Tennessee State Apiarist. **Please let Charles know if you are interested in this class!**

To learn more about beekeeping in Tennessee visit the **Tennessee Beekeepers Association** website at: <http://www.tnbeekeepers.org/>



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HONEY-BASED RECIPES

1. WATERMELON SALAD WITH WHIPPED FETA - Makes 4 servings

For Honey Balsamic Reduction:

1/2 cup - white balsamic vinegar

2 T - honey

1 tsp. - dijon mustard

zest of 1 orange + 2 T of the juice

1/4 tsp. - kosher salt

For Whipped Feta:

4 oz. - feta cheese, crumbled

1/4 cup - whipped cream cheese

3 T - honey

6 cups - seedless watermelon, cut into 1" cubes

1/2 cup - fresh mint, julienned, reserving a few sprigs for garnish

4 (1") pieces - honeycomb

freshly ground pepper

Combine the balsamic vinegar and 2 T honey in a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to a slow bubble and cook for 8-10 minutes. The syrup will be thickened, remove from the heat and stir in the dijon mustard, orange zest, juice and salt, set aside and let cool.

Process the feta cheese, cream cheese and honey in a food processor until smooth, chill.

Combine the watermelon, fresh mint and honey balsamic reduction in a bowl and toss gently. Spoon the watermelon onto 4 plates, drizzling with the remaining balsamic reduction, top with a dollop of whipped feta and garnish with a piece of honeycomb and a sprig of fresh mint and freshly ground pepper, serve immediately.

TIP

You can prepare the components of this salad ahead of time, refrigerating the watermelon cubes and whipped feta, storing the honey balsamic reduction at room temperature and assembling the remaining ingredients right before serving.