

The Nevada County Beekeepers Association ~ November 2012

Local Buzz

President's Message

Rob Slay, President

Hey bee peeps, its November and were going to be learning about sting therapy. Hope you can make it. Now is the time to let Randy know who you want to want to nominate for next years officers.

September 5th Meeting - 7:00 PM

Grass Valley Veteran's Memorial Building
255 South Auburn Street in Grass Valley

Our November program features Apitherapy (Bee Venom Therapy) presented by Tracey Stirling who took the Charles Mraz Apitherapy Course. Our club raised \$135.00 through our raffle to send Tracey to Portland last October to help her finance this amazing trip.. We may also see nominating committee reports for our club elections. **No dinner before the meeting this month.**

Bee Bits

Randy Oliver, Contributor

I'm writing these words from the state of Mississippi (thank God I learned how to spell that back in 3rd grade), where the land is flat beyond a Californian's imagination! Cotton country, sweet tea, and fried foods. A A gracious, overtly religious, conservative group of beekeepers. Small hive beetle and wax moth are big deals in this warm, humid climate. And bugs—meaning that a lot of pesticides are applied to crops here. Up to 14 sprays a year to cotton, a crop frequented by bees.

Imagine working your bees on a 90-degree day with high humidity in a bee suit! That sweet iced tea starts to sound pretty good. It's very interesting to me to see beekeeping through the perspective of beekeepers in other areas. We don't realize how good we have it! One of the presenters showed slides of beekeeping from his travels around the world. In a Vietnam village, the average yearly cash income was about \$27. Yet when he trained the villagers in the art of beekeeping, they could earn that in a week, and that additional income would trickle throughout the village's economy, eventually allowing some of them to purchase their first motorized transportation (motorcycles).

(Change subject) I've been seeking out beekeepers across the country to assess the success of those beekeepers who keep their bees without any treatments for varroa. It appears to me that the process of evolution is progressing nicely! There are beekeepers in many states whose bees now handle varroa pretty well. They get decent or better honey crops, and experience relatively low winter losses to the mite. I find this very encouraging.

In a controlled trial of nucs that I ran this spring, in the 10 untreated colonies (queens from one of my breeders) mite levels either stayed level or went down over the course of 3 months! In forty colonies of Russian bees, given a single Apiguard treatment in early August, mite levels in October were acceptable in all but about 5. And even in some of those with high mite levels, there was no sign of Deformed Wing Virus.

Unfortunately, this message has been lost on many commercial queen producers, who still continue to sell queens selected only for honey production, rather than mite resistance.

On an ending note, I've recently been researching genetically engineered crops deeply—first with respect to bees, and secondly (largely due to Prop 37) with respect to humans. I read extensively the anti-GMO literature (which scared the pants off me), but then did the extra work of then checking their claims for validity. This involved reading the original scientific studies cited, as well as scientific analyses of the debates on GM foods. I'm not about to try to persuade anyone, but I will tell you that the GE genie is out of the bottle, and that plant scientists are eager to apply its potential, along with concurrent (non GM) marker assisted selection (MAS), to the breeding of crop plants. What dismays me is that the organic farming community has chosen to draw an arbitrary line in the sand—wholeheartedly embracing MAS, but condemning gene splicing. To me, as an environmentalist, this appears to be a mistake.

Human demands upon the Earth's finite ecosystem are growing. There are only about 4.5 acres of biologically productive land on the surface of the Earth available for each current human inhabitant. Depending upon the culture's lifestyle, we use anywhere from 25 acres (U.S.) to as little as 1 acre (Bangladesh) to feed and clothe each person. Unfortunately for the bee (and many other species), due to human population growth there are over 200,000 additional human mouths to feed every single day—each requiring the conversion of another couple of acres of natural habitat into farmland!

It doesn't take a mathematician to figure out that if we wish to conserve natural ecosystems that we need to get more yield out of existing cropland! And one of the best ways to do that is to breed crops that are more productive and pest-resistant. Plant scientists are making huge strides in developing such cultivars, both by GM and conventional breeding. If they manage to file a patent, so what?—other breeders can easily “steal” the germplasm away from the patented genes, and in any case, the patents expire after 20 years!

