

# THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

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## What You Missed

Our last meeting featured a talk by Dr. [Mark Winston](#), Professor and Senior Fellow, Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. Dr. Winston ran one of the foremost bee research programs at Simon Fraser University before moving to the Centre for Dialog.

He has written two books about his time as a bee researcher; exploring the intricate ways we come to understand our world through language and through science. "Bee Time", which was published in 2014 and "Listening to the Bees", which was published in 2018.

"Listening to the Bees" was written in collaboration with poet Renee Sarojini Saklikar. It is a mixture of essays and poetry.

Dr. Winston then read several excerpts from his books including:

About his time as a naturalist in the South American jungle (Listening to the Bees).

Legend of the Bees, a poem by Renee Sarojini Saklikar (Listening to the Bees).

Colony Collapse Disorder (Bee Time).

Queen Pheromone Research (Listening to the Bees).

Once Upon a Bee Project (Bee Time).

Gone but not Forgotten (Listening to the Bees).

Dr. Winston's books are available at Book Passage in Corte Madera.

## What's the Buzz?

Our next meeting will be on Thursday June 6, 2019 at the American Legion Log Cabin, 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo, CA. starting at 7:30 pm. The meeting will feature Dr. [Tom Seeley](#), Department of Neurobiology and Behavior, Cornell University. He will be speaking on "Darwinian Beekeeping", or how we can mimic successful feral colonies in our bee management practices.

### Upcoming Meetings:

#### July

No meeting – Marin County Fair  
(See Page 4 for more information about the fair)

#### August - TBA

Annual Marin Beekeepers potluck

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# Hive Tips

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

**Depending on where you live in the county, conditions are very different for bees at this time of year. Do you live close to many irrigated gardens? Then your bees may still be building comb, and even getting ready to swarm!**

- o **Are they already making preparations to swarm...**i.e. swarm cells? You won't stop swarming by adding more space. You can take a split with the queen – and without any frames with queen cells – to (likely\*) stop them from swarming. This is basically a swarm (except they will get some comb and perhaps some food). By removing the queen and part of the colony, you have done what they were already planning to do. Now, leave the original colony (with queen cells) alone for at least 3 weeks to do what they were already planning to do – get a new queen to replace the one that left in the “swarm”.

\* **“likely”**... if they are left with too many bees, they could still have a secondary swarm.

- o My bees swarmed – now what?? Well, not soon after the swarm leaves, multiple queens may be emerging. It's a “Game of Thrones” situation in there with virgins vying for right to lead the colony. And after all that fighting, they'll still need to go on mating flights. Best you can do is be patient. Put it on your calendar to check them again in three weeks. By then, you should evidence of a mated queen, if not the queen herself. No evidence? Give them another frame of brood so they can try again.

Drone laying queens vs laying workers:

- o Chances are, a new queen (whether due to supercedure or swarming) will successfully return from her mating flights, there are a percentage that do not.
- o How do you determine whether it's a drone laying queen or laying worker?
  - A drone laying queen will tend to have a regular brood pattern (tight, centered in the hive) and single eggs in the center of cells. To correct:
    - Find the drone laying queen and remove her. Then introduce a frame of brood with eggs/ young larvae so they can make a

new queen, OR,

- combine (preferably with newspaper method to slow the combination of the two colonies) with a queenright colony
- In either case – it is imperative that you find and remove (aka kill) the drone laying queen. If not, they will either not make a new queen, or if you combine with a queenright colony, the queens will fight and the queen capable of laying fertilized eggs might not win the battle.
- o Laying workers will tend to have more of an irregular brood pattern and you will find multiple eggs – not centered – in cells. To correct:
  - Combine with stronger queenright hive using the newspaper method.
  - Shake / brush all bees out 20+ yards from the hive. Return hive / frames to original location. Foragers will return. Laying workers – who have not been outside the hive – will not. Introduce a frame of brood and now bees will create a new queen.
- o **A Simple Formula for Splitting: #7 Split = 2+2+2+1 (for a 5 frame nuc box)**
  - 2 frames of brood (one capped, one mixed age that has eggs/young larvae from which bees can start queen cells)
  - 2 frames of food (include pollen and nectar/capped honey)
  - 2 frames of bees shaken in (preferentially from brood frames that have a lot of nurse bees; return brood frames to parent hive after shaking bees into your split)
  - 1 empty frame
  - Check split in 2-3 days to be sure they are making queen cells (no queen cells? Are you sure you didn't get the queen?)
  - After ensuring that bees have queen cells, then be patient and wait for about 30 days +/- . By then, if the queen successfully returned from her mating flight(s) you will likely see capped brood.
- o **If you haven't done so already, it's time to set up your bait hives!**
  - If you plan to set out bait hives this year, now is a good time to do so. (We've already had one move in this season.)
  - Review Tom Seeley's book, Honeybee Democracy, for complete details on what his

research has shown that swarms prefer in a nesting cavity.

