

THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

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What You Missed

Our last meeting featured presentations by several of our club members of gadgets that they had built or found to make beekeeping life a little easier.

Here is a highlight of the gadgets. If you have any questions about a particular gadget, seek out the club member who presented it at our next meeting.

First up was Mike Turner. Mike developed a hive stand to combat the ant problem that many of us face. The stand is a rectangle built of 2x6 lumber that the hive or hives will sit on. The rectangle is then attached to two 4x4 that extend past the front and back of the rectangle. A vertical hole is drilled in the end of each 4x4 and a carriage bolt is inserted with the head of the carriage bolt resting on the ground. The carriage bolt has a nut and washer below and above the 4x4, which allow for leveling adjustments. Vaseline mixed with baby oil is applied to the bolts as a barrier, which the ants will not cross and the bees don't get stuck in.

Next Bonnie Morse showed off her "Dirty Girl" bottom board. The bottom board has a V-shaped bottom with a trap door that can be opened to dump the debris. She also showed off a robber screen that can be purchased from Brushy Mountain and comes ready to install.

Next up was Volker Ackerman. Volker had difficulty marking queens with the commercially available marking pens so he decided to try something different. Volker found that acrylic paint, which is commonly used for painting models and can be found in the local hobby stores, works great for marking queens. He applies the dab of paint to the queen with a toothpick. It dries faster than the marking pens and doesn't goop like some of the markers.

Next Terry Oxford showed off a wire cutter that she uses to separate hive boxes that are connected together with bridge comb. The device consists of an old guitar string with a wooden handle at each end. She runs the wire between the two boxes easily cutting through the bridge comb.

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What's the Buzz

Our next meeting will be on Thursday December 4, 2014 at the American Legion Log Cabin, 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo, CA. starting at 7:30 pm. The meeting will feature Robbin Thorpe, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Entomology, Harry H Laidlaw Jr. Honey Bee Research Facility, University of California, Davis. Dr. Thorpe has special interest in bumble bees and solitary ground nesting bees that are host specific in their pollen choices. He is coauthor of two books published in 2014:

Bumble Bees of North America, Princeton University Press. California Bees & Blooms: A Guide for Gardeners and Naturalists, Heyday. Books will be available for sale and signing at the meeting.

Upcoming Meetings:

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,

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Dave Peterson then showed off several gadgets. A French drain, which he uses to separate honey from the wax cappings. The drain consists of a section of 1" PVC pipe that has had a portion removed so it is shaped like the letter C. A series of slots are cut perpendicular to the length of the pipe. The cappings are dumped into a 5 gallon bucket with the drain at one side (the opening of the C faces the side of the bucket). The bucket is tipped on its side and the honey drips through the slots in the drain and then pours into a clean bucket. He also shared that he uses redwood chips for smoker fuel. The redwood chips are readily available as much at most garden centers. He also showed off a self-lighting propane torch. Available at most hardware stores and you never have to remember to bring a striker or matches to your bee yard.

Next up was Richard Hyde who showed off a silicon bread pan that he uses to make blocks of wax. He pours the liquid wax into the bread pan and lets it solidify. He warms the bread pan slightly and the wax releases easily from the pan.

Next Charlie Kinnard showed off an invisible fence that he developed to encourage bees to increase altitude quickly as they leave the hive. Charlie discovered that you can create a fence out of bamboo or other wood slats with openings in it that the bees will perceive it as solid and will not try to fly through.

Measurements for a Transparent Bee Barrier

Bees tend to go over or around a fence with holes which appear to be 7degrees or less as seen from the hive entrance. Bees *returning* to the hive occasionally pass through the fences described below. The fence's bars should be at least 5/8" wide. Each fence's hole has diameters averaging a figure given below. The minimum fence height is for someone standing 3ft back from the fence, on level ground. The fence need not extend to ground level

Distance from hive	Avg. hole dia.	Min. fence ht.
2 ft	3"	2½ ft
3 ft	4.5"	3 ft
4 ft	6"	3½ ft
5 ft	7.5"	4 ft
6 ft	9"	4½ ft

Next up was Gary Morse. Gary showed off several gadgets. He showed off wedge-shaped wood shims that he uses to tilt the extractor to get more of the honey out. He then showed off an inner cover with a hole cut for a feeder jar. The inner cover is also handy if you are feeding dryvert sugar. Finally, he showed off a honey bucket stand. It is made of two pieces of plywood that are hinged together. The bucket is attached to the top piece and can then be tilted to drain the last of the honey as you are filling your jars.

Rob Rowland then showed off a microphone that he connected to his Mac Book computer and was able to listen to the beehive. He got the idea from the October edition of the American Bee Journal.

