

BROWARD BEEKEEPERS GENERAL MTG 2/11/16

Coconut Creek Florida

- Discussion about Zika virus and the spraying for mosquitos – Everyone needs to contact Broward Mosquito Control to express concerns about indiscriminate spraying.
- Annual Bee College March 4,5 St. Augustine, if you are going it is recommended to book hotel now
- Florida State Beekeepers Association - \$15 annual membership , BBA recommends our members should join
- Water Matters Day Tree Tops Park March 12, 9-3
- Coconut Creek Arbor Day April 30
- Deerfield Beach Spring Fest April 30 need volunteer 3-7 p.m.
- Need Speaker for Victoria Park Garden Club – MAY 23

PLEASE CALL DAN or HARRY TO SIGN UP FOR ANY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY as soon as possible.

First Micro Apiary – FIRST OF Its KIND OF PROJECT IN THE COUNTRY!!

First Micro Apiary opened in Oakland Park Victoria Park - URBAN Farming INSTITUTE press coverage was there and a lot of VIP's. Dan Lewis was instrumental for the success and launching of the micro apiary.

Plaque was awarded to Discovery Farms Urban Farm Institute for the first Microapiary in Florida. Wind resistant to hurricanes and 6 ft high and also adhering to Best Management Practices. The microapiary has plexiglass observation windows John Coldwell is getting bees installed there now

At the Apiary on Sample Road we have had problems with people dumping but last week it was over the top. Dan showed photos of a huge amount of construction waste Dan and John Yinger searched through it and found the ownership of the trash. The owner who is connected with the Mayor of Boca Raton and the Coconut Creek Police got involved and found the dumpers who had left their identifying info in some paperwork that was found in the pile of dumped waste. The police got the culprits to clean it up at their expense. Possibly will be working with the owner to get the property fenced in.

Intro's.....

Leo is working on micro apiary projects in Parkland.

Charlie and Linda Coxson has 2 hives thanks to Sam Comfort

Carol Nevius has a helper now who is very excited to work with her

New people today: a couple who have no hives but are interested.....

Chloe had a great harvest in January but went outside last week and found all of her bees were gone. She got invaded by wax moths.

Ellen and her husband from Charlotte NC visiting

Harry asks how those here for first time found it through Facebook, on line, searching for groups – several just googling bees in Broward

Kevin is working on the website and Nevin has been checking out the Instagram

THE ACT EVERYONE IS WAITING FOR!!! SAM COMFORT – the most natural and unconventional beekeeper

He has about 600 hives up and down the east coast. Near Plattsburg NY and his home base in Pompano. He is doing queen raising down in Homestead now.

Colony Collapse disorder is People Collapse disorder.
He loves S. Florida bee meeting because everyone here is happy about their bees and not having to buy bees like up north.

Sam has diagnosed this year BEEKEEPER Collapse Disorder!!!
Because no new and young people are taking it up.
He gets calls from people upset about their bees dying and they don't know why

I always wanted to be a farmer, so he knew people in upstate NY and they told him he could come and take care of them. He got stung so much he ran the first time he went to bees. He realized beekeeping was the hardest thing he has ever done and that was the beginning of where he is today.

Not wearing a veil slows you down to deliberate acts that the bees can sense.

Within a few months his friends went to Brooklyn and he decided to move to Montana and found a beekeeper to work for. 5,000 hives treating for feeding and varroa mites never missed a beat. Feed medicate and move them thousands of miles. This was not his idea of what he wanted to do. Beekeepers used to be able to work at home but no more because of Chinese honey at pennies a pound coming into the country.

He did not know how he would fit into this life. He did the Montana bee operation for 2 years.

He got a call from a friend to manage his bees but that he was going to have to do it all alone. Sam said ok. His friend went down from 1000 hives to 250 and discovered that his friend had mite strips in every hive and that the mites had just developed resistant.

Formic acid was the old way to treat them for varroa mites. It worked but none of the brood was alive and many of the queens were gone. This knocked the bees back to practically nothing now. No queens and nothing ordered and he had to figure out how to do splits. But they had no hives that were strong enough to split. He taught himself how to graft larvae and put them into a queenless hives to get a quantity of queens. 10 days after the grafts the queens would emerge and go out and mate and come back and lay eggs and then the hives started to come back and by May he was back up to 1000 hives. He hauled them back to NY and VT, and those hives saved his whole operation of his boss.

