

Local Buzz



President's Message

Ron Slay, President

Hi fellow bee peeps, March already wow! Bee work is soon going to be very busy. I hope anyone wanting packages of bees, queens or queen cells has them on order because suppliers are booking up very fast. Remember things you do now determine how your "operation" will end up next spring.

Please join the discussion at our next meeting regarding Q&A sessions. We want to make sure everyone goes away from the meetings with answers. We would also like to start a new program that will provide monthly checklists so everyone knows what they need to do between meetings. Please join the discussion at our next meeting. Jeremiah will lead the group as I will be in Puerto Rico doing "bee research".

No Host Dinner

There will be a no host dinner at LinQ buffet at 5:30 PM Monday before the meeting.

All are invited. 682 Freeman Ln. Grass Valley

March 5th Meeting

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

Dr. Eric Mussen, California State and UC Davis Researcher and Extension Apiculturist, will bring us up to date on the 'State of the Hive'. Come hear the latest in the world of Beekeeping. Read more on Dr. Mussen's ongoing research at <http://entomology.ucdavis.edu/faculty/facpage.cfm?id=mussen>

Bee Bits

Randy Oliver, Contributor

I received a suggestion from a 2nd-year beekeeper after last month's meeting that my presentation was of interest to him, but what he was hoping to receive at the meeting was more guidance on what he "should" be doing with his hives. I put the word "should" in quotes, since I don't like to tell anyone what they "should" do (except for that guy who pulled out in front of me without warning last week!).

His comment pulled me back to the reality that many of our members are relative newbees at beekeeping. I, of course, am off in the stratosphere of micro investigating obscure aspects of bee and parasite biology. So thank you for bringing me back down to earth!

We of the NCBA Board of Directors plan each year's program out in advance. We could really use help from the membership in letting us know what you'd like to see or hear! And suggestions for programs that would interest you. This is your association it is up to you to make it work; the officers don't get paid enough to ask them to do it for you!

My feeling is that most of the membership does not drag themselves down to the Vet's Hall in order to listen to debate about club procedural matters, so I try to help steer those sort of discussions to committees. Please raise your hand when we ask for volunteers!

For example, at the upcoming meeting we need to discuss our club library policy, since we simply have too many expensive books not getting

returned. I do not wish to debate the issue all night, so if anyone has strong feelings, please join a committee to formulate options for the members to vote upon.

Also at this upcoming meeting, I will be taking payment for this year's beginners classes (\$55, \$30 for returnees), which includes the field sessions. I have issues every year with checks, so I offer a \$5 discount for payment in green cash (\$50, \$25). Please go to <http://scientificbeekeeping.com/announcements/> for class details and location (please do not email me any questions if they are already answered at that site). If you wish to reserve a place, you may email me randy@randyoliver.com. Put "class reservation" in the subject line, no need for a message. This will hold you a place until the meeting, at which I'll expect full payment to confirm you.

Back to the topic of basic beekeeping instruction: at our meetings we have a question and answer section for a half hour at the beginning of each meeting. This is specifically for the answering of beginners' questions and for discussion of such. Please do not be embarrassed to ask questions, as we've all been there, and are happy to either answer them intelligently or to throw out incoherent blather, depending upon the responder. But that's what makes our meetings so much fun! (That was a joke).

Seriously, if anyone wants to pick up the ball and prepare a brief to-do list for the upcoming month that can be presented at each meeting and included in the newsletter, that would be wonderful! I'm asking for a volunteer. I'd be happy to help them, but I feel that it would be of benefit to the beginners and hobbyists to have someone other than a commercial beekeeper (meaning me) lead the discussion.

Our speaker will be the ever popular Dr. Eric Mussen, who travels all the way up from Davis to give us his perspective on the state of beekeeping each year. Eric is a wealth of information, and is not to be missed!

Goodies Sign-up

Karla Hanson, Coordinator

Please let me know if you can bring a treat for any of the coming meetings. queenbeez@att.net

Raffle Prizes

We always need more contributions to the monthly raffle! Almost everyone loves having more plants. Be creative. For every item you bring, you receive a free raffle ticket. The raffle helps with the club's expenses. Thanks!

From the Librarian

Tynowyn Slattery, Librarian

A new DVD is available in the Library:
Alternative Beekeeping Using the Top Bar Hive
and The Bee Guardian Methods

Produced by Back Yard Hive
running time; 1 hour 25 minutes

After hearing about the top bar hive for a while and not quite understanding how it functions, I was looking forward to this DVD and I wasn't disappointed; the explanations are very clear and well presented. The whole production, script, photography and music is commendable. The images and the filming of the hive and brood hatching are all well worth watching. This shows what is only described in so many of the beginner books.

As for using the Top Bar Hive, it is probably best to study all the information available before going with it or the traditional Langstroth. The bees remain the same, but the containers certainly differ.