From a biological standpoint, I simply don't see GM crops as being any more inherently dangerous than conventionally bred crops. Our domestic plants today are often far from “natural”—you wouldn't recognize the ancestors of many. Be aware that even conventionally bred cultivars of several crops (beans, potatoes, celery, etc.) often turn out to be too toxic for humans. The reality is that plant tissues are naturally awash in poisonous substances (I highly recommend the paper “Misconceptions about the Causes of Cancer” [i]). Plants have needed to repel herbivores throughout their evolution, and since plants can't run, hide, or bite back, they do it chemically. Many of our most popular fruits, nuts, grains, and vegetables (and especially herbs and spices) contain powerful phytochemicals. Their wild ancestors required cooking or leaching before the plant was edible to humans. Plant breeders systematically select for cultivars with lower levels of (the often strongly flavored) toxins.

And there is nothing novel about gene splicing—viruses have been swapping genes between species of plants, animals, bacteria, and fungi since the beginning of life. This natural process of “horizontal gene transfer” has been a driving force in evolution. We humans are all GMO's—a large proportion of our “own” DNA has come from other species.

The regulatory agencies (especially in Europe) have learned from some earlier missteps, and are demanding careful review of safety studies for GM crops (which I wholly support). Plant breeders are bringing to market GM cultivars that are pest, virus, heat, or drought resistant, better flavored, and more nutritious. The direction of GM plant breeding is to eliminate the use of synthetic insecticides, which would be a big plus to honey bees and other pollinators. As an environmentalist, I feel that we

all need to look at the Big Picture, which to me includes the incredible potential of genetic engineering as part of the solution to environmental degradation in a crowded world.

[1] Gold 2002 Misconceptions about the causes of cancer
http://potency.berkeley.edu/pdfs/Gold_Misconceptions.pdf

From the Librarian

Tynowyn Slattery, Librarian

Five books and 2 DVDs all geared toward children and educational programs for children.

Fiona's Bee by Beverly Keller and Diane Paterson. A story of a young girl who learns about bees and making friends at the same time. nice 2 color line drawings on almost every page.

Honeybee by Barrie Watts and Honeybees by Jane Lecht Both these books are arranged to teach children about the life cycle of honeybees; the first is more appropriate for older kids, 6 years & up and the second for 3-6 and both have really excellent photographs of all stages of larval development and hive and field activities with age appropriate explanations, while the Watts book has a two page review, in the back, with questions to help lead further discussion.

Let's Buzz the Schools from the William H. Miner Agricultural Research Institute Educator's Guide to Honeybees, Pollination, Africanized Honeybees, Honey and Beeswax compiled by the Sonoma County Beekeeper's Association.

These two binder format books are intended as teachers' guides with ideas for structure and content in a more in-depth and on going, middle school, class examination of honeybees and the natural history surrounding them. Unfortunately, since these two books are not from a publisher, the photos aren't very clear but the line drawings are good and, more to the point, they are packed with ideas and suggestions. I would use these guides in conjunction with the excellent poster size photos that we have in the library.

The library also has two DVD resources for taking bee information into the classroom.

City of Bees: A Children's Guide to Bees, a joint production of companies in the UK and Denmark Colorful and well done with general information for children grades K-6, it has a downloadable teachers lesson plan. This DVD has been reviewed here before.

Classroom Guide by Randy Oliver An excellent and practical resource for going into the classroom and really engaging children.

If you have children or grandchildren, there's a good chance that you have been asked about presenting something about bees in their classroom and with these resources, a jar of honey and wearing your, very cool, suit, veil and gloves, you'll make a great impression, share some specialized information about something that is exciting and interesting to you and, perhaps, inspire our future generations of beekeepers.

...and a note about late books: The library books are checked out for a month, which can be extended by another month by calling, or preferably, e-mailing me. If problems arise with returning material it

can be mailed to: Tynowyn Slattery, 20493 Rome Road, Nevada City, CA 95959, 530-265-6318
swoolman@saber.net <mailto:swoolman@saber.net>

Apitherapy Conference

Tracey Stirling, Contributor

Dear NCBA members. I want to take a moment to send a heartfelt thank you to all of you who contributed to my trip to the Charles Mraz Apitherapy conference. I have such gratitude to live in a town filled with so many amazing people who are willing to support a complete or near stranger in such an endeavor, as well as to have so many friends and loved ones also willing to show their support. This type of generosity encourages me all the more to want to share all the amazing things I learned at this conference with anyone who is willing to listen.

