



Local Buzz

President's Message

Ron Slay, President

Hi fellow bee peeps. Can you believe this great weather we're having? Still cranking out nucs and will be done next week. 2B honey made 350 splits off 95 colonies, so you can build up your inventory also. Remember have fun while working bees, that's why were in it; have fun and learn a few things and maybe make a buck.

May 7th Meeting - 7:00 PM

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

Randy Oliver will be presenting, "Colony Health." What to look for and what to do to keep your hives healthy.

No Host Dinner - 5:30 PM

There will be a no host dinner at Lin-Q buffet just before the meeting.

Everyone is invited. 682 Freeman Ln. Grass Valley, in the Raley's shopping Center

Bee Bits

Randy Oliver, Contributor

Spring has sprung! The rain and snow kept the bees in during much of the early Manzanita flow, but they made up for it in the last weeks of April! Things couldn't possibly be any better for bees than they've been - temperatures just right, plenty of moisture in the soil, and everything in bloom. By the time you read this, any colonies that had not been split have likely swarmed.

Keep an eye on your mite levels—the warm winter promoted early brood-rearing, so mites are starting at elevated levels.

My sons and I have been swamped with bee work—raising queens, shaking packages, making up nucs. We plan to double the size of our operation this season. There just aren't enough hours in the day!

In beekeeping, timing is everything. To get the most out of your bees, you need to be their servant, and provide them with space, queens, feed, etc. when they need it. A week later may be too late!

We got lucky the other day—at one of our yards where we had been on our knees going through nucs, an oak tree crashed down on those very nucs the next morning in dead calm weather! If it had happened the morning before, it would have hit us!

I've been caught up of late reviewing some recent scientific papers by various authors who have claimed to have found the cause of CCD. The press release for one paper came from Harvard School of Public Health, and this got worldwide attention. Unfortunately, the author knew little about bees and really overextended. You can see some of my critique on my home page at ScientificBeekeeping.com.

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!

Library

Anyone interested in setting NCBA library policy please email Randy randy@randyoliver.com

From the Librarian

Tynowyn Slattery, Librarian, Reviewing 2 new books

A new book has arrived.

Encaustic Art: The Complete Guide to Creating Fine Art with Wax

Dr. Lissa Rankin, published 2010, 240 pages

In the last 10 years, the art of encaustic painting has had a renaissance among contemporaneous artists: the technique itself has examples from 100-300 AD during the Roman occupation of Egypt depicting portraits painted with wax on boards to be placed on the mummies of the deceased. The portraits are so life like and preserved so well by the medium that they bring an astonishing sense of personality and presence to these archeological artifacts.

There are many books about encaustic painting out now, but not having space or money for more than one, it had to cover a lot of bases and after a goodly amount of time spent searching, this is the one that came close to meeting all the criteria.

The instructions are clear and technique thorough, with basic, easy to understand and follow content, even to making ones own wax colors, for new artists, but also demonstrates the uses of wax for sculpture, printmaking and collage used by many well known and accomplished artists, giving the more experienced artists the inspiration and means to expand their own work.

The hazards of toxins associated with artists pigments are compounded with those of being burnt with the hot wax and author Rankin, a medical doctor, gives a thorough discussion of safety issues.

Important in an art book, the paper quality and layout is very good and the many photos are outstanding. This is a beautiful addition to our library and would deserve a look by anyone, even by those not interested in creating anything in encaustic.

Tynowyn Slattery

20493 Rome Road, Nevada City, CA 95959 265-6318 ~ swoolman@saber.net

Swarms Wanted

Now buying swarms at \$10 per pound, delivered to my place. A large swarm can weigh over 10 pounds. Contact Randy Oliver, randy@randyoliver.com

2012 Swarm Collection Hotline

Lynn Williams, Contributor

Swarm season is upon us. If you are interested in being called upon to collect bee swarms this year then please email me at iamlynn@hughes.net or call me at 530-675-2924. I will prepare the 2012 list and then either Karla Hanson or I will try to get in touch with you to collect a swarm. Note that when we get a swarm call we need to be able to get in touch with you right away as it becomes too time consuming and not practical to leave a phone message and wait for a return call.

We need to make the assignment as soon as possible after a new swarm call is received. Even if you were on last year's swarm collection hotline list we need to hear from you this year to keep you on the list. When you reply give me your name, phone number, and what areas you wish to serve. Note that we get many calls to the Yuba City/Marysville area so let us know if you will go that far. Have a great bee season.

This Month's Recipe

Submitted by Leslie Gault

Honey Ginger Lemon Tea

4 cups water

2 Tablespoons crushed ginger

2 Tablespoons honey

2 Tablespoons lemon juice

Optional: if being used to soothe cold and flu symptoms you may add:

Pinch of cayenne

1 teaspoon crushed garlic

Boil ginger and honey (and cayenne and garlic if used) in water for about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Add lemon juice and serve.

