

# Elm Fork Beekeepers Association

## Member's Spotlight

*Interview series featuring members of the EFBA so we can all get to know each other and our community of beekeepers.*

Six questions with Jan Hodson, local beekeeper and President of EFBA

### Why Honey Bees?

I've always been interested in insects. Many years ago my husband and I saw ads about classes in Josephine, TX. conducted by John Talbert. We were tempted but it was just too far to drive. Collin Co. was too far to go to a club meeting. I did attend several programs by expert beekeepers including Talbert, T-Lee, and several honey queens. Other people put their bees on our property for short periods. I became interested in getting bees for property ag exemption. They are a sustainable option that does not destroy the ecosystem.

### How and when did you first become involved with beekeeping?

I bit the bullet in 2015. I attended another beekeeping class at Clear Creek and started talking to two women that had bees in Denton and were driving to Collin Co for meetings. I told them that we really needed a club in Denton. They agreed! The first information and interest meeting was held in August 2015. I became the Treasurer in Sept. That is when I really started studying bees and learning. I guess you could say that is when I got stung. I'm now addicted.



### What are you currently doing with honey bees?

I have been buying new equipment (I have 8 frame garden hives) making splits, re-queening, building nucs, and trying to get all of my hives strong and healthily. Sold all the honey I produced this year. Sold a nuc. Mainly building up and planning for a better year next year. Fingers crossed!



### What goals do you have as a beekeeper?

I plan on producing more Nucs for sale next year and producing more honey for sale. I'm thinking about building a long Langstrof hive.

I'm also thinking about buying some organic cotton seed and planting some cotton in the yard for the bees. If I get some cotton to play with making things from the natural fibers that would be a bonus.

### Any past problems or failures with bees that you care to share?

I lost some splits due to chilled brood this spring. I learned you need to make sure you have enough bees to cover the brood and keep it warm when the nights are getting down in the high 30's. Do not use screened bottom boards for weak hives when it is cold! I thought how stupid I was, then I watched a video from Barnyard Bees where he made the same mistake. Made me realize that even expert beekeepers can make bonehead decisions. I've spent some time learning more about hive temperature requirements.

### Any advice or encouragement you would like to offer to new beekeepers or possible future beekeepers?

Read, read, and read some more books on bees, magazines, and online articles. Keep an open mind on advice you receive and use the knowledge you gain to weigh the pro and cons of hive management decisions. Keeping bees has lots of ups and downs. Enjoy the ride!