

Local Buzz



November 2006

President's Message

Dear fellow beekeepers,

As hard as I tried to hold onto it, summer slipped through my fingers. While I feel that I didn't get nearly enough accomplished, ask my wife and she'll say we did. I just hope the weather holds out a little longer.

The bees seem to be doing fine and most have plenty of stores for the winter. We made some late nucs that will probably have to be fed for a couple of months, but the rest are fine. The forever-ongoing honey room project is nearing completion....believe it or not. I am contemplating renting the room out to members next spring. If anyone is interested I would appreciate some feedback.

The year is winding down fast. Those of you that are interested in almond pollination, start making plans. Randy could probably help you find a broker. Last year I took three hives...yes three whole hives, to pollination and made \$300! Hardly paid for my gas, but this year I'll be taking 50+. It's nice to be able to make a little money while partaking in a hobby that you enjoy.

Until we see you at the November 6th meeting,
Happy Beekeeping!

Your President, Shane Mathias

November 6th Program

Tom Harper, Master Mead Maker, will make a presentation on 'Turning Liquid Gold into Wine.' Learn the makings, the tricks and tips about this valuable topic.

Snack Sign Up

Thanks to Deborah Morawski, Amber Johnson, and Janet Brisson for offering to bring snacks to our November meeting!

November Elections

The NCBA will be holding elections for President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer at the November meeting, and we're looking for candidates. Contact Shane Mathias at 308-1376 if you're interested. We also need volunteers to send out the snail mail newsletter and perform various other jobs to help run the meetings.

Bee Bits

By Randy Oliver

It looks like we might be blessed with a nice Indian Summer! I could use it, since I'm trying to build late splits up overwintering strength. We've been feeding pollen substitute and syrup like mad! I just did a test on Mann Lake's sterilized feed pollen compared to Glorybee's--the bees clearly preferred Mann Lake's in an open air free choice trial.

I've been spending far too much time writing, at the expense of caring for my bees. I get going on what I think will be a small article, and next thing I know, I'm spending late hours doing research, and grinding out thousands of words.

Almond pollination is firming up--North Valley strong colonies are signing in the \$150 range.

Today I just sent off two more articles to publish in the December American Bee Journal--one on integrated pest management for varroa, the other on oxalic acid. Here is an excerpt:

Does It Harm The Bees?

Ellis and Aliano found that OA is about 70 times as toxic to mites as it is to adult bees—which is a much greater spread than with either thymol or formic acid. The bees normally do not react defensively to being dribbled with syrup, but on rare occasions run out the entrance for a while. Occasionally one will notice a little adult bee kill after oxalic treatment. Adult bee kill does not seem to be an issue. However, there are questions about subtle effects, larval kill, and lasting suppression of brood development.

As far as winter broodless dribbling, it is absolutely critical to treat them only once, with exactly the right amount and concentration of OA. More than one winter treatment clearly hurts the bees. Charriere and Imdorf (2002) found that colonies treated with 5-6 ml/seam of 3% OA were only 85% the strength of controls by April 25. The best review is in Anonymous (1999). Typically, winter bees treated with OA start out a little slower, but catch up by the end of March.

Spring/summer treatments

With summer dribbling, it is easy to overlook any effect of OA on brood rearing, especially if applied to late summer colonies that are not on a honeyflow, and were stressed by mites. Local anecdotal reports didn't notice any frank effect, but they weren't really

measuring. One study of late gives us pause. Hatjina and Haristos (2005) is the only study I've found that reports significant problems to brood development following OA dribble. The authors recommend against summer treatment. The study was performed in Greece, "during the summer, between honey flows." A question that is begging to be answered is: whether OA efficacy or brood mortality is affected by the amount of nectar flow during treatment.

Brødsgaard, et al. (1998) Treated colonies once in late March, and measured brood areas. "Neither the residues of oxalic acid in honey, the GST activity, nor the colony development after spring treatment with either trickling or spraying with oxalic acid seem to indicate any problems."

Heinz Kaemmerer of Heilyser Technology says:

"You can treat your colonies with a liquid mixture of OA and sugar but be careful. The liquid acid shortens the life of the bees. There is no problem during summer because the bee's life not longer than approximately 6 weeks. The problem starts with winter bees--do not treat your winter bees more than one time with liquid OA. When using liquid OA bees get wet and have to clean each other. The result is, the acid ends up in their stomach and during winter without a cleaning flight it shortens the life of the bees. Two treatments on winter bees might kill the colony. Liquid OA is a slow killer and bees will probably die after a few weeks or month instead reaching the next season."

Do not be in the "If a little's good, a lot would be better" mentality with oxalic. It can be rough if over applied to the winter cluster, and is rough on the brood in the summer colony. However, be aware that most other treatments also affect the brood (amitraz, formic, thymol), queens (coumaphos), or drones (fluvalinate).

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Taste Your Honey
Honey Shop and Tasting Bar

October Minutes

Q and A: Most people reported a good honey crop, except for one or two individuals. Honey quality varies by elevation. What is the best way to treat a hive with foul brood? Treat the bees, burn the old combs, install new foundation and continue to treat while the bees draw it out. Combining hives is recommended so it is drawn out quickly.

The club has purchased the new mechanical extractor, as voted on last month. It's a nice machine but needs some balancing, Shane will look into it. It will be \$30 to rent, with \$10 returned if returned very clean, Karla Hanson is in charge.

Nevada county beekeepers must register hives yearly with the County Ag Commissioner. Less than 10 is free. Registering allows the Ag Commissioner to keep statistics on how many beekeepers the County has, allows you to be notified if somebody will spray in your area, and helps protect your right to keep bees. No officer reports were given.

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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 December 2006 edition is November 19th. 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

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Nevada County Beekeepers Association



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First Class Mail

November 2006

November Meeting

Our November 6th meeting program will be by Tom Harper, Master Mead Maker, on making mead from your liquid gold, honey.