Queen Cells

Janet Brisson, Contributor

The day before I left for Connecticut, I went through our hives and noticed really spotty brood in 3 of our hives. We have been re-queening in midsummer, to ensure strong queens coming into spring and to break the varroa brood cycle, but last season was so busy, we just didn't get it done. Doug Vincent, owner of Beekind in Sebastopol, did an excellent talk on mid-summer splits and re-queening at the last Symposium that you can see here on You Tube <http://youtu.be/xKxmPiPPsV8>.

I also had a very strong hive that needed splitting. I called Randy the day I got back to see if he had any queen cells. Yes, he did, but I had to get them that afternoon, they were going to hatch the next day. Yikes, didn't I need 24 hours? No, if I did my splits that morning, I would be ok by evening time.

I made my split, kept the one strong queen and dispatched the queens in two of the hives. The 3rd hive, couldn't find the queen, but did find a supercedure cell, a queen cell towards the top of the frame. I removed it and went back several times to see if I could find the queen. Did the hive already dismissed her? I looked in front of the hive and on the screened board, but didn't see her.

Right before I left home, I called Randy to see if I needed to bring anything to pick up queen cells. No, didn't need to bring anything, he would tape the queen cells to my skin. Wait, I'm sure I didn't hear that right, the thought of having queen cells that were ready to hatch taped to my skin was a little too much for me. There had to be another way. Randy's a very busy guy, and when I asked about getting those queen cells home another way, he raised his eyebrows and said, he does this all the time, and what was I worried about. I guess I was worried about the queens hatching on my skin before I got home. Would I feel better if he put the cells in a zip lock bag and I could put that next to my skin. The body heat was important to ensure the cells made the trip back in good health. Yes, I could do that.

Once I got home, I heated a towel with a hair dryer and put that in a pan with a lid and drop the cells in there and headed off to the hives to install the cells. I'll know in a week if they made it.

Sugar Dusting and Mite Thresholds

Janet Brisson, Contributor

I've been getting phone calls and emails about what our area's mite threshold is. I wrote the below in response to a members letter.

Did you do a natural 24 hour count? You put in an oiled board 4 days after a sugar dusting, since the bees continue to groom themselves for about.

3 days and you would get an elevated drop if done sooner. So, put in an oiled board, don't smoke your bees. Wait 3 days, pull your boards and count your mites, then divide by 3 for your mite count.

If that's how you did it and you have 28 mites, that would be 9 mites in 24 hours. I would use 10 mites in the spring as my threshold and 50 mites in the fall.

I actually haven't done a 24 hour count in years, Randy Oliver's' Accelerated Sticky (which is dusting your hive with powdered sugar) works so well with the idea that you knock down a lot of mites while you get an idea of your mite load. I always split my supers. I dust the top one first with a heaping cup of powdered sugar, remove it and then dust the bottom hive with a cup of PS. You clean the sugar off the top bars that way. If I see 10 to 40 mites on the top of the sugar after 30 minutes, I will dust again once a week for 3 weeks. If I see over 50, I would dust twice a week for 3 weeks.

My schedule is dusting for a 3 week period in March/April, once the queen is laying.

3 weeks after blackberry flow (end of June, beginning of July) with the same format as above. This will knock down the mites so you can harvest your thistle honey, in September without having to worry about that 8/15 date. The August 15th date is if you haven't done anything for your mites, this is the date you must do something to rid your mites so you have winter bees. And if you do use a miticides, you need to pull your honey at that time.

Then we dust again 3 times after we pull our thistle honey in September.

At this time, the queen as slowed down laying, there is no drone brood and it's important to get as many mites out of the hive as possible. If I am dusting in September and not seeing any mites like last year, I only dusted once and then again a month later. If I am still not seeing mites, I would dust every other month until spring and then do a 3 week dusting in the spring. It's important to dust a couple of times during the winter when the bees are flying on a warm day. This helps clean out the phoretic mites that are clinging to the backs of the bees.

April Minutes

Jack Meeks, Secretary

Pres Rob Slay opened @ 7PM. Jim Hill moderated Q&A. First honey flow and swarms expected May 15.

Nucleus boxes need two frames brood and one frame honey.

MOTION Oliver: Purchase public address system with wireless mic to allow all to be heard during meetings. Approved, voice vote.

FINANCE Brisson: Jan End \$4009.45; Inc \$857; Exp 396.12; FebEnd\$4470.33. March Beg \$4470.33; Inc \$573.17; Exp \$100; Marched \$4943.50.

PROGRAM Video "The Quest For Local Honey" premiered Jan at So Yuba River Wild & Scenic Film Festival. Karin Meadows and Jen Rhi Winders production.

Worldwide and local beekeeping practices and ceremonies, commercial and individual, with interviews, related problems with diseases affecting bees. Dr. Eric Mussen, Randy Oliver, Thom Staser, Gary McClaughry and Briar Patch were featured. The explosion of non-native almond culture in California caused bees from all over to circulate widely. Cereal monocultures like corn and wheat which provide no nectar exclude beekeeping from large areas of farmland, while city beekeeping in yards and roofs produce local supplies.

