



Local Buzz

President's Message

Leslie Gault, President



Earlier today I put on one of my “bee shirts” for inspiration to write the President’s Message, but it didn’t work. Instead of inspiration, all I can think about is the drought. We are heading into February, and there is still no rain! We’re irrigating in January. Our local irrigation districts are enacting their drought and climate change plans. Companies are quietly adjusting to the new reality of resource scarcity and thus increased prices due to drought. Is this because of normal climatic variation, or is something really happening? I think I know.

The weather obviously affects everything we beekeepers do, from the simply ability to access our colonies right down to the survival of our colonies. Lately beekeeping has had its challenges anyway, now add to the list of serious problems the ongoing drought. No rain = no flowers = no bee food = no bees.

So what can we do? The main thing is to be vigilant as to what’s happening with your colonies and take steps to help them before they get into trouble:

Water Make sure your bees have plenty of easily accessible water for drinking and cooling. The further the bees have to fly for water, the more stress on the hive. Go build that bee-watering facility now and resolve to keep it full all summer! And, if it’s hot out, make sure that there is plenty of room inside your hive boxes for the bees to fan. If they are too crowded, heat can build up and they will make space for circulation by reducing essential things such as honey and brood. When appropriate, open up screened bottom boards and provide for ventilation in the upper boxes.

Food Watch your colonies carefully to be sure they have enough pollen and nectar coming in. Check your bees on a warm day to make sure they have sufficient stores and FEED syrup and pollen substitute if need be. Since there is less forage available, the danger of starving is very real, especially for colonies during spring build up. If we go into a spell of cold weather, dry or not, where the bees can’t go out to forage, they can quickly starve to death.

Mites Check mite levels regularly and take steps to keep levels low. Mites create additional stresses on the hives and the dry weather may affect amounts.

Defense During a drought, other honey bee colonies, native bees, wasps, and numerous other critters will also be feeling the effects—and looking for easy food sources such as your bees. So help your hives defend themselves. Make sure your electric fence is in good order, put out the yellow-jacket traps early this year (keeping yellow-jackets down in early season reduces nest strength later in the year), and take steps to prevent robbing.

We may all need to be vigilant about these things for the rest of this year and on into the next rainy season, depending upon what happens in the next couple of months. I personally am trying to let go of the hope for a large honey crop this year and shift over to just helping my bees survive. Rain, even if we receive large amounts at this point, isn’t likely to be enough to significantly alter the water deficit. But keep your fingers crossed for a phenomenally wet next couple of months and let’s see what the spring holds.

February 3rd Meeting – 7:00 PM

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

George Bleekman will be discussing building and using a solar wax melter. A wax melter allows the beekeeper to render cappings, burr comb, scrapings, and old comb into profitable blocks of high quality beeswax. Winter is a great time to tackle such projects.

Professor Bleekman was a professor of biology for 23 years at American River College. He has been keeping bees since 1978, and currently has 12 colonies which are pollinating 40 acres of fruit trees in Orangevale.

Classes

Serge Labisque bee class

On Feb 15. 8:30 to 4:00 at the senior building at the fair grounds.

Lunch is included and the cost is \$40.00.

Class size is limited to 40.

To sign up can call A to Z Supply at 273-6608 ask for April or Dan.

Mead Makers' Short Course – At U.C. Davis

Cost is \$500.00

Dates: February 6, 2014 – February 8, 2014 (All Day)

Contact: Amina Harris, aharris@ucdavis.edu - 530-754-9301

Sponsor: Honey and Pollination Center

Location: Robert Mondavi Institute for Wine and Food Science Ave

Covers topics on Fermentation, Filtration, Sensory Analysis, Meadery Design, Financing the Meadery.

Australian Honeybees Unable to Make Honey

Australia's hottest spring on record has spawn droughts and intense heatwaves; it has been disastrous for honeybees as their hives are melting whilst temperatures soar. So now instead of searching far and wide for flowers to harvest nectar to turn into honey or collect protein-rich pollen to feed the larvae or performing their role as pollinators, the honeybees are spending the lion's share of each day from 10AM to 7PM searching exclusively for fresh water to cool down their hives.

It's not just the lack of honey that is now a concern, but rather it's the overall health of bees that's at risk. Scientists know that searing temperatures in the springtime also cause sterile pollen in many plants like almonds, plums, kiwi's and cherries. Sterile pollen has no protein.

Aussie honeybees generate about \$6B per annum for the 12th largest economy on the globe including pollinating almost 70 percent of food crops, cotton for clothing, over \$150M in honey sales.



Country Rubes Combo Screened Bottom Boards

Special NCBA Club Price! Call Janet for details. 530-913-2724 or rubes@countryrubes.com

Honey Extraction House

A to Z Supply has a honey extraction house available for rent. Equipment is provided and the room is heated and there's lots of hot water for clean up. For more information: 530.273.6608



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

Minutes from Last Meeting

Jack Meeks, Secretary

President Leslie Gault introduced new officers and board. Debra Morawski collected dues for year 2014
PROGRAM: Vice Pres Brion Dunbar introduced Pat Heitkam, Orland CA, who shipped 60,000 queens last year, and has 6000 hives. He favors star thistle honey as flavorful and less likely to crystallize. He recalled some bad years, 1982-tracheal mites and 1987-varroa mite epidemics. He showed photos of artificial insemination method raising queens, and plastic cup starter cells in rows. He has used semen imported from Europe for A.I. because natural random drone fertilization is spotty.

Members Q&A: Oxalic acid should be used only once on each generation of brood in a hive, such as August, December, April. Details at www.scientificbeekeeping.com/

A to Z Supply

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Membership Dues

Janet Brisson, Treasurer

Membership Dues are DUE

Please pay by check or bring exact change to the meeting.

\$15.00 for Newsletter via email delivery

\$20.00 for Newsletter through the mail

You can pay online by credit card (\$1 surcharge)

countryrubes.com/nevadacountybeekeepers/membershipsignup.html

If you would like to mail your dues, please send your check made out to NCBA or Nevada County Beekeepers Association and mail that to me at:

NCBA c/o Janet Brisson

20693 Dog Bar Road Grass Valley, CA 95949

Any questions, please feel free to email me at rubes@countryrubes.com.

You can call at 530-913-2724. Leave a message so I can call you back.

Last Month's Meeting – Pat Heitkam of Orland, VA



Pat Heitkam of Orland, who operates a queen bee-rearing business, tends his hives.
Pat shipped 60,000 queens last year, and has 6000 hives.

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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Nevada County Beekeepers Association



c/o Steve Reynolds
10838 Ridge Road
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First Class Mail

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