

THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

Volume 7, Issue 7

September 2015

What's the Buzz?

Our next meeting will be on Thursday September 3, 2015 at the American Legion Log Cabin, 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo, CA. starting at 7:30 pm. The meeting will feature a talk by Lilia de Guzman. Lilia De Guzman is a Research Entomologist specializing in Honey Bee Breeding, Genetics, and Physiology Research at the USDA-ARS lab in Baton Rouge, LA.

The Baton Rouge lab is the epicenter of imported Russian bee stock and has done considerable research on their mechanisms of mite resistance.

Lilia will present her research on Russian bees and how and why they seem to be resistant to mites. She will make the case for keeping Russian bees ... and, in particular, discuss their grooming and hygienic behavior.

Upcoming Meetings:

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.

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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 from the day



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March 3, 2016

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

April 7, 2016

Bonnie Morse, co-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](#)

Honey Harvesting.

Time to consider how much honey (if any) you should be removing. General rule of thumb 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 (like 5 frame nucs), 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 when it gets cold and may be detrimental.

Varroa mites

With fall comes decreasing colony populations and increasing varroa mite populations. This can be a deadly combination for your colonies. The Marin Bee Census survey has shown an average of 47% of colonies lost each year are lost between October – December. This can largely be attributed to losses due to heavy mite loads and the associated diseases they vector. Mite numbers have been up sooner in the season than usual and we are hearing reports of uncharacteristically early colony losses.

By regularly monitoring the levels of mite infestations in your colonies, you'll have a better idea if high mite levels are due to your bees' inability to deal with mites in the colony (through hygienic behavior (often observed as uncapped pupae)), grooming, broodless periods, etc.) or whether a sudden spike might be due to your colony finding and robbing out a nearby crashing hive.

Information on how to do a sugar roll to determine varroa infestation % is available from the University of Minnesota:

http://www.extension.org/mediawiki/files/e/e1/VarroaMites_155.pdf

There are passionate voices on both sides of the debate on whether to treat or not to treat. There is logical reasoning on the pros and cons on both sides. Keep in mind that your bees' problems could quickly become another hive's problem. And because of the increasing number of beekeepers – and increasing hive density, particularly in some neighborhoods - a moderate approach to consider would be to treat if mite levels go above a certain threshold. If your bees have shown no method of resistance (you should be looking for it every time you inspect), you might consider requeening the colony with more resistant stock when that option next becomes available. If you have been monitoring your bees and they have shown mite resistance, you might consider a treatment as a

way to help them reduce the number of introduced mites, but consider giving their queen another chance.

Visit www.scientificbeekeeping.com for information from Randy Oliver on treatment options and application information. Get as much information as possible on the pros/cons of different approaches before/if you decide to treat for mites.

Yellow jackets are continuing to be a problem.

This has been a terrible season for yellow jackets in many areas of Marin. You may be seeing yellow jackets on the ground removing dead and dying bees. There can be some benefit to this. Of more concern is if you see those attacking healthy bees (e.g. returning foragers) – or worse, entering the hive and removing bees. Reducing entrances can help your bees better defend their nest. Don't hang yellow jacket traps too close to hives as the pheromone in the traps may attract more yellow jackets to the immediate hive area.



Bees defending hive entrance from yellow jackets (they are actually attacking a yellow jacket on the right but there are so many bees on it you can't even see it)

See Hive Tips on Page 4

From the Librarian's Desk

Welcome Back to the Library!

The club library will be back in action on Thursday. Time to round up those items you borrowed way back in June (or earlier) and return them for a chance to win a lovely prize. Be sure to come by & see a couple of additions acquired over the summer:

- The Beekeeper's Problem Solver by James E. Tew
- The Wisdom of the Hive by Tom Seeley

Small Hive Beetle Update

Small hive beetles continue to make their appearance across Marin. In 2014, we observed them in hives in San Rafael (near Civic Center) and San Anselmo (off Butterfield). This year, we have also seen them in Novato (near Hamilton) and two new areas of San Rafael (near Margarita Dr. and off Lucas Valley Rd.) Infestation numbers have been very low and no comb damage has been observed to date.



Small Hive Beetle on the right (about the size and shape of a lady bug)

It's Auction Time!

At October's Gadget & Gizmos night, the Library will once again host a Silent Auction. We're looking for donations of beekeeping related items to entice the crowd. Our friends at Marin Ace Hardware have generously donated a flat of plants and some gift certificates to get the party started. Do you have something you could add? Please contact Marina at Thursday's meeting or by email at marinamay53@gmail.com. Thanks for helping to make this a fun evening!

Beekeeping Classes

Honey bees for Life

October 4, 2015 at Green Gulch Farm with Michael Joshin Thiele / Gaia Bees
Info and registration at <http://www.sfzc.org/green-gulch/calendar/workshops-retreats/honeybees-for-life-workshop>

Party at Peterson's

An invitation from Dave Peterson:

The summer nectar flow is coming to an end and hopefully our girls have put away enough honey to get them through our mild winter with some left to share with us. Soon it will be time to pull those supers and see what you have to extract. I plan to do my extraction the week of September 21.

Those who have used our extractors know it requires some effort to pick up, use, clean up and return. With this in mind, I plan to leave my "Honey House" (garage) set up through the weekend of September 26 & 27 for **Club Members with less than 36 frames** to extract. That way it's only one set up and one clean up... and I do it all.

If you are interested doing your extraction at my house, drop me and e-mail and we can schedule a workable time. Include **in your e-mail how many frames you expect to be extracting** so I can schedule accordingly. If some of you don't have enough stores to extract and just want to observe, let me know and we'll set a time. Be sure and leave 40 to 50 pounds of honey for your bees to over winter. I'll be out of e-mail touch from 8/30 thru 9/13 so don't expect a reply until after that.

Before you reserve a time, **please re-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.

When you come to my place 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 my 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 bin and modify so as to be able to hang your frames from a stick or rod.

If you just put the dripping frame in a plastic tub, they will sit in the dripping honey and slide all around on the bottom and drip whenever picked up for uncapping. And... you will lose a lot of honey in the bottom.

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.