

# THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

Volume 1, Issue 3

November 2009

## What You Missed

The November 5th meeting saw another packed house at the Draper Farms' barn. A discussion panel consisting of experienced beekeepers Mea McNeil, Dan Stralka, and David Peterson presented a plethora of beekeeping information. Over a two hour period they covered the topics of obtaining bees, beekeeping equipment, hive location, how to move a hive, honey production and harvesting, diseases and pests, available treatments for bee diseases and parasites, when and how to feed bees, and other products that can be harvested from the hive.

The panel members remained after the presentation to answer additional questions. Thanks to Mea, Dan and David for sharing their expertise with the group.

## New Meeting Location

Our club is expanding and, sadly, has outgrown the barn at Draper Farms. Our new meeting location is the American Legion Log Cabin, 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo, CA.

It is located just down the street from Draper Farms. Turn on to San Francisco, just like you would if going to the farm. After turning on San Francisco, take the second right onto Veterans Place. There is plenty of parking adjacent to the Log Cabin.

## What's the Buzz

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, December 3, 2009 at the American Legion Log Cabin, 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo, CA, starting at 7:30pm.

### **PLEASE NOTE THE NEW MEETING PLACE.**

Join us for an interesting talk by Kate Frey on Creating a Bee Garden. Kate is an internationally distinguished garden designer, who has been awarded two gold medals at London's Chelsea Flower Show. She worked for 18 years at Fetzer's organic gardens in Hopland, CA which was used as a test plot for pollinators by Dr. Gordon Frankie at U.C. Berkeley. She currently specializes in creating beautiful habitat and pollinator gardens. Web sites are [www.rustictowers.com](http://www.rustictowers.com), and [www.themelissagarden.com](http://www.themelissagarden.com)

Upcoming Meetings:

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## ASK ERIC

Dr. Eric Mussen is the UC Cooperative Extension Apiculturist.

If you have a question, email it to [nuc@marincountybeekeepers.org](mailto:nuc@marincountybeekeepers.org). We'll select one for Eric to answer every month.

**Q.** My hive has serious mites and might be collapsing... but bees are still coming and going and trying to get rid of them. Now I see strange "behavior"...most/many of the bees leaving the hive stop to groom themselves before flying away. Could they be robbers cleaning their lips after a nice honey meal??

**A.** If the colony is collapsing, the bees are going to fly off and try to find another colony into which to enter. They are carrying a bunch of mites on their bodies, and they try to scrape them off. The "cleaning" activity also could be the result of many other things, but something is stimulating the bees to try to brush off an irritant. It could be anything from the size of a mite to the size of a few microbes.

## Equipment Order

Bonnie Bollingier is organizing a club equipment order from Mann Lake. Equipment cost will be the same as shown in the catalog. However, since we will be picking the equipment up from Mann Lake's store directly, you will save on the shipping cost. Information was sent out through The MarinBuzz earlier in November.

If you have any questions email Bonnie at: **[orders@marincountybeekeepers.org](mailto:orders@marincountybeekeepers.org)** or, talk to her at the meeting.

JANUARY 7<sup>th</sup>

Speaker to be announced.

FEBRUARY 4<sup>th</sup>

February will feature Dr. Marla Spivak. Marla Spivak is Professor and Extension Specialist in Apiculture, University of MN. Dr Spivak, along with Gary Reuter developed the line of Minnesota Hygienic bees in an effort to reduce or eliminate the need for chemical treatment of bees for parasites as well as many common bee diseases.

## Dues are Due

A reminder that annual dues for 2010 are now due. Dues are still just \$20 per year. You can pay in person to David Peterson at the monthly meeting or mail you check made payable to Marin Beekeepers to:

Marin Beekeepers  
c/o Mary Nordquist  
2072 Hatch Road  
Novato, CA 94947

New members and members with new contact info please make sure to include your address, phone number and e-mail.

Membership includes free admission to all meetings, access to the Club's honey extracting equipment, and subscription to the Club's "MarinBuzz" listserv which serves as an online discussion forum and a way to notify Club member of local bee swarm information.

## T'is the Season for Hive Losses and Healing Ointments

Many seem to be losing hives now. If you are one of these people, take heart that you are not alone. According to the 2009 Marin County Bee Census, 49% of last year's hive losses occurred between October and December. From January – March, 29% of losses occurred.

While it can be a sad day when you have to dismantle a failed hive, you can do something productive with all that propolis no longer needed for winterizing the hive. Online and in books you can find a variety of recipes that use propolis – from furniture varnishes to tinctures. Here's one for a healing ointment that can be applied to minor cuts, bruises and abrasions that was found in 'Super Formulas' by Elaine C. White:

### PROPOLIS HEALING OINTMENT

1 tablespoon beeswax

4 tablespoons mineral oil

1 tablespoon propolis granules (see recipe for these below)

1 tablespoon honey

Melt the ingredients in a microwave or make a small double boiler by placing a can in boiling water. Stir until it cools.

### PROPOLIS GRANULES

STEP 1: Obtain hive scrapings containing mostly propolis. Place the scrapings in a heat-proof container that can later be discarded. Add enough water to cover the scrapings and heat this in a 200 degree F. oven. The wax will melt and float on the water, while the propolis will stick to the bottom of the container. Stir often to help release the wax. Maintain the heat for at least 2 hours. Remove the can from the oven and let it cool.

STEP 2: Remove the waxy layer that formed on the surface of the water. Pour off the water and save the colored mass beneath it.

STEP 3: Place the container in the freezer. When the propolis is brittle, chip the granules from the container. Spread the propolis granules on a paper towel to dry. Store them in a sealed container.

Want more recipes? 'Super Formulas' contains instructions on how to make more than 360 useful products containing honey, beeswax and propolis and is available at Beekind in Sebastopol.