



Local Buzz

President's Message

Brion Dunbar, President

Thanks to whoever did the successful rain dance. Two nights in a row of rain, just as the blackberry bloom is beginning! Will it make for a decent crop of honey? We will have to wait and see.

My bees have been building up well, though the last two weeks or so they have slowed down due to a nectar dearth. I did have one colony almost die out when we had the 3 days of cold at the start of this month, including one day with snow. On this one colony, I had apparently not left them with enough honey stores, and many of the adult bees starved.

The first picture below is what one of the frames looked like, almost full of brood and hardly any adult bees. The second picture is the bottom board covered with dead bees. A sad sight, so don't let this happen to your hives. This time of the year the bees are 'all in' on raising brood, and may not have much honey store to get thru a cold spell. They are like an aggressive investor, betting everything on the stock market, and not putting anything away for a rainy day.

I have limited number of 2nd year queens available for \$10 each. You can call me at 559-1422



May 4th 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 2 - Practical Management".

There will be no dinner gathering before the meeting.

Bee Bits

Randy Oliver, Contributor

The debate about the neonicotinoid insecticides, favored by the EPA as being "reduced risk" products, has heated up in recent months due to effective activism in the media. I recently spoke with the EPA risk assessors,

who are dismayed that the debate is taking place in the media, rather than by the scientific community, and thus putting political pressure on the EPA to “do something,” despite a lack of scientific consensus.

A few recent studies, some contradictory, have added fuel to the fire. The results of one study suggested that feeding colonies large amounts of neonics in pollen patties later resulted in elevated queen failure, but only in colonies headed by queens taken from bee breeding populations that had never been exposed to neonics (suggesting that exposed populations develop a degree of immunity).

Another 3-year study from the U.S. did not find such negative effects at field-realistic doses.

Another recent study strongly suggests that plantings of seed-treated canola do not negatively affect honey bee colonies, but negatively affect at least one species of bumblebee, and one species of native bee. My analysis of current science is that, not surprisingly, neonic seed treatments likely affect solitary and bumble bees more than honey bees, whose large colonies exhibit a “buffering” effect.

Research looking for negative effects due to neonics has become a cottage industry for researchers looking for publicity or funding (the two go hand in hand). What bothers me is the lack of comparative trials to test the negative effects of neonics vs. the alternative insecticides (pyrethroids, organophosphates, or carbamates) which were formerly used by growers. Growers prefer the neonics due to their safety to humans, and their systemic action in plants, which minimizes pesticide exposure to the rest of the environment.

Although we'd all like an agricultural system that is totally organic, there is no evidence that farmers could currently convert without causing massive starvation of human populations worldwide. The good news is that agriculture is steadily moving toward agroecological (eco-friendly) practices worldwide (at a faster pace in Europe). The downside is that there is typically less productivity, resulting in higher food costs (the Europeans tend to be willing to pay more of their monthly budget for food). We in the U.S. could do the same if everyone suddenly demanded (and were willing to pay for) organically-certified food only. But that would also mean that we would price much of our food out of the budget of the Third World countries that depend upon us for cheap commodity food.

To me, the debate about the neonics is not whether they harm insects (they are insecticides after all), but whether they are less or more harmful to the environment (ecosystems) as a whole than alternative insecticides. This sort of data is sorely lacking.

Beekeeping Symposium

www.registration.ucdavis.edu/Item/Details/147



Saturday May 9, 2015
8:00 AM - 6:30 PM

Gen. Admission: \$75
Student Admission (Reduced!): \$15

Speaker Needed to Talk on Bee's Wax

We are looking for someone to speak at our November 2 meeting about uses for bees wax. If this is you or if you know someone who would be interested please contact Jerry Van Heeringen at jerryvan29@gmail.com (530) 913-5709.

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

Randy Oliver discussed chemical pesticides: Despite widespread claims, no neonic pesticides stand out as more toxic to bees, and the traditional organophosphates are worse. Beekeepers fail to report details of toxic losses to FDA, which is heavily lobbied by unsupported narratives.

Janet Brisson Finance: Feb Start \$2221.70; Inc \$648; Exp \$350; Feb End \$5519.70.

