

THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

Volume 10, Issue 10

November 2018

What's the Buzz?

Our next meeting will be on Thursday November 1, 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 [Janice Cox](#), Natural Beauty at Home. She will be discussing "Natural Beauty from the Hive".

Upcoming Meetings:

December 6, 2018

Panel discussion on hive designs

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

What You Missed

Our last meeting featured a talk by Elina Nino, PhD, UC Davis Extension Apiarist. Her talk was titled "Forage for Honey Bees within an Agricultural and Urban Context".

Newly founded California Pollinator Consortium - a varied group studying various aspects of pollinators and their behavior.

The California Pollinator Consortium:

- Promote sharing of ideas and information among faculty, staff, students and affiliates working with pollinators and pollination.
- Promote synergistic collaboration among researcher and others working on pollinators.
- The days of easy funding are gone so the various groups are working together to obtain funding.

Upcoming UC events:

- Bee Symposium March 2, 2019
- California Honey festival May 4, 2019
- International Conference for Pollinator biology health and policy July 17-20, 2019

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E.L Nino Bee Lab:

- Characteristic biotic and abiotic stressors affecting colony health.
- Lots of issues faced by bees and beekeepers:
 - Varroa
 - Pesticides
 - Pathogens
 - Food Supplies
 - Beekeeper practices

Insufficient Nutrition:

- Honey bees need diversity of pollen sources.
- Better nutrition improves honey bees immune/detox response.
- Helps deal with pathogens, even pesticides.

Many groups have formed to work on honey bee nutrition:

- Project Apis m.
- The Bee and Butterfly Habitat Fund – encouraging extra forage around farms
- Honey Bee Health Coalition
- Pheasants Forever.

There is little data to document that bees need variety of nutrition. The California Pollinator Consortium undertook a longitudinal assessment of two forage mixes:

1. Native California Mix - Developed by professor Neil Williams
2. A Mustard Mix – Developed by Project Apis M.

Study of the two mixes:

- Start tracking colonies before, during and after almond bloom.
- Measured:
 - Resource use
 - Colony growth – adults, brood and weight
 - Varroa mite infestation
 - Pathogen load
 - Immune competence

Because of all the rain the wildflowers didn't bloom until after the almond bloom. Because of this they were only able to study the mustard mix

Adult bee population size was significantly higher for colonies with access to mustard plantings in comparison to control groups. Wildflowers also attracted more native bees, which increases the pollination efficiency of honey bees during the almond

bloom.

Later in the season the population of adult bees evened out between the various study groups. This indicated that extra forage later in the year would be beneficial.

Varroa mites – not much difference between groups.

Later in the year had a terrible mite problem: There was a great deal of deformed wing virus in the study hives. They think that it might have been from outside sources, since they had many beekeepers around the experimental sites

Overall found that the hives exposed to the mustard bloom had a lower mortality rate.

Protecting Pollinators with economically feasible and environmentally sound practices:

Which plants do bees prefer?

Are systemic pesticides found in nectar and pollen of horticultural plants in harmful levels?
Can pollinator-comparable best management practices be developed and adopted by growers?
Is "pollinator friendly" labeling of interest?

Which plant do bees prefer:

Sampling of plant preference took place weekly from July to September. Five minute timed counts were made. Work will continue for four more years.

Nepeta (catmint) and Zinnia were found to be the most attractive to pollinators in the Hagen das Honey Bee Haven. Honey bees preferred tubular flower vs. flat flowers.

Bees at the Haven – plants are all pollinator supportive, most are native and drought tolerant. The plant list is on the website. There are 85 species, 26 genera, 5 families.

Plants are not only attractive to certain pollinators but also certain cultivars within a species. Some hybrids were less attractive to pollinators than the original cultivar.

Effect of irrigation and plant cultivar on bee attraction:

New project just starting

Also starting study of landscape context for bees in PA and CA studying:

- Forage quality
- Insecticide intensity
- Colony density
- Modeling impact of landscape context and management on bee health

They are recruiting beekeepers for 2019 to participate in the study

Latest resource from UC Davis:

- Best Management Practices for urban areas, including list of approved miticides.

Janice Cox Workshop

Janice will be leading two workshops on Saturday, November 3rd (click below on "Register on Eventbrite" to sign).

