The Bee Line

Beekeepers Guild of Southeast Virginia

FEB - MAR 25 EDITION

In This Issue:

Beekeeping Short Course
Nuc Program
Mentor Program
The Beekeeper's Calendar
Recipe: Honey Cinnamon Latte
Guild Clothing
Future Meeting Dates

Article submissions are always welcome! Email the editor, Jennifer Bell, at: jenniferburdock@gmail.com

Beekeeping Short Course

Thanks to all who helped make our 2025 short course a success. We had a total of 20 new students register for the course!

Calling All 2025 Nuc Sellers!

With our introductory course wrapping up, we have a lot interest from new-bees looking to buy nucs! Making a split is a great tool for swarm prevention, and if you don't have the room to expand it into another hive, please consider selling those bees to a fellow member! Our guild is one of the few clubs in Virginia that produce local nucs for members, rather than importing bees from outside the area. As a seller you are able to set the terms of the sale including the price and how you want to handle equipment (trading frames, including the price of equipment in your sale, loaning equipment, etc.) We take pride in this program and would like to keep it going! There are a few guidelines that the guild requires our sellers to adhere to:

1. Nucs provided by suppliers, enrolled in the guild nuc program, must be state-inspected and be accompanied with a health certificate as proof of state inspection.

2. Nucs shall have fully drawn frames, a queen who is the mother of the brood in the nuc, brood in all stages of development, including capped brood in a solid pattern and stored honey and pollen.

If you have questions on how to put together a nuc, reach out to a mentor or our other experienced beekeepers.

If you are interested in selling nucs this spring - to be ready by May/June timeframe - please reach out to the nuc coordinator, Bailey Bunn, with the following information:

1. Name
2. Email address
3. Phone number
4. Brood chamber size (medium or deep)
5. Approximately how many nucs you anticipate to sell. It is okay if this number changes.

Bailey Bunn – Nuc Coordinator
bunnbailey13@gmail.com
303-815-2821

Mentor Program

Do you want to be a beekeeper but just don't know how to get started? Are you new to beekeeping and a little overwhelmed? Are you an experienced beekeeper wanting to share your knowledge and passion with a “newbee”?
A benefit of Guild membership is our Mentor Program. This service is especially helpful for beginners, but is also useful to those who have been keeping bees and need a little help.

Our Mentor Coordinator, Kevin Du Bois, will be happy to pair those seeking support with a local, experienced beekeeping mentor who has expressed an interest in assisting other beekeepers.
You may accompany your mentor on their hive inspections to determine if beekeeping is a hobby for you prior to investing in bees and equipment. Once you decide to become a beekeeper, your mentor will assist you with equipment selection for both yourself and your bees so that you do not spend money unnecessarily.

Our club “nuc” program will make state-inspected nucleus, or starter bee colonies, available to you (for a fee) in order to provide you with the best possible start for your first bee colonies. Your mentor will assist you in installing and managing your own beehives through the first year and beyond as needed. From the simple art of lighting the smoker through harvesting honey, your mentor will be there to guide you as much or as little as you desire. Imagine the security that comes with knowing that help is only a phone call or email away!

Please find Kevin at a monthly meeting or at our Beekeepers Introductory Training and he’ll match developing beekeepers with a mentor to help grow our teaching and learning skills for the benefit of members and the Guild in successful beekeeping.

The Coastal VA Beekeeper's Calendar

February: February is typically the coldest winter month in Coastal Southeast Virginia. The bees are usually clustered in their hives waiting for warm spring weather to arrive. Make sure that your hive entrances are open and not blocked by dead bees in case we get a few days of 50°F or warmer for cleansing flights.

Continue to check the colonies for adequate winter stores by opening them and checking the location of the winter cluster. If the bees are at the top of the box, they've gone through their honey and you will need to feed them to prevent starvation and encourage population buildup. Because they may not take sugar syrup at temperatures below 50°F, you may have to feed fondant, candy or granulated sugar directly over the winter cluster.

Brood rearing has begun and the bees will need pollen. In this area pollen is usually plentiful; only feed pollen patties if there is no natural pollen being brought in as pollen supplements can also boost buildup of small hive beetles once the weather warms.

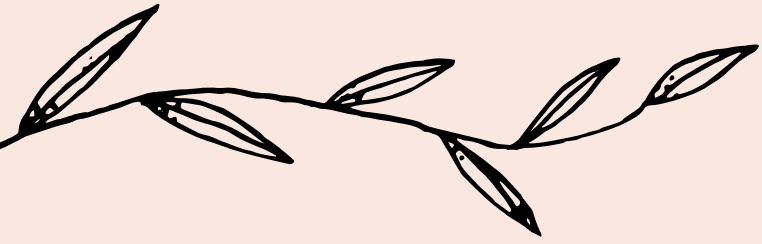
Place your orders for queens and local nucs as soon as possible to ensure timely spring delivery. Remember the state of Virginia does not recommend purchasing stock from any states with Africanized honey bees. Take inventory of your equipment and order any new woodenware to allow time for assembly and painting.

March: If you haven't already done so, order queens NOW. Many breeders are already sold out for spring delivery dates. Evaluate woodenware and replace any items that have rotten.

Install honey supers. A queen excluder may be used above the brood box and under the 1st super. Air out drawn comb that had been stored with the wax moth preventative paradichlorobenzene (PDB) for several days before putting it on the bees. A better alternative is the biological control, XenTari which does not require airing prior to use.