PROGRAM Jeremiah Farrell "Splits and Swarms" Splits will reassemble unless separated by two miles or more; after 2-3 weeks can be returned. Best if moved in dark or dawn. Swarms tend to gather 30 feet high while scouts look for a home. If shaken to ground, they return to branch. Best result if you throw a line over the branch and haul up two or three extracted frames where they can start a home.

Pheromones less effective than "Bee-Go" butyric acid, which will move bees as desired with a drop or two near a swarm, or to clear a honey frame for extraction. To reduce unproductive calls, he asks "Is it on your property?" "Can you reach it yourself?" "Will there be someone there?" "How long has it been there?" "How large-basketball, baseball etc?"



What's this pictured above? If you know what is going on in this picture perhaps you could share your thoughts at our next regular meeting.

Breakthrough device? ...or another gimmick.



How the Internet of Things Could Save the Bees

Dan Tynan, Tech Columnist

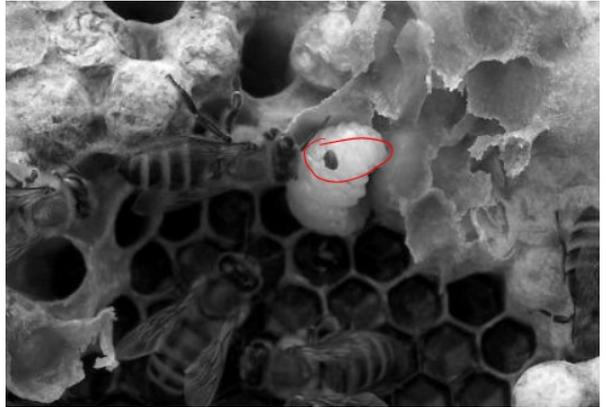
It's a concept that's both simple and terrifying. For years, scientists have known that honeybees are disappearing at an alarming rate. Fewer honeybees means less pollination, which could lead to a rapid drop in food supplies. If the bee die-off continues, the entire human race will be threatened. We need bees.

Fortunately, researchers at the University of Minnesota may have come up with an Internet of Things device that could help prevent the bee-pocalypse.

One theory behind the massive bee collapse involves the Varroa destructor mite, a tiny, vampirelike parasite that lives inside honeybee colonies and literally sucks the life out of them, infecting them with a virus that contributes to colony collapse disorder.

image

In the left corner, the hardworking and industrious honeybee; in the right, the much smaller parasite, Varroa destructor mite. (Photos via Wikimedia, "Apis mellifera Tanzania" by Muhammad Mahdi Karim.)



The Eltopia MiteNot can wipe out the mites using a circuit board camouflaged to blend in with a traditional honeycomb frame made from cornstarch wax and other renewable materials. Beekeepers install one MiteNot frame inside the hive; the board's embedded sensors detect temperature fluctuations and other environmental data, then transmit it via a 3G cellular connection to Eltopia's cloud-based BeeSafe application.

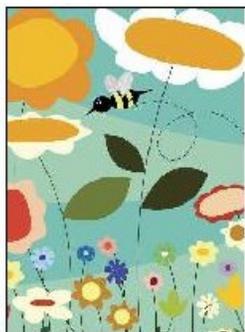
Based on sensor data, BeeSafe can detect the optimal moment when female mites have laid their eggs, but before the male mites have fertilized them. It then sends a command back to the MiteNot frame to heat up just enough to sterilize the male mites without harming the bees.

When covered in wax, the frame with MiteNot installed becomes indistinguishable from any other part of the hive and can be reused as needed. Its great advantage is that it can fight the mites without the use of pesticides, which could also harm the bees.

The Eltopia MiteNot is still being tested, but it may be available as early as fall 2015. Hopefully we'll all still be around by then.

<https://www.yahoo.com/tech/how-the-internet-of-things-could-save-the-bees-117114866924.html>

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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

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.

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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

Bee Location Available

Landowners Ross and Wynn Tessien would like to host a few hives on their property in exchange for a bit of honey. They have 4.25 acres down off Dog Bar on Feather Way. The property is fenced, 6' high. If you're looking for a location, please contact them directly ross@planitsolar.com. (Randy doesn't go that far down Dog Bar, so no competition from him).

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

May 4th Meeting – 7PM

Program:

Randy Oliver presenting "Beginning Beekeeping 2 - Practical Management".