

THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

Volume 9, Issue 7

July / August 2017

What You Missed

Our June 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 are highlights of the gadgets. If you have any questions about a particular gadget, seek out the club member who presented it at our next meeting.

Richard Hyde

Richard uses a 10 ft. ladder and places a catch hive on paint shelf – a couple of frames of comb and some lemon grass oil in the catch hive.

A collapsible work bench: Light weight and foldable. Great for when you are working bees.

To heat honey a little bit from a 5 gallon bucket he uses an electric plate warmer (like a big heating pad). Wraps around the bucket and stays on for a day.



Heating Pad Around & Under Five Gallon Bucket

Rune Houston

Zombee Catcher (florid fly infected bee catcher). Five gallon bucket with a funnel and a spot light attached to a sensor. Turns on at night and turns off in the morning. Bees are attracted to the light and then fall

What's the Buzz?

There is no regular meeting of the Marin County Beekeepers in August. Instead, please plan to join us on August 5th, starting at 6 pm, at the home of Neil and Mary Nordquist, 2072 Hatch Road, Novato, CA for the annual potluck dinner. Sign up will be online again this year. Go to: <http://marinbees.org/wp> and click on Club Resources for more information on the event and to sign up to bring a dish. *Everyone should bring their 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 you 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

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into the funnel and can't get out. Google "Zombee" to find out more about this citizen science program.

Rick Limpert

Hive top. Found that a box with the telescoping cover gets really hot when it is in the sun. He built a sloping top to set on top of the telescoping cover. It also keeps the rain off, is easy to remove, and you can store stuff under the cover.

Tuppy Lawson

Tuppy built a sloping top out of insulation and uses tie downs to keep it in place.

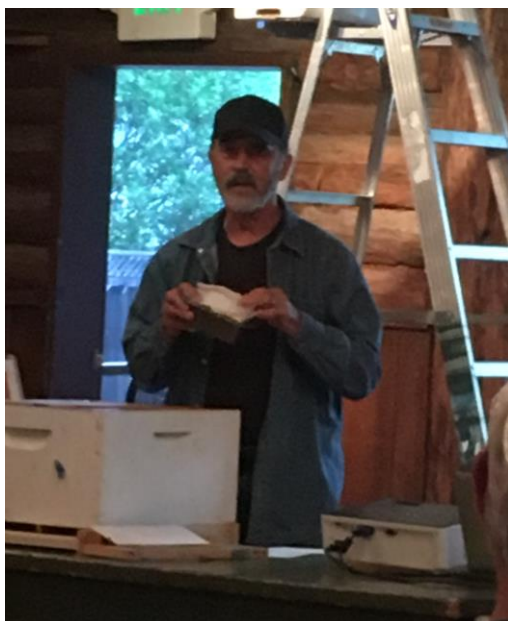
Bonnie Morse

Fume Board. You spray the fume board with Beequick. The Sun is supposed to heat up the fume board and Beequick, driving the bees down into the lower boxes. Sometimes this doesn't work quick enough. Bonnie created a breeze board with a 4" diameter sheet metal elbow that fits into a hole in the top. The elbow can swivel to catch the breeze.

You can make a top bar hive using a deep Langstroth. Start with some bees on Langstroth frames and then start adding top bars.

Gary Morse

Gary uses a small baking pan with a screen on top. He covers the screen with cheesecloth. Next he heats the dirty wax and pours it into the pan to clean the wax. Honey separates out in the pan, wax is lighter than honey.



Gary showed a moving screen, from Brushy Mountain. It screws onto the front of the hive. The openings in the screen can be closed off but the screen allows for ventilation.

Gary always carries a roll of plastic wrap. It has many uses in beekeeping. One is to place the wrap on top of the honey in a five gallon bucket. Uses a spatula collect the foam that occurs on top of the honey and then place on the plastic wrap.

Volker Ackerman

Mini smoker. Rudolph Darthe developed with a one way valve that doesn't allow you to inhale. It doesn't have a bellows. It requires you to blow into a tube. Light weight so it can be used hands-free, holding it with your mouth.



Mini Smokers

Dave Peterson

Cone for extracting bees. Create a screen cone that is placed over the opening. Bees can get out but not back in. Place a catch hive with comb and a frame with some young larvae and eggs nearby. The bees that can't get back into their home will end up in the catch hive where they will start to raise a new queen from the available eggs/larvae.

Make a cone using plastic window screen. You can make a big circle by folding a piece of newspaper in half, over and over again. Then trim the end. When you open it up it is pretty close to a circle. Place circle over the screen. Cut out screen circle. Create a cone. Staple bottom together and then sew it up into a cone. Attach the cone to a piece of cardboard in order to create a base.

