

THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

Volume 11, Issue 10

October 2019

What You Missed

Our last meeting featured a talk by Rosalyn Johnson, PhD, yardbio.org, Yardbio, short for backyard biodiversity, is a biodiverse garden consulting company that is managed by an adventurous naturalist and wildlife ecologist, Ros Johnson, PhD, whose education is in native bee ecology, and who has experience with native plants from the prairie wilds of the Midwest to swampy Florida, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Yardbio's vision is to add to the growing patchwork of native garden spaces in the Bay Area to help support local pollinators and wildlife one backyard at a time.

Ros' PhD research was on native bee diversity with positively correlated plant diversity (including weeds) in farm fields. Plant diversity encourages animal diversity. This finding is not new. It is often repeated in ecology.

Loss of insect diversity is happening in a global context of anthropocentric environmental losses. Humans have wiped out a large percentage of the animal populations. She thinks we should change what we plant in our yards. Get rid of lawns and exotic plants. Plant more natives

Knowledge of insect status in California is limited. Broad insect surveys that repeat are needed but are difficult to fund

Experts are concerned

- Is it pesticides?
- Habitat loss?
- Climate change?
- A combination?

Status: Are CA native bees endangered or threatened?

8 species of bees are endangered but 7 of those are in Hawaii and one in the eastern US.

See What You Missed continued on Page 2

What's the Buzz?

Our next meeting will be on Thursday October 3, 2019 at the American Legion Log Cabin, 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo, CA. starting at 7:30 pm. The meeting will feature a talk by [Jon Zawislak](#), Apiculture Instructor, University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service. His presentation will be on small hive beetles.

Upcoming Meetings:

November 7, 2019

A Panel of local beekeepers, "Products from the hive: demos and sales"

December 5, 2019

Megan Denver and Jorik Phillips, [Hudson Valley Bee Supply](#), [Bees for Development](#), "The Resource Hive" and auction to benefit Bees for Development

January , 2020

[Toni Burnham](#), DC Beekeepers Assn, Regular Bee Culture contributor, "Teaching Bees to Kids"

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February 6, 2020

A Panel of local beekeepers, "Beekeeping in Other Countries"

March 5, 2020

[Andony Melathopolous](#), Asst Professor, Pollinator Health Extension, [Department of Horticulture](#), Oregon State University, Topic TBD

April 2, 2020

[Meghan Milbraith](#), Michigan State University Extension, [Northern Bee Network](#), "Why Bees are the Coolest"

May 7, 2020

[Anne Leonard](#), Associate Professor, University of Reno, "How Flower Rewards Shape Interactions between Bees and Plants"

June 4, 2020

[Wyatt Mangum](#), American Bee Journal columnist, Author *Top-Bar Beekeeping: Wisdom and Pleasure Combined* and *Bee Child*, "History of Bees and Hives in America"

July 2020

Marin County Fair

have pollinator plants at that time. Planting seeds maybe the solution. You can't collect seeds in wildlands without a permit. Try to buy local plants. If you can't find the plants you want locally, you should at least go for natives.

What is habitat gardening?

Habitat is an area that provides food, water, and shelter for the species in which you are interested.

Things to consider

- The more diverse your plants the more diverse the bees you'll attract.
- Don't transplant from wild areas. Bees are already using it and it is illegal in some cases.
- Native plants and seeds are widely available in Marin.
- Water for pollinators is an important part of the garden – provide some kind of surface for the bees to land on to collect without drowning.
- Habitat gardens tend not to look manicured.

Resources for plants:

- Marin Master gardener list – on MBK website
- Calscape.org - interactive
- California Bees and Blooms by Gordon Franke, Robin Thorpe, et al. – club has a copy in the library (ties California natives to California bees)

Vision:

If we add native and other pollinator plants to the landscape, we can begin to undo the damage done by lawn development and the planting of non-native and invasive plants.

In the face of uncertainty over insect declines what can we do?

- Rebuild insect populations by restoring backyard habitat that support them.
- Avoid or limit pesticide usage.
- Plant pollinator plants for seasonal blooming.
- Leave space to ground bee nesting (70% of native bees are ground nesting). Don't mulch everywhere.
- Provide cavity nest.

Do you augment the landscape for your bees? What trees, crops, and pollinator plants do you grow?

Master Gardener pollinator list is one of the best she has seen. It is better to plant as the rainy season starts. Easier to dig and the plants will get more sufficient water. Unfortunately nurseries don't always

Party at Peterson's

The annual Group Extraction at Dave Peterson's Honey House (garage) went off without a hitch last weekend. Dave reported that thirteen members used his setup, extracting 181 frames of honey.

