

Local Buzz

June 2015



President's Message

Brion Dunbar

We had ten people show up for our mite wash cup making workshop. Many thanks to Dave Pfadt for hosting. Everyone in attendance took home two cups, and we managed to make a few extra. We will be selling these at the next meeting as a fundraiser for the association.

The blackberry flow has been a large disappointment so far. Flowers everywhere but not much nectar. I've had to start feeding syrup lately- many colonies were on the brink of starvation. The lower elevation ones especially so. Some of my yards at 3000 feet or so seem to be whitening some comb just in the last week or so. Plenty of pollen variety, as you can see from the picture below. It may be a long dry summer for bees, so get your feeding system figured out if you haven't already done so.



The new colorful club logo debuted above was created by Laurel Mathe at Mystic Design. Nice work Laurel!

June 1st Meeting – 7:00 PM

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

Our speaker for this meeting is Randy Oliver presenting "Beginning Beekeeping 3 – Avoiding Stings".

There will be no dinner gathering before the meeting.

Bee Bits

Randy Oliver, Contributor

This spring has been tough for bees. Our nectar/pollen flows have run early, and there simply hasn't been much nectar in the blossoms. We don't normally need to feed our splits, but this year we've had to in order to avert starvation. I'm typing these words on May 22nd with the blackberry well in bloom in most areas, and our normal July bloomers, such as Toyon and Basswood, already well into bud. This means that plant phenology continues to run well ahead of "normal."

At this point in bloom, our splits are strong and fill a 10-frame deep, at which point we can usually add another deep of foundation for them to draw out. But this year many of the splits are so light in stores, that I expect that the bulk of the nectar flow will simply disappear into the bottom box. Unless a miracle happens, we may need to feed many of our colonies in order to get them through the winter.

We recently finished a long-term trial of Apivar strips, in which I wanted to see whether there were any negative effects upon colony buildup, winter survival, or queen survival. We found no evidence of any negative effects due to treatment. Although we don't use synthetic miticides in our operation, Apivar strips are an easy to apply effective treatment when there is brood present.

Also of interest to us are the low mite counts that we're seeing in many of our overwintered colonies, which haven't had a mite treatment since last November. I don't want to get prematurely excited, but it appears that perhaps our selective breeding program is starting to pay off. We can only hope...

We're now starting testing of other mite control methods, including alternative methods of applying formic acid, oxalic acid, and thymol. Those wishing to gain some hands on experience are welcome to volunteer to help with setting up trials and with data collection (taking lots of bee samples).

The Obama administration recently released their pollinator protection plan, which, not surprisingly, focuses upon habitat improvement. By lumping bees with butterflies (honey bees and monarchs), the importance of maintaining areas with populations of host and forage plants came to the fore. EPA will also continue to take a more critical look at insecticides.

I'm trying something out this season—keeping nucs with new queens on hand so that I can fill local demand for small numbers of queens. Just call me, and I'll cage them to order for \$30 green cash.

Club Dues

Janet Brisson, Treasurer

If you are paying in cash at a meeting please try to bring the exact change. If you would like to pay your dues through the mail, please send your check made out to NCBA or Nevada County Beekeepers Association, for either \$20.00 (to receive newsletter through mail) or \$15.00 for newsletters.

NCBA C/o Janet Brisson

20693 Dog Bar Road Grass Valley, CA 95949

Any questions, please feel free to call me at 530-913-2724 or email me at rubes@countryrubes.com

Minutes from Last Meeting

Jack Meeks, Secretary

Pres Brion Dunbar opened with Q&A.

Request for an exhibit hive for May 22 & 23

DISCUSSION: Strawberry Music Festival is at the Fair. Gathering of bees outside but on walls of a hive is not swarming, but "bearding" to cool the hive. Honeyflow is over in June. Thereafter bees need feeding and protein. Honey is stored above the pollen and brood. Honey band must be breached to get new storage space used above a brood frame.

PROGRAM: Randy Oliver: 'Hive Management' Nosema is cause of spring Colony Collapse. If pollen runs out bees can cannibalize eggs, larvae, pupae. Check uncapped pupae-if there is plenty of food jelly, protein level is OK. If you see six frames of brood, they are ready to swarm. Maximum population is at peak honeyflow; later in summer population declines, then VARROA becomes a problem; deformed wing virus increases, brood rearing decreases, stops in midwinter, and the survivors live on until spring when pollen enables a new cycle.

