

THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

Volume 11, Issue 12

December 2019

What You Missed

Our last meeting featured presentations by Marin Beekeeper members Anna Taylor, Marina Wright, Mary Nordquist, Gary Morse, and Bonnie Morse about various hive products.

Products you can make from the hive

Gary Morse

First Things first Clean up your wax
It takes 9 lbs. of honey to make a pound of wax. Try not to take too much wax off with the cappings. Drain your cappings overnight and then you can render the cappings wax. You can buy a solar melter from the major bee supply outlets. Gary uses a meatloaf pan to collect the wax at the bottom of the wax melter. Gary uses a silicon pan – easier to get the wax out. Gary covers the pan with ¼" hardware cloth that he then covers with cheesecloth, which collects the sludge. You can compost the cheesecloth.

You can then filter the wax through a paper towel to remove any leftover debris. You can also filter the wax through old sweatshirt material.

If you don't want to buy a solar wax melter you can also use a pot with water. Heat the wax and water together. The wax rises to the top. Equipment should be dedicated for beeswax, etc. since cleaning is difficult.

Anna Taylor

Hand dipped candles. The challenging part is finding a container to hold the wax that is tall enough. She found an old tin that a bottle of Scotch whisky came in. Uses bungee cords to hold the container down in the pot of water. Attach the bungee cord from the handles of the pot to the top of the wax container. Have a reserve of melted wax available to top off the container. She uses #4 square braided wicking. Weigh the wicking down with metal nuts tied to the end of the wick to keep it straight at the start. Cut the nuts off after the candle gets started. You need to keep the wax at a uniform temperature, generally when the water is almost simmering. If it is too hot the bottom of

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What's the Buzz?

Our next meeting will be on Thursday December 5, 2019 at the American Legion Log Cabin, 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo, CA. starting at 7:30 pm. The meeting will feature a presentation by Megan Denver and Jorik Phillips , [Hudson Valley Bee Supply](#), [Bees for Development](#), "The Resource Hive". Making and overwintering your own nucs is the key to sustainable beekeeping. The Hudson Valley Resource Hive is more than just another nuc box. By using a partitioned hive body in conjunction with modular four frame deep supers, it allows two smaller colonies to share heat and effectively act as one larger colony in a 4 over 4 configuration, increasing overall winter survivability even in our sometimes harsh Northeast winters. In addition to being a superior way to winter nucs, it's also a great way to alleviate spring swarming, re-queen colonies, get perfect comb drawn in a hurry, produce frames of brood for boosting production hives or making increase colonies just to name a few. It is also an integral part of anyone's treatment free regime. In short...Its Magic! or at least as close as beekeepers get to such a thing.

We will also be holding an auction to benefit Bees for Development. See page 4 for more information.

Upcoming Meetings:

January 2, 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

Marina Wright

Beeswax wraps

Fabric coated with beeswax, intended to replace plastic wrap. They prevent air from contacting food. They are reusable & washable.

Why make them yourself? They are environmentally friendly and you can personalize sizes and fabrics.

What you need?

- Fabric – Marina likes to use cotton (use pinking shears or hem to prevent fraying) wash the fabric first.
- Container for wax
- Cover work surface with parchment paper.
- Need a paint brush to apply to apply the wax.
- Need an iron

How to make Beeswax Wraps

- Melt the beeswax
- Brush fabric with melted wax. You only need to paint one side– don't worry about blobs of wax.
- Sandwich fabric between two pieces of parchment paper
- Iron the parchment paper to smooth out the wax – about 30 seconds
- Peel back the parchment layer - Parchment can be reused.
- Lift fabric off of bottom layer and place on fresh parchment to cool.

They will mold to a container with heat from your hand or you can use a rubber band.

After use -

- Wipe clean
- Wash with cool soapy water
- Hang to dry

Don't

- Microwave
- Put in oven
- Put in dishwasher or washing machine.

Bonnie Morse

Propolis tincture

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the candle will thin out. If it's too cold you end up with ribs. Dip the candle repeatedly, allowing the wax to cool a bit between dips, until you reach the desired diameter. Before you get to the finished dimension you can roll the candle out on a firm surface to smooth it out and then dip it a few more times to finish.

Mary Nordquist

Mary makes rolled beeswax candles. You can buy the sheets of candle wax from the major beekeeping suppliers. They come in several different colors. The sheets have to be soft enough to roll. You want to make sure there is no space between the layers as you roll the candle. Make sure the wick is firmly held in the sheet of wax. Then you roll the sheet into a cylinder.

A carton of ten sheets cost about \$20.

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A lot of beekeepers throw away any propolis that they scrape from their equipment. Propolis is plant resins that are naturally antibacterial and antifungal.

You can collect propolis from dead colonies or from cleaning up supers when harvesting honey.

