

The Bee Line

Pineywoods Beekeepers Association

Next meeting January 9, 6:30 pm

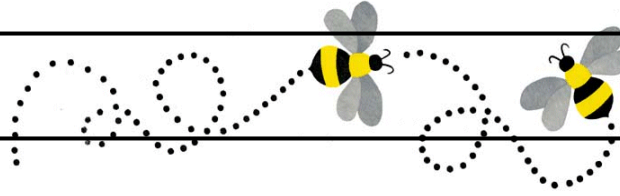
Lufkin VFW Post 1836

1800 Ford Chapel Road, Lufkin

<https://www.pineywoodsbeekeepers.org/>

Volume 25 Issue 1

January 2025



January Program

We have a loaded program this month! Our speakers will describe several ways to increase your hive count. Don Lymbery will talk about catching swarms. Bob Love will discuss walk-away splits and splitting hives using queens or queen cells. Edward Doucet will go over the Demaree method of splitting hives. At least one of these methods should work for you!

Assorted Buzziness

2025 dues are now due! \$15 e-mail membership or \$20 postal membership, per family. Pay at the meeting or send a check or money order (payable to Pineywoods Beekeepers Association) to Treasurer Mike Hartman, PO Box 536, Lufkin, 75902.

January is a good time to renew your Texas Beekeepers Association membership, as well as your subscriptions to *The American Bee Journal* and *Bee Culture* magazines. Here are the links you'll need:

<https://texasbeekeepers.org/>

<https://www.dadant.com/catalog/books-subscriptions/american-bee-journal/us-delivery>

<https://www.beeculture.com/magazine/>

2025 Bee School

We have confirmed dates and plans are underway for our 2025 Bee School. Classroom days will be February 15th and 22nd and bee yard day will be March 1st (weather permitting).

What's Buzzing

Mead-Make Resources – This seemed an appropriate section of the newsletter for this information! Here are some resources James Dotson shared.

<https://www.meadmakr.com/batch-buildr/> You can use this “calculator” to play around with the specs for your batch. It can help you figure out how much honey, yeast, and nutrients you need.

<https://city-steadng.com/>

<https://www.manmademead.com/>



James likes their YouTube channels. I'm including their websites because they have information and tutorials, as well as links to their YouTube channels.

<https://www.northernbrewer.com/> is his go-to site for brewing supplies, including his Big Mouth Bubbler and yeast nutrient.

He got his 1-gal pitcher from Amazon, as well as his screw-top bottles (from North Mountain Supply).

Five Star Beekeeping – I sent an email with their brochure, along with a pdf I created using information Walter received. If you're interested in ordering, let Walter know. If there's enough interest in a bulk order, we can move forward with that.

Roy Stark (Kirbyville) has 15 nucs for sale. \$200 each, or \$175 if you bring 5 frames to swap. Next spring, he'll release a new line of queens for sale, "Texas Pride Queens." They're a mix of Italian and Russian VSH bees that he's been working on for 10 years. Each nuc includes a Texas Pride Queen. roystark52@gmail.com or 409-423-0263

At-Home Beekeeping Series presented by the Lawrence Co. Alabama Extension Office. 6:30-7:30pm. Recordings from this series are available **for only two weeks** after each session on the Lawrence County Alabama Extension Office Facebook page. <https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/bees-pollinators/at-home-beekeeping-series/>

2025 Dates and Topics

January 28 — Coming Out of Winter

David Tarpy, North Carolina State University

February 25 — Honeybee Nutrition

Priya Chakrabarti Basu, Mississippi State University

March 25 — Colony Losses in the United States of America

Geoff Williams, Auburn University

April 29 — Honeybee Nest Architecture

Michael Smith, Auburn University

May 27 — TBD

Melanie Kirby, Institute of American Indian Arts

June 24 — TBD

Liz Walsh, United States Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service

Seasonal Tips

Robert Jones

January 1st is the beginning point for the beekeeping calendar in Deep East Texas for Angelina County and all the surrounding counties. This is the time that is critical to feed your bees. Some time on a warm day late in December on into the first week of January you should inspect the colony strength and resources.

Pollen patties, along with sugar syrup, can be added at the time of this inspection to push the queen for early brood production. (Note: Do not offer the pollen patty without syrup.) Do not go down into the hive looking for a queen or evidence of brood which will not be there. Rolling a queen at this point will lose the hive. Notice when you open the colony how many of the top bars have bees that come up on them and then count them. This indicates your hive strength.