Dave also brought his beevac to show to those interested in building their own beevac for extractions.

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.

Upcoming Meetings:

September 7, 2017

Kate Frey, co-author of The Bee Friendly Garden, "Bee Friendly Gardens".

October 5, 2017

Gro Amdam, Professor, Arizona State University, "Vaccinating Honey Bees: Concept, Data, and Feasibility".

November 2, 2017

Gene Brandi, President, American Beekeeping Federation, "Beekeeping from a Commercial Perspective".

December 7, 2017

Janet Brisson, owner of Country Rubes, "Small Hive Beetles".

January 4, 2018

Marin Beekeepers, "Panel Discussion: Community Breeding".

February 1, 2018

Mace Vaughn, Pollinator Program Co-Director, Xerxes Society for Invertebrate Conservation, "Habitat and Lobbying".

March 1, 2018

Leo Sharaskin, editor, Keeping Bees with a Smile, "Natural and Practical Beekeeping".

April 5, 2018

Samuel Ramsey, Doctoral Student, University of Maryland, "Varroa Research".

May 3, 2018

Elina Nino, Extension Apiculturist, UC Davis, "Effects of Supplemental Forage on Bees".

June 7, 2018

Marin Beekeepers, "Gadgets and Gizmos".

July

No meeting: Marin County Fair, June 30 – July 5.

August

No meeting: Marin Beekeepers Annual Potluck.

Mite-A-Thon 2017

The First Annual Mite-A-Thon is a collaborative citizen science effort lead by Pollinator Partnership to monitor the "mite loads" in honey bee hives across North America. From September 9 through the 16th, thousands of beekeepers will test their hives to measure the level of Varroa mite infestation.

Information on [how to do a sugar roll to determine varroa infestation % is available from the University of Minnesota](#).

The primary objective of the "First Annual Mite-A-Thon" is to raise awareness about the level of Varroa mites across the hives of North America and to teach consistent and effective methods to measure mite load. A secondary purpose is to educate beekeepers about mite management strategies through materials utilizing partner developed books and videos.

The "Mite-A-Thon" coincides with the 30th anniversary of the discovery of Varroa destructor in North America.

The Mite-A-Thon's major sponsor is Valmont Cosmetics in conjunction with sponsors The Almond Board of California, Project Apis m., The American Beekeeping Federation, The American Honey Producer's Association, The Canadian Honey Council, Mite-Check from the University of Maryland, The University of Michigan, The University of Minnesota Bee Lab, The Honey Bee Health Coalition, and Pollinator Partnership.

For more information, visit www.pollinator.org/miteathon

Fair News



Looking for the Queen

A big thank you to all who entered and volunteered at the County Fair this year. You helped make it another successful event, informing the public and maybe inspiring curious minds to become beekeepers. Special thanks to Dave Peterson and Bonnie and Gary Morse for the loan of their observation hives, Wendy Lee for securing the bee friendly plant display from West End Nursery in San Rafael. Please consider visiting them for your planting needs. Mary and Neil Norquist and Marina Wright in helping with the display set up. I hope everyone had fun and enjoyed the fair, now is the time to start thinking about next year's entries.

This year our judge was Olivier Azancot, owner of Café Bastille on Belden Lane in the Financial District. He was a gracious last minute replacement for Michele after some unexpected health issues kept her from the judging. There were some great entries, especially Gary's molded beeswax candles, but we could always have more, so please start considering next year. Thank you.

BTW, a woman's hat was found at the booth. Let Dan know if you misplaced yours.



The Bee Booth Ready for the Public

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

Honey

Eucalyptus Blend

- 1st Roy Crumrine, Tiburon, CA
- 2nd Marina Wright, Sausalito, CA
- 3rd Roy Crumrine, Tiburon, CA
- 4th Linda Albion, Woodacre, CA

Floral

- 1st Orla Meehan, San Rafael, CA

Wild Flower

- 1st Bill Papendick, San Rafael, CA
- 2nd Will Ackley, Sonoma, CA
- 3rd Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA
- 4th Beth Renneisen, Fairfax, CA

Crystallized

- 1st Eric Gustavson, Mill Valley, CA
- 2nd Jim & Barbara Yeager, Corte Madera, CA
- 3rd Bill Papendick, San Rafael, CA
- 4th Rob & Karen Tysinger, Novato, CA

Chunk

- 1st Beth Renneisen, Fairfax, CA
- 2nd Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA
- 3rd Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA
- 4th Marina Wright, Sausalito, CA
- 5th Rob & Karen Tysinger, Novato, CA

Comb

- 1st Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA
- 2nd Rob & Karen Tysinger, Novato, CA
- 3rd Beth Renneisen, Fairfax, CA

