



UPCOMING EVENTS:

Next Meeting: Monday, February 25, 2025

Location: **The Lamar Senior Activity Center**
2874 Shoal Crest Ave Austin TX 78705

- 6:00 PM** Doors open. Meet, Eat and Greet
Bring a **Valentine** themed snack to share
- 6:30PM** Business Meeting
- 6:45PM** Guest Speaker **Charliebee Agar**
- 7:45PM** Door Prizes
- 8:00PM** Meeting Ends

From the PRESIDENT

Elissa Sexton

From the SECRETARY

Joy Mills

Let's Set a Warm Trap!

Swarm traps are a great way to attract honeybees to establish a new colony, and the location where you hang them plays a key role in attracting bees. Here are some important tips on where to place them:

In a Bee-Friendly Area: Place your swarm trap in an area where bees are likely to forage, such as near wildflower meadows, gardens, orchards, or agricultural fields. Bees are naturally attracted to areas that are abundant with food sources.

High, but Not Too High: Aim to hang the swarm trap at least 8–15 feet (2.5–4.5 meters) off the ground. Bees prefer to nest in trees or higher places, but you want to ensure the trap is still accessible and visible to scout bees.

Away from Other Bee Hives: Swarm traps should be placed at least 100 yards (91 meters) away from any existing hives to prevent the bees from being confused about the location.

Shady Spot: Choose a location that receives partial shade during the day, as it will keep the trap cooler and more comfortable for the bees. A place with some morning sun or late afternoon shade is ideal.

Avoid Windy Areas: Bees prefer calm environments. Avoid placing traps in overly windy areas, as they can be difficult for the bees to find and navigate.

Natural Habitat: Swarm traps placed near trees, bushes, or other natural structures can help mimic the conditions bees would naturally seek when looking for a new home.

On a Steady Structure: If you are placing a swarm trap on a post or structure, make sure it is stable and won't easily be disturbed by wind, animals, or people.

Orient the Entrance: The entrance to the swarm trap should face away from prevailing winds. If you're in an area with strong winds from a particular direction, face the entrance away from that wind.

By following these guidelines, you can greatly increase the chances of attracting a swarm to your trap.

This month's Guest Speaker: Charlie "Bee" Agar

Charlie Agar is "saving bees and sweetening teas" all across Central Texas from the family homestead and retail store on the south end of Seguin. Charlie is a past area director of the [Texas Beekeepers Association](#). He is a volunteer mentor with the non-profit [Hives for Heroes](#), and a regular guest speaker and presenter to groups and organizations. Check out his web page, [Charliebee.com](#)

An Invitation from Le Creuset Outlet

Le Creuset Outlet invites beekeepers to spend a few hours sampling and selling their wares in their Round Rock location at the Premium Outlet mall.

The store features high-end cookware and bakeware at discounted prices. Local artisans are promoting breads, cookies, and other food products to help bring traffic to the store, delight customers, and showcase local artisan foods.

No fees, keep your profits, have fun, and make some money.

Le Creuset Outlet
Premium Outlets Round Rock
4401 North IH-35, Suite 161
Round Rock, Texas 78664
Contact Laurie at 1-512-863-7181

The store is located near Starbucks and Skechers, easily accessed from the east side of the mall.

From the Treasurer
Rachael Lam

What's Blooming in the Austin Area?

Though winter lingers, nature is already painting the city with small bursts of color.

Along the hiking trails of the Barton Creek Greenbelt, **Texas Redbud (Cercis canadensis var texensis)** begins its show. Tiny magenta-pink blossoms cling to bare branches, creating a striking contrast against the gray sky. The flowers release a soft yellow pollen.

Near the riverbanks and creeks, **Mexican Plum (Prunus mexicana)** trees offer white blossoms that seem to glow in the soft light. The fragrance is sweet and enticing, inviting insects to gather its pale yellow pollen, which drifts lightly on the breeze.

Driving through the Hill Country just outside of Austin, one can spot the **Elbow Bush (Forestiera pubescens)**, also known as "Spring Herald" for its early blooms. Its yellow-green flowers are easy to miss, but they carry a fine, greenish-yellow pollen that signals the coming of spring.

Even the invasive **Japanese Quince (Chaenomeles japonica)** puts on a show in some Austin gardens. Its deep coral-red blossoms stand out against the winter landscape. The pollen, though faint in color, carries hints of pale yellow.

In wild fields the **Agarita (Mahonia trifoliolata)** starts its bloom. Small, golden-yellow flowers cluster along its sharp leaves. The pollen is also a warm golden hue, often clinging to bees that emerge from their winter dormancy.

Neighborhood yards around the city are beginning to show **Snowdrops (Crocus sativus)** and **Crocuses (Crocus sativus)** that provide early orange or yellow-orange pollen for bees. **Rosemary (Rosmarinus officinalis)** will provide nectar and a whitish pollen in late winter.

As the sun climbs higher it brings the first signs of spring. Tiny flecks of yellow and green pollen drift through the air, whispering of warmer days

Preparing Honeybee Hives for Spring

As winter fades and temperatures begin to rise, beekeepers must prepare their hives for the busy spring season. Proper preparation ensures colonies have the resources, space, and health to thrive during the upcoming nectar flow.

Inspect and Assess Hive Health

On the first warm day (above 55°F) when bees are flying, open the hive for a quick inspection. Check for signs of a healthy queen, brood in various stages, and food stores. If the queen is absent or laying poorly, consider requeening early. Colonies that appear weak may need to be combined with a stronger hive.

Feed if Necessary

If honey stores are low, provide supplemental feeding to prevent starvation. Use 1:1 sugar syrup to stimulate brood production and build up colony strength. A pollen substitute may be necessary if natural pollen sources are still scarce.

Manage Pests and Diseases

Spring is a crucial time to check for varroa mites. Conduct an alcohol wash or sugar roll test to assess mite levels. If necessary, apply an appropriate treatment before the main nectar flow begins. Also, inspect for diseases such as chalkbrood or foulbrood and take action if needed.

Provide Adequate Space

As brood production increases, colonies will quickly expand. Ensure there is enough space by adding drawn comb or foundation frames. Overcrowding can trigger swarming, so consider splitting strong colonies if needed.

Prepare for Swarm Season

Monitor colony growth and look for swarm cells. Providing ample space and managing congestion reduces the risk of losing bees to swarming. Setting up swarm traps can help recover any bees that do decide to leave.

By taking these proactive steps, beekeepers can set their colonies up for a productive and healthy spring season.

From the VICE PRESIDENT

Eddy Monske

Let's Build a Swarm Box (or Nuc)

Cut list

- 2ea 22.2 x 6 cm (hand holds)
- 2ea 48.6 x 25 cm (sides)
- 2ea 19.0 x 23 cm (front & back) *note entrance = 1.5 x 14 cm
- 2ea 48.6 x 22.2 cm (lid & bottom)

The wood I use is Huber Zip System exterior sheathing.

GP exterior sheathing also works (less expensive), but I prefer the Huber Zip System.

Often you can find the OSB at construction sites for free.

Near my house, right now, there are 2 houses being built, both have plenty of scrap Zip System sheathing (OSB).

To save wood, the lid and bottom (especially the bottom) can be made of a bunch of little slices of scrap.