9am to 12pm: ["Natural Beauty Products from the Hive"](#)

Cost: \$50. [Register on Eventbrite](#). To be held in Novato at the home of Rob & Karen Tysinger. (Address to be sent to registered participants the week prior.)

Join Natural Beauty expert and author of the newly revised *Natural Beauty from the Garden*, Janice Cox and learn to create your own natural skin and hair care products. The skin is our largest organ and the products and ingredients we use have a direct impact on our overall health and wellness. Learning to create your own products is fun, cost effective and will also make you a better consumer. Honeybees are nature's best cosmetologists. They produce natural beauty ingredients that science has yet to duplicate. You will create: Honey Shampoo, Honey Oatmeal Cleanser, Facial Toner, Natural Clay Facial Mask, Honey Aloe Sheet Mask, Soothing Honey Cream and Moisturizing beeswax lip balm. The use of garden herbs and flowers will also be discussed and how you can customize your own products. All materials are included and you can take home the products you create. (Books will be available for sale at a discounted price of \$19.95)

1pm to 4pm: ["Natural Beauty Products from the Garden – Holiday Gifts"](#)

Cost: \$50. [Register on Eventbrite](#). To be held in Novato at the home of Rob & Karen Tysinger.

(Address to be sent to registered participants the week prior.)

Join Natural Beauty expert and author of the newly revised *Natural Beauty from the Garden*, Janice Cox and learn to create your own natural skin and hair care products using ingredients you already have in your home. Learning to create your own products is fun, cost effective and will also make you a better consumer. They also make wonderful gifts for friends and family. You will create a Honey Bath Bomb, Lavender Bath Salts, Beeswax Lip Balm, Facial care kits including DIY sheet masks, and a soothing Gardeners hand cream. Gift ideas and packaging will also be discussed. All materials are included and you can take home the products and gifts you create.

(Books will be available for sale at a discounted price of \$19.95)

Hive Tips

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

Reducing Hive Size

Temps are dropping and your beekeeping season is winding down. Time to start thinking about winter preparations, if you haven't already (though the bees have been getting ready for months). Remove unused space and unneeded honey. In our area, bees need about 30 lbs. of honey per colony going into the winter. For smaller colonies, a guide would be to have about 50% food / 50% brood.

If you have a box on top of the hive that has no (or very little) built out comb on the frames, it needs to come off for winter. It is highly unlikely the bees will be building comb up there this season and that is a lot of dead air space where heat generated by the cluster will escape.

Mites!

Fall is a time for increasing problems with mites in colonies. Bee populations are reducing for winter and mite numbers are going up in colonies with little mite resistance or tolerance. This can lead to crashing colonies.

Ideally, you started checking your levels in August...if not sooner. But that doesn't mean you are out of the woods, even if you treated your colony or they had a low infestation %. There is a high hive density in some areas of the county (particularly in high population areas along the 101 corridor) and the problems of one

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hive can quickly become the problems of another through drifting and robbing.

Speaking of mites, this from Randy Oliver on 10/9/18 to the Marin County Beekeepers:
"Please pass on my appreciation to your members-- their donation helps me to cover my research expenses. In the past two weeks, I've paid assistants over \$2400 to glue metallic tags onto bees in high-mite colonies. I'm recovering those tags from low-mite hives in the neighborhood. I've now documented substantial bee drift into the hives placed 300 feet away on the other end of my property, and as of yesterday, have recovered three tags from an apiary over 1/2 mile away! The above findings document the problem that many of you are experiencing with "mite bombs" in your midst.

I couldn't do this research without support such as yours."

Where are all the drones?

Drones are few and far between in most colonies right now. Some resourceful colonies still have some drones around – and even continue to raise drones – but they have all but disappeared in other colonies.

What does this mean to you? Well, if you have a colony that supercedes the queen this fall, the new queen may have difficulty mating, or getting well mated. It also means you should be particularly careful during hive inspections as a colony may have a more difficult time replacing a killed or injured queen despite weather that would make mating flights possible.



Getting Hives Ready for Winter

Drivert Sugar

Marin Beekeeper Diane Greenberg is once again organizing an order of Drivert Sugar for any member interested.

