

The Local Buzz

November 2020



President's Message, Amy Husted

Winter Preparations

Welcome to fall, or what passes for fall in these parts. It's looking like we will see no rainfall in the entire month of October, which is unusual but not surprising. I hope for our sake, and the bees sake, that this winter we will see more rain than last winter.

While our winters are mild and do not require special equipment to winterize your bees, there are some things you can do to help your bees survive. The most important thing is to make sure that your hives contain around 40 pounds of honey. 8 frames of honey is roughly equal to 40 pounds.

It doesn't get cold enough here to wrap hives in extra insulation. If anything, we need to protect the hives from excess moisture, not cold temperatures. There are several ways to insure that your hives remain moisture free.

Make sure your hives lids are water tight and that there are no gaps or cracks for water to get through. Tilt the hive slightly forward so that any water on the bottom board will drip out. A top entrance will allow excess moisture to escape, but will also allow heat to escape. I use quilt boards to provide a little venting at the top, but also retain heat.

A quilt board is a box that fits on top of the hive under the inner cover. It can be an old honey super or thick shim, at least 3 or 4 inches tall. Staple a thin cloth or screen to the bottom of the super, and fill it with pine shavings or another organic absorbent material. Drill a couple small holes in the sides to allow moisture to escape. You can also use a top feeder, just fill the tubs with pine shavings.

Good luck out there, stay safe and happy beekeeping!

November 2nd Meeting – ON ZOOM

Due to current events the upcoming regular meeting will be hosted on Zoom.

Spencer Wingfield shares his Honey Sample testing.

Meeting information will be circulated to the membership by email.

Bee Bits

Submitted by Randy Oliver

Autumn weather is arriving late this season – something that we may need to get used to. There is mixed fall bloom occurring in the County, with bees bringing back pollen in some areas. This may stimulate some late-season brood rearing, resulting in a fresh batch of workers that will become “winter bees.”

In the large pollen sub and probiotic trials that I'm running, I'm noticing that the smaller colonies have been unable to expand their brood nests. I've been in discussion with this with researchers and beekeepers from other dry regions, and find that this is not unusual. The colonies continue to rear a small amount of brood, which appears to be well fed and healthy, but the cluster size does not grow.

I'm curious as to the reason(s) for this observation – is it due to temperature, or perhaps humidity? I'm suspecting that it may have something to do with the amount of open brood that a cluster is able to maintain at a high humidity, which requires water foraging – an activity that can wear the foragers out.

In any case, if you haven't already done so, get your mite levels down before winter. Formic Pro or repeated Hopguard would be appropriate treatments at this time of year. Make sure that your hives have plenty of honey stored above the cluster. If not, feed them heavy syrup while it's still warm enough for them to process it. Colonies will also benefit from dry insulation (such as Styrofoam) installed above or below the hive cover.

High Altitude Flying

Submitted by Brion Dunbar

Flying insects are hard to study in the field, and scientists don't know a lot about the extreme limits of bee flight. They have some clues though: Carpenter bees (*Xylocarpa varipuncta*) native to the southwestern United States can hover in low air density environments characteristic of high altitudes. Tropical orchid bees can lift twice their weight while hovering, another indicator that bees have a little more flying skills than just the ability to flit from one flower to another.



Those bees are tropical or lowland species, while bumblebees are common denizens of Alpine hiking trails from the American Rockies to the Andes. "They seem to be really good at hanging out at high elevations," says Dillon. So the researchers wondered, how hard is it for bees to actually fly around up there?

In the mountains of western China, the researchers captured six local male bumblebees (*Bombus impetuosus*) in the wild at around 10,660 feet. They stuck the bees in a hypobaric chamber, and gradually sucked air out, simulating higher elevation environments with reduced oxygen and air density. "Just by pumping air out, we can reduce the total barometric pressure which would be like carrying the bee up the mountain," says Dillon.

They observed the bees' behavior, recorded sound to calculate their wing beat rhythms, and analyzed wing motion from video footage. The average bumblebee could still successfully hover at about 26,000 simulated

feet, and two bees flew higher than 29,527 simulated feet—that's about 500 feet above the summit of Mount Everest.

So, why do bees have this ability? All flying animals cope with altitude in different ways, but they usually have an excess flight performance that allows them to do so. For bees and other insects, "that excess flight performance is really useful for things like escaping from predators," says Dillon. With birds patrolling the skies and spiders lurking on flowers, it's a dangerous world out there for a bee.

Bees also need to carry pollen and nectar back to the hive. "Bees may be an unusual case in that their need to lift heavy loads could confer a secondary advantage of giving them greater altitude range. They would not necessarily be able to do both at the same time—at least not to the same degree," says Richard Bomphrey, a biologist at the University of London's Royal Veterinary College in the UK. In essence, the bees' ability to trek up a mountain could be just a byproduct of traits evolved to enhance pollen-gathering.

Source: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/bumblebees-can-fly-higher-mt-everest-180949566/>

Treasurer's Report

Submitted by Janet Brisson

Treasurers Report		
August 1, 2020	Beginning Balance	\$4,437.61
	Deposits (memberships)	<u>100.00</u>
	Subtotal	4,537.61
	Debits	<u>-14.41</u>
	End Balance R/C 10/24/20	\$4,523.20
September 1, 2020	Beginning Balance	\$4,523.20
	No Deposits	
	Debits	<u>-28.40</u>
	End Balance R/C 10/24/20	\$4,494.80

The One Week (Virtual) Insect University Starts on Monday October 26th

A free pollinator-focused webinar on our essential pollinators and steps we can all take to conserve them.

The One Week (Virtual) Insect University is co-sponsored by the OSU Department of Entomology and Chadwick Arboretum and Learning Gardens, with support from NIFA IPM Pollinator Health grant and the Manitou Fund. [Registration is required for each session: register here](#)



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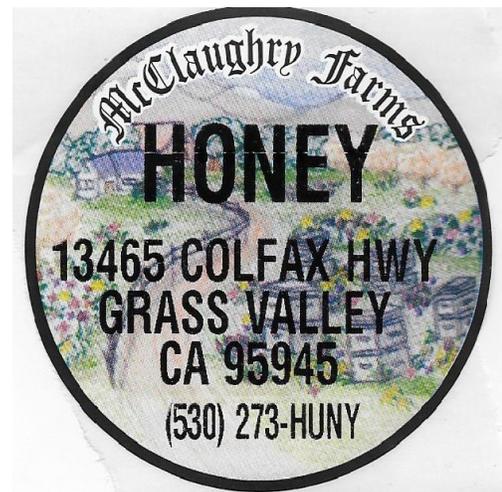
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Advertising rates are \$7 per year for NCBA members and \$16 per year for non-members.

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. Please email Janet Brisson at rubes@countryrubes.com

Nevada County Beekeepers Association
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November 2nd Meeting

MEETING ON ZOOM

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