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Have You Considered Beekeeping?

Anson County Beekeepers Association members are reminded of the meeting on Tuesday, February 28 at the Anson Co-op Extension Office, located at 501 McLaurin Street in Wadesboro. The meeting begins at 7 p.m.

The meeting agenda will be: Monthly management minute; Box and Frame demonstration; and Swarm trapping and preparation with trap examples.

Beekeepers meeting are open to everyone who is interested in having bees for Honey and pollination as well.

Check the Facebook page Anson County Beekeepers or our President Jody Taylor 704-475-7939 for more information.

Here are some great reasons to get started in beekeeping!

There are countless reasons to become a beekeeper. Each beekeeper has their own reasons for getting into beekeeping. Below are just a few of the many reasons one particular person got into it. You might want to become a beekeeper too!

1.) Pollination Many long time gardeners have observed a decrease in the number of honey bees pollinating their fruits and vegetables and subsequently a decrease in productivity. Becoming a beekeeper can have a direct impact on your fruit and vegetable production as well as that of other gardeners within the more than 2 mile foraging range of your honey bees. Pollination is vital to the propagation of many common garden fruits and vegetables and keeping bees is an effective way to help increase pollination.

2.) Save the honey bee The plight of the honey bee is well known. In addition to the mystery of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) and the fears concerning pesticide use, a parasitic mite has decimated the honey bee population. It is believed that 90% of feral honey bee colonies and 50% of managed colonies died after the Varroa Mite spread throughout the U.S. in the late 80's and early 90's. The Varroa mite continues to be the biggest threat to bees. This huge loss of feral bees as well as managed honey bees has made an even greater need for new beekeepers to take up beekeeping and build up the honey bee population. Without honey bees many of the fruits, vegetables, and nuts we love will be gone and the cost of many others will rise considerably due to a large drop in yields. Want to do your part and stop the decline, become a beekeeper!

3.) Honey Honey is the sweet reward for a job well done. Honey is good for you and makes everything sweeter. Its healing and beneficial properties are continuing to be discovered. The U.S. consumes much more honey than we produce and therefore if you choose to sell your honey you have a local market just waiting to buy it. Honey should not be your first reason for getting into beekeeping, because it may cause you to overlook the time and effort that it takes to keep bees, but it is definitely one of the many wonderful reasons to become a beekeeper.

4.) Sustainability Many are searching for ways to be more self-sufficient and live a more sustainable life style. Keeping bees is a great first step down this path! When done right, a beekeeper can sustain their hive numbers through a process of splits to replace bee losses and grow their beekeeping operation.

As far as small scale farming, compared to purchasing chickens and a chicken coop, goats and fencing, or other livestock, beekeeping is an affordable step into a sustainable lifestyle. Beehives also take much less space than chickens and goats and can be located in your backyard or even rooftop. Making beekeeping a first step to a sustainable lifestyle for many.

5.) Inexpensive hobby Raising honey bees does require a monetary investment, but when compared to other hobbies is rather inexpensive. Think about the startup cost to woodworking such as; table saw (\$200-\$500), router (\$100), planer (\$300), band saw (\$200), lumber and so on (this is not to say I don't love woodworking).

In addition to being less expensive than many start up hobbies, there is a built in market for recouping costs. While carpenters can sell their products, there is a built in market for local honey. You will be surprised when you bottle your first honey harvest how many people are looking for it!

6.) Bees keep you learning If you enjoy learning, especially science, you will love being a beekeeper! There is so much science behind beekeeping. For example, learning how honey bees search and find a new home site, communicate that discovery, and agree to simultaneously move their swarm to that new location, as described in Honeybee Democracy by Thomas Seeley, is fascinating. And it's only the beginning!

Equally as interesting is research described by Jürgen Tautz in his amazing book *The Buzz about Bees: Biology of a Superorganism*. Tautz explains how honey bees work together so closely that the colony as a whole resembles an organism in itself. Honey bees have even been studied for their abilities to be trained (in record time) to detect explosives, drugs, and even cancer. I could go on, but in short; if you love learning, you will love beekeeping!

7.) Connect with the environment Becoming a beekeeper will immediately increase your awareness of the environment around you. Starting with an increased interest in the weather, which has a definite impact on your honey production. You will begin to care about and follow what is currently in bloom so that you know what pollen and nectar sources your bees are able to get food from. You will want to educate yourself about what row crops are being planted in your area and what types of pesticides are being sprayed on them. When you become a beekeeper your bees' success depends on the environment around you and you will therefore find yourself paying closer attention to it.

8.) The thrill Keeping bees comes with its fair share of adrenaline rushes. It starts with the first time you install your bees, a moment you will never forget. Then there is the first time you see a swarm of bees exiting a hive and swirling in the air around you (one of the most thrilling things I have ever experienced). Even the inspection of a full hive with 1,000s of bees buzzing before you; it's.....thrilling!