Beekeeping and the Boy Scouts America

Diane Benton, Contributor

Did you know that the average age of a beekeeper today is 60 years old? It's not something I had really thought about until someone asked at the fair's beekeeping booth last summer "what is happening to all the bees?" As I was about to form an answer about mites, viruses and the sad state of our environment, one of our club's members, Jeremiah Farrell, piped in and stated that the decline in bee populations was due to the Boy Scout merit badge being discontinued! What???



The Boy Scouts of America beekeeping merit badge was offered from 1915 until 1995. When the badge was discontinued 17 years ago, the number of young people exposed to beekeeping dropped dramatically. The theory is that because there are fewer and fewer backyard beekeepers, there are not enough healthy colonies available to maintain diversity when disease and colony collapse strike the big commercial beekeepers. There is actually a movement afoot to reinstate the beekeeping merit badge so we can interest and train the younger generations in the art of maintaining and nurturing bee colonies.

What can our club members do to introduce the younger generation to beekeeping? We can suit up our



grandchildren, neighborhood children and our friend's kids with veils and gloves and let them spend some time in our bee yards. Show them the queen and let them taste honey straight from the hive. We can volunteer to staff the fair's beekeeping booth in the summer. It's so much fun to point out the queen in our display. Kids love it. In fact they often return with their friends and point the queen out themselves!



Beekeepers also follow the Boy Scout motto "Bee" Prepared.

My nephews Matthew and Jack from Reno and Truckee visit Randy's bee yard. They each went home with a jar of honey.

Two of our club's younger members, Walker and Emily, shown here with dad Mark. Mom Christa stays home to bake cupcakes for the club. Walker and Emily live in downtown Lincoln. They each have one hive kept on property down the street from their house. Dad Mark keeps the family's three other hives on land located between Cool and Georgetown.

Country Rubes Combo Screened Bottom Boards

Special NCBA Club Price! Call Janet for details. 530-913-2724 or rubes@countryrubes.com

Club Membership

Janet Brisson, Treasurer

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.

You can always mail your dues.
\$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

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

Email Janet at rubes@countryrubes.com

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

Chronicle hives, SF State set trap for phorid fly

Reprinted from the S.F. Chronicle

Submitted by Lynn Williams. Story by Meredith May, Chronicle staff writer

The latest honeybee killer: the zombie fly parasite.

First discovered on the San Francisco campus last fall by biology Professor John Hafernik, the phorid fly lays its eggs in the abdomens of bees. When the larvae hatch, they devour the bee from within, causing a neurological meltdown. The host bee exhibits unnatural behaviors, like flying at night and toward lights. After the bee dies, the larvae hatch out of its neck.

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So far the flies have been found in 77 percent of the hives his team has sampled in the Bay Area, and in bees he's dissected from the Central Valley and South Dakota.

He confirmed that an amateur entomologist had found fly-infected bees in her Santa Barbara yard near some black lights.

Hafernik came to The Chronicle's rooftop garden recently and judged it an ideal research site because the bees are isolated and protected from most creatures and people. There's also an electrical outlet, so he can plug in a light trap and see if any of our bees are drawn, zombie-like, to the light. He'll install a funnel trap, so he can collect the bees that come to the light, and take them back to his lab to wait for maggots to emerge.



Deb Wandell / The Chronicle
Tiny brown shells (top, right) near the bees were left after phorid flies emerged from pupae stage.

He brought some vials and envelopes of the phorid fly to show the staff. This "monster killer" is smaller than an ordinary fruit fly and almost transparent. A sneeze could knock it over. But up to 15 can hatch out of just one bee. It's a native fly, first described in Maine in 1924, but it has been found in Alaska and southern New Mexico. It's been known to parasitize bumblebees and paper wasps, but not honeybees.

Hafernik and his graduate research assistant Christopher Quock, whose photos of phorid flies attacking and hatching out of bees went viral, will make monthly visits to The Chronicle rooftop to gather bees until the end of the year.

If any flies crawl out of Chronicle bees, they'll use those flies to infect some S.F. State bees wearing pinhead-size transmitters super-glued to their backs.

Using two lasers beamed across the entrance to the S.F. State hive, they'll be able to log the entry and exit times of the parasitized bees so they can find out if they also abandon the colony during the day.

This could help determine whether the fly is controlling the bee, or if the bee knows something is wrong and is willingly

leaving the hive to sacrifice itself for the good of the colony.

Eventually, Hafernik wants to do DNA probes of the parasitized bees to see if the phorid fly is throwing the bee's gene regulation out of whack, causing it to stumble in ever-tightening circles, fly at night and headfirst into light.

Lending our bees to science feels both noble and frightening. We might not want to know that these fragile creatures we are trying to care for are being eaten alive from inside. But Hafernik and Quock cut to the chase - we most likely do have the fly.

"It's the same as the varroa mite," Hafernik said. "Most hives have it, it's just a question of whether or not the colony is strong enough to live with it."

And whether the beekeeper's heart can take it. [Full story...](#)

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 May issue is May 24th. 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

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President: Rob Slay..... 263-5618
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Lynn Williams 675-2924
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Newsletter Mailing: Steve Reynolds..... 268-2133
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Nevada County Beekeepers Association



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