

THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

Volume 7, Issue 7

July/August 2015

What's the Buzz?

There is no regular meeting in August. Instead we will be gathering for the Marin Beekeeper's annual potluck dinner on Saturday August 8th starting at 6 pm at the home of Neil and Mary Nordquist, 2072 Hatch Road, Novato, CA. Sign up will be online again this year. Go to: <http://marinbeekeepers.org/> and click on Club Resources the click on Annual Potluck for more information on the event and to sign up to bring a dish. Everyone PLEASE remember to bring your own plates, utensils and drinking glasses. This is a **GREEN "ZERO WASTE" EVENT**. All items should be brought in a reusable or recyclable/compostable container.

Please plan on taking your recyclables / compostables / garbage with when you leave the event.

Directions to Neil and Mary Nordquist, 2072 Hatch Road, Novato:

Take the San Marin Drive/ Atherton Avenue exit from US101. Turn west onto San Marin Drive. Continue on San Marin Drive to Simmons Lane, the first stop sign. Turn left onto Simmons Lane. Follow until you come to a stop light at a T-junction with Novato Boulevard. Turn right onto Novato Boulevard and then make a left turn at the next light onto Wilson Avenue. Follow Wilson for approximately 1 1/4 miles. There will be stop signs at Center and Vineyard Roads on the way. Hatch Rd will be a right turn shortly after Wilson narrows. The Nordquists are 1/4 mile down Hatch Road on the right. 2072 is on the mailbox just before the gate. Please park on the street and walk in through the gate.

Don't forget to bring a sweater or jacket as the evenings can get cool in Novato.

Upcoming Meetings:

September 3, 2015

Lilia de Guzman, entomologist, USDA-ARS Baton Rouge: The Search for Mite Resistant Honey Bees

What You Missed

Our June meeting featured Mark Winston, PhD, Academic Director and Fellow of the Centre for Dialogue, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC.

His talk was titled "Bee Time: Lessons from the Hive". As a graduate student Dr. Winston worked in French Guiana with Africanized bees. Surprisingly, he found that the Africanized bees were quite calm most of the time.

Africanized bees swarm two or three times a year with several afterswarms. They have a reproduction rate of 70%. They are more keyed into the alarm pheromone than European honey bees so the likelihood of receiving multiple stings is high. He learned a lot from Africanized bees. Honey bees are a feral organism. They are the most wild thing that is managed by human. He also learned about the introduced species. There are hundreds of millions of hives of Africanized bees in South America making a major impact on the environment.

Dr. Winston went on to talk about European honey bees in the United States. This year 40% of the managed bee hives died. He feels that commercial beekeeping is a major problem for bee health. Over 60% of colonies in the U.S. come to California each

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spring to pollinate almonds. Then they are trucked to other areas to pollinate a variety of crops. Farmers tend to eliminate other plants so there is no variety of forage. Feeding bees sugar and pollen substitute increases the volume of bees but it creates weaker bees that are not as long lived.

In addition, there are varroa mites; which vector viruses. Beekeepers compound the problem with the use of miticides. Many miticides create resistant varroa mites.

Another issue is the use of pesticides. Over 1.2 billion pounds of pesticides per year is used in the U.S. Studies have found that a typical hive may have residue from 5 to 30 pesticides. It has also been discovered that combination of pesticides at low doses can have catastrophic effects on bee colonies.

1. Behavior - combinations of low doses of pesticides can affect behavior, sometimes causing navigation difficulties for foragers or cause queens to lay less vigorously.
2. Immune System – pesticides affect the immune system of bees.
3. Detoxification – combined pesticides make it difficult for bees to detoxify the pesticides.

Dr. Winston then talked about genetically modified crops (GMOs). He stated, to the knowledge of the scientific world there are no adverse effects to honey bees from GMO crops. He spoke of a study done on GMO crops and wild bees. It was found that there were fewer bees in GMO vs. organically grown crops, but that could be attributed to more wildflowers in the organic crops.

He spoke of a study comparing GMO vs. organic farming. Comparing profits on two farms of similar acreage it was found that the profit on the GMO farm was around \$27,000, planting 100% of the acreage, while the organic farm profit was around \$365,000, planting only 70% of the acreage. The increase was attributed to less inputs required (i.e. pesticides, etc.) and higher yields per acre because more pollinators were attracted to the field. He feels that we need to change our agricultural practices and eliminate monoculture planting. He said that wild bees could become an important commercial pollinator if conditions were changed to make farms more attractive to them.

He went on to talk about bees in the city. He spoke of two of his students that started a project to study bees in the city of Vancouver. They found that lawns are bee deserts (no nutritional value) and that, while

buildings take up a lot of space, cities are a healthy place for bees. They attributed it to a variety of small plantings of flowers and less pesticide use. They started a program called “Hives for Humanity” which helps to bring beekeeping into the poorest sections of Vancouver.

He closed by saying that bees can build incredible bonds in the human community and admonished us to never underestimate anybody.

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October 1, 2015

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

November 5, 2015

TBD

December 3, 2015

TBD

January 7, 2016

Neal Williams, PhD, UC Davis entomologists.

February 4, 2016

Dave Tarpy, PhD, Department of Entomology, North Carolina State University.

March 3, 2016

Greg Hunt, PhD, Professor of Entomology, Purdue University. He will be discussing mite-biting bees.

April 7, 2016

Bonnie Morse, owner Bonnie Bee & Company. She will be discussing results from the broodless study.