FINANCE: March Start \$5519.70; Inc \$373.87; Exp \$122.17; End \$5771.40

Oakland Museum Bee Exhibit

Reprinted from the Oakland Museum Website.

Bees: Tiny Insect, Big Impact is now showing at the Oakland Museum – Gallery of California Natural Sciences through 9/20/2015, 1000 Oak St, Oakland, CA 94607

Family and kid friendly. More information here on hours and directions: <http://museumca.org/exhibit/bees> or call 888-OAKMUSE (625-6873)

“This new exhibition in the Gallery of California Natural Sciences takes a look at the wildly diverse and intricate world of one of the most important creatures to human agriculture and the natural environment. Through family-friendly experiences, hands-on activities, and media, Bees: Tiny Insect, Big Impact touches on topics of honeybees and Bay Area beekeeping, the diversity of California native bee species, citizen science projects, and the similarities between bees and humans. Discover real bee specimens under a microscope, crawl through a human-sized beehive, and try on a beekeeper suit. The exhibition continues outside of the Gallery: get involved with citizen science organizations, check out bee hotels installed in the OMCA gardens, and take home guides on planting a bee-friendly garden and building bee hotels for your own garden. In an immersive gallery environment, explore the causes of bee population decline, learn about the significance of bees to California's economy and ecosystems, and discover how simple but powerful actions by Californians can help bees to survive in a changing world.”Oakland Museum Website.

Honey Bees are Wild, it Really is that Simple.

French Wildlife and Beekeeping <http://wild-life-in-france.blogspot.fr/>

There seems to be a large number of people in the bee keeping world that can't get to grips with the fact that honey bees can and do live quite contentedly without the assistance of human beings and have done so for some 300,000 years managing the ups and downs of disease and ice ages. Insects really don't need us to manipulate their life processes, they just require suitable habitat and living conditions and honey bees are no exception to this, but already I hear the cries of outraged bee fiddlers everywhere accusing me of bad management, spreading disease and worse.

Let's start by taking a quick look at some of the mainstream bee keeping practices;

- Clipping the Queens wings to prevent them from being able to fly when the colony attempts to divide and swarm.
- Opening the hive on a regular basis, normally every 7/8 days in the season, removing the frames of comb to check for signs of diseases and for any Queen cells that are made prior to swarming.
- Should Queen Cells be found it is fairly common practice to destroy all but one or two or in some cases all of them. (The bees will make perhaps 10 – 15 but will normally only allow one or two to hatch, the others are insurance).
- Regularly destroy Drone cells and larvae to reduce the number of varroa mites; there is a special tool for this – a Drone comb.
- Use Plastic pre formed honey comb.
- Using various insecticide treatments in the hive to kill varroa mites.
- Regularly removing old Brood comb and replacing, usually with a frame of new wax foundation.
- Transporting hives with bees from one location to another for forage.
- Feeding the bees with artificial pollen substitutes often made from soya flour.

Granted not all mainstream keepers use or practice all of these methods but weekly removal and inspection of colony frames much of the year, varroa mite control and

swarm prevention are considered to be necessary for colony survival and preventing the escape of colonies into the wild.

My perspective on this that puts me in the naughty corner is that I simply don't think it is right or necessary to treat bees using any of these products or methods. I'm happy for my bees to swarm, in fact it's a marvel of nature and although it takes time I enjoy swarm collection and hiving them. I never have any health issues with my bees, and yes, I would know and I'm certainly not of a mind to use insecticides in my hives whether they are synthetic or so called natural.

Contrary to the popular view honey bee colonies don't die or fail when left alone or I should say that they don't fail anymore than would be naturally expected. The only disease that is considered to be serious in France is American Foul Brood which isn't very common and is mainly spread by bee keepers using infected equipment or selling infected stock.

Much is made of replacing old comb with new wax foundation, but if left to themselves they manage the comb by removing any that is no longer fit for purpose and replacing or restoring as required, something they have always done. Many keepers talk of hives becoming too full of honey or too full of brood but again the bees will manage this if they are of local stock although maybe not to our maximum profit. For the time being how a person wishes to keep and manage their bees is still a matter of choice here in France, (and the UK), but as always there is a vociferous body of people that would impose their views and methods on everyone else.