The sugar comes in 50# bags and will cost \$40 per 50# bag. This price has not changed in 4 years. If you want to share your 50# bag with someone else, you have to arrange that yourself. Diane will not coordinate splitting bags.

Orders must be placed by November 23rd and paid for via check or PayPal to Diane at diane@dianesbees.com (use friends and family so that she is not charged for your order).

Checks can be mailed to Diane at 2204 Laguna Vista Dr. Novato, CA 94945 and must be received by November 23rd. Email Diane at above email for more details and the address for pickup.

The sugar is going to arrive November 30th and **must** be picked up between 12:00-1:00pm. Each person must pick up their purchase that day, or arrange to have someone else pick it up for them.

Thanks a Lot

Since it is the Thanksgiving time of year, I would like to acknowledge some of the people who help make the newsletter better.

Thanks to the contributors including Bonnie Morse for Hive Tips and other articles throughout the year, Marina Wright for keeping us informed about what is happening in the library, and Dave Peterson for writing about goings on from time to time.

I also want to thank my wife, Karen, who proofreads the newsletter every month, making me look like a much better writer than I actually am.

Rob Tysinger

Beekeeping Classes

Classes with Bonnie Morse:

All classes offered through the Fairfax Backyard Farmer. Contact them at <http://www.fairfaxbackyardfarmer.com/> to enroll.

Backyard Beekeeping (Sat. November 10 Sat. December 1, or Sun. March 9 or Sat. April 27, 9:00am – 12:00pm)

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 2016 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.
Location: The Fairfax Backyard Farmer, 135 Bolinas Rd, Fairfax
Limited to 12 people.

Beginner Beekeeping class series (9 hours, \$119)

Know you want to keep bees? 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.

\$30 discount if you already took the Backyard Beekeeping Class. Some of the information will be repetitive, but there's a lot of information, so probably not a bad thing!

Class room sessions: Saturdays, January 26 & February 2, 9am – 12pm (2 classes, drop in fee = \$50/class, if space available)

Field Day: Sat., March 16, 9:30am – 12:30pm, location TBD, tent. San Geronimo (drop in fee = \$60, register in advance to get address and additional information)
Rain date March 23.
Limited to 12 people.

Intermediate Beekeeping class series (9 hours, \$119)

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.

Class room sessions: Sundays, February 17 & 24, 9am – 12pm (2 classes, drop in fee = \$50/class, if space available)

Field Day: Sat., March 16, 1:30pm – 4:30pm, location TBD, tent. San Geronimo (drop in fee = \$60, register in advance to get address and additional information)

Rain date March 23.

Limited to 12 people.

Intermediate Beekeeping (Saturday, April 6, 9:00am – 12:00pm, \$60)

Don't have time for the Intermediate class series but need help with your new colony? An overwintered colony has explosive growth potential. This class will focus on space management: expanding hive size for spring, swarm prevention- and if that fails, swarm capture, and setting up bait hives for swarms.
Limited to 12 people.

Special Offer!

Stunning new bee book available through Deep Snow Press editor Leo Sharashkin (who will be speaking in Marin again and leading workshops in February 2019):

"HONEY FROM THE EARTH: BEEKEEPING AND HONEY HUNTING ON SIX CONTINENTS"

This book took 15 years to produce. You'll be totally amazed Visit 23 different countries, witnessing the breathtaking diversity of bees and beekeeping traditions around the world. This is the most stunning collection of bee imagery ever made, complete with insightful narrative by Tom Seeley, Kirk Webster, and other bee geniuses.

To see more and to purchase go to:

<http://horizontalhive.com/keeping-bees-with-a-smile/honey-from-the-earth.shtml>

It's a large 12"x12" hardcover, with 352 pages of magnificent photographs and stories. Get it with a \$10 discount now through Nov. 30, 2018.

Some of the things you'll see:

- Chinese farmers pollinating orchards by hand after bees disappear
- Bees by the truckload - industrial beekeeping in America
- Scaling cliffs to reach honeycombs of the giant bees in Nepal
- Getting honey from killer bees in Panama
- Honey myths from the heart of the African jungle
- Straw skeps in Germany and Romania
- Rooftop urban beekeeping in Hong Kong
- The surreal honey-making ants of the Australian desert
- The most exotic stingless bees of the tropics and SO MUCH more!