- No time to read? Local beekeepers report success with the following set up:
  1. Deep hive box
  2. A couple of frames with empty built out combs (if you have them) in the center surrounded by empty frames with starter strips (or just empty space – but you'll need to add frames soon after they move in or else they will start building from the top of the box).
  3. Entrance reducer set to medium.
  4. Box above the ground 2-3' (higher if you are able).
  5. Optional: Spray lemon grass tea (boil lemon grass until you make a dark tea) or other substances mimicking queen pheromones on the top of the frames and entrance of the hive.
  6. Wait to observe scouts!



**Installing a Bait Hive**

## Become a Citizen Scientist

(A message from Randy Oliver of Scientific Beekeeping)

Hi All,

Everyone talks about late-season mite drift into their hives, but there is surprisingly little hard data on the actual number of mites that manage to do so. So I'm asking for volunteers for a citizen science project. I'm looking for beekeepers willing to take twice-a-week stickyboard counts from August through fall. OK to miss counts for vacations, etc. Please email me for the protocol, as we need more volunteers in urban, suburban, and rural areas across the country (and around the world).

Any volunteers can email me at: [randy@randyoliver.com](mailto:randy@randyoliver.com) please put "Mite Drift Project" in the subject line, and I'll send the protocol.

Thanks,  
Randy

## A Silver Anniversary

It's hard to believe but this year will mark Dan Stralka's 25th year as our booth coordinator at the Marin County Fair. Dan will receive special recognition during the fair and we are adding our congratulations and thanks to Dan for all he does to make our Marin Beekeepers booth so successful. Well done Dan!

## From The Desk of the Librarian

Thanks to everyone for supporting the library this season with a special thank you to Doug Fairclough for pitching in while I was out of town. Come by on Thursday to check out some titles for the summer. We will be back again in September. Oh - and if you bring books back this week, there's a chance you'll win a fun prize!

## County Fair Time



The 2019 Marin County Fair is fast approaching. Entry forms and category descriptions, as well as this year's entertainment schedule are posted online:

<https://www.marinfair.org/2019/concerts>

If you entered last year you should have received an entry package. If not, or if you are entering for the first time, you can view the 10 category descriptions for the Adult Honey Department on the Fair website, under Competitive Exhibits:

<https://www.marinfair.org/-/media/files/fair/2019/exhibits/food-and-beverage/honey.pdf?la=en>

Entry forms are available at:

<https://www.marinfair.org/-/media/files/fair/2019/exhibits/entry-information/entry-form.pdf?la=en>

And remember that you can now enter online. Enter as many categories as you would like. You must enter to win!

You might also be interested in another category that showcases honey, Winemaking, Division 15, Mead Wines.

Important dates:

Entry forms by **May 16**, online June 3

Entries received **Friday, June 7, 3 pm to 7 pm & Saturday, June 8, 10 am to 5 pm, at the Exhibit Hall.**

Judging will be the following day on Sunday June 9.

The actual Fair dates this year are **Wednesday July 3 to Sunday July 7.**

Dan will be posting a fair schedule on the Buzz and will have it at the meetings. As in the past, we'll need two volunteers to answer bee questions for a few hours during each time period. This is a great opportunity for us to do some PR for the bees, for the club to get some exposure with the public, and for you to have fun talking about bees. All the exhibits entered will be on display as well as an observation hive for you to practice finding the queen. You'll get a free admission the fair and can spend the rest of the day looking at everything else that the fair has to offer and enjoying the entertainment, which is all part of entry.

Please note the dates and plan on participating in the fun.



## Need Equipment in a Hurry?

If you find your growing colony – or recently acquired swarm – or split made to prevent a swarm – is in need of equipment ASAP, we have a source in Marin County for bee equipment! The Fairfax Backyard Farmer. 135 Bolinas Rd, Fairfax, CA. **415-342-5092**  
Open Wed – Friday, 11am - 6pm, Sat noon – 6pm, Sun noon to 5pm.