Select a sunny, southeast facing spot for new apiary locations. All day sun is best to discourage small hive beetles and varroa mites. Feed any light hives to encourage population buildup. Make sugar syrup in a 1:1 ratio (5 lbs. sugar to 10 cups water) at this time of year. If medicating, STOP at least 2 weeks before honey supers for human consumption go on! On a warm day of 60 degrees or more, check for larvae and brood. If there is no sign of a laying queen, order one ASAP or combine with a queenright colony. Move frames of brood to the lower hive body. Do not break the brood into two boxes when cold weather is forecast.

Place bait hives with at least one frame of treated drawn comb (no honey or pollen) in each of your bee yards to catch swarms.



Honey Cinnamon Latte (Iced or Hot)

TOTAL TIME: 10 MIN MAKES: 1 LATTE

Ingredients

- 4 Tbsp ground coffee (grind about 3 tbsp whole beans)
- 1/2 cup boiling water
- 1 1/2 Tbsp honey
- Pinch of ground cinnamon
- Pinch of sea salt
- 1/3 cup milk

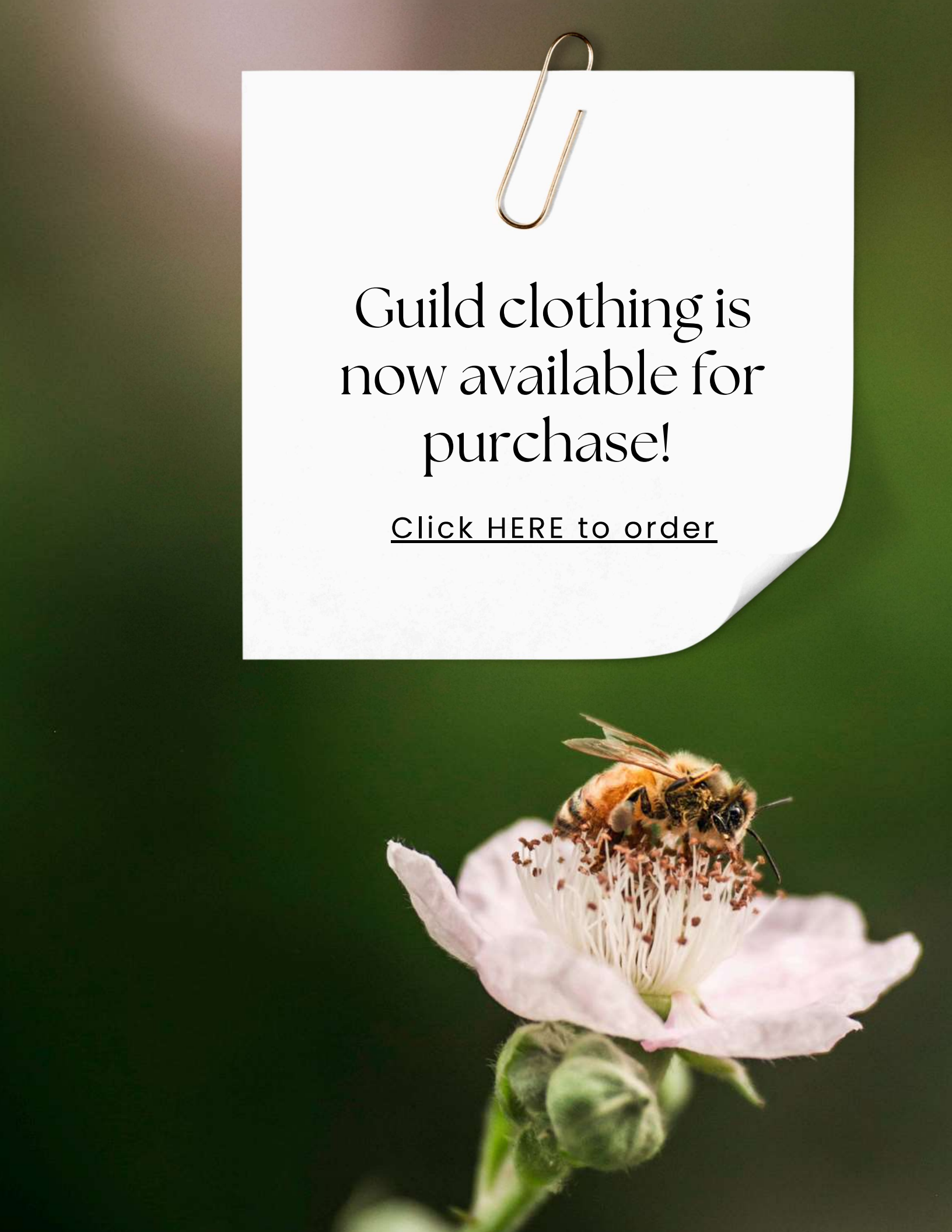
Directions

1. Place your drinking glass in the freezer to chill while you prep the coffee.
2. Add ground coffee to a French press and add the boiling water. Brew for 4 minutes.
3. Add the coffee to chilled glass. Then add the honey, pinch of cinnamon and sea salt (if using) and stir.
4. Add the milk, stir, then add as much ice as you can fit. Enjoy!

To make a hot latte: While the coffee is brewing, heat the milk and froth. Add the milk at the same step and skip the ice.

Guild clothing is now available for purchase!

Click HERE to order



Future Meeting Dates

February 10th - Swarm Management followed with a Swarm Bucket Workshop. Learn how to make a swarm bucket from a 5-gallon bucket before swarm season begins. Participants should bring their own 5-gallon bucket, with lid, to the workshop.

March 10th

Guild meetings will continue to be offered both virtually via Zoom and in-person at Towne Bank 137 Mt. Pleasant Rd., Chesapeake, VA 23322 at 7:00 pm.