

THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

Volume 6, Issue 8

September 2014

What You Missed

Our last meeting was the annual potluck dinner. Over 50 Beeks and friends descended on the Nordquist's home in Novato to share food and drink, stories about bee adventures and a myriad of different topics. It's a great way to get to know your fellow club members on a more personal level.

A big thank you to Neil and Mary Nordquist for opening up their home to the club for this great event.

Here are some photographs of the day (thanks to Ron Tonini)



See What You Missed on Page 2

What's the Buzz

Our next meeting will be on Thursday September 4, 2014 at the American Legion Log Cabin, 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo, CA. starting at 7:30 pm. The meeting will feature a talk by Michael Burgett, PhD, Professor Emeritus, Extension Beekeeping, Department of Entomology, Oregon State University

Upcoming Meetings:

October 2, 2014

Jennifer A. Berry, Research Coordinator and Lab Manager for the University of Georgia Honey Bee Program.

November 6, 2014

Marin County Beekeeper: Gadgets and Gizmos (back by popular demand! Email Bonnie: bonnie@bonniebmorse10@gmail.com if you have something to share).

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December 4, 2014

Robbin Thorpe, Professor Emeritus of Entomology, Harry H Laidlaw Jr. Honey Bee Research Facility, University of California, Davis.

January 8, 2015

Tom Seely, Professor and Chairman in the Department of Neurobiology and Behavior at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

February 5, 2015

Jay Evans, researcher at the USDA lab in Beltsville, Maryland. His work has spanned a wide range of topics including genome characterization of varroa mites and managing diseases and pests of honey bees.

March 5, 2015

Christina Grozinger, Professor of Entomology and Director, Center for Pollinator Research Penn State University.

April 2, 2015

Elina Nino, Extension Apiculturist, University of California, Davis.

May 7, 2015

Dr. Marla Spivak, Distinguished Knight University Professor at the University of Minnesota.

June 4, 2015

Mark Winston, Academic Director and Fellow of the Centre for Dialogue, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC. Mark is recognized as one of the world's leading experts on bees and pollination.

July

No meeting (Marin County Fair)

Beekeeping Classes

Biodynamic Beekeeping Workshop

September 7, 2014

“Bees: The Lifeline of the Biosphere”

with Michael Thiele www.gaiabees.com

Topics will include: biology, the life forces and natural gestalt of bees, alternative beehive designs, an overview and study of the life-rhythms and cycles throughout the bee year, biodynamic approaches and bee-centered management, along with strategies for health; bees and their (agro)-cultural quality and their pivotal role for life on earth; introduction into apisophia. More info at: <http://www.sfzc.org/ggf/display.asp?catid=3,76.125&pageid=3569>

Bonnie Bee & Co. Fall and Winter Classes

Class room sessions at the San Rafael Community Center, 618 B St., San Rafael, 6:30pm - 8:30pm
Additional information and registration in the 'Youth and Adult' classes through [San Rafael Community Center](#)

Beginning Beekeeping class series (9 hours, \$99, course code 22399)

Classroom sessions will include basic bee information, seasonal cycles of a colony, equipment options, where to place your hive, how to get bees and tips on working with your equipment. When the weather warms up, there will be a field session so you can observe and practice working with your tools and bees.

Class room sessions: Wed., Jan. 21st – Wed. Feb 4th
(3 classes)

Field Day: Sat., Mar. 14th, 9:30am – 12:30pm

Intermediate Beekeeping class series (9 hours, \$99, course code 22402)

You've got your colony through winter (or not) - now what? Class sessions will include how to clean up your equipment, expanding hive size for spring, swarm prevention- and if that fails, swarm capture, setting up bait hives for swarms, identification of common pest and diseases and management options for them. Topics will also include dealing with special situations:

aggressive hives, queen failures, and laying workers. Field day will include information on how to split a colony, pest and disease ID, and swarm prevention.

Classroom sessions: Wed., Feb 11th – Wed. Feb 25th
(3 sessions)

Field Day: Sat., Mar. 14th, 1:30pm – 3:30pm

Fall Pollinator Plant Sale!

Pollinator friendly, drought tolerant, neonic free plants at a local store that has gone above and beyond to provide pollinator friendly products, with some of the profits going toward local bee research.

It's a win:win:win:win:win situation!

Mark your calendar to be at Marin ACE Hardware on Saturday, October 18th. Open 8am - 6pm. 180 Merrydale Ave, San Rafael - across 101 from the Civic Center. www.marinace.com

Local beekeepers will be on hand with an observation hive and will be available to answer bee and bee friendly plant questions.

From the Librarian's Desk

Welcome back to the Beek Library! We will be back in full swing on Thursday and look forward to seeing you.

We have obtained a few new items over the summer, including a couple of Michael Bush's "The Practical Beekeeper" books. If you have been cleaning your bookshelves and have items you think other Club members would enjoy, please consider donating them to the Library. All Club members are welcome to borrow items. If you currently have something out on loan, remember to bring it back Thursday & have a chance a winning a great prize.

Hive Tips



We said it last month, but we'll say it again...your bees could be hungry! The flow (nectar and pollen) has slowed recently. In some areas, colonies that had ample food stores in July have all but depleted their reserves.