Put propolis in a glass container. Pour in Everclear, (vodka doesn't work as well). California has a lower volume of alcohol in Everclear than other states. Put in about 1:1 Everclear to propolis. Shake up every once in a while until the propolis is dissolved. Strain to remove the solids.

Propolis ointment - You can use on cuts and scrapes.

1 part beeswax (1/4 cup, 58 g)
4 parts coconut oil (1 cup, 217 g)
1 part honey (1/4 cup, 85 g)
1 part propolis tincture (1/4 cup, 47 g)

In double boiler, melt all (in order). Take off heat. Stir until it starts to congeal. Pour into containers. Containers with screw on lid are best.

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 to.

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

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 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 Ready for Winter

From the Librarian's Desk

The library will be closed on Thursday in order to give you maximum viewing time at our "fun"raiser for Bees for Development. Join in the holiday festivities, find a gift for yourself or a loved one and give a helping hand to fellow beekeepers around the world. We have a number of items to raffle and auction over the course of the evening - perhaps something here can find a home with you ...?

- Antique Swiss smoker
- Pollinators garden platter
- Scrappy striped wall-hanging (23" x 29")
- 1889 copy of Langstroth's "On the Hive and the Honey Bee"
- framed Judie Bomberger print "The Beekeeper"
- tapered candle mold (holds 12)
- antique German honey container
- various books & other treasures!

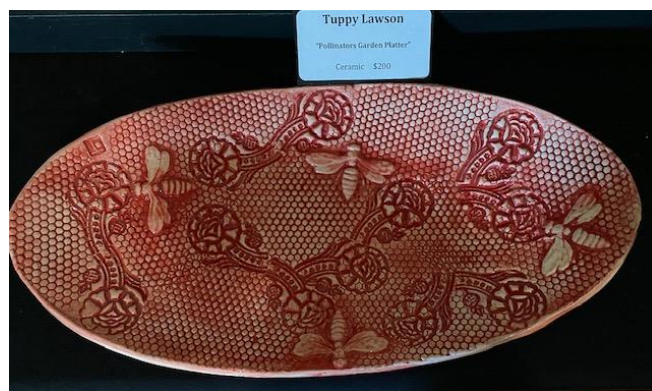
Some of the many auction items that will be available at the December 5th Marin Beekeepers' meeting:



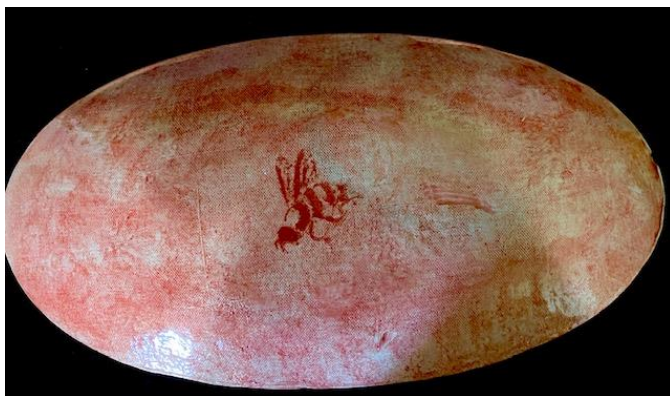
Antique Swiss Smoker



Wall Hanging



Pollinator Garden Platter



Bee Themed Platter

Membership Renewal

Time to Renew Your Membership

If you have already renewed for 2020 or joined after November 1, you can disregard this notice.

Membership dues remain at \$20.00 for another year. Memberships include all family members residing in the same domicile and are for the calendar year. Those new members joining after NOVEMBER 1 are paid through all of 2020. Renewals are due by the January meeting and delinquent after the February meeting. In mid February, we will purge the Buzz, Swarm and BeekAdmin list subscribers who have not renewed by that time.

The best and easiest way to pay your 2020 dues is online at www.marinbeekeepers.org . You do not need to sign in or use a password. Just click on "become a member", fill out the form and submit. Be sure to complete the payment section at the end, which is via PayPal. You do not need to have a PayPal account to pay using a credit card. There is a small transaction fee added to your dues that is assessed by PayPal.

Or you can mail a check payable to Marin Beekeepers to our Treasurer:

Mary Nordquist
2072 Hatch Rd.
Novato, CA 94947

Of course, you can always renew at the door when you come to the monthly meetings by cash, check, or credit card.

Bee Classes

College of Marin, CA

Winter semester, January – March 2020

Re-envisioning Beekeeping in a time of crisis

This course is an introduction to a system-based approach to beekeeping. We will combine contemporary entomological research, the study of natural wild beehive environments and cutting-edge trends in life sciences to better understand the complexities of the life and the needs of honeybees.

For all levels of beekeeping; beginners welcome. Registration will open in early December. More info at <https://www.apisarborea.com/events/>