May 5, 2016

TBD

June 2, 2016

TBD

July 2016

County Fair

Hive Tips

By Bonnie Morse, [Bonnie Bee & Company](#)

Late Summer and Fall Hive Management. It may be still be summer, but the solstice has passed, the days are getting shorter, and bees are starting to get their hives ready for winter. Some changes you may see:

- **Queen Supersedure.** 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 tends to still be high at this time of year (though this will vary from hive to hive), 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 portions 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.

Yellow jacket populations are peaking. Despite what seemed to be a slow start to their annual build up earlier this season, yellow jacket populations seem to be rather robust right now. They can be seen constantly around many apiaries now hauling off dead and weak bees around hives. While this activity can be beneficial, it is prudent to keep an eye out. If you see yellow jackets entering healthy hives, it would be a good time to reduce entrances (or add a robber screen) to help make it easier for the colony to protect itself. If the population (and cluster size) of your colony is already reducing in preparation for winter, it may be time to consider harvesting excess honey or removing unneeded boxes to reduce amount of space the bees need to defend.

Robbing by other bees tends to become more problematic at this time of year. If you have a smaller colony, keep an eye out for robbing and perhaps consider reducing the entrance (if you haven't done so already) to help make it easier for the colony to protect itself. If robbing starts, you need to stop it immediately. Some good suggestions for options on how to do so are available on the website of Michael Bush: <http://www.bushfarms.com/beesrobbing.htm>

From the Librarian's Desk

The library is still on summer vacation & will be back again at our September meeting.

At the October meeting, the Club will host a Silent Auction as part of the popular Gadgets & Gizmos night. We're looking for donations of beekeeping and bee-related items. The evening's fun is made possible through our members' generosity. Please contact Marina at marinamay53@gmail.com if you have an item to donate or would like to help.

Party at Peterson's

Save the Date: Once again Dave Peterson plans to have a group Extraction Party at his Honey House (garage) Saturday, September 26. Come to the party where you can extract your honey without the set up and clean up. The party is limited to members who have 30 or less frames to extract. Details to follow next month.

Fair News



A visit from Clo

The 2015 Marin County Fair was another great success for us. There were more entries than last year and, thanks to Anna's candle class, more entries in the hand-dipped candles category. Thanks to all of you who took the time to enter and volunteer at the booth. Congratulations to Isa for her Best of Show in the honey category, Marina for her beeswax, Jim and Barbara for their beautiful full frame and Rob for receiving the Salvisberg Award for his candles.

Start planning your entries for next year's fair. They'll be due in early in June, so mark your calendars. Send any suggestions for improvements for next year and additional exhibit categories to Dan Stralka at Stralka.Daniel@epamail.epa.gov

Thank you to Dave Peterson, and Jerry Draper for supplying the focal point of the exhibit, the observation hives. And thank you to Sunnyside Nursery for supplying bee friendly plants for display.



Finding the Queen



Pollinator Friendly Plant Display

As for the Honey Competition, here are the final results.

Honey

Eucalyptus Blend

- 1st Marina Wright, Sausalito, CA
- 2nd Roy Crumrine, Tiburon, CA
- 3rd Richard Hyde, Tiburon, CA
- 4th Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA

Floral

- 1st Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA
- 2nd Peter Bauer, San Rafael, CA
- 3rd Beth Renneisen, Fairfax, CA

Wild Flower

- 1st Isa Foulk, Novato, CA
- 1st Jeff Kent, San Rafael, CA
- 2nd Richard Hyde, Tiburon, CA
- 2nd Roy Crumrine, Tiburon, CA
- 3rd Jim Landis, Novato, CA
- 3rd Rob Tysinger, Novato, CA
- 4th The Kosek Family, Mill Valley, CA
- 4th Roy Crumrine, Tiburon, CA
- 5th Jeff Kent, San Rafael, CA

Crystallized

- 1st Rob Tysinger, Novato, CA
- 2nd Jeffrey Templeton, Novato, CA
- 3rd Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA
- 4th Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA
- 5th Marina Wright, Sausalito, CA

Chunk

- 1st Marina Wright, Sausalito, CA
- 2nd Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA

Comb

- 1st Marina Wright, Sausalito, CA
- 2nd Pamela Scott, Kentfield, CA
- 3rd Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA

Hive Products

Natural Beeswax

- 1st Marin Wright, Sausalito, CA
- 2nd Rob Tysinger, Novato, CA
- 3rd Bill Papendick, San Rafael, CA

Molded Beeswax

- 1st Marin Wright, Sausalito, CA
- 2nd Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA
- 3rd Rob Tysinger, Novato, CA
- 4th Bill Papendick, San Rafael, CA
- 5th Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA

Hand Dipped Beeswax Candles

- 1st Rob Tysinger, Novato, CA
- 2nd Anna Taylor Gravley, Corte Madera, CA
- 3rd Marin Wright, Sausalito, CA
- 4th Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA
- 5th Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA

Full Frame

- 1st Jim and Barbara Yeager, Corte Madera, CA
- 2nd Richard Hyde, Tiburon, CA
- 3rd Bill Papendick, San Rafael, CA
- 4th Anna Taylor Gravley, Corte Madera, CA
- 5th Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA

Special Awards

Best of Show – Honey
Isa Foulk, Novato, CA

Best of Show – Beeswax
Marina Wright, Sausalito, CA

Best of Show – Full Frame
Jim and Barbara Yeager, Corte Madera, CA

Marin Beekeepers Award
Isa Foulk, Novato, CA

Salvisberg Award
Rob Tysinger, Novato, CA