The effect this has on a hive will vary considerably based on location and each individual colony. When inspecting your hive(s), be on the lookout for stored pollen (bee bread) - likely in lower box, nectar, and capped honey. Is it there? Great. Not? Consider feeding. Also, with the increase in popularity of beekeeping, there are simply a lot more bees that need food. Be mindful that feeding can have unintended consequences of attracting ants and/or robbing and mitigate as needed.

If you are feeding sugar syrup, you may want to switch to a 2:1 sugar:water ratio to promote food storage.

Has your hive temperament changed for the worse recently? Common causes of aggression in previously docile hives can include:

- Lack of food. As mentioned above, check for amount of food when checking your colony. Bees without sufficient stores can become more aggressive – and more protective of what little they do have. Feeding can help reduce unwanted behavior.
- Robbing. Either by other bees or yellow jackets, robbing can cause increased aggression. If robbing is a suspected problem, minimize entrance size and/or add a robber screen to discourage this

activity.

- Animal intrusions. Late night visits from skunks and other critters can cause increased bee anxiety. This usually dissipates with the passage of a little time after these visits. Wearing light colors while working your hive (or working near your hive) will help to discourage the bees from mistaking you for a large animal and inciting their ire.
- Queenless. A queenless colony – and one that does not have eggs or larvae to make a new one – can quickly become an irritable colony. If a queenless colony has not yet become a laying worker colony, the issue can often be resolved by giving the bees the resources to make a new queen (e.g. a frame with eggs and young larvae from another colony) or by purchasing a mated queen.



Honey Harvesting

If you have not done so already, it is time to consider how much honey (if any) you should be removing. General rule of thumb for an average winter in Marin is for a colony to have 30 lbs. of honey stored. One medium frame of honey is about 3 lbs., one deep frame has about 7 lbs. For smaller colonies (e.g. 10 frames or under), you would want to see approximately 50% brood and 50% food.

While an admirable sentiment, leaving too much honey on a hive is not beneficial for the colony. It will give them additional space they will need to heat during winter and may be detrimental.

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Late Summer and Fall Hive Management.

It may be still be summer, but the days are getting shorter, and bees are starting to get their hives ready for winter. Some changes you may see:

- Queen supercedure. It is not uncommon to see supercedure cells in your colony at this time of year. Let the bees replace their queen, if they feel it is needed. The drone population at this time of year is high, and while you may not know the qualities of the drones your new queen will be mating with, a young queen may help the colony get through the winter and be ready for rapid spring growth.
- Propolis may be more prevalent in your colony. While perhaps an inconvenience (usually minor) to the beekeepers, allowing the bees to utilize propolis as they see fit will provide them with a number of benefits. In addition to the anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties of propolis which may assist in keeping a hive healthy, bees will use propolis for a variety of reasons including to seal cracks and to minimize entrance opening(s) preventing unwanted access to the hive from ants, yellow jackets, and weather elements.
- Brood cluster size and location may be changing as the brood area in upper portion of the hive is converted to food storage.
- No evidence of eggs, larvae or capped brood? Before jumping to the conclusion that your colony is queenless, check pollen/bee bread stores. If the colony has not been able to bring in enough, then the queen may cease egg laying until food availability again increases.

Party at Peterson's

As in the past, Dave Peterson will be hosting an extraction party at his Honey House (garage in Ross) for Members with 30 or less frames to extract on September 20-21. Send an e-mail to arrange a time to: Dpeterson307@aol.com. Include in your e-mail how many frames you expect to be extracting so Dave can schedule accordingly. If don't have enough stores to extract but want to observe, contact Dave

and he will set a time.

Before you reserve a time, **please check your hives to be sure you will have some excess honey to extract.** Try to make a reasonable estimate of the number of frames you will have. Last year some Members reserved a time to extract only to find they did not have any excess making scheduling and instruction more difficult. Be sure and leave 25 to 35 pounds of honey for your bees to over winter. A fully drawn out and filled medium frame holds about 3 lbs. of honey and a fully drawn out and filled deep holds about 7 lbs. of honey.

Dave asks that "When you come to extract, please bring your frames in some arrangement so that the frames hang from the tabs as in the hive and with a bottom so that the honey does not drip all over your car and his garage. The easiest way to do this is by leaving the frames in your supers and set them on a plywood base to catch the drips. Or you can purchase various sized plastic bins and modify so as to be able to hang your frames from a stick or rod. Also, **please remove all the bees from the supers** so that you don't bring them into the Honey House. You can use a fume board, blow them or brush them off. Then give them a few good bumps to shake loose the hangers on.

FYI:

Dave is currently the keeper of two of the Club's honey extractors, the 12 frame and 6 frame machines. They are stainless steel, variable speed, electric powered centrifugal extractor.

Mary Nordquist is the keeper of the Club's large extractor up in Novato. It will handle 20 medium frames or 10 deeps. It uses a belt and pulley system to regulate the speed and is even bigger than the 12 frame machine.

Rob Tysinger, also in Novato, is the keeper of the Club's other 6 frame extractor.

Each extraction kit includes the extractor, uncapping bin, electric knife, scratcher, roller punch and sieve set. The 6 and 12 frame extractors require a SUV, Station Wagon or Truck for transport; the 20 frame requires a truck. If you have deep frames to extract, you should use the 12 or 20 frame extractor.

Club Members in good standing (current dues paid) can check out the extractors for use a few days at a time. Please contact:

Dave dpeterson307@aol.com,
Mary neilmmary@verizon.net, or
Rob rob@tysingerengineers.us
to arrange pick up times.