For those of you who are not familiar with Apitherapy, it is the use of all the medicinal properties of the hive. The conference was a blast! We had such an amazing panel of speakers some coming from as far as Russia. There were lectures on all the medicinal properties of the hive including, propolis, honey, pollen, beeswax and bee bread. There were lectures on Veterinary Apitherapy, the treatment of autoimmune illnesses and pain as well as contraindications. But most interesting by far were the lectures and hands on demonstrations of bee venom therapy or bee acupuncture.

I will be speaking of Bee Venom Therapy at the November meeting and I will also be sharing a live demonstration. Bee venom therapy has been around for thousands of years and has shown to be helpful in many types of ailments particularly those dealing with inflammation. BVT is most commonly used for MS in the states but it is also highly popular for those with Rheumatoid Arthritis. Other ailments helped by BVT are Fibromyalgia, sports injuries, sciatica, incontinence, and asthma just to name a few.

Please come to the November meeting if you or anyone you know could benefit from this form of treatment. You have a gold mine of healing in your hives just waiting to be discovered!

This Month's Recipe

from Leslie Gault

Persimmon Walnut Honey Bread

- 2 Persimmons (1 1/4 cup persimmon pulp)
- 1-1/2 cup whole wheat pastry flour (available at Briarpatch)
- 1/2 cup whole wheat flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp ginger powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp clove powder
- 3 Tbsp butter at room temperature
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts or other favorite nuts

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Cut the persimmons into half and scoop out the flesh (or blend in blender) to make 1-1/4 cups of persimmon pulp. If you prefer, reduce persimmon pulp to one

cup and add one lightly beaten egg. Cream the butter and honey. Add the persimmon (and egg if being used) and beat the mixture till well blended. In a separate bowl, sift the dry ingredients together and add to the liquid mixture, stirring lightly until well mixed. Blend in the nuts. Turn the batter into a well greased loaf pan and bake in a preheated 350F oven for 40-60 minutes until a toothpick comes out clean when inserted in the middle of the loaf. Cool slightly before slicing, best when served warm.

Emergency Winter Rations and Moisture Control

Janet Brisson, Treasurer

Last year, I read an article on Emergency Winter Rations and Moisture Control and decided to try it. Since we were gone 6 weeks over winter, I needed a way to continuously feed the bees. Prior to that, I was making honey boards, but they were hard to make and very messy. This was a piece of cake. At first I loved it, so easy to set up. Then I hated it, I thought I had really messed up the hives with these big lumps of sugar and thought I would have to chip them out of the hive. Finally, loving it again. I didn't realized how easy it was to clean up, the newspaper and sugar just lifted off the hive. I could inspect the hive and put the newspaper with sugar right back on again.

I'm going to reprint below.

Emergency Winter Rations and Moisture Control

I have discussed the Mountain Camp method of winter feeding and moisture control in past newsletters and I feel it is worth going over once more.

1. Add a solid spacer rim to the top of your stack, about 2" in height
2. Cut two sheets of black & white newspaper to fit exactly inside the walls of your hive body (these will be laid directly on your top bars leaving about 1/3 of ten frames exposed).
3. Using a spray bottle full of tap water wet the newspaper so it is fairly saturated but not dripping.
4. Fill a 2 lb plastic coffee can with dry granulated cane sugar.
5. Dump 1/3 of the sugar on the newspaper and mist it with the spray bottle so it just begins to clump.
6. Repeat the process until the sugar is gone.

Why mist the sugar? Because if you don't the bees may carry it from the hive as foreign material. When will the bees use this? It has been my observation that they will be up in this sugar in the very early spring. Are there any side benefits of this? Yes, I believe that this helps absorb the moisture that will be produced by the bees' respiration and heat that is generated and rises as condensation. My bees can take some really cold weather but they cannot survive being wet and cold. And, should they not need this sugar in the spring, you can use it in a 1:1 spring feed.

Nominations for President and Vice President

Randy Oliver, Contributor

We at NCBA always welcome new blood into our leadership, independent upon your beekeeping experience. If you are interested in being an officer, please phone Randy 277-4450. The executive board will help you every step of the way. Don't be shy!

