

Local Buzz



July 2007

President's Message

Dear Fellow Beekeepers,

This message comes to you from Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. As I write this, I am looking out into where the Sea of Cortez meets the Pacific Ocean. This morning while on a walk, I observed honey bees working a flowering palm tree. They looked the same as our honey bees....they weren't even wearing little sombreros. It's been a great week, but reality kicks in tomorrow when I head home.

When I get home there is lots of work to be done. All the honey supers that were put on prior to me leaving will need to be removed and replaced in order to take advantage of the starthistle bloom that should be taking place very soon. Honey needs to be extracted, bottled, and sold. I hope it was a successful honey crop for everyone. It seems that local honey is in greater demand than ever before.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the next meeting on July 2nd where we will be having a BBQ. Happy beekeeping!

Your President, Shane Mathias

July 2nd BBQ Picnic

Our July meeting will be a social BBQ at Randy Oliver's house, 14744 Meadow Drive (a mile or so off of Hiway 174, just past Orzalli Road on the right.) beginning at 6 PM on our regular meeting night, Monday July 2nd. The grill will be provided, but bring something to BBQ for yourself, a side dish of any sort to share, and everything else you'll need such as drinks, lawn chairs, cups, plates, and utensils. Oh, and bring a sense of merriment also! There will be no business meeting or program.

Randy needs someone else to bring over a second gas grill, so if you can help out by throwing one into your vehicle, please give him a call at 277-4450.

If you have any questions, please call our president, Shane Mathias at 530-308-1376.

What's this Picture?



Hugh Cavallaro submitted the above picture, do you know what it is? It's a dead lizard in one of the Cavallaro's hive boxes, encased in propolis. Hugh believes that the bees stung an unwanted visitor to death, then encased it. Editor's not so sure that the lizard wasn't already dead. What do you think?

Bee Bits

By Randy Oliver

(These are excerpts from Randy's upcoming article in the American Bee Journal. Please read the full article when it comes out, as there is significant detail omitted here due to space issues)

Fat Bees

This spring I was showing a class of kids a beautiful comb of very young brood. Every cell was glistening with "brood food," I explained to the students the significance of that wondrous liquid, in that it was akin to the milk with which mammals nourish their young. Nearly all other animals on earth (with the exception of the nonsocial insects) either abandon their young to fare for themselves, or (in the case of birds) feed them the same food that the adults eat. Honeybees

have the wondrous ability to feed their larvae with milk-like secretions from their own bodies—royal jelly and “bee milk.” The point that every beekeeper needs to understand is that the real nutrition for the colony comes from pollen. Specifically, a mixture of various and appropriate plant pollens, gathered by foragers, and carried back to the hive in the specialized pollen baskets on their hind legs. Pollen is synonymous with “bee food”—it provides the protein, lipids (fats), vitamins, sterols, minerals, and micronutrients that bees need for growth and health. Honeybee colonies require pollen in a big way—to the tune of 30-100 lbs a year! The stimulus for pollen foraging is largely the production of brood pheromones by larvae—hence, beekeepers who see pollen loads coming in at the entrance generally assume that the colony is queenright with brood present.

Bees not only store pollen and honey, but they store food reserves in their bodies. This is done mainly in the forms of a compound called “vitellogenin.” Vitellogenin is used by other animals as an egg yolk protein precursor, but bees have made it much more important in their physiology and behavior, using it additionally as a food storage reservoir in their bodies, to synthesize royal jelly, as an immune system component, as a “fountain of youth” to prolong queen and forager lifespan, as well as functioning as a hormone that affects future foraging behavior!

Pollen foragers carry their pollen loads directly to the brood nest, and use their heads to pack it into cells adjacent to larvae. This pollen may be consumed directly by nurse bees, and generally is consumed quickly in the brood nest. Cells of pollen may be covered with honey in fall to be used the next spring as the colony expands its population prior to early pollen flows. This last point is a big one! Honeybees are tropical insects that need a warm environment and constant feeding (similar to humans). Similarly to humans, when they migrated from the tropics to more temperate climates, they “learned” to create dry homes that they can heat to comfortable temperatures during winter, and to store food in their larders for lean times (i.e., any time that plants aren’t flowering).

Incoming nectar is quickly distributed within the hive among all age groups of bees, and to the larvae. Pollen foraging is stimulated by brood pheromones, pollen stores, and amount of jelly in the shared food fed by nurse bees with the foragers.

The quality of the jelly is dependent upon the vitellogenin levels of those nurses. Amazingly, up to 25% of radioactively tagged amino acids fed to nurse bees were transferred to foragers overnight! Even just a few days of rain causes an almost total loss of pollen stores, forcing the nurse bees to dig into their vitellogenin reserves. When protein levels drop, nurse bees neglect young larvae, and preferentially feed those close to being capped. When protein levels drop lower, nurses cannibalize eggs and middle aged larvae. The protein in this cannibalized brood is recycled back into jelly. Nurses will also perform early capping of larvae—resulting in low body weight bees emerging later.

What’s happening is that the honeybee has figured out ways to keep most of the precious protein stores in the colony, and since vitellogenin levels are necessary for immune function, the colony delays the risky task of foraging to the oldest bees, who have depleted their vitellogenin levels.