Hive Products

Natural Beeswax

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

Molded Beeswax

- 1st Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA
- 2nd Rob & Karen Tysinger, Novato, CA
- 3rd Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA
- 4th Will Ackley, Sonoma, CA

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Hand Dipped Beeswax Candles

- 1st Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA
- 2nd Rob & Karen Tysinger, Novato, CA
- 3rd Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA

Full Frame

- 1st Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA
- 2nd Antonia Lawson, San Rafael, CA
- 3rd Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA
- 4th Rob & Karen Tysinger, Novato, CA

Special Awards

Best of Show – Honey “Marin Beekeepers Award”
Eric Gustavson, Mill Valley, CA

Best of Show – Beeswax
Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA

Best of Show – Full Frame
Daniel Stralka, Mill Valley, CA

Salvisberg Award
Bonnie & Gary Morse, San Rafael, CA

Hive Tips

Yellow jackets are becoming a bigger nuisance around hives. So far, we seem to have had a reprieve from the overwhelming yellow jacket populations of the last few years that relentlessly assaulted colonies in many areas. Nonetheless, this is the time of year when their populations will peak.

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.

Do NOT hang yellowjacket traps on or near your hives. The pheromones that help lure the yellowjackets into the trap may actually be attracting more yellowjackets to your apiary.

A fake hornets nest can be hung nearby to try to discourage them. (See photo.) We’ve had mixed results with this, but hey – it’s just a crumbled up paper

bag so it’s inexpensive and worth a try if you’re having trouble. A plate or bowl with balsamic vinegar may also help to deter yellowjackets.



A “Fake Hornet’s Nest” to Deter Yellowjackets

Robbing by other bees tends to become more problematic at this time of year. If you have a smaller colony, keep an eye out and perhaps consider reducing the entrance (if you haven’t done so already) to 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>

Comb building is done for the season

While there are places in the county where some bees seem to be finding the nectar resources to build a little new comb, in general, comb building is done for the season by this time of year. Don’t expect bees to be able to build out on new frames.

If your bees have a lot of honey, you might consider extracting some now and returning the wet frames to them so they can refill with more nectar.

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Varroa mites. Now is the time to start monitoring your mite levels, if you haven't started already. As fall approaches, we tend to see decreasing colony populations and increasing varroa mite populations. This can be a deadly combination for your colonies. "But we're hardly into summer!" you might be saying. While that may be true, mite numbers are building up now – or may be building up now in your colony.

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 (which some bees do through hygienic behavior (often observed as uncapped pupae), grooming, broodless periods, etc.) or whether a sudden spike this fall 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](#)

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.

Beekeeping Classes

Upcoming Classes

The Hows of Honey with Bonnie Morse

How much you can harvest, how to collect from hive, how to extract, how to clean up, and how to process cappings.
Saturday, September 16, 9am – 12pm, \$50 per person

Location: The Fairfax Backyard Farmer, 135 Bolinas Rd, Fairfax
Tel: 415-342-5092

Fall and Winter Hive Management

The majority of annual hive losses occur between October and December. We review the reasons for this – primarily varroa mites. Other management issues that occur when temperatures start to cool include feeding, managing space, moisture management, how to inspect hives with minimal time / intrusion, and off-season queen issues / solutions.

Classroom sessions:

Wednesdays 9/27 & 10/4, 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Location: San Rafael Community Center

Field Workshop:

Saturday, 10/7, 9:30am – 12:30pm,

Location: TBA

\$85 or \$30 drop in for classroom sessions, \$50 drop in for field workshop

Register through the [San Rafael Community Center](#) course code 27546

Overwintering Your Bees

Preparing for winter, how to handle common winter problems, how to clean up / store equipment.

Saturday, October 21, 9am – 12:00pm, \$50 per person

Location: The Fairfax Backyard Farmer, 135 Bolinas Rd, Fairfax.

Register through [The Fairfax Backyard Farmer](#)

Backyard Beekeeping

Considering becoming a beekeeper? Take the first step by learning about this fascinating and important pollinator. This is a great time of year for new beekeepers to start planning so equipment is ready and bees are ordered in time for the 2018 season.

In this class, you'll learn about the roles of the queen, workers and drones within a colony and how they interact with seasonal cycles. Learn about basic considerations you'll need to take into account before jumping into this exciting new hobby, including where to place your hive, equipment options and sources, bee sources, and time required.

At the end of class, you'll have the opportunity to sample some local honeys from around Marin County.
Saturday, November 11, 9:00am – 12:00pm, \$50 per person

Location: The Fairfax Backyard Farmer, 135 Bolinas Rd, Fairfax

Register through [The Fairfax Backyard Farmer](#).

Limited to 12 people.