

# ORANGE CO

*Beekeepers*



## April Meeting

Will Hicks, another of our wonderful inspectors, shared with us his photographs and experiences from his visit to South America. He and Don Hopkins were invited to participate in a honey bee conference in Bolivia last summer? They traveled through the remote countryside meeting with local beekeepers. This first part of the trip was unusually cold and they were unable to go into any hives but later they were able to inspect hives that were often set on ridge lines to keep the africanized bees away from habitation. Will noted that working the bees was not much different than working our European bees except that once they got annoyed, they became grumpy much quicker.

Will said it was a great trip despite the rigors of the primitive roadways and frequent vehicular problems. The people were very friendly and like beekeepers anywhere excited to watch and talk about honeybees.

The most interesting part of Will's talk to me were the two types of small stingless bees, meliponines, which local people kept in small boxes nailed to their front porches. These bees built horizontal circles of honeycomb in which they lay their brood. They are stacked up like pancakes in the hive and are surrounded by petal-like freeform wax pieces that create small floating honey cups. They seem very beautiful.

## Highlights



### Treasurer's update

With the funds in our account, OCBA decided to purchase an extractor for use by club members and the install a pollination garden in Hillsborough.

### Volunteer Opportunities

[Butterfly Bash](#) at NC Museum of Life and Science in Durham. Saturday May 22

[Farm to Fork](#), at Breeze Farm in Cedar Grove, Sunday May 23, 4-7 pm

### State Meeting

Remember the [NCSBA Annual Summer Meeting](#) is the first week in July in China Grove, NC.



## Honey Plants and the Co-evolution of Plant and Pollinators

Betsy Kempton and Geneva Green, members of OCBA, spoke at our May meeting. Betsy spoke on the emergence of angiosperms which differed from their seed bearing predecessors, gymnosperms, by having flowers which in their arrangement of stamen and ovule prevent self-pollination. Some of these plants reproduce through wind pollination. Others reproduce by creating sticky pollens that are carried by animals and insects. Plants that can attract many pollinators who can successfully gather their pollen and redistribute it, are likely to be more plentiful. Pollinators that can gather pollen and nectar from plentiful plants will be more likely to increase in number. So as diversity of plants increased, pollinators changed and expanded. The two groups evolved side by side. Some pollinators became so specialized as to limit their resources. Similarly a plant can limit the pollinators able to pollinate it by overspecialization. Honey bees are excellent pollinators because they are capable of pollinating a wide variety of plants and because of their large numbers per hive.

There are many plants that bees pollinate, some that they gather nectar from to make honey, some that they gather pollen from. There are plants that the bees receive little from but are essential to us because they require pollination to produce the fruits and vegetables we eat.

In North Carolina, our major honey crops are Tulip Poplar in Central NC, Sourwood in the Mountains, and Gallberry and Tupelo towards the coast. Red Maple is important as an early nectar source. Crimson Clover, Buckwheat, and Blueberry are all cultivated crops that produce good nectar flows. Many herbs produce flowers that bees like, such as lavender, oregano, mint and allium.

There are lots of perennials that you can plant that honey bees will visit especially those in the lamiun, aster and salvia families. For a more complete list visit our website at [greenstonequarterly.com](http://greenstonequarterly.com).



# Beekeeping Events

## Piedmont Wildlife Center Festival for Wildlife

On Saturday, May 15th, many members from OCBA attended this annual event that raises money to protect local species and increases knowledge about local species and local resources. Many of our young people were there including Taylor Solie, Michelle Metzger, Clara Kempton, John Fee and Sara Laudeman. Lanette Fee, Peter, Solie, Chris Laudeman, Betsy Kempton, Shari Metzger, Geneva Green and Lewis Cauble also worked the booth. Lewis rebuilt our bee gazebo and brought a nuc of gentle bees that we used to show people a hive with workers, drone, a queen and brood. There were many people interested in learning more about beekeeping and many kids who began to feel more comfortable with the bees. There was a feral colony in a tree on site nearby.

This is a wonderful event with lots of other interesting booths including owls, snakes, hawks and turtles from rescue organizations.



# Time to Harvest:

## Sunday

we harvested some honey from the bees we had at the the blueberry farm at the shop. We pulled three supers from two different hives. We checked on the hives that we had installed the ross round frames in at the mini-workshop last month. They had only drawn out and capped some of the rounds on the fist level but these looked perfect.

Lewis demonstrated using a fume board to drive the bees down out of the supers. We used Bee Quick and left the fume boards on for 5 minutes.

Taking the supers back to the shop, we took turns using the heated cappings knife to cut off the wax cappings. We then spun the honey out in a 9 frame radial extractor. The first super we extracted was mostly blueberry honey. The second was mostly Tulip Poplar.

