

The Richmond Beekeepers Newsletter



October 1, 2023

October news

For our October meeting Samantha led a Q&A and Ron enlightened us on the biology of winter bees. I'm sure everyone would agree that it was an informative night.

Our November meeting will be on Thursday November 9th at 7:00 at Greenwood United Methodist Church located at 10040 Greenwood Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060

Photo from Wayne Surles

Bee Swagger

From Ron Stilwell

Last Autumn I was invited to serve as the "Bee Wrangler" on the set of the television series "Swagger" that was filming at a former juvenile corrections center off of 301 in Hanover County. It was a very different kind of experience that involved a lot of waiting around...and really good food. The most interesting part was on the actual day of shooting the director wanted a lot of bees in the air for a particular shot. I had thousands of them flying around. Yet his response was "I need more bees!". Well, while being aware of the nervousness of the crew, I managed to get A LOT of bees flying and he was very pleased with the result. At the end of the shoot, I asked for the bee suits that would likely never be worn again--for our first ever Beginning Beekeeper training.. Sadly, I was only able to get a couple of smokers---no suits.

Well, lo and behold, my neighbor, Shaun Irving, who is pretty active as a movie extra, recently went to an auction of Swagger merchandise. He managed to snag all of the bee suits and is donating them to Richmond Beekeepers Association. Hooray!

VABA Fall Meeting



**NOVEMBER
3RD & 4TH**

**JOIN US AT THE VSBA
FALL MEETING**

Excellent Speakers, Workshops, Classes for Beginners, Intermediate Classes, Beekeeping Supplies, Fun Social Events and Sight Seeing and more... All in family friendly historic Williamsburg ,VA

Location:
Williamsburg Lodge
310 S England St,
Williamsburg, VA 23185

Go to virginiabeekeepers.org

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



BOB BINNIE



**RANDY
OLIVER**



**DR. JULIANA
RANGEL**

Registration will be opened on September 1st
Students and Children under 18 Register for Free

State Pollinator Petition

The Virginia State Beekeepers Association recently initiated an effort to include the Honey Bee as the State Pollinator among the designated official emblems and designations of the Commonwealth.

In 1622 honey bees were reintroduced to North America with the shipment of beehives to the Jamestown Settlement. Since that time the honey bee has traversed the state and continent to provide pollination for agricultural crops as well as plants in forests, meadows, and wetlands.

Over the past 400 years the Western honey bee, *Apis mellifera*, has become a naturalized species whose activities benefit other pollinators, wildlife, plant-life, and people. Your assistance and that of your association's membership is needed to achieve this designation goal.

Please circulate copies of the attached petition among your members. Ask them to take the petition to fairs and festivals, farmers markets, and other meetings and gatherings to acquire support for designating the Honey Bee as the State Pollinator. The signed petitions will be presented to members of the General Assembly.

To sign the petition online visit:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeMubJAc_nJA_0xn3abS8wEOq_eQx0-HhdiuRrHPSUhYRW3zw/viewform.

Digital copies of signed petitions may be emailed in reply to this message.

[VSBA State Pollinator Petition.pdf](#)

Completed petitions may be mailed to:

Lannie Ballard

100 Pear Tree Lane

Natural Bridge, VA 24578

Member Spotlight: Daniel

By Sophia Oliveri



Meet Samantha! When I walked up to her Church Hill home, I immediately knew I was at the right place- there was a sign for the bees on the gate! When I walked into the house, the fun, bright, maximalist décor was the first thing I noticed. Just like her bright, cheery, patterned outfit, her home was an expression of her and I loved it.

