



### UPCOMING EVENTS:

Next Meeting: Monday, November 17, 2025

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

**6:00 PM** Doors open. Meet, Eat and Greet

**6:30PM** Business Meeting

**6:45PM** Guest Speaker: Dodie Stillman,  
speaking on Honey Sensory Analysis

**7:45PM** Door Prizes

**8:00PM** Meeting Ends



## Sweet & Simple: Holiday Gift Ideas from Your Beehive

from Elissa Sexton



As the holidays buzz closer, it's the perfect time to turn your bees' hard work into heartfelt, handmade gifts. Whether you keep hives yourself or simply want to make the most of local honey and wax, here are some creative ways to share the sweetness of the season.

### 1. Honey Jars with a Personal Touch

Nothing says "homemade" like a jar of golden honey.

Dress up your jars with rustic twine, a sprig of dried herbs, or a festive ribbon. Add a handwritten label or tag with the harvest date and the floral source — "Summer Clover" or "Wildflower Blend" adds charm and story. Small 4-oz. jars make perfect stocking stuffers or teacher gifts.

**Bonus idea:** Infuse your honey with flavor! Try orange zest, cinnamon sticks, or a sprig of rosemary. Let it sit a few weeks before gifting for a subtle, aromatic twist.

### 2. Beeswax Candles

Beeswax candles burn cleanly, smell naturally of honey, and cast a cozy, golden glow — ideal for holiday evenings. You can pour them into vintage teacups, small mason jars, or roll sheets of beeswax around a cotton wick for a quick project.

**Try this:** Add a touch of essential oil (like cedarwood or orange) for a gentle fragrance, or decorate jars with dried orange slices and cinnamon sticks for a rustic look.

### 3. Natural Beeswax Lip Balm

A simple, soothing treat for dry winter lips — and a thoughtful little gift.

All you need is beeswax, coconut oil, and a few drops of peppermint or vanilla essential oil. Pour the melted mixture into small tins or lip balm tubes and label them with fun holiday names like "Snow Day Peppermint" or "Cinnamon Kiss."

### 4. Honey & Wax Body Balm

For a luxurious handmade spa gift, combine beeswax, shea butter, and a little honey for a rich body balm. Pour into small glass jars and decorate the lids with fabric scraps or kraft paper labels. It's perfect for gardeners, crafters, or anyone who could use some winter skin relief.

### 5. Honey Gift Baskets

Combine your hive-inspired goodies into themed gift baskets:

- **"Bee Kind" Spa Set:** lip balm, lotion bar, beeswax candle.
- **"Tea & Honey Cozy Night":** small jar of honey, loose-leaf tea, a wooden honey dipper, and a handmade candle.
- **"Baker's Basket":** honey jar, beeswax wraps, recipe card for honey cookies.

Homemade gifts not only reduce waste and cost but also remind recipients of the natural abundance that bees bring to our world. This holiday season, share the sweetness — and maybe inspire a few new beekeepers along the way.

## IMPORTANT NEWS ABOUT THE NOVEMBER AABA CLUB

From Joy Mills

The time of year has arrived to think about AABA Board positions for 2026. According to our bylaws we have 5 positions: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Member-At-Large. Each position is held for a 2-year term and may serve up to 2 consecutive terms to ensure stability and continuity. Here is where we currently stand:

President: Elissa Sexton, 2025

Vice President: Eddy Monske, 2025

Secretary: Joy Mills, 2024

Treasurer: Rachael Lam, 2025

Member-at-Large: Taha Yasin 2025

This means we have an open position for Secretary. Additionally, Eddy would like to resign from the position of Vice President, so this leaves two open positions. We will be taking nominations and vote at the November meeting. If you, or someone you know, may be interested in joining our Board, please be at the meeting on 11/17/25 to **nominate and vote for the candidates of your choice!**

Here is a brief idea of what each of those positions require.

**Vice President:** 1. Perform the duties of the President in his/her absence 2. Be responsible for the planning and coordination of monthly club programs (contacting guest speakers, etc) 3. Contributing to the monthly newsletter. 4. Attend Board meetings.

**Secretary:** 1. Keep accurate record of the proceedings and minutes for monthly club meetings and Board meetings. 2. Keep a current list of names and information on all active members. 3. Preserve in a permanent file all records of value to the Organization including a roster for all meetings. 4. Contribute to, edit, and disseminate a monthly Newsletter. 5. Attend Board meetings.

## NOVEMBER GUEST SPEAKER: Dodie Stillman

If you don't already know her, you might recognize her name from our Facebook page, Dodie is a regular and informative contributor. She has been a part of the Austin Beekeepers Assoc since 2017 and is a Master Beekeeper. She carries a wealth of book knowledge and practical knowledge when it comes to beekeeping. Dodie will be sharing with us information on Honey Sensory Analysis.



## DECEMBER AABA MEETING

Yes, we need to discuss December's meeting in November!

Why, you ask?

December is traditionally a simple party/gathering before the holidays to celebrate our beekeeping successes and frustrations over the past year. We are looking for ideas from our members. In the past we have held the December social/meeting in a local restaurant. Now that we have a permanent home, we could have our social/meeting at the Sr Center per usual or plan something different. The Board would like to hear from you. What's your favorite way to celebrate? Yummy appetizer? A variety of desserts? A combo? Mayb a full-blown holiday meal with trimmings! **Come with ideas!**

## 2025 ANNUAL CONVENTION

November 20-22, 2025

Breeding for Better Bees in Texas

WACO CONVENTION CENTER

100 Washington Avenue  
Waco, TX 76701

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Cory Stevens  
Sue Cobey

Check it out and register HERE:

<https://texasbeekeepers.org/>

## How to Prepare Your Hives in September from Eddy Monske

Preparing beehives for winter involves several key steps to ensure the colony's survival during cold months by protecting them from cold, moisture, rodents, and other hazards.

### 1. Remove Feeders and Empty Supers

Take out any feeders, especially those on top or inside the hive, to prevent moisture buildup and provide only necessary space. Remove empty honey supers to avoid excess space that can cause drafts.

### 2. Inspect and Combine Colonies if Necessary

Check the health of your colony: signs of disease, pests, queen viability, and sufficient brood presence. Combine weak colonies if needed to create a strong, viable colony going into winter.

### 3. Install Mouse Guards and Manage Entrances

Fit mouse guards to prevent rodents from entering the hive during winter. Reduce hive entrances to minimize drafts and prevent unwanted visitors, but maintain enough opening for good ventilation.

### 4. Improve Hive Ventilation

Proper airflow is essential to reduce moisture and condensation inside the hive, which can cause mold and kill bees. Use screened bottom boards, upper entrances, ventilated inner covers, or moisture quilts as appropriate.

### 5. Secure Hive Covers and Provide Protection from Elements

Repair or replace lids to keep out rain and snow. Add awnings or small roofing extensions over hive entrances to keep them dry from snow and sleet [1 4 5](#).

Place weights like bricks or stones on top to prevent covers from blowing off in strong winds [5](#).

### 6. Create Windbreaks and Keep Hive Area Clear

If exposed to strong winds, place a windbreak upwind of the hives to reduce wind chill and drifting snow. Clear away weeds and overhanging branches near hives to reduce moisture buildup and prevent rodent harborage [1 4 5](#).

### 7. Final Checks Before Closing Hive for Winter

Verify the queen is laying and brood is present, check colony size, make any last feeding adjustments, and close hive entrances as needed for rodent protection [5 13](#).

### 8. Ensure Adequate Food Stores

Most importantly, make sure the bees have enough honey stores to last the winter. The best way to feed bees in cold(er) weather is to have them fed before it gets cold, but feeding may be necessary if stores are low. Finishing feeding well before cold weather sets in.

#1) Give them **stored frames** of honey which you've squirreled away from earlier in the season. Simple enough.

#2) **Mountain camp method.** My personal favorite way to feed bees in Winter. Simply remove everything above the brood box (super, queen excluder, inner cover, telescoping cover), next, place newspaper on top of the frames.

Now, place a super on top newspaper. Dump 10lbs (or more) of dry sugar on top of newspaper. Optional is to poke a couple holes where the cluster is. The bees will feed on the sugar as needed.

#3) **Open feeding.** While it's still warm out for the bees to fill their hives, provide a bucket of syrup. It's imperative that the bucket has floaties & straw or sticks so they can climb up to the top & fly away. Do NOT place the buckets too close to the hives (at least 50' away works well). Repeat as needed. Using this method, you will feed other hives in your neighborhood. You will also fill the boxes up with stores VERY quickly.

#4) Place **fondant** directly on top of the frame. There are numerous recipes on the internet. Pick one and go with it. This is an excellent way of giving bees emergency feed.

#5) **Normalize your hives.** Take honey from the strong hives and divide honey equally. Don't forget, adult bees need pollen too, not as much as a baby bee, but they still require pollen. Even so, feed your bees NOW if they need food. We've had an awful Summer & Fall. Many beekeepers are in a dearth. Help the bees now, while we still have warm days.

## What Can You Find Still in Bloom?

By Rachael Lam

Here in Central Texas, November provides a gentle display of late-season blooms, seed heads, grasses and shrubs preparing for the months ahead.

One of the plants still actively flowering in November is the White Mistflower (*Ageratina havanensis*). Locally it is recorded as blooming between October and November, making it a late-season value. Its small white clusters may not draw crowds like the vivid spring wildflowers, but they serve an important role when fewer resources remain.

Another native to look for is the Blackfoot Daisy (*Melampodium leucanthum*). According to local flora guides, its bloom time stretches out to November in the Austin area. With its low habit and little white daisy-like flowers, it brings brightness to dry, rocky spots where other plants may be fading.

The valley and hills around Austin also still have patches of the Gregg's Mistflower (*Conoclinium greggii*) — a late-season nectar plant. It thrives in sun or partial shade and remains useful for pollinators as other blooms taper off. These kinds of plants are vital in the autumn ecology even when the showy blooms are gone.

November is an excellent time for planting new perennials, shrubs and grasses in the region. Local gardening advice urges homeowners to take advantage of the cooler weather and lower heat stress to establish plants for next Spring. November is one of the last good windows to sow or place plants that will become resilient in the summer heat.

In Austin, one can sow wildflower seeds during early November to establish the root systems ahead of dormancy. Gardeners are reminded to use well-draining soils, allow plants to settle before heavy freezes (though the Austin area seldom endures very deep freezes), and to look forward to spring's emergence even as the foliage fades.

In short, November flora in the Austin area might lack the boldness of spring's wildflower bloom, but if you stroll through a garden or natural area this month, listen for the last hum of bees, observe which plants still hold visits from butterflies, and appreciate how nature slowly winds down for winter.