After extracting his supers for the year during the week, Dave makes the uncapping bin and extractor available for Club Members with a small number of frames to extract. This saves a lot of wear and tear on the equipment from being picked up and returned, not to mention the savings in time to set up and clean up after use.

The club has five extractors, a hand crank four-frame extractor, two six-frame extractors, one twelve-frame extractor, and one 20-frame extractor. The four-frame extractor will fit in most vehicles; the two six-frame extractors will fit in most SUVs, station wagons, and some cars. The twelve-frame will also fit in station wagons and SUVs, the largest may need a truck to transport.

Dave Peterson manages the four-frame, a six-frame and the twelve-frame extractor. He is located in Ross. His contact info for Dave Peterson is dpeterson307@aol.com

Mary and Neil Nordquist manage a 20-frame extractor. They are located in Novato. Their contact info for Neil Nordquist is neilmary@verizon.net

Rob Tysinger manages the other six-frame extractor. He is also in Novato, contact info for Rob is rob@tysingerengineers.us

Each extractor comes with a cappings tub, straining screens, uncapping knife, and honey bucket with gate valve, everything you need to extract.

To reserve an extractor, contact one of the people listed above to see if the extractor they manage is available when you want it

Hive Tips

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

Reducing Hive Size

Temperatures are dropping and your beekeeping season is winding down. It is 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 to.

Mites!

'Tis the season for mite problems in colonies. A colony reducing its population for winter coupled with increasing mite levels can lead to crashing colonies.

Ideally, you started checking your levels in August...if not sooner. If not, it's not too late to start checking. Not sure how? Check out [this pamphlet produced by the bee lab at the University of Minnesota](#).

You really can't tell just by looking at a colony how bad the mites are. Sure – you know you have a problem with a significantly decreased adult population and when you see sick larvae and discolored uncapped pupae. But don't be fooled by what appears to be a thriving colony with frames of apparently healthy brood. You never know what is feeding on the underside of your bees unless you check.

As we saw with the two years of data collected in the broodless study, monitoring boards under screened bottom boards may not give you an accurate reflection of what's going on the hive. Sugar rolls (or alcohol washes) are important tools for determining the level of infestation in your colony.

Where are all the drones?

Drones have started to disappear for the season. Some resourceful colonies still have some drones around – and are even continue to raise drone – but they have all but disappeared in others.

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

Bee Classes

Beauty from the Hive

(Saturday, November 9, 9:00am – 12:00pm, \$85, includes materials fee)

Using the recipes from Janice Cox's books and ingredients from the hive, we will make: 1) Bath bombs, 2) Bath salts, 3) Hand cream, 4) Lip balm. You will get to take home your creations.

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

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

Backyard Beekeeping (Saturday, November 23, 9:00am – 12:00pm, \$60.)

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 2020 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.

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

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

Limited to 12 people.

4H Beekeeping Project

The local 4H is having a 4H Bee Keeping Project kick off meeting on October 6 from 1 to 2:30 at the First Congregational Church of San Rafael, 8 N. San Pedro Road, San Rafael. Kids ages 5 to 18 are welcome!

They will have 5-6 meetings during the year and will meet on Sundays. You will not only learn about bees, but about what you can make with products from the hive too.

If you are interested, email club member Cecil Nielsen at crnielsen@comcast.net or just come to the first meeting. Enrollment cost for 4H for 2019-2020 is \$65 for kids.

They would welcome any Beeks that would like to come to the meetings and share their knowledge, provide project ideas, share their bee stories, invitations to visit to their apiaries, watch extractions, see different beekeeping equipment, etc.

4H is also looking for a location where they can set up a hive come spring! If you think you can help, please reach out. They could also use donations of bees, bee suits, hive tools, and other equipment.

Pollinator Plant Sales

Fall is a great time for planting. You can take advantage of fall root growth, winter rains, followed by spring root growth so a plant can get better established before another dry summer sets in requiring a lot of irrigation to keep plants looking their best. There will be two opportunities to purchase pollinator plants this fall:

October 12
Marin California Native Plant Society presents:

PROMOTING POLLINATORS!

An Educational Fair and mini Plant Sale, 10 am to 1 pm. Bay Model Visitors Center, 2100 Bridgeway, Sausalito, CA

LOTS of free parking available; kids hands-on activities, too.

October 26
Marin ACE Hardware.

Our friends at Marin ACE Hardware are once again holding a fall pollinator plant sale with 20% of the proceeds going to a bee habitat project. All plants are sourced from neonic-free growers.

Marin ACE Hardware is located at 180 Merrydale Rd, San Rafael, CA 94903, across the freeway from the Marin Civic Center.

Want to help out from 11am - 2pm and talk about bees and point people in the direction of their favorite plants? Email Bonnie: bonnie@bonniebeecompany.com.