



North Central Beekeepers Assoc., Inc. • P.O. Box 294 Brainerd, MN 56401

*A Non-Profit Educational Organization For Beekeepers.*

## **North Central Beekeepers Association**

**March 2013 Newsletter**

**Meeting 7:00 pm. 3-18-2013 Northland Arboretum, Brainerd, Mn.  
56401**

**Collecting pollen from your hives**

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## **North Central Beekeepers Newsletter March 2013**

**Meeting 7:00 pm. March 18, 2013 Northland Arboretum, Brainerd, Mn.**

**Serving committee; Amy Kowalzek**

**Amy is serving lunch all by herself this month. There should really be two family's serving each month. Many hands make light work! There are still two months with no one signed up and two with only one signed. It is only a drink and a snack not a four course sit down meal. Your help is needed.**

**The meeting will start with pollen trapping demonstration by Lewis Struthers from Parkers Prairie. Lewis is at least a second generation beekeeper and possibly third generation. Lewis keeps in the area of 200 hives, builds his own queens and still has time to grow an extensive fruit orchard. Lewis has hybridized his own apple varieties. He brought samples of his apples to the January meeting for all to sample. Along with all the above Lewis also teaches continuing adult education courses at Alexandria District #206. This spring he will teach an advanced beekeeping and a orchard production course. Check the courses out on the internet.**

**The business meeting will follow Lewis' presentation so come early and not miss out on the pollen trapping presentation.**

**It is now March, Are your bees alive? Are your queens laying? How much feed is left in the hive? What type of feed is in the hive? Have you been in your hives? You need to be looking, on a warm afternoon with no wind blowing ease the top of each hive and QUICKLY check out what is going on in there and then if things are looking right close it up and go to the next. Try to see if there are any brood cells with eggs, larvae or very possibly capped brood. In order for the hive to**

**raise that brood they have to have a carbohydrate source (honey, fondant or sugar). Honey is of course the best food but if they have eaten almost all that was in the hive last fall you must put in a substitute. You may have frames of honey from your own dead outs. Go ahead and use these, they will not have disease you don't already have. Don't use any other honey as you may get more than you paid for.**

**Fondant is very good bee feed if you have access to it or can make it yourself. Fondant access is often difficult to achieve and can be tricky to make yourself.**

**Sugar is the easiest to get but can be very difficult to feed. Sugar cakes can be processed at home but one must be very careful to not get burned or ruin the house. When possible cook outside on a hard surface without other people and distractions. A heat source, large kettle and mixing device along with an accurate thermometer are all needed. Sugar cakes that are not properly cooked drip down thru the frames and kill your bees.**

**The MOUNTAIN CAMP method with granulated sugar is fairly simple and works when out of options. To feed sugar in this method you need a frame or empty shallow super, newspaper, sugar and water preferably in a spray bottle. Lay two layers of paper on top of the frames covering  $\frac{3}{4}$  or so of the length. Set the super on top then pour the sugar in. Do this in layers while spraying with the water. Don't spray to the point of run off but just about. The idea is to have the sugar clump up and get hard. The bees may carry the sugar out as garbage when granular but when solid they use it as food. The water helps the bees utilize the sugar as food**

**Bees also need a protein source to raise that brood. Bees can not, will not raise brood without protein. Pollen is the best and proper protein source for bees. There may be pollen in the corners of the frames but most likely not. Fill cells of a frame with your own pollen so that the**

**bees can get to it. Do not buy pollen unless you are very certain that it has been irradiated to eliminate virus and other disease. The vast majority of pollen available is from china and Southeast Asia. There for the quality is questionable. This is the reason to watch and learn from Lewis as he shows us how to collect our own pollen. Bees cannot eat pollen as pollen. They must convert it to beebread. This is a process not unlike making silage. The bees carry the pollen to the cells and while packing it into the cell add enzymes that cause the fermentation. This fermentation breaks down the pollen grains into a product that the bee can digest in their stomach. Without your own pollen or a SAFE source you must use a pollen substitute (pollen patty). Pollen patties are not as good as pollen but are much better than nothing. I buy the highest protein patties that I can find. Others us a cheaper patty and get along, you need to make that decision. Lay the patty directly on the top of the frames in the area of the brood nest so that the bees don't have to move to get it.**

**If you get to your hives and find that they are all dead. Try to figure out why. Where are they, head first in cells, backed in the cells, tongues sticking out or all on the bottom board. These are all signs of different causes of death. You now need to decide if you are going to replace your dead outs and how. Splits, nucs and packages are all possible but where do you get them and at what cost?**

**Want Ads;**

**Handmade bee equipment, Old equipment repaired!**

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**Aitkin, Mn. 56431**