Keith Wedmore ended the evening by showing off things that he used that can be found for free. He displayed a feather, which he uses to brush bees off of comb; besides being free, he feels that the bees don't mind it as much as the commercially available brushes. He then showed off a cover that he uses when inspecting a hive. The cover is made out of canvas, and is placed over the open box to cover the portion that you are not inspecting, reducing the bees exposure to the elements and keeping them calmer. The last thing he showed was a frame spacer that he uses in his honey supers, which uniformly widens the space between frames encouraging the bees to build out the comb beyond the edges of the frame. This makes it easier to uncap the honey comb during extraction. He admitted that the last item was not free but was an invaluable tool in his beekeeping.



Club Members Checking Out the Gadget Display

Hive Tips

- Cold doesn't kill bees - moisture does. Make sure your hive tilts forward slightly so rain doesn't condense inside on your bottom board. Not sure the bees have enough ventilation? On a warm day, quickly check the inside of your top to see if it is wet or has mold. If so, consider giving them a little more ventilation by adding a shim, stick, or thin piece of wood between the top and inner cover.
- According to the annual Marin Bee Census Survey, approximately half of annual hive deaths occur between October and December. If you lose a colony, you will want to try to determine the cause of death. Most importantly, you want to be sure you did not lose the hive to American Foulbrood. Chances are slim that the cause is AFB, however because several cases were reported in Marin last year you'll want to check to be sure. Good photographs and information are available online, including in this report: http://www.countryrubes.com/images/American_Foul_brood_AFB_pdf.pdf
- If ABF is a possibility, be sure to store the equipment in such a way that other bees cannot find it and rob it out and take the disease home with them. The club has several hand held black lights available for loan (check with David Peterson or Bonnie Morse) so you can inspect frames if scales are present.
- Not sure why your colony perished? Don't be shy – ask for help! Post questions on the Buzz, bring a frame or two to the next Marin Beekeepers Association meeting, etc.
- If you can rule ABF out, 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 and store in a manner where mice will not have access - like on top of a screened bottom board with entrance reducer in. Do not allow too much space between the hive bodies or mice might move in and make a nest and destroy your combs.
- By now, you should have removed your excess space and honey, leaving less space for the bees to need to heat this winter. If for some reason you still need to remove a hive body, do so in a manner that will cause the least heat to be lost in the hive. Pick a sunny day and work during the highest temperatures of the day (usually around 2-3pm). You can put an inner cover between the

hive body to be removed and the rest of the hive. Alternatively, you can add a bee escape board (plans can be found here:

http://www.beesource.com/forums/showthread.php?2_21375-Vortex-Bee-Escape-Board-With-Pics) for 48 hours.

From the Librarian's Desk

Many thanks to our donors, volunteers and especially the bidders who helped us raise \$1249.00 for the Broodless Study at last month's Silent/Live Auction. A very special thank you to Mea McNeil who channeled her inner auctioneer and kept the crowd hooked throughout the evening!

The library will be open on Thursday evening for Club members to borrow & return items. Need some extra reading over the holidays? Stop by and see if there is a book or magazine of interest to you. Need to make some space for all of your incoming gifts? The library welcomes your donations for sharing with your fellow Marin Beeks.

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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

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 sessions)

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

Broodless Study Update

The auction at last month's Gadgets and Gizmos meeting raised \$1249 to help offset the costs associated with the ongoing study at the Romberg Center.

Since late March of this year, 15 data sets have been collected from 18 colonies (including photographing monitoring boards, 24 hour mite drops, cluster size, brood status, observed diseases, etc.). While too early draw any conclusions, as far as 24 hour mite counts

observed to date since 9/17 (mite counts prior to that date were negligible overall):

3 colonies: mite drop has continued to increase
5 colonies: mite drop has increased 3 fold or more
6 colonies: mite count has fluctuated up / down
4 colonies: mite count has maintained or decreased
Only one colony has become entirely broodless during the study period. Mite drop has leveled off during this period, while mite drops from colonies of equal size have continued to increase. Stay tuned for more info as available....

Cluster size: 9/17/14 vs. 11/26/14. (What will this ultimately mean regarding mites and winter survival? No idea yet...we'll just have to wait and see....)

Maintained:	2 colonies
75 - 99%:	6 colonies
50 - 74%:	6 colonies
25 - 49%:	4 colonies
0- 24%:	0 colonies

Dues are Due

A reminder that annual dues for 2015 are now due. Annual dues remain at \$20.00 for the calendar year 2015. New members who joined in October or later are considered paid through 2015. The payment is not due until the January meeting, but some have started renewing.

The best way to renew is do it on the Website: www.marinbeekeepers.org and pay using PayPal or a Credit Card. You do not need to "Sign In". Just click on "**Become a Member**", scroll down to: "**To join, complete the following form:**" Then check the circle by "**Renewing Member**" and fill out the form with your current information. There is a small service charge to PayPal for the processing of the payment.

Or you can mail your renewal check for \$20.00 payable to Marin Beekeepers to our Treasurer:

Mary Nordquist
2072 Hatch Road
Novato, CA 94947

You can also renew at the meetings as you come in the door, by cash, check or Credit Card.

Marin Bee Census

The results of the census are here! To view go to: <http://bonniebeecompany.com/wp/projects/2009-present-marin-county-bee-census-survey/>