The European honeybee, in adapting for the long winters of temperate climates, has figured out ways to store energy in the form of honey for the winter, and protein in the form of vitellogenin. This allowed the species to maintain a large social population year round, despite the vagaries of nectar and pollen flows. These well-nourished, long-lived bees have been called “fat” bees. Fat bees are chock-full of vitellogenin. Understanding the concept of fat bees is key to successful wintering, spring buildup, and honey production.

Powdered Sugar Treatment in July; Our Best Time

By Janet Brisson

We found one of the best times to treat your hives with powdered sugar is just as soon as you pull your berry honey around the end of June, beginning of July, right before the thistle flow. Using Randy’s Amplified Sticky method, check your sticky boards for the number of mites in the powdered sugar without doing a 24 hour count first.

If you see mites, treat again in 4 days and then again, right up to the thistle flow. Intensive multiple treatments will capture most of the mites emerging from the capped brood over a space of 2 weeks. July into August is when the mite population will really start to accelerate. By knocking them down in July, you can comfortably watch your bees put on thistle honey without watching your sticky boards for mite explosions. In years before powdered sugar, we would watch our mite population build up to such a point in August that we would remove our honey supers early, just to put on Apistan. For the past two years, that July treatment allowed us to wait until September to remove our honey supers.

Yes, you can use powdered sugar during a honey flow, and if you have a sudden mite explosion, intensive multiple treatments is the way to save your hives. Even though we’ve seen bees carry out bits of sugar during a flow, we sell to a health food store and strive to keep the sugar out of the honey.

Fair Entries Due July 21st

Entry forms are now being accepted for the 2007 Nevada County Fair. To enter, you may pick up a Competition Handbook at many fine local businesses, or swing by the Fair Office to say “Hi” and get your copy. You may also submit your entries online from the comfort of your own home. Entry forms are due Saturday July 21st so don’t wait! Occasionally people mix up when the entry forms are due (July 21!!!) and when they have to deliver their works of art to the fairgrounds (August 2). Receiving (when you must deliver your entry to the fairgrounds) is Thursday August 2 between 11 AM and 7 PM, but don’t miss the paperwork deadline July 21. For more information, see the fair website at: <http://www.nevadacountyfair.com/entries.html>

June Minutes

V-Pres Rob Slay opened with Q&A comments: This has been a good year for CA beekeepers. Colony collapse seems to be connected with winter nutrition. Blackberry nectar is plentiful now, but then there will be little forage until star thistle.

Economy Pest Control kindly refers swarms to us. If you pick up a swarm, wait until dusk to get all the bees. Leftovers will be hungry and angry next day. To protect residents, residual-spray the pickup spot. MOTION Carl: Publish overdue library books monthly in the Buzz until returned, or we decide to replace them. Passed, voice vote. FINANCE Janet: May Start \$1545.52; Inc 128.50; Exp 24.70; May End Bal \$1550.32.

Kathy Kellison, Sonoma County Beekeepers, explained the Partners for Sustainable Pollination and the Pollinator Conservation Act of 2007 Contact: <kellison@earthlink.net> PROGRAM Gary and Lois McClaghry explained judging of honey entries at the fair--Appearance=30%: lids clean inside and out, no pollen, bubbles, antennae or wax, moisture less than 18% (some test with an interferometer). Color=10%; Clarity=10% (honey in plastic jars appears lighter than in glass--enter your lightest color sample in each class) Overall Taste=50%, trumps the others, so choose your tastiest. Lois described how to prepare the Novelty Gift Box class and the Three Novel Shaped Container class, not judged on taste. Entries are due Thursday Aug 2, 11AM to 7PM.

Jack Meeks, sec

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Blueberry Honey Coffecake

2 cups blueberries, fresh or frozen
 1 Tablespoon all purpose flour
 ½ cup honey
 2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice

1 ½ cup all purpose flour
 2 teaspoons baking powder
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ½ cup honey
 2 eggs
 ¼ cup milk
 2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 1 teaspoon freshly grated lemon peel
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 6 Tablespoons butter, melted
 ½ teaspoon baking soda

Directions

Place blueberries in bottom of greased 9-inch round cake pan; distribute evenly. Sprinkle with flour; drizzle with honey and lemon juice. Set aside.

In a small bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt; set aside. In a medium bowl, combine honey, eggs, milk, lemon juice, lemon peel and vanilla; beat with fork until well mixed. Add flour mixture; mix well. Stir in melted butter; mix well. Pour batter over blueberries in pan; spread to cover evenly. Bake at 350°F for 30 to 35 minutes, or until toothpick inserted in center of cake comes out clean. Cool in pan on wire rack 10 minutes. Invert cake onto large plate; cool.

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.

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. The newsletter is published monthly as a service to the membership. Articles, recipes, commentary, and news items are welcomed and encouraged. Submission by email is encouraged. Please submit to Leslie Gault at lesliegault@yahoo.com. The deadline for the August 2007 edition is July 21st. A limited amount of advertising space (business card size 3" by 2") is accepted and need not be bee-related. Rates are \$1 per issue or \$7 per year for NCBA members and \$16 per year for non-members. All revenue from advertising goes to the Association treasury and helps offset the cost of producing and distributing this newsletter. To receive the *Local Buzz* via email: please email your request to lesliegault@yahoo.com

Nevada County Beekeepers Association

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Nevada County Beekeepers Association



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July 2007

July 2nd BBQ Picnic

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