



### UPCOMING EVENTS:

Next Meeting: Monday, March 17, 2025

Location: **The Lamar Senior Activity Center**

**6:00 PM** Doors open. Meet, Eat and Greet  
Bring a **Green** themed snack to share  
It's **St Patrick's Day!!**

**6:30PM** Business Meeting

**6:45PM** Guest Speaker **Art Thomas**

**7:45PM** Door Prizes

### From the PRESIDENT

Elissa Sexton

In Central Texas, March marks the arrival of spring, bringing with it a variety of flowers that begin to bloom. One of the most iconic sights during this time is the **bluebonnet**, Texas' state flower. These vibrant blue flowers typically start to bloom in March and continue through April, creating beautiful fields of color across the landscape. Alongside the bluebonnets, the **Indian paintbrush** also makes an appearance, with its striking orange-red blooms that complement the bluebonnets perfectly.

Another notable bloom in March is the **Texas yellow rose**. This native rose, with its bright yellow flowers, begins to show its color early in the spring, brightening up gardens and wild areas alike. The **Mexican plum tree**, with its delicate white to pale pink blossoms, also begins to bloom in March, adding a soft, fragrant touch to the surroundings.

The **redbud tree** is another early spring bloomer, known for its vibrant pink to purple flowers. These trees often start blooming in March, adding another splash of color to the landscape. While **lantanas** are typically associated with warmer months, some varieties can begin flowering as early as late March when the weather starts to warm up.

In addition to these trees and shrubs, you'll also start to see wildflowers like **dandelions** and **phlox**. Dandelions, with their cheerful yellow blooms, are common across Central Texas, and they typically begin to appear in early spring. **Phlox**, with its array of colors ranging from pink to purple to white, can also start blooming in March, contributing to the colorful tapestry of flowers in the region.

These early bloomers are just the beginning of the wildflower season in Central Texas, with even more flowers and plants to come as the weather warms.

### From the SECRETARY

Joy Mills

#### Honey-Glazed Corned Beef for St Paddy's Day



#### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup Honey
- 4 lbs corned beef brisket
- 2 qts water
- 1 tbsp pickling spices
- 1 large white onion
- 1 large carrot
- 1 stalk celery
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 3 tbsp Dijon-style mustard
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger

#### Directions

Tie pickling spices in a square of cheesecloth  
In a large stew pot, combine brisket, water, pickling spices, whole vegetables and garlic.  
Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer 3 hours.  
Place a cooking rack in a shallow baking dish or pan.  
Remove brisket from cooking liquid and place fat side up on rack.

#### For the glaze

Combine honey, brown sugar, mustard and ginger to make glaze, then spoon glaze over meat.  
Bake, uncovered, in a preheated oven at 350 F for 30 to 40 minutes.

## From the TREASURER

Rachael Lam

### Essential Bee Equipment for Spring

As spring approaches in Central Texas, beekeepers need to ensure they have the right equipment to support hive expansion and honey production. With Austin's mild winters and early blooms, preparation is key to managing successful splits and maximizing honey yields. Here's a breakdown of essential bee equipment for the season.

#### Hive Components for Expanding Colonies

1. **Hive Boxes (Deep and Medium Supers)** – As colonies grow, additional boxes provide space for brood expansion and honey storage.
2. **Frames and Foundation** – Ensure you have extra frames with wax or plastic foundation for new boxes and splits.
3. **Bottom Boards and Covers** – Solid or screened bottom boards help regulate ventilation, while inner and outer covers protect hives from the elements.

#### Tools for Splits and Hive Management

1. **Nucleus Boxes (Nucs)** – Used for making splits, these smaller hive boxes house new colonies until they establish.
2. **Queen Excluders** – Essential for controlling where the queen lays eggs, especially for honey production.
3. **Feeders** – Spring can still bring unpredictable weather; internal or entrance feeders provide supplemental sugar syrup for newly split colonies.
4. **Smoker and Hive Tool** – These standard tools help manage hive inspections and minimize stress on bees.

#### Protective Gear

1. **Bee Suit or Jacket** – Lightweight, ventilated suits work well for Austin's warm climate.
2. **Gloves and Veil** – Protection is essential when working with active colonies.

Having the right equipment and strategy ensures a productive beekeeping season.