His boss gave him 10 hives and gave him a place to raise them. Since 2005 he is still working with the stock DNA from those hives.

Now the bees have adapted to keeping the beetles out of the hives over the past 5 years.

Florida has constant pollen and nectar coming into the hive which makes it unique down here.

He took 5 of his best hives to Vermont and used these 5 hives to bank from the stock of the bees. He kept the 5 breeding hives in isolation and used them to raise queens.

Bees thrive on diversity

He met Dee Lusby and she is the only one who never treated for varroa mite. She kept all of her bees on SMALL CELL foundation. More cells per square inch. Looking at bees closer to the equator you find much smaller bees than 'up north.

He had the 5 hives and had learned how to build up his hives so he went to Florida. He signed up with a beekeeper in West Palm Beach. He had to raise 300 queens a week. They used 'Italian bees and plastic foundation. They usually had very solid brood and low varroa. He realized he was breaking the brood cycle for a week every month when he removed the queen. He realized that this is what bees do, they swarm and that is a cleansing period for the bee hive. Moving them out and breaking the brood cycle.

He moved from 5 hives to 160 3 frame nucs in a matter of a couple of months. He put them up north on the small cell foundation and they did incredibly well

He had no materials and realized that he had to do something to bring beekeeping back and that is how Anarchy Apiaries came to him.

History of beekeeping.....the Langstroth hives and how up till 1880s they were great until the diseases started. Wax being given to hive from year to year was causing it. But it became illegal to keep skeps and hollow logs and only now allowed were Langstroth hives. So beekeeping became an esoteric art hobby.

Sam didn't have money to buy so much material and he started inventing an inexpensive approach. He started doing simple top bar hives. And a stick and a bucket were his extractor.

He liked the idea of no supers and just access to the entire hive. The bees stay mellow because you go in at one end. No mashing of bees to open and close your hives like you do with a Langstroth

He started putting in popsicle sticks across the top of the bars to help them get straight starts on the bars.

The advantages of top bar are many. The bees are very forgiving of poor carpentry. Kirk Webster was one of his first mentors. You can read about him at kirkwebster.com and he was the first one who told Sam he could raise bees without treating for varroa.

Sam wanted to make Northern hardy bees. The bees don't seem to survive well up north so he started with top bar hives overwintering.

The Trapezoid shape of top bar gives more strength to the comb

Top bars were great for raising bees and queens.

Sam's long term goal is to work down to 5 hives and manage them through a network of beekeepers. We in S Florida are on the beekeeping cutting edge.

Sam still does grafting and he does it to get to the front of hardier bees. The queen is everything. If you want to change the characteristics of your hive, you change the queen.

S. Florida has good genetics and nice bees.

Sam shows a how the biggest mechanical operation in Hawaii. They pump out about 400,000 queens a year there.

Sam took Langstroths and cut them in half to simulate swarming

He started doing little flower pot sized boxes to see how the queens would be. They were too small.

Then Sam found Warre hives – a French beekeeper who developed the idea. He took the Warre design and modified it. He was able to construct small Warre hives that he doesn't have to destroy and that he can stack and inspect. He makes his own hives for only a couple of dollars a hive.

Raising queens is fascinating and you can do it in your own backyard. He grafts off of breeder queens that are 3-4 years old. They have longevity.

He showed photo slides of queenless combines. It is a good way to make comb honey

Bait hives are great. They are looking for a 10 gallon empty vessels. They like it higher off the ground 5-10 feet off the ground. Put what you can in it to make it smell like a hive. It will attract the bees. Bait hives usually work 90% of the time. You are saving the bees from going into a wall of someone's house.

Bees in Florida are really gentle.

He shows us his bee vacuum. A cordless dustbuster on the outside and a net strainer bag in the inside.

The next time you go to a hive or a meeting, bring a young person. Combat Beekeeper Collapse Disorder.

Anarchy Apiaries. or Sam Comfort.

Each queen that you raise needs its own box

Take a couple of frames of brood and shake some bees in with a new queen and create your split.

Open Forum:

Feeding Bees?

Sam said he feeds his bees but not 1-1 or it will ferment 2-1 and a bit of lemon juice
In emergencies he does feed or as baby bees, but he wants bees to feed themselves once they become teenagers.

Tap water filtered or let to set out for a couple of hours

Inverted sugar can be fed, the bees produce invertase anyway to break sugar down.....

Sam is around to answer questions