

The Happy Berry

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Preamble - The mission of The Happy Berry is to be an ecologically intensive farm that is *Environmentally Enhancing, Socially rewarding for the community and Economically Sustainable for its stewards*. We want to do this by promoting biological diversity in plants, animals, birds, insects and microbes, in essence *Gaia*. The intent is to promote resilience (maintain structure and function of The Happy Berry despite being impacted by climate change, government change, economic change and other unanticipated changes). As stewards we believe bees are an important part of our management plan. Bees can suppress pests as well as be pests themselves; and are inadequately credited for environmental enhancement through all sorts of venues (for example scavenging and predation of June beetle larvae).

Volunteer Position Available - **Bee Manager, Early May to late October.**

Why do we need a Bee Manager?

The Good

There are also good bees like the blueberry bee, bumble bees like *Bombus impatiens*, sweat bees, and bees that are predacious on pests like Jap beetles. We are sure there is more to learn. We are hoping someone would be excited to document what “good” bees we have on the farm, their roles, and habitats, and with logs and research figure out how we can promote the good bees.

The Bad:

Yellow jackets: We have at least a couple of species at the farm. All are scavengers. They cut a hole in fruit as the sugar increases and eat the fruit directly. The holes result in spoilage organisms which enhances the banquet for them. In Figs this is especially bothersome. Several different bees with rough tongues start lapping up the sugar that oozes on to the surface as the fig ripens. They create a conical hole that looks like a bird peck. Most bees just fly off as a

hand approaches a fruit to pick it but yellow jackets hang out in the fruit and the unfortunate picker gets stung. In grapes, table as well as muscadine, it is bumble bees that cut the hole but it is the yellow jacket that does the stinging. In blueberries it is June beetles and Jap beetles that cut the holes but again it is the yellow jacket that does the stinging. Then there is the nuisance issue when you are picnicking at the farm. Then there are underground nests, which if disturbed can be quite dangerous. We have found, using pheromone technology, these yellow jacket problems are significantly reduced. The problem is that during harvest season from June 1 to end of October it is easy to get behind.

The Duties

Starting in May we provide yellow jacket Pheromone stations which need to be cleaned, locations installed and rebated every three weeks. It is recommended that we have 6 stations per acre and maintenance schedule developed. Locations need to be recorded so others can find stations in case help is needed. It is especially important to start early and end late so that Queens are trapped and to thereby reduce ground nests. The pheromones target queens, workers and a general feeding stimulus. Applicant should learn important pollinator species and how to promote them. If help is needed, help will be temporarily assigned.

Qualifications - The applicant should want to become a bee expert. Want to learn so that they can recognize the many different pollinator species at The Happy Berry and the forage plants and nesting locations for these pollinators. Want to learn how to sex carpenter bees on the fly for example. Want to learn how some bees parasitize pest species. Want to learn how and make suggestions for improving native bee and pest bee management at The Happy Berry.

Successful applicant - will be able pick free berries, in season, for themselves and their immediate family.