Three big pluses I see for the Top Bar:

1. A window on the side that allows a peek into hive activities
2. No lifting 2-3 supers just to get to the brood nest
3. A lot more affordable. Great for the beginner and anyone wanting to be part of the solution and learn about bees but isn't so interested in getting a cash crop. (Not that too many of us are paying the mortgage with our bees).

And a few of the negatives which were actually "dealbreakers" for us.

1. Lower honey production
2. The comb is destroyed to extract the honey
3. Combs are fragile and difficult to trade out or move

These aren't the only pros and cons of the Top Bar. You can search the Internet using "Top Bar Hive" and get a lot of additional information or check out this DVD out and see what you think.

I do have a couple caveats:

In more than a few instances, information was exaggerated, (disease enters the hive when the top is uncovered) or even not a good thing to do, such as, feeding the bees local honey instead of sugar water, which is a potential foulbrood pipeline, as I have heard from trustworthy sources.

Although it is understood that hive management techniques and the purposes for relating with these endlessly fascinating creatures differ greatly, one could question whether dividing the community into "Bee Keepers" or "Bee Guardians", is a good way to do it. By The Way...there are County Hive Registration forms in the library if you didn't get one in the mail.

Books checked from the library must be returned by the next meeting. If you can't make the next meeting you can mail the book back to me at:

Tynowyn Slattery
20493 Rome Road
Nevada City, CA 95959

Nature News Blog

According to an article on the Nature News Blog, a team of entomologists have determined that Asian hive bees have developed a synchronized 'don't-even-bother' signal for would-be predators. This, says the team, is the first example of an insect 'I See You' (ISY) display. These signals tell the predator not to bother attacking, saving the prey from having to defend against the attack and the predator from wasting its energy on a futile attempt.

<http://blogs.nature.com/news/2012/02/%E2%80%9998we-can-see-you%E2%80%9999-display-deters-bee-botherers.html>

This Month's Recipe

Leslie Gault, Contributor

Leslie's Honey Apricot Scones

1 cup regular white flour

1 cup whole wheat flour

2 tsp baking powder

Dash salt

4 Tbsp butter

2 Tbsp honey (yours of course)

1/3 cup milk (or soy or almond milk)

1/2 cup dried apricots, chopped (may substitute any other dried fruit or raisins)

Large crystal sugar (optional for dusting tops)

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Stir together flours, baking powder, and salt. Add chopped fruit and stir again. Gently warm butter, milk, and honey mixture in microwave until butter is melted and honey can be stirred into milk. Combine with flour/fruit mixture to make a soft dough, carefully adding small amounts of milk if needed. Turn out on very lightly floured board and knead gently to combine until it just sticks together. Do not over knead! Roll or pat out to 1/4 inch thickness, sprinkle with sugar (if desired) and cut into desired shapes. Bake on lightly oiled cookie sheet for 15-20 minutes until scones are fragrant and lightly toasted (cook time depends on thickness, moisture, your altitude, etc.). Excellent fresh out of the oven with a cup of coffee. Easy to double recipe, scones freeze and reheat well. If sweeter scones are desired, add more honey but reduce amount of milk correspondingly. Makes about 8 small scones.

Bee Symposium

A Day About Small Scale Beekeeping

Saturday, March 10th, 2011

9:AM to 5:PM

Sebastopol Veterans Building

282 South High Street

Sebastopol, California

Tickets \$35.00 in advance, \$40.00 at the door

Tickets and information at:

<http://www.beekind.com/annualbeesymposium.html>

Extracting a Bee Swarm from a Wood Duck Box

Diane Benton, Contributor

In January my partner, Jerry Van Heeringen and I were called by a “birder” friend to extract a bee swarm from one of the Wood Duck boxes that his club had put up around the ponds in Penn Valley.



The Wood Duck is about three-quarters of the length of an adult Mallard. It is a medium-sized perching duck, meaning that they will often perch high in trees. They usually nest in cavities in trees close to water and will take advantage of nesting boxes mounted in trees in wetland locations. If you look about 6 feet up a tree near a local pond you will often see manmade Wood Duck nest boxes. They are on almost all the ponds in Alta Sierra.



When we arrived we could see the nesting box about 6 feet up the tree and we could see bees entering and leaving the box. The combs of honey were also visible through the front entrance of the box. Because this was an “extraction” the first thing we did was smoke the entrance of the box. If

it had been a swarm in a tree we would not use a smoker. We then pried off the front of the box and the beauty of the comb was exposed. It’s always handy to bring some extra tools to an extraction. We eventually removed the whole box using a Philips screwdriver.



Jerry smoked the bees a second time. We extracted the first comb and tied it to a frame using dental floss. Using the bee brush I brushed bees that had fallen to the bottom of the box into a 5 gal. bucket with some comb and honey on the bottom. It’s always handy to bring along two brushes as one usually gets sticky with honey. I then dumped the bees into the hive box we brought with us. After removing 3 combs we were extra careful because we knew we would soon see the Queen in the middle of the hive.