Country Rubes Combo Screened Bottom Boards

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Goodies Sign-up

Karla Hanson, Coordinator

Please let me know if you can bring a treat for any of the meetings. Contact Karla Hanson, queenbeez@att.net

Meeting Minutes

Minutes from October meeting are unavailable.

Club Membership

Janet Brisson, Treasurer

If you are a new member and want to sign up but can't make it to the meeting, you can sign up on line at NCBEES.net or email Janet at rubes@countryrubes.com

Extract from a lecture to Workmen

Dornach, 3rd February 1922, Rudolf Steiner

I have told you that the female element is more connected with the influences from the surrounding world while the male element shuts itself off from these influences.

If men are addicted to absinth it wrecks those organs which should ensure that offspring have strong stable characters.

So if the vice of absinth drinking spreads among men we shall get weakly offspring, weakly future generations.

If in addition, women take absinth, it will happen that the offspring will be very prone to illness.

If we see women who drink absinth and they have children it will be found that these children will be very liable to illnesses....

We can study what honey does when we eat it.

Absinth unites with the fluid in man in such a way that it drives out the air and with it the soul element, and that gives a feeling of pleasure.

Honey gives pleasure only on the tongue.

The moment honey is eaten it assists the proper connection between airy and fluid elements in man.

Nothing is better for man than to add a little honey, but in the right measure, to his food.

The bees, in a wonderful way, help man to learn how his soul should work on his organs.

Through their honey, the bees give back to man what he needs for the work of his soul in the body.

When he drinks absinth he wants to relish and enjoy his soul.

When he adds honey to his food he wants to prepare his soul so that it works and breaths properly in the body.

Bee keeping, therefore, advances civilization because it makes man strong.

Drinking absinth, however, would drive mankind gradually to the point of extinction.

If one thinks how greatly the bees are influenced from the starry worlds, one sees that bees are the means of ensuring man receives what is right for him.

All that lives, works together in the right way if it is combined in the right way.

When one sees a hive of bees, one should say to oneself with awe and reverence:

By way of the beehive the whole universe flows into man and makes us good, capable people, but if we drink absinth it turns us into the opposite.

Thus knowledge of man becomes knowledge of the universe.

Raffle Prizes

Karla Hanson, Coordinator

Thank you all for bringing some great items for our raffles, keep it coming. Plants, eggs, jewelry, soaps, bee items, jams, beautiful metal garden art, the list goes on and on... Thanks to everyone!

The Nevada County Beekeepers Association is dedicated to apiculture education and promotion of the art and science of beekeeping among beekeepers, agriculturists, and the general public. This is a “not for profit” organization. Donations are welcomed.

Meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 7 PM at the Grass Valley Veteran’s Memorial Building at 255 South Auburn Street in Grass Valley. All visitors are welcome. Use the back entrance.

The newsletter is published monthly as a service to the membership. Articles, recipes, commentary, and news items are welcomed and encouraged. Contributions should be received by the 20th of the Month to be included into the next issue. Submit to garyg@newpress.com

Advertising space (3” by 2”) in this newsletter is usually available and need not be bee-related. Advertising rates are \$7 per year for NCBA members and \$16 per year for non-members.

Nevada County Beekeepers Association

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President: Rob Slay..... 263-5618
Vice President: Jeremiah Farrell..... 743-2842
Secretary: Jack Meeks..... 432-4429
jackm@nccn.net
Treasurer: Janet Brisson..... 913-2724
rubes@countryrubes.com

Board Members

Larry Merritt..... 613-3923
lameritt@theunion.net
Randy Oliver..... 277-4450
Charlie Whittlesey.....292-3249
or 755-0468
Deborah Morawski...675-2924
Karla Hanson..... 265-3756

Committee Chairs

Swarm Hotline: Karla Hanson..... 265-3756
Lynn Williams 675-2924
Librarian: Tynowyn Slattery..... 265-6318
Newsletter Mailing: Steve Reynolds..... 401-4654
slreynolds86@yahoo.com
Newsletter: Gary Gustafson..... 478-1216
Honey Extractor: Karla Hanson..... 265-3756

Nevada County Beekeepers Association



c/o Steve Reynolds
10838 Ridge Road
Nevada City, CA 95959
First Class Mail

November 5th Meeting - 7PM

Program: Apitherapy (Bee Venom Therapy)

No dinner before the meeting this month!