Feed the bees the pollen patty resource according to the hive strength. Feed a whole patty for 8 to 10 frames of bees and ½ patty for 5 to 6 frames of bees. Two major reasons we feed in the early part of the year are to keep colonies that have wintered to this point from dying out due to a lack of resources and to support the colony expansion due to pollen which appears early in our area around the third week of January. Further south of Angelina County may see this happen in the second week of January.

The beginning of this natural pollen resource means that the hive will re-establish the brood nest since the queen will begin laying eggs for the first time in several months. (Pollen patties offered after the natural pollen has started will not be taken up as quickly and this resource can become a haven for the hive beetles.) With the hive expanding and resources dwindling due to the honey being used for heating and brood expansion, January and February become the easiest months to lose hives because winter cold snaps bring us to below freezing, sometimes for a week at a time. If this happens and the resources (mainly HONEY or syrup) are not available, the hive will be lost and you will find them with their heads down in the comb with the nest in a ball shape but overcome and gone.

Remember to keep that feeder full, especially this time of year, checking and filling only on warm days for inside colony feeders. Also, package bees are normally ordered from December to January 1st with delivery normally after April 1st.

Comb-Grown Goodness

Russian Honey Cake

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/277220/russian-honey-cake/>

Burnt Honey

¾ cup wildflower honey
3 tablespoons cold water

Cake Layers

1 cup white sugar
14 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into slices
¾ cup wildflower honey
2 ½ teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
¾ teaspoon fine salt
6 large cold eggs
3 ¾ cups all-purpose flour

Frosting

4 cups cold heavy whipping cream
¾ cup sour cream



You might want to consult the website for pictures and videos of the process.

1. Gather all ingredients. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Line a baking sheet with a silicone baking mat. Place a mixing bowl and whisk in the refrigerator.

2. Pour 3/4 cup honey into a deep saucepan over medium heat. Boil until a shade darker and caramel-like in aroma, about 10 minutes. Turn off heat and whisk in cold water.
3. Place a large metal bowl over the lowest heat setting on the stovetop. Add sugar, butter, 3/4 cup honey, and 1/4 cup burnt honey. Let sit until butter melts, 5 to 7 minutes. Reserve remaining burnt honey for the frosting.
4. Meanwhile, combine baking soda, cinnamon, and salt in a small bowl.
5. Whisk butter mixture and let sit until very warm to the touch. Whisk in eggs. Keep mixture over low heat until it warms up again, then whisk in baking soda mixture. Remove from heat.
6. Sift in flour in 2 or 3 additions, stirring well after each, until batter is easily spreadable.
7. Transfer about 1/2 cup batter onto the prepared baking sheet. Spread into an 8- or 9-inch circle using an offset spatula. Shake and tap the pan to knock out any air bubbles.
8. Bake in the preheated oven until lightly browned, 6 to 7 minutes. Remove liner from the pan and let cake layer continue cooling until firm enough to remove, 6 to 7 minutes. Invert cake onto a round of parchment paper.
9. Repeat Steps 6 and 7 until you have 8 cake layers, letting each cool on an individual parchment round.
10. Trim edges using a pizza wheel to ensure they are the same size; save scraps for crumb mixture. Spread any remaining batter onto the lined baking sheet. Bake in the preheated oven until edges are dry, about 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and cut into small pieces; toss with reserved cake scraps.
11. Return scraps to the oven and bake until browned, 7 to 10 minutes more. Let cool completely, 15 to 20 minutes.
12. Transfer to a resealable bag and beat into fairly fine crumbs using a rolling pin; set aside.
13. Remove the bowl and whisk from the refrigerator. Pour in heavy cream and whisk until soft peaks form. Add sour cream and remaining burnt honey; continue whisking until stiff peaks form.
14. Place a cake layer on a parchment paper round on a pizza pan or serving plate. Spread a cup of frosting evenly on top, almost to the edge. Repeat with cake layers and frosting, pressing layers in smooth-side down. Place the last cake layer smooth-side up.
15. Frost top and sides of cake. Cover with crumbs; clean any excess crumbs around base.
16. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 8 hours to overnight. Transfer to a cake stand using 2 spatulas. Cut and serve.



Brandon Turner has always had a fixation with bees and has been keeping them for 10 years. His wife, Angela, has been involved for one year. She wanted to help the environment and make money. They consider themselves hybrid beekeepers.