

The Clod-Hopper



Volume 33 Edition 9 Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. – Raleigh, NC

SEPTEMBER 2016

September Speaker – Louis Romanow

(contributed by Paul Hoffman)



Louise Romanow is fascinated by bugs. She understands that the word “insect” is not a synonym for the word “pest,” and understands that many of them are our allies in the garden: pollinating, preying on other pesky insects, and breaking down organic matter so that our soil is enriched. Louise is an enthusiastic gardener as well. Her own garden is a fairly wild wooded landscape about an acre in size with many native plants.

Louise arrived in North Carolina in 1976 to go to graduate school at NC State and never left. She finished her degree in agricultural entomology (note that agriculture has to do with growing plants and entomology is bug science) in 1984. She has spent years studying the interactions between insects and plants.

Louise became a Wake County Master Gardener in 2005, edited the Master Gardener newsletter for five years, and became a leader in organizing Master Gardener training in 2008. She is well known for her knowledge of insects and their interactions with plants and often speaks and writes about bugs for Master Gardeners and other groups. She presented a 2-hour training program on the subject earlier this summer at a JC Raulston arboretum gardening adventure.

Sometimes we gardeners are confused and act as if the only good insect is a dead insect. Louise believes that as gardeners we want to make decisions on insect pest control based on identification (as much as possible), deciding whether damage is tolerable, and the impact on other beneficial insects.

We are looking forward to Louise’s presentation to the Gardeners of Wake County on September 20. We will learn about useful strategies for reducing insect damage while minimizing the environmental impact of control measures. Louise will teach us about some common insect pests, their life cycles (often a key to control measures), and appropriate intervention. Finally we will also gain a better appreciation of where beneficial insects fit into the picture of having a healthy beautiful garden.



CLUB MEETINGS

Meetings are at 7:30pm at the JC Raulston Arboretum every 3rd Tuesday. Refreshments at 7:00 pm.

Inside This Issue

SeptemberSpeaker.....	Page 1
Board Members.....	Page 2
Boone Perspective	
What Bugs Me.....	Page 2
The Amazing Honey Bee	
Robert Allen.....	Page 3
Membership Application.....	Page 4

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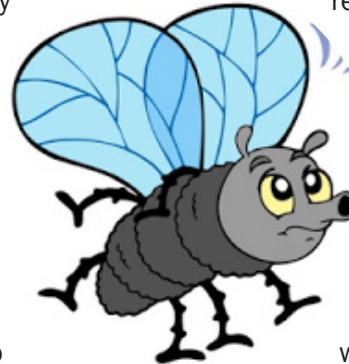
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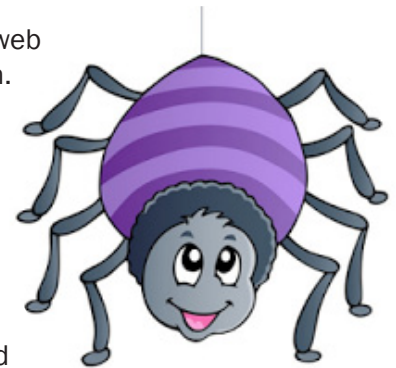
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Boone Perspective – What Bugs Me

I was contemplating what it would be like to soar through the air like the US Olympic Gymnasts as I was chasing a house fly with my swatter. The fly pivoted in midair and landed upside down on the ceiling out of my reach. How is this even possible? If I could do that I would make a version of the Matrix movie, post it on YouTube, and have a billion views. Later that evening I was watching fireflies blink on and off in the yard. I thought how nice it would have been in earlier years when I was in the mood for romance to have just started blinking away. For me it probably would not have worked out so well. I would likely have fallen for one of those female fireflies which copy the blink pattern of other females species and when the guys land with amorous intent, they get eaten instead. Did some people learn this behavior from the firefly or are fireflies students of a one of mankind’s oldest profession?



I’m mesmerized by a garden spider’s web dripping with dew in the early morning sun. Even the smallest spider can make 7 different kinds of silk. If I could make silk I would likely squirt out Flagelliform when I meant to squirt Aciniform. Probably spiders don’t even care about the names. What I am sure about, is if I had the garden spider’s skill I would lasso the Hosta-Eating deer that come in my yard and dangle them from trees until they repented.