## From our CONTRIBUTOR

Freddie Benjamin



The art of splitting a honey bee hive is both a management tool and a way to nurture a thriving apiary. Beekeepers have long recognized that the practice of hive splitting not only prevents overcrowding and swarming but also serves to expand their colonies during times of abundant nectar flow. The ideal period to perform a split is early to mid-spring, typically from March to April, when the natural environment comes alive with blooming flowers and trees, providing the bees with an essential nectar bounty.

During this time, the colonies are naturally expanding, and a robust hive will usually contain a sufficient number of bees, brood, and food stores. A healthy colony ready for a split should display a significant presence of brood across several frames, ensuring that the new colony will have enough young bees to develop a strong workforce. The moment to split often becomes apparent when the hive shows signs of overcrowding—such as the presence of queen cells or excessive bearding. These indicators suggest that the bees are nearing the limits of their current home, and a split will provide relief while also creating an opportunity to multiply the number of hives.

However, timing a split requires more than just ensuring an ample number of worker bees and brood. One crucial factor often overlooked is the presence of enough mature drones in the area to allow for successful queen mating. A newly emerged virgin queen must leave the hive to mate with drones in flight, a process that can only happen when drone populations are sufficiently high. Splitting too early, before drones are abundant, can result in an unmated queen and colony failure.

The process of splitting a hive requires careful planning and execution. Beekeepers must prepare a new hive box, complete with frames that hold the necessary brood and honey stores. The separation involves dividing the colony into two parts, ensuring that both have sufficient resources to thrive.

Whether the original queen is retained in one hive or moved to the new split, the beekeeper's decision is guided by the health and strength of each colony. With the added support of sugar syrup feeding in the days following the split, the new colony quickly becomes established. In Austin, timing these activities with the natural nectar flow and the presence of drones guarantees that both the original hive and the newly formed colony can prosper, making hive splitting an essential practice for successful beekeeping.

## From the V. PRESIDENT Eddy Monske Thinking about Buying a New Suit?

Choosing a beekeeper suit can be a confusing proposition. One needs to consider fabric, full suit vs just a jacket, veil and gloves.

There are mainly 3 fabric types for bee suits & jackets: thick cotton canvas, 3 Layered mesh with foam, or 3 Layered mesh with open space.

1. Canvas suits aren't effective against bee stings. They are very uncomfortable in the Texas summer heat and I do not understand why they exist.
2. Both Layered mesh suits are similar except for the middle layer which varies significantly. The suit layered with foam is the lightest of the 3 fabrics but offers poor ventilation. However, it comes in a large selection of colors. The mesh suit layered with open spaces is the heaviest of the 3 fabrics but offers the best ventilation. All of my jackets and full suits are made of the layered mesh with open space. Even with the ventilation they are hot and uncomfortable in the sweltering summer heat.

Owning a suit and a jacket is practical. If you have a guest visiting as you tend your bees, let them wear the full suit while you wear the jacket. Wearing very baggy, light colored clothes also helps minimize stings (especially when using just a jacket).

When choosing gloves, the white colored gloves are made of goatskin. Those are subtle and give better tactile feel than the yellow ones (cow hide). You'll incur more stings with goatskin vs. cow hide. Another option is to use thick oversized latex gloves or dish washing gloves. The bees ~can get through all types of gloves, but the stinger doesn't usually penetrate very deep. If you are conserved with stings on your hands, you can wear double latex or wear latex gloves underneath leather gloves. This virtually eliminates stings.

Choosing a veil can be important to consider for visibility and protection. All veils that come zippered to your suit will give you the best protection. The next consideration is the shape of the veil. The Fencing Veil (round) provides good visibility but can collapse onto your face when bending over and has limited air circulation. The Square Veil (hooded) has a structured top which provides excellent visibility and and better airflow than the fencing veil. The Round Veil (traditional) sits over a helmet or hat often with a elastic base to secure it to a suit. It provides great airflow and good visibility but less secured compared to zippered veils; it can

Whichever you choose, remember there are differences, and the best choice depends on personal preferences.



Cotton Canvas Suit Material



Layered Mesh Suit with Foam



Layered Mesh Suit with Open Spaces



Available Colors



Round Style Veil



Fencing Style Veil



Square Style Veil