After Jerry removed the last comb I continued to brush bees into the bucket and then pour them into the hive box. Now that all the honeycomb was removed we decided to remove the whole box from the tree. The bees then returned to the tree where the box had been hanging and as they clustered I brushed them into the bucket. It was now mid afternoon so we decided to go to our birder friends house in Penn Valley and have a beer while waiting for the rest of the bees to return. Our original plan was to come back after dark to pick up the rest of the bees but because the temperatures were dropping quickly and it was such a small hive, we went back after an hour and collected the rest of the bees and the hive box.

In a normal extraction we would spray the area the bees had swarmed to with a strong scent to discourage their return but in this case we weren’t sure whether it would discourage a Wood Duck

from nesting in the box so we left the box on the ground and our birder friend said he would contact his club and handle it the next day. One month later the Queen is still with us and we have a small but healthy new hive.

Beekeeping Class

Randy Oliver

Randy will be holding the Beginning Beekeeping Class in two different formats:

Evening Series Class:

Mon nights March 19, 26, Apr 2 (regular NCBA meeting), 9 and 16. Classes run from 6:30-8:30.

Single All-day Class:

Sat March 24, from 9am-4pm. Bring a lunch.

All classes (except Apr 2) are in the Tall Pines Cottage at the beautiful Nevada County Fairgrounds. The Cottage is a stone's throw uphill from Gate 5 (the gate closest to the Bee Booth).

Cost for either series is \$50 green cash (\$55 for checks, IOUs, promises, etc.) and includes a 50-page Beginning Beekeeping handout.

Enrollment also includes field sessions to be arranged as weather permits. The hands-on field sessions are the most important part of the class for success at beekeeping!

You may sign up and receive the handout in advance at the March NCBA meeting on Monday March 5, 7pm, at the Grass Valley Veteran's Hall on South Auburn St.

I suggest that you do not buy any bee equipment until you have taken the class!

Updates or announcements will be posted to <http://scientificbeekeeping.com/announcements/>

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February Minutes

Jack Meeks, Secretary

Pres Rob Slay opened with Q&A. John Miller presented his new book "Beekeepers Lament" and donated a copy to our library. Collapsing Colony Disease (CCD) seems to be disappearing naturally. Apiary registration with Jeff Pylman, NC Ag Commissioner adds to our political influence and protects our presence if zoning problems try to restrict beekeeping areas. There are County Hive Registration forms available in our library.

FINANCE from Janet Brisson:

Jan 1 Bal \$4501.69; Inc\$411; Exp \$334.30;

Jan End Balance \$4009.45.

PROGRAM

Randy Oliver "Early Spring Management". Wintering bees' core temperature is 95F in a tight cluster which expands and contracts as needed. The cluster moves to food and pollen stores, but in cold weather a small population of bees may starve because they can't break cluster to reach stored honey. If plenty of pollen is stored, brood raising may start in December, increasing hive population sufficiently that starvation can result in spring if rain becomes too frequent. If many bees are stuck headfirst in comb, you know they are starving, and sprinkling ample amounts of dry sugar in time may save the colony. Check hive weight by lifting one end. Nosema ceranae, Deformed Wing Virus and Varroa mites are still dangers. Look out for random bullet capped cells indicating a laying infertile worker. Feed sugar syrup and pollen supplement to stimulate spring growth and prevent starved out colonies until fruit nectar blooms.

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

Time To Pay Your 2012 Dues!

Janet Brisson, Treasurer

Help us reduce paper and mailing costs, get your newsletters electronically and your family membership fee is reduce from \$20 to \$15.

Annual dues are due now. This will be your last newsletter if you are not paid up . I will be collecting dues for the year 2012 at the next meeting. If you are a new member and want to sign up but can't make it to the meeting, you can sign up on line at NCBEES.net. Send in your check for \$15.00 to the address below. On your check, please indicate if you are a new member.

If you are paying in cash, please try to bring the exact change to the meeting. You can always mail your dues by sending your check made out to NCBA for \$20.00 (includes newsletter through mail) or \$15.00 (include newsletter through email) NCBA

c/o Janet Brisson
2093 Dog Bar Road
Grass Valley, CA 95949

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



Photo by Diane Benton

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. The deadline for submissions to the April issue is March 22nd. Submit to garyg@newpress.com

Advertising space (3" by 2") 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: Rob Slay..... 263-5618
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Committee Chairs

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Lynn Williams 675-2924
Librarian: Tynowyn Slattery..... 265-6318
Newsletter Mailing: Steve Reynolds..... 268-2133
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Nevada County Beekeepers Association



c/o Steve Reynolds
PO Box 548
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First Class Mail

March 5th Meeting

Dr. Eric Mussen, California State and UC Davis Researcher and Extension Apiculturist will bring us up to date on the 'State of the Hive.' Come hear the latest going on's in the world of Beekeeping.