The Amazing Honey Bee – Robert Allen

The Superorganism

The honey bee, Apis mellifera or “honey-carrying bee”, is an insect, an animal, and a “superorganism”, which emerged 130 million years ago, long before humans evolved. Bees first arrived in Virginia from England in 1622. Survivors, they have evolved into organized colonies over 50,000 strong in the spring, developing diversified functions such as cleaner bees, brood caring bees, guard bees, and nectar and pollen gatherers to name a few. A honey bee colony consists of one queen that in the spring and summer may lay up to 1000 eggs a day, many worker bees (sterile females), and several hundred drones (fertile males) whose only function is to leave the hive to mate with newborn virgin queens. The under-appreciated workers pollinate orchards and flowers, and 80 percent of our crops, which constitute one-third of everything we eat. Honey bees also provide honey and wax for cosmetics.

The Amazing Honey Bee – Robert Allen

continued

How I Got Into Beekeeping

Strange as it may seem, my son and I bought our first hive in 2003 because we thought it would be healthy to have our own honey to make Mead, an alcoholic beverage created by fermenting honey with water, sometimes with various fruits, spices, grains, or hops. We didn't realize the hard work involved! We became obsessed! We learned real quick that we didn't own the bees, we just "kept" them...hence the term "beekeeper". Beekeeping required learning to "think like a bee" in order to understand what they need to stay healthy, to have enough room to store honey, to give the queen room to lay her eggs, for workers to care for the young, etc. We learned to deal with parasites- varroa mites, small hive beetles, wax moths, etc.; how to extract and bottle honey, leaving enough for them to make it through the summer drought.

Beekeeping as you can guess from the above involves lots of work from mid February through early November each year. Not a hobby for the faint of heart! My wife, daughter, son, and I all kept bees and in some years extracted over 250 lbs of honey in June! Some years not as much, since like all farming, weather influences the plants and trees that provide nectar.



Protect Our Pollinators

Keeping bees healthy and thriving has become a nationwide and global problem due a combination of factors: climate change, parasites, insecticides (particularly neonicotinoids), herbicides, and industrial agriculture (monocrops) to name a few. It is estimated that 44% of beehives nationwide perished in 2015-16. There are research efforts underway to understand why honey bee colonies are in such poor health, and what can be done to manage the situation.



What can gardeners do to help? Since bees can fly up to a 2 miles from their hive to gather nectar and pollen, they can be exposed to insecticides and herbicides on farms, along roadside spraying, spraying lawns for parasites and for mosquitoes in neighbor's yards (eg, companies like Mosquito Joe, Terminix, etc.). If they bring tainted pollen and nectar back to the hive, all the bees can die rather quickly. I have lost a hive in this way--piles of dead bees in front of the hive! So, if possible, don't spray pesticides in your yard; don't spray for mosquitoes--just remove breeding sites- standing water in pans, cans, etc. Encourage neighbors and friends to do the same.

We need to protect all our pollinators-- honey bees, bumble bees, mason bees and others. Without

healthy, abundant pollinators our food supply is at risk. A quote attributed to Albert Einstein warns why all of us need to be good stewards of our planet. Protecting pollinators is an important part of this: "If the bee disappeared off the face of the Earth, man would only have four years left to live."

Mac Williamson

1408 Lake Pine Drive
Cary, NC 27511

Change Service Requested

Membership Renewal

All memberships need to be renewed before the end of the year and a new application should be submitted so we can be sure our records are up to date. The membership form is included at the end of this months Clodhopper. Please fill this out and submit it to Barbara Brown.

Membership Application

Name _____ Spouse _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (h) _____ (w) _____ (cell) _____

Email _____ Occupation _____
(if retired, state former occupation)

Gardening Special Interests _____

Hobbies _____

Membership dues are \$30 for individuals and \$45 for families in the 2017 Calendar Year. Make checks payable to Gardeners of Wake County. Mail application and check to:

Barbara Brown, Membership Chairman
517 Wyndham Drive
Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526-7706