9.) You get to light fires Maybe it's a guy thing, but I have always loved lighting a campfire. Now that I am a beekeeper I get to do this every week! So if you're like me, believe it or not, this can be a fun part of beekeeping.

10.) Connect to your community Whether you live in a small town or large city, when you keep bees and sell honey you build a connection to your community in a unique way. You will be surprised how many people are out there that want to buy your local honey, and are thrilled when they find you. With any luck they will keep coming back to get more year after year.

11.) For the love of bees Honey bees are fascinating! Just the fact that honey bees can fly 3 miles to collect nectar and return home again to their hive without getting lost is amazing. More unbelievable is the fact that the location of the nectar was communicated to that bee by a waggle dance performed inside a pitch black hive, detected by the foragers antenna, and then translated to an exact distance and direction. The secret life of these little creatures has been further revealed to us in incredible new ways in recent years through documentaries such as More Than Honey and Vanishing of the Bees. By becoming a beekeeper you join this fascinating world!

12.) Beekeeper Comradery Beekeepers are a unique bunch. It's been said we beekeepers are somewhere between farmers and crazies. This may be the reason beekeepers share a unique comradery with one another.

13.) Beekeeping is fun for the whole Family! Bonus, because why not? Many kids LOVE beekeeping. They don't all get into and work the hives with me but they each have roles based on their age. For my 3 year old son, that is suiting up and saying "oooh and aahhh" and "dat is a billion a bees, daddy!" And this makes him a beekeeper.

My older kids help plan where to sell honey, determine prices, and design labels. They love having our "business meetings" around the kitchen table. They especially love that they own one of the hives (bought on loan and paid off with their "Honey Money") and are responsible for its costs and benefit from its income.

The kids even made a "bee village" this winter during a warm snap in which they developed a honey bee watering hole that was very popular with the local honey bees! **Conclusion** These are just 13 of the many Reasons to become a beekeeper. If you ready to take the next step and become a beekeeper, join the Anson County Beekeepers on February 28.

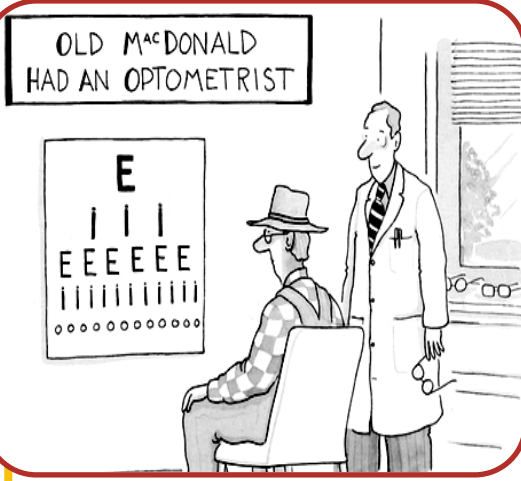
Black History Month Comedy Night at HMOC

Harvest Ministries Outreach Center and Cityreach Community Center invite everyone to their Black History Month Comedy Night featuring Anson County's own Ampston Hews. Come celebrate Black History Month with comedy and a delicious soul food meal. It takes place on Saturday, February 18, with the doors open at 5 p.m., show at 6 p.m.

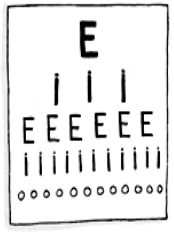
This event is free and the soul food meal is only \$10. The meal includes a meat, 2 sides, roll and dessert. Chicken and dumplings will be available for \$5. Drinks are included.

Harvest Ministries is located at 1134 East Caswell Street in Wadesboro, behind McDonalds.

The telephone number is 704-294-3153.



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Dear Anson County Water Customer:

In a continuing effort to provide clean, safe drinking water, Anson County Water is conducting a Water Quality Preventive Maintenance Program. This program involves temporarily switching water disinfectants from chloramines to chlorine to optimize water quality.

This switch will last from Wednesday, March 1 through Friday, March 31, 2023.

During the Preventive Maintenance Program, some water customers may notice temporary taste, color or odor differences in their water. This is a normal component of the process. Water quality is not affected and remains safe for drinking, bathing, cooking and other general uses.

Although most customers will not notice any difference in their water, Anson County Water recommends that three groups of water users take special precautions prior to March 31:

- 1) Kidney dialysis providers/patients
- 2) Fish, pond, pool and aquarium owners/operators
- 3) Businesses that use water in their production process

The customers listed above are advised to seek professional advice for the appropriate steps to accommodate the change in water disinfection.

When the program is completed, Anson County Water will return to using chloramines to treat your water.

Please visit <http://www.co.anson.nc.us/> for more information about the switch.

Sincerely,
Anson County Water Customer Service