



STAHLMAN

BEEKEEPING NOTES

**2024 Vol 6 issue
21**

Published by Dana Stahlman Raleigh, North Carolina Email: stahlmanapiaries@aol.com
Published free as a public service to anyone interested in honeybees. Email me to be added to
my mailing list. Published 5-31-24

Traveling the State of North Carolina

I do a lot of traveling. I am often called upon to give bee talks. Thus, I get to visit many counties of my adopted state. This is a big state east to west. In fact, a trip to Ashe County from my home in Raleigh is a three hour plus drive. I have driven to Boone, N.C. on many occasions in the last 9 years up route 221. I kept passing a sign to Hidden Happiness Bee Farm. Two weeks ago, I just had an opportunity to visit H.S. Greene and his business. This is more than a bee supply business.

Getting to his bee farm took a winding trip of about a mile on what I consider back country roads. I didn't have any idea what to expect. It was much like the trip I did several years ago to visit a beekeeper living on the side of Cullowhee Mountain. Beekeepers in the region of the mountains I have visited are very interesting people. They are seasoned and very protective of their land.

I remember a situation in Rayburn County Georgia where I kept bees on a sourwood honey flow. To place my bees in a good location, I was asked to share 1/2 of my honey crop with the land owner. He promised to keep the bears away. I got two barrels of honey from that one location -- about 1200 pounds of good sourwood honey. I gave the owner one barrel. He was also a beekeeper and harvested the honey for me. The comment was made that people don't really know what sourwood honey is! And most of what is bought will include some tulip poplar and sumac honey in it as well. Both of these varieties of honey will darken sourwood honey.

I am well aware of one beekeeper in Georgia who dropped some hives off in a mountain location for sourwood and the hives disappeared. No one had any idea of what happened to them. The bears didn't get them.

H.S. Greene spent two hours sharing thoughts and ideas about mountain beekeeping. He was willing to show me some locations that require a 4 – wheel vehicle to reach and since my interest also includes rock hunting, welcomed me back. Both he and his wife, Karen are helpful in helping beekeepers.

His store is so unique that a visit just to see what he has done on a mountain side makes the trip worthwhile. I am going to share a number of pictures I took. Far too many to share but these pictures will give you an idea of what you will be in for.



This is a classroom and museum – just one of the many things you may not see if you just walk into the store. This room is dedicated to Bob Cole (Willie Robert Cole).

I knew Bob when I was involved with him in an EAS meeting many years ago. He was from North Carolina and along with John Ambrose of North Carolina State University - were movers and shakers of that organization along with the likes of Richard Taylor, Roger Morse, Kim Flottum, Ann Harmon, Walter Rothenbuhler and Grant D. Morse.

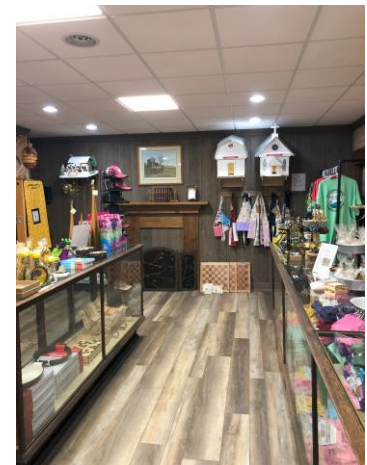
What makes this room so unique, is that H.S. Greene has many artifacts of Bob Cole's life preserved in it. So many beekeepers I have met in North Carolina do not know who Bob Cole was. This is one place where the memory of Bob Cole lives. From his collection of bee books to the plaques on the wall including his EAS Master Beekeeping Certificate issue in 1982 are displayed.

I might add that H.S. Greene offers various levels of beekeeping classes here

and makes available a field day with various speakers and events. He is people oriented!



A picture of H.S. and Karen working with a customer. Displays cover all walls. There are additional rooms with various bee related products for sale.



And my wife, Judi loved the dinning area with real amish ice cream.

When I give talks, I often open the floor to questions. Here are a few that I want to answer and I will answer more over in issues coming up this year. Thanks to Ashe County Beekeepers for these questions.

How long does it take for bees to start producing honey? There are two ways to answer this question. One would be to describe the process of converting nectar to honey. But I think this is the answer the beekeeper was looking for.

New beekeepers starting with package bees or nucs -- it takes these colonies time to build up a large work force. Usually 8 to 10 weeks or more. By then the honey flow is over and the new hive without many foraging bees misses out on the opportunity to get a good amount of honey. This is true of those colonies that must drawn comb on new foundation. It takes a hive of bees less time if the bees have drawn comb for brood rearing and honey storage. In any case an established strong hive can always gather more nectar and convert it to honey than a weaker hive. A colony of 60,000 bees will produce more honey than two hives with 30,000 bees in each hive.

Thank you Kenneth Lucas.

How far does a bee travel from a hive? Bees do not fly any further than necessary to gather pollen, nectar or water. Usually the range for honey bees gathering honey is not much more than 2 miles. There are report that bees can fly 7 or 8 miles. Bees in that case would likely use all the nectar collect to provide the energy required to return to the hive.

Thank you Elizabeth Lucas.

How do you know when your bees have swarmed? If you notice a sudden reduction of bees in your hive and find many open queen cells at the bottom of frames in the brood chamber, you can definitely say the reduction in bee population was caused by the bees swarming – the old queen left with ½ of the bees previously in the colony. Smarming is a natural behavioral trait of honey bees due to several factor such as over crowding of the brood nest and the instinct to swarm.

Thank you Jina Motts

I have a queen castle and it's been a game changer. Why aren't queen castles more common? Is it possible to over winter three frame nucs in a queen castle?

Answer, I share your feeling about the value of having a queen castle. I would like to say it might be possible. However I have never been successful trying to carry three queens over the winter. Some queen castles have four sections rather than 3. It may be that the winter cluster is forced to alter the shape of the winter cluster – rather than take the form of a ball. The heat loss is greather due to the exposed exterior of the winter cluster. If the queen castle is reduced to 2 divisions of 5 frames each, winter survival is more likely. I lived in Ohio at one time and thought I could over winter extra queens in a queen castle. It did not work out well even with the queen castles packed in an insulated box with good ventilation and a small flight hole in each section for bees to fly.

Thank you Wayne J. Pitts