

# Orange County Beekeepers



## OCBA Field Day With Chatham

The Orange County Beekeepers joined forces with the Chatham County Beekeepers for a field day extraordinaire on Saturday, July 25th. Activities included hive inspection and varroa sampling at host Pete Mabie's house in N. Chatham, an ice cream social also at Pete's, more hive inspection and varroa



sampling with the Chatham Club's hives on the campus of Central Carolina Community College in Pittsboro, and a close up look at a foulbrood hive. A few folks finished

off the day with a little mead tasting at the Chatham Marketplace with Ben and Becky Starr.

### Varroa Sampling

Part of our observation of hives involved looking for signs of varroa mites. First we observed the general state of each hive, looking at brood pattern, looking for eggs and developing brood, and checking stores of pollen and honey. Then we looked for signs of varroa including young bees with deformed wing syndrome and phoretic mites clinging to nurse bees. Then Don and Will took a sample of bees off a frame of young brood by scooping them up in a container, in this case a jiffy peanut butter jar. You want

around 200 bees, in this jar about 1" of bees. They then replaced the top with a screened lid and added XXX powdered sugar through the screen, about 2 tablespoons or the fat end of a hive tool piled high. After shaking the bees in the sugar, they set it aside to let the bees really get covered well. While they were waiting, they went on to inspect the next hive. When the bees were thoroughly covered, they shook out the loose mites into a 5 gallon bucket lid with a 1/2 " of water on it.



The sugar then dissolves while the brown mites float on the surface easily visible. These were counted to determine if treatment was needed. This time of year less than 10 mites is okay. It was great to get to observe this method for sampling in person. Don also checked drone brood for mites. Since mites prefer drone brood, this is a great quick way to check for mite load on a colony.



Don Hopkins uses a cappings scratcher to uncap and pull drone brood from a frame at Central Carolina Community College. The photo at the left shows the fairly well developed brood impaled on the scratcher. Notice the remnants of the cappings on the underside of the tool.

The photo below is a close up of a mite on the drone brood.



Will Hicks collects about 200 bees in a Jiffy peanut butter jar for a sugar shake.



Read more about the varroa mites in these links:

NCSU publication [“Managing Varroa Mites in Honey Bee Colonies”](#) covers the topic thoroughly. This is a 4 mb download so may take a while if you are limited to dial up speeds. It is worth the wait. Everything you need to (must) know but were afraid to ask.

Pesticide labels.

[MiteAway II](#)

[Apistan](#)

Other Resources

[Purdue Extension Publication](#)

[Wiki Article](#)



## Ice Cream Social

Our area beekeepers have proven themselves skilled at more than just keeping bees. Our social included numerous varieties of homemade ice cream including: Peach, Blueberry, Vanilla, Chocolate, and Cantaloupe Sorbet. To make it even better people brought treats to go with the ice cream including a homemade topping made with fresh fruit and rum.

We all enjoyed the chance to sit on on Pete and ?'s front porch and visit. Many discussions of bees and gardens were heard.

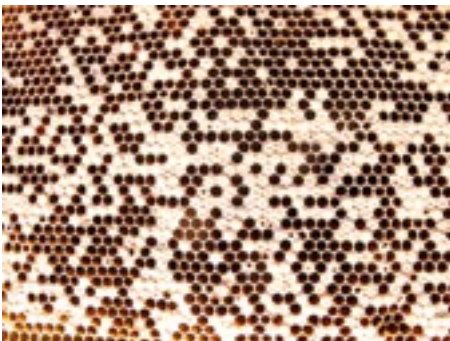
## Foulbrood

A hive with a case of American Foulbrood was located in Northern Orange County. Our inspectors were nice enough to bring it to our field day. We were able to observe for general signs of foulbrood. First we smelled the hive for the tell tale sign of foulbrood, a kind of rotting meat smell. Then we looked at brood frames for poor laying patterns, concave cappings, and partially opened capped cells.



liquifies, it pools on the lower side of the cell and then dries out creating a dark shiny residue that sometimes includes the dried out tongue of the larvae.

Along with the signs of foulbrood, we saw the normal markers for a failing hive including lots of hive beetles, and wax moth larvae.



At closer observation, Will tested brood cells for the roping that sometimes occurs. As the brood rots you can insert a toothpick or stick into the cells and it will rope out.

While we did not see this we were able to see the scale that occurs after the brood dries up. After it

## Making Mead

Ben and Becky Starr have been making mead for a while starting with their own personal experiments. Now they are opening their own meadery next to the Chatham Marketplace.

On Saturday afternoon, they did a demonstration on mead making for the Johnston County Beekeepers, some members from Orange and Chatham joined in for the fun.

Ben described the making of mead by combining honey and water and yeast to produce one of the earliest forms of alcohol perhaps predating the making of beer.

He then described some of the variables in the process that can produce the many different flavors of mead. While he did that, Becky passed out samples of their mead.

Ben then showed us a simple method for making mead while Becky read us the recipe. It included honey, oranges, raisins, cinnamon sticks, cloves, nutmeg and bread yeast. To learn more, visit [Starrlight Mead](#).

