

# THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

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September 2018

## What You Missed

Our last meeting was the annual potluck dinner. A smaller group than usual attended this year but the camaraderie was just as strong. 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 new feature of our potluck was home-made ice cream produced using the club's liquid nitrogen container.

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



Making Ice Cream

## What's the Buzz?

Our next meeting will be on Thursday September 6, 2018 at the American Legion Log Cabin, 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo, CA. starting at 7:30 pm. The meeting will feature a talk by Randy Oliver, [scientificbeekeeping.com](http://scientificbeekeeping.com) and regular contributor to American Bee Journal. Meeting starts at 7:30pm at the American Legion Log Cabin at 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo. He will be discussing "Reading Combs: Understanding Bee Biology Over a Season."

### Upcoming Meetings:

**October 4, 2018**

[Elina Nino](#), UC Davis Apiculture Extension and Research, "Effects of Supplemental Forage on Honey bees"

**November 1, 2018**

[Janice Cox](#), Natural Beauty at Home, "Apiary Beauty". Janice will also hold workshops on Saturday, November 3rd.

**December 6, 2018**

Panel discussion on hive designs

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**January 3, 2019**

[Ramesh Sagili](#), Oregon State University, Department of Horticulture, "Honey Bee Nutrition: What We Know, What We Need to Know"

**February 7, 2019**

[Leo Sharaskin](#), Horizontal Hives, "Natural Beekeeping". Leo will also hold workshops on Saturday, February 9th.

**March 7, 2019**

[Billy Synk](#), Director of Pollination Programs, Project Apis m, "Supporting Pollinator Habitat"

**April 4, 2019**

[Rachael Bonoan](#), Post doctoral researcher, Tufts University and Washington State University, "Why Bees Like Dirty Water"

**May 2, 2019**

[Mark Winston](#), Professor and Senior Fellow, Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

**June 6, 2019**

[Tom Seeley](#), Department of Neurobiology and Behavior, Cornell University, "Darwinian Beekeeping"

**July**

No meeting – Marin County Fair

## 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 16th.

Those who have used our extractors know it requires some effort to pickup, use, clean up and return. With this in mind, I plan to again leave my "Honey House" (garage) set up through the weekend of September 22nd & 23rd, if necessary, 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 an 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. <[dpeterson307@aol.com](mailto:dpeterson307@aol.com)> 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.

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, 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.

When you know what you have to extract send an email and preferred time on Saturday. If there are too many to finish on Saturday, we will extend to Sunday.

## From the Librarian's Desk

Welcome back! After a relaxing summer break, the club library is back in business. Please check your shelves and return your borrowings on Thursday. We have a great selection of "how-to" and experience-based books on bees & beekeeping along with older issues of beekeeping magazines.

If you're interested in a subscription to the American Bee Journal, we also have discount forms available.

## Hive Tips

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

**Mentioned last month but worth mentioning again....Yellow jackets continue to be a problem for many beekeepers.** 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 yellow jacket traps on or near your hives. The pheromones that help lure the yellow jackets into the trap may actually be attracting more yellow jackets to your apiary.



### Yellow Jackets at the Door

A fake hornet's nest can be hung nearby to try to discourage them. 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.

**While we wait for the fall flow to start, some bees are having trouble finding enough to eat.** If you haven't been inside your colony recently, it might be worth taking a quick peek to make sure they've got enough to eat. While I've seen a lot of colonies with excess honey ready to harvest recently, I've also seen quite a few colonies with NO food whatsoever. Those bees need help to get ready for winter! A full size colony (example 2 deep boxes or 4 medium boxes) needs about 30 lbs. stored for a Marin winter. A small

colony (like a 5 frame nuc colony) needs about 50/50 brood/food ratio.

**Late Summer and Fall Hive Management.** The days are getting shorter, and bees should have already started getting 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 tends to still be high at this time of year (though this will vary based on location as well as strength of individual hives), 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) to prevent 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.

**Varroa mites.** Mite levels are climbing and it's time to check the infestation level of your hives. As fall approaches, we tend to see decreasing colony populations and increasing varroa mite populations. This can be a deadly combination for your colonies. About ½ the colony losses in Marin occur between October – December, and many of these losses are a direct result of varroa mites and the diseases they vector.

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.

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Mite drops on monitoring boards under screened bottom boards may not give an accurate indication of what's happening inside the colony.

Two other alternative ways to test are by using an alcohol wash or by doing a sugar roll. Information on [how to do a sugar roll to determine varroa infestation % is available from the University of Minnesota](#) Bee suppliers are now selling a "Bee Squad Varroa Testing Kit" with everything you need.

## QUILT AUCTION

The auction conducted at the pot luck took in \$1325. \$662.50 will be going to 1) Pollinator Partnership - for Puerto Rico Bee Relief efforts and 2) Habitat plantings at Dominican convent and Santa Sabina. The large quilt by Diana Sammataro brought in \$1200 (\$1250 - \$50 shipping) and was purchased by an out of state person. Couldn't make it to the potluck? You'll have another chance to bid on quilts by Diana Sammataro and misc. bee themed stuff (jewelry, mugs, towels, etc.) at our December meeting. The December silent auction will benefit Bees for Development.



## Randy Oliver Workshops



Saturday, Sept 8th:

Randy will be leading two workshops for which you can register now on Eventbrite (click below on "Handling Bees" or "Mite Management").

1) 9am - 12pm: [Handling Bees](#)

He will also cover nutrition and seasonal management issues.

2) 1pm - 4pm: [Mite Management](#) and breeding for resistance.

Each session will be \$50 per person and have max of 20 people. Richard and Karen Hyde will be hosting at their home apiary in Belvedere. Address will be sent to registered participants the week before the workshops.