Sacramento Area Beekeepers Association Classes

Submitted by Bob Sugar

Saturday, June 20 – Intermediate – Randy Oliver

Class fee: \$45

COURSE COORINATOR: Ron Nies (530).941.3554 or sabaclassbees@gmail.com

All classes will be held at the UCD Extension Center, 4145 Branch Center Road (off Kiefer Road west of Bradshaw Road). Classes start at 8:30 a.m., end at approximately 4:30 p.m. For additional information, contact Ron, or visit the SABA website at www.sacbeekeepers.org.

Club Reminders

Fair Booth Shifts - The Nevada County Fair starts August 12th thru 16th and with that we need members to sign up for 4 hour shifts to fill the Bee Booth. Please contact Karla Hanson @ QueenBeez@att.net and let her know which day or days and shift you would like to do.

Available shift times are

10:00AM to 2:00PM

2:00PM to 6:00PM

6:00PM to 10:00PM

Sign up early for your favorite time and day.

Raffle Items - This is the best time of year to garden... So please remember to bring some of your plants to the Bee Meeting for the raffle. Or any other items that you think will be good raffle items including plants, eggs, jewelry, soaps, bee items, jams, beautiful metal garden art, the list goes on and on... Thanks to everyone!

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

Parmak 12 Volt solar powered electric fence charger. Protect your apiary from bears.
Model DF-SP-LI. Unused in the box.
\$160 - Contact Brion at 559-1422

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.

A to Z Supply

13396 Ridge Road
Grass Valley, CA 95945
530-273-6608/274-3871



**NOW CARRYING A
FULL LINE OF
BEE KEEPING
SUPPLIES
STOP BY AND CHECK IT OUT.**

HOURS:

M-F: 730 AM—530 PM

SAT: 8 AM—5 PM

SUN: 9 AM—4 PM

Www.atozsupply.com

sales@atozsupply.com



Sacramento Beekeeping Supplies

- Complete line of all beekeeping supplies
- American dealer for Sheriff suits
- Gifts—bee themed children's wear, tableware, garden décor
- Books—children's beekeeping, homemade cosmetics, candles
- Beeswax candles, molds, waxes, dyes, scents, and wicks
- Honeycomb sheets for rolling candles—35 colors

2110 X Street, Sacramento, CA 95818
(916) 451-2337 fax (916) 451-7008

Web page at www.sacramentobeekeeping.com/
email: info@sacramentobeekeeping.com

Open Tuesday through Saturday 10:00 – 5:30
Mail Orders Receive Quick Service

Goodies Sign-up

Karla Hanson, Coordinator

Please let me know if you can bring a treat for any of the coming meetings. We only need a couple of folks each month, so pick a month and let me know. Contact Karla Hanson, queenbeez@att.net

From the Librarian

Tynowyn Slattery

Remember...If you can't make meetings to return books, you can always mail them to:

Tynowyn Slattery 20493 Rome Road Nevada City, CA 95959 swoolman@saber.net 530-265-6318

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

Officers

President – Brion Dunbar	559-1422
briond@aja.com	
Vice President – Jerry Van Heeringen	913-5709
jerryvan29@gmail.com	
Secretary – Jack Meeks	432-4429
jackvmeeks@gmail.com	
Treasurer – Janet Brisson	913-2724
rubes@countryrubes.com	

Board Members

Leslie Gault	346-7092
Randy Oliver	277-4450
Karla Hanson	265-3756
Deborah Morawski	675-2924

Committee Chairs

Swarm Hotline -	
Karla Hanson	265-3756
Lynn Williams	675-2924
Librarian – Tynowyn Slattery	265-6318
Membership – Janet Brisson	913-2724
rubes@countryrubes.com	
Newsletter Mailing – Steve Reynolds	268-2133
Newsletter Editor – Gary Gustafson	478-1216
garyg@newpress.com	

Nevada County Beekeepers Association



c/o Janet Brisson
20693 Dog Bar Road
Grass Valley, CA 95949
First Class Mail

June 1st Meeting – 7PM

Program:

Randy Oliver presenting "Beginning Beekeeping 3 – Avoiding Stings".