THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

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What You Missed

Our last meeting featured a talk by 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's talk was titled "Landscape for Pollinators". Kate proposed that beekeeping is also about creating habitat. She said that, because of concerns about colony collapse disorder and other factors affecting pollinators, there is currently a lot of interest in pollinator gardens from farmers and the general public. She pointed out that 35% of our crops rely on pollinators and that 85% of our foods contain ingredients that rely on pollinators. In general, 75% of plants rely on pollinators. Plant reproduction is critically important for ecosystems and for the animals that feed on plants.

Kate pointed out the most fruits and berries, many different vegetables, and seed crops such as alfalfa, onions and flowers all need pollinators. These are a major source of revenue for agriculture.

Many native pollinators are also in decline. Of the four common species of bumble bees their numbers have declined by 90% and their range has declined by 87% over the last two years. This is attributable to the

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What's the Buzz

Our next meeting will be on Thursday November 1, 2012 at the American Legion Log Cabin, 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo, CA. starting at 7:30 pm.

Our guest speaker will be 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.

Harvesting Queen Cells for Installation into Nucs

Upcoming Meetings:

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

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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 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 intracolonial (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

December Meeting

Join us on Thursday December 6 for an entertaining evening in conversation with author, Hannah Nordhaus and commercial beekeeper, John Miller. Hannah's "Beekeeper's Lament," a national bestseller, follows the life and times of migratory beekeeper John Miller during the height of CCD. This book brought the bee crisis to the mainstream, enlightening the general public to the plight of the bees and portraying the unique life of this gregarious beekeeper. Mea McNeil will engage Mr. Miller and Ms. Nordhaus in a Q&A that is sure to be a great time. Bring a copy of the book to be autographed. Whyte's Book Smith in San Anselmo and Book Passage in Corte Madera offer a 10% discount for club purchases. Please send any questions to anna@marinbees.com.

Website News

We've got a new look! Go to http://marinbeekeepers.org to check-out the new club website. At our November meeting, Anna Gravley, web master for the club site, will do a quick preview of the site, with its new options, including a review of information sharing via the Club forum, classified ads for selling, buying and trading equipment and events calendar. Suggestions and/or questions are welcome and should be sent to Anna at anna@marinbees.com

The Librarian's Desk

The Club library has books available for loan to members. Drop by the table at the back of the room and see our selection of beekeeping manuals and fiction offerings. If you've borrowed an item, please remember to bring it back for circulation to the rest of the club. We're happy to receive donations of books or other materials, including past issues of beekeeping magazines.

Fall Hive Tips

* Many are reporting decreasing activity of yellow jackets, but they are still out and active. If you see them entering your hive(s), give the bees a hand in defending the colony by reducing entrance size.

* Temps are starting to drop and your beekeeping season is winding down. Time to finish your winter prep (though the bees have been getting ready for months): Remove unused space and unneeded honey so the bees will not have to work as hard to keep warm. In our area, bees need about 30 lbs of honey per colony going into the winter.

* Cold doesn't kill bees - moisture does. Make sure your hive tilts forward slightly so rain doesn't condense inside on your bottom board. If you see moisture inside on your top, you should consider giving them a little more ventilation by adding a shim, stick, or thin piece of wood between the top and inner cover.

* Store your honey supers and built out combs in a manner that will not encourage wax moths, i.e. where light and airflow are abundant or in a freezer (or after freezing). If you stack outside, put spacers in between hive bodies to allow for airflow.

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lack of pollen and nectar in our gardens (many of the plants commonly used in gardens are not rich in pollen or nectar). Pesticide use in urban and agricultural areas and introduced pests and diseases also contribute to the decline.

There are many different types of pollinators. They are often active at different times of the season, coinciding with the blooming of certain plants. Honeybees, native bees, certain flies, beetles, wasps, butterflies, ladybugs, and certain birds, all play a pollinator role.

There are over 1600 species of native bees found in California and approximately 4000 species of native bees found throughout the U.S. Most are solitary and ground dwellers. They are not likely to sting. They are very effective pollinators. They fly earlier in the day than honeybees and also when it is cold and wet. Bumblebees practice buzz pollination (buzzing there wings while griping the flower to release the pollen), which is particularly effective for tomatoes and blueberries.

Butterflies only feed on certain plant families that they have co-evolved with, so most butterflies are natives. Certain moths also act as pollinators and have plant requirements similar to butterflies.

How do we attract pollinators to our garden? In temperate regions, such as the Bay Area, it is possible to provide forage throughout the year. Elements to a pollinator garden are:

- Shrubs on the windward side to provide protection for vulnerable plants.
- Mulch to reduce weeds and retain moisture.
- Bare areas without mulch since many pollinators are ground dwellers.
- Healthy soil for healthy plants (liberal use of compost).
- Locally adapted plants.
- Don't be too neat.
- Create micro-climates.
- Provide a source of water for pollinators.
- Don't use pesticides.

Pollinator gardens can take on many forms and there are a variety of different types of plants in various colors to choose from. There should be a variety of plants that bloom at different times of the year in order to provide more constant floral resources to the pollinators.

Honeybees, in particular, look for patches of plants to make it worth their while to visit. The rule of thumb is a three foot square of the same plant. You can also plant swaths of the same type of bee friendly plants to attract honeybees.

Some California native plants are now found throughout the world. Among these are Phacelia, which is recognized worldwide as bee fodder.

Some resources for plants that attract pollinators are:

Annie's Annuals & Perennials
www.anniesannuals.com

California Flora Nursery
www.calfloranursery.com
There is also a list of native plants for bees compiled by Dr. Gordon Frankie of the University of California. The list can be accessed on line at nature.berkeley.edu/urbanbeegardens.

Pollen Project Update

Sampling for the pollen project is now finished. All that remains for the beekeepers who have participated is to collect the last four month's of samples and send them to Penn State.
For nearly 18 months, we have been working on organizing, fundraising and, of course, collecting samples. Now we can wait to find out the results. Thank you to everyone involved for your work and participation!

Special thanks to Bonnie Bollingier for coordinating the effort, collecting and shipping the samples, and sending out reminders and updates to keep the project on track.