We then went outside to check out her bees. She has an industrial ladder (think Lowe's topstock) leading up to a small awning, and then a step up to the black rubber roof. The roof is home to 7 hives at the moment. We went up with no gear and her bees were delightful. A

few great things that stood out about Samantha's setup:

- She and her fiancé set up a chicken waterer and filled the trough with rocks, which both weigh down the waterer and give the bees a safe place to land
- She oriented every couple hives in a different direction, which helps her navigate the rooftop setup and avoid drift
- She hand painted flowers on her boxes, which was a really nice touch and after getting to know her a little better, very on brand
- She and her fiancé put a cover over their next door neighbor's AC unit (also on the roof, about 6' away from the bees). It's mesh and it doesn't hinder air flow but it keeps the fan from killing unsuspecting bees. Great idea!
- She's also an avid gardener and an advocate for native plants, which she consciously tries to incorporate into her garden design. Ask her about her delicious pink cherry tomatoes if you get the chance. And arnica!

After she graciously let me tour her hive setup and garden, we headed inside and sat down at her dining room table (in chairs that she thrifted and reupholstered) and I got the scoop on who Samantha is and what she's all about. We talked for hours, but here are some fun, interesting highlights that you may not have know about our new RBA veep!

- She upcycles, refinishes, and reupholsters furniture- sometimes for fun but sometimes competitively.

- Speaking of competition, she's the current state champion Christmas wreath maker. She's the second best Easter wreath maker but she will return next year to duel it out and destroy anyone who even thinks about making a wreath. Just kidding, she didn't say that. She's lovely and she would probably help you with yours if you asked.

-She once planned a cross country trip in order to reside inside of a potato.

-She volunteers her voice to deliver the news to the vision impaired

-She knits backwards and upside down

-In addition to the sought after spud residency, she has also traveled internationally and her favorite place to visit was Cuba

-She genuinely loves the bees and gets really excited about opportunities to involve the community and teach people about them. (That's why she's a great VP) When she was talking about volunteering at the Science Museum, I believe her exact words were "best thing ever!"

I had a great time getting to know Samantha and I would definitely encourage you to do the same at the next bee meeting. Part of her mission as a newer beekeeper is that she wants to be an example for keeping information interesting and accessible. So, no matter how new you are to beekeeping, please don't hesitate to reach out to her to share your ideas and get involved!

Bee School

From Ron Stilwell

Well--- it was the last country on earth that was free from varroa mites. Sadly, that has come to an end for the beekeepers of Australia. Fifteen months ago varroa was detected in a port city and the government stepped in with an eradication plan to attempt to stop the spread among the country's apiaries. As most beekeepers suspected, that effort was an expensive and labor intensive waste of resources which sacrificed the lives of countless honey bees. This article explains that the authorities have decided to call off eradication in favor of varroa management.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-09-20/varroa-mite-eradication-efforts-abandoned-australia/102876418>

Honeybees and other pollinators are well known to prefer native plants and there is a movement afoot in our area to encourage the planting of native species. They naturally grow well in local soil, are hardy, and attractive. Learn more at that upcoming Plant Native! Festival at Crump Park on October 21.

<https://henrico.us/utility/keep-henrico-beautiful/native-plant-festival/>

Gardening Inspiration from Abroad

Of course Wayne is thinking about bees as he travels abroad. Here are a few pictures of bees and bee friendly places he found on his trip to Germany, Austria, and Hungary.



October Honey-Do List

- As the cooler weather approaches it is crucial to insure your hives have enough food to last until spring
- Be sure to have a plan for supplemental feeding if needed
- Look for fall flowers like Goldenrod for sources of a “fall flow.”
- Make sure bees have a water source on hot dry days
- Check in on your queen to make sure she is present and healthy
- Consolidate weak or small hive



RBA is on Facebook!

If you are a member of RBA please join us on our new Facebook group. It's a great way to stay in touch, ask a question, share a swarm capture, share a mishap, or just see what fellow members are up to.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/478487129904285/?ref=share&exp=3bcf>

Got Something to BUZZ about?



Do you have news or photos to share with RBA members? Just send your news or pictures to bee.geek1@gmail.com by the first of the month. We will include them in our next newsletter.

Executive Board

Steve White: President

Samantha Forbes: 1st VP (programs)

Terry Harper: 2nd VP (membership)

David Cox: Secretary

Karen Nickolaou: Treasurer

Ron Stilwell: Member at large - Education

Nancy Essid: Newsletter

Check out our website <https://richmondbeekeepers.wordpress.com/>