

# THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

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October 2012

## What You Missed

Our last meeting featured a talk by Alan Hawkins. Alan has been keeping bees in a variety of bay area micro-climates for many years. Currently Alan is keeping bees in five locations. Here are some of the highlights from Alan's presentation:

### COASTAL: GREEN GULCH

- 5 Acre farm (Southern Marin, near Muir Beach)
- Nectar flow in the area Feb – June (backbone of which is Eucalyptus)
- Area is generally cool, wet & windy
- Needs a hardy bee, e.g. Russians & Carniolans (which have a slow build up)
- Any new colonies that are added to the apiary must be introduced in February in order to take advantage of the early nectar flow.
- Colony deaths are usually due to queen loss or Varroa mites.
- Colonies can have problems with mice, wasps (August), voles (when weather changes in the fall)
- Alan keeps 40 lbs of honey on hives at all times. He takes a little in June to demonstrate how to extract, but the rest is left on. The area does not provide for excess honey for beekeepers.
- October is the last chance for natural forage

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## What's the Buzz

Our next meeting will be on Thursday October 4, 2012 at the American Legion Log Cabin, 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo, CA. starting at 7:30 pm.

Our guest speaker will be [Kate Frey](#). Kate is a world class garden designer and consultant, specializing in sustainable, bio-diverse, ecological gardens and landscaping, including the [Melissa Garden](#) bee sanctuary in Healdsburg. Kate will present her "pollinator garden slideshow."

### Upcoming Meetings:

#### November 1, 2012

[Bonnie Bollengier & Gary Morse](#). Our own club members and owners of "Bonnie Bee & Company" will discuss the first club order of nucs with Marin queens & future plans to develop local stock.

#### December 6, 2012

John Miller & Hannah Nordhaus. Touted as "a revelatory, bittersweet investigation into the state of commercial beekeeping in the 21st century," this duo will talk about "[The Beekeepers Lament](#)," written by Ms. Nordhaus about John Miller (commercial beekeeper). Mr. Miller is widely known for his charisma as a speaker — this is one not to be missed!

#### January 3, 2013

[Steve Sheppard](#). Dr. Sheppard is Department Chair of Entomology at Washington State University. His area of interest is population genetics & evolution of honey bees, insect introductions & mechanisms of genetic differentiation.

#### February 7, 2013

[Kirk Visscher](#). Dr. Visscher is an associate professor of entomology at UC Riverside. His research interests include the social behavior and ecology of social insects with emphasis on honey bees, which

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occupy a special place among the social insects because they are among the most behaviorally complex, the most amenable for study, and of the greatest benefit to man.

**March 7, 2013**

[Kirk Webster](#). Kirk Webster is a master natural Queen Breeder living near Middlebury, VT. His queens are selected for VSH (Varroa Selective Hygiene). Colonies that display this characteristic detect infested larvae and then uncap & remove them.

**April 4, 2013**

[Heather Mattila](#). Heather Mattila is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Wellesley College. Professor Mattila's research focuses on the role that intracolony (within-colony) genetic diversity plays in the organization of communication and division of labor in honey bee colonies.

**May 2, 2013 & June 6, 2013**

TBD

Dave also stores and schedules the Club's extraction equipment at his place. The equipment is available for use by all Club Members and can be reserved by contacting him at [dpeterson307@aol.com](mailto:dpeterson307@aol.com). The Club has a 12 frame and a 6 frame, stainless steel, variable speed, electric powered centrifugal extractor. Both measure about 2ft. x 2ft. x 4ft. and generally require a station wagon, SUV, van or truck to transport. Club Members can check one out for use a few days at a time. There is also an electric uncapping knife, a scratcher, sieve set and uncapping bin available to go with the extractor. The equipment should be picked up, used, cleaned and returned within a few days to a maximum of one week.

## Fall Hive Tips

- \* Monitor your mite count. This can be done by checking 24 hour mite count on sticky board / monitoring board, or with a sugar roll. Even if you don't plan on treating your bees, this can be very educational for you - and other beekeepers who may want to compare notes - as to timing and mite loads that bees can / cannot tolerate.
- \* 2012 seems to be a boom year for yellow jackets. If you haven't reduced your hive entrances, you may want to consider doing so. Why make your bees work harder than they have to to defend their home and winter stores from robbers?
- \* Harvesting your honey: On average, bees in our area need about 30 lbs of honey going into winter. Leave too little on and your bees could face starvation unless you intervene and feed. Leave too much on and your bees could work harder than necessary to heat their home this winter.

## Extraction Party



The Club Extraction Party at Dave's Honey House (garage) was a big success again this year. Over the weekend of September 23 & 23, twenty-six Members -- three more than last year -- extracted about 600 pounds of honey. About half were NewBees for their first extractions and others longer term members who took advantage the opportunity extract without having to set up and clean up.



Dr Tom Seeley explains bee lining

for the bees with Coyote Bush.

#### SAN FRANCISCO: ZEN CENTER

- Five story building with black roof (warm for bees) in Hayes Valley
- Uses Carniolan stock.
- Warm area (especially with black roof) and an abundant food supply for the bees. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, Alan harvested 150 lbs of excess honey from 3 hives.
- Enemies of the bees in this area are Varroa mites.

#### TRACY: HOME BACKYARD & SHEEP RANCH

- Nectar is available year round so Alan can harvest twice in a year.
- During the year, temperatures range from low 20's to 115 F.
- Enemies of the bees are Varroa mites and teenagers (vandalism).

#### BRENTWOOD: Frog Hollow Farm & Knoll Farm

- Shadier area. More green on the ground in summer.

#### General lessons in beekeeping:

- There is no routine and you cannot go on autopilot. (Alan usually splits and treats for mites in August, but otherwise nothing is regularly scheduled.)
- High causes of bee death:
  - Queenless
  - Varroa mites
  - Beekeeper stupidity

## Pollen Project Update

The first four months of pollen samples (March - June) are currently being analyzed at the lab in Gastonia. Results will be released as soon as available.

October will be the last month of sampling for the 27 locations that have sampled since the beginning of the study. For the Marin Beekeepers, this will wrap up 18 months of organization, fundraising and sampling.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved!