

THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

Volume 12, Issue2

February 2020

What You Missed

Our last meeting featured a presentation by [Toni Burnham](#) of the D.C. Beekeepers Alliance and a regular Bee Culture contributor. Her talk was titled "Teaching Bees to Kids."

Talking about Honeybees with Kids: Tips, Activities, Resources

A lot of people are terrified about talking to kids while Toni finds it harder to talk to adults that know more about bees.

If you show up in your beekeeping gear the kids will come to you.

Common beekeeper fears:

- Public speaking
- Unruly behavior
- Wrong level
- Being boring
- Ineffectiveness

Speaking:

- Go out with someone else first/volunteer
- Approach as a conversation
- Know how glad they are to meet you
- Get content, time expectations
- Borrow tactics/ slides/ stories/ props
- Arrive early and calm
- Feel free to hide behind props

You are not the Law!

- The teacher or instructor is responsible
- Do not accept a session without an adult leader present
- Ask ahead of time about management routines
- Things will happen: let the teacher handle it

You don't have to go alone:

- Always connect with the teacher/leader and /or ask for a volunteer from your club or a class parent

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What's the Buzz?

Our next meeting will be on Thursday February 6, 2020 at the American Legion Log Cabin, 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo, CA. starting at 7:30 pm. The meeting will feature presentations by local beekeepers, "Beekeeping in Other Countries"

Upcoming Meetings:

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 of "*Top-Bar Beekeeping: Wisdom and Pleasure Combined*" and "*Bee Child*", "History of Bees and Hives in America"

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July 2020

Marin County Fair

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Classrooms: Different Ages, Different Understanding

- Pollination is a second grade next generation science standards 7 – 8 yr. olds
- Small groups with large age ranges are difficult
- Group two grades together at most
- Ask the older kids to help with the younger kids
- You can keep them sitting about 5-7 minutes per grade level
- Slow down, short sentences, check in

The need to meet:

- No child left inside
- Multi-level: listening, touching, smelling, tasting, questioning, exploring feelings
- Beekeeping is a sensory experience
- Combine biology, engineering, history current events, culture, food, art
- Connect classroom to the planet in real time
- You are giving the gift of yourself

The Magic of Observation Hives:

- Vaudeville proverb: never follow a kid or an animal act (be the act)
- Con: not necessarily focused on you (keep the observation hive until you are ready)
- Don't open it early
- Ask kids to look for special things
- There is always something happening
- Supports bee anatomy / colony life talks
- A chance for one-to one interaction

Look like a beekeeper: You

- Jacket
- Bee t-shirt
- Bee earrings
- Bee Shoes

Look like a beekeeper : Them

- jackets, veils
- Gloves (unworn preferred)
- Smokers

- Hat veils
- Clean tools

Toni doesn't recommend suits since they are too hard to get on and off in a short time. Have a designated volunteer to help put gear on. Encourage selfies (have parents take the photos)

It's about time:

- Common class length 45-50 minutes
- Settling in and teacher intro 5 minutes
- Max PowerPoint time for kids 10 – 15 min
- Questions 6 mins
- Switching activity (potential) 3-5 min
- Hands on activity 15 mins

Four kinds of learning:

- Listening, watching
- Touching, feeling, handling
- Writing, making, feedback
- Observing, and reflecting at home

Teacher contributions:

- They can come up with crafts
- Make up a writing subject about bees

Observational Science:

- Handouts, work sheets, how-tos, stuff to grow/watch (make seed balls?)
- Using that observation hive
 - There must always be a designated adult with a hand on the hive
 - Plan to take turns, often 2 dozen+ kids in a class/meeting 8 at an ob hive is a lot
- Have other activity
 - Flower dissection
 - She usually starts with:
 - Short (5 slide) presentation about pollination
 - Open flower (star gazer lily, two kids share
 - Worksheet to label
 - Step by step destruction
 - Find nectar, feel pollen, put it on the stigma
 - "Every grain becomes a seed"
- Good sample fruits and vegetables
 - Strawberries, pumpkins (usually produced by bee pollination) both have lots of seeds

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You can do this in winter

You can still bring in props like veils, drawn comb

Bee anatomy:

- Who's in the hive slides
- Head thorax abdomen review
- Freeze dry a bunch of dead bees (bring extras)
- Short films

Products of the hive:

- Why honey made bees our partners
- Pass out pollen pellets
- Blobs of propolis
- Cut strips of deep thin surplus foundations
- Cut pass out 4" wicks
 - Roll candles
- Honey stick on the way out
- Learn about bee problems
- From fear to friend to champion
- Short presentation (monocultures and pesticides)
- Make seed balls (lots of fun)
- Don't throw at people. Think about where to throw the seed balls

Making nests for native bees:

- A lot of prep but a ton of fun
- Need to bring the blocks of wood predrilled

Tell the world:

- Make posters
 - What would you say to the bees?
 - What should people know about bees ?
 - What makes bees happy?

Several volunteers and materials needed

Plan and Paint a bee box

Organizing a harvest:

Yes this is a commitment, but she has done it with 1000 kids

- Connects kids from the flower through the bee to the bottle
- 3 beekeepers, teacher, a parent or two
- One harvestable frame/ 4 students

Organize 1 – 3 side activities to keep kids busy until their turn and after spinning:

- Pollinator craft ok, seed balls not so much
- Tabling: Different and similar
- Normalizes / plants a seed
- Median visit is 5-10 min
- Props are eye catchers
 - Ob hive
 - Empty hive with some drawn comb
 - Veil glove, smoker, hive tool
 - Tactile - expendable stuff (burr comb, etc.)
- Experiences are education/ extenders

Recommend beekeeping books

Wait until the end to Waggle Dance

Other Ideas are plentiful resources from:

- Pollinator Partnership
- Pollinator Live
- Honeybee Conservancy

LESSON PLANS AND HANDOUTS AVAILABLE:
dcbees@dcbeekeepers.org

Membership Renewal

It is past the time to renew your membership. Annual renewals are due on or before the January Meeting and delinquent after the February 6th Meeting. You only have a few days left to renew before the Dues increase from \$20 to \$30. Act now:

If you wish to renew your Membership now, dues remain \$20 per calendar year. Late renewals will be charge \$30 after February 6. You renew online at www.marinbeekeepers.org. Just click on "become a member", pay using *PayPal (you don't need a PayPal account - you can use a credit card) and be sure to hit submit at the end.

*There is a small service fee when using PayPal.

Or you can mail a check to:

**Mary Nordquist
2072 Hatch Rd.
Novato CA 94947**

You can also join when you come to any of our monthly Meetings – Cash, Check or Credit Card.

Hive Tips

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

This can be a precarious time of year for the bees. This season, January has been relatively warm and dry and forage is plentiful in many areas of the county. Bees are starting to use those resources to build up the population. But they may be doing so without keeping many food reserves available and that growing population can suddenly find itself with a food shortage if we suddenly get prolonged rains or the temperature drops significantly. Bear that in mind as you consider your management options at this time of year.

Adding space...or not

With warm (mid 60's), sunny days in the upcoming forecast it could be a good time to plan an inspection. Keep in mind that even mid-60's can be 30 degrees lower than bees need to keep the brood warm, so you might consider leaving small colonies alone. Not much you can do at this time of year and it will be very difficult...and sometimes impossible...for them to bring temperature around brood (which is likely there) back up to 90+ degrees. The best chance for a small colony right now is for you to be patient and let them alone for another month or more. Otherwise, your curiosity could lead to their demise.

How do you know it's a small colony?

- Perhaps you see very little foraging activity except when it is particularly warm or the colony is in full sun.
- If you have more than one colony, a small colony may have much less foraging activity and less pollen going in than the others.
- Put your ear up to the side of the hive and knock gently. The buzz of a small colony will be much less than that of a larger one. Fewer bees to be buzzing!



Knock and Listen for the Buzz

Booming colonies might benefit from some additional space. Some signs that your colony might be ready for space:

- Lots of foraging activity, even during times of the day when it cooler or the hive is shaded.
- When you open the top, there are lots of bees on the inner cover.
- If the bees had used propolis to plug up entry holes, they are starting to re-open them.

Lower portion may still be empty, even if boxes above are full of bees. We're OK with that. It can be a buffer to help prevent congestion....and swarming....a little later in the season.

Did you have a colony die out? It's important to check your frames and rule out American Foulbrood as a potential reason. While in Marin the chances are low that it was the cause, we do get several reported cases a year. Because it is such a contagious disease, you need to rule it out. Otherwise, other bees in the area could find your colony and rob it out and spread the disease. If a colony has been dead for a while, you'll want to be looking for scales on the bottom of the cells in the brood area. Don't know how to diagnose your dead out? Don't be afraid to ask for help! Post pictures to the Buzz, or ask a beekeeping friend to look at your hive, or bring a frame or two to a Marin Beekeepers meeting, etc.

Time to start getting ready for next season!

- Clean up your equipment from dead outs and pulled honey supers from last season.
- Read a book.
- Sign up for a class.
- Order and assemble new equipment
- Make a plan for your spring bee increases, or what to do with all the excess bees your think your apiary will provide.

The 2020 season will be upon us quickly!

Farm Day

Thursday, March 19, 2020
9:00 am to 12 noon
Marin County Fair Exhibit Hall

The annual Marin County Farm Day is approaching! A few volunteers are needed to staff our Farm Day exhibit.

The 3 hour event is attended by about 1500 elementary

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school children and 800 teachers and parents. The Marin Beekeepers exhibit always draws a crowd, featuring Dave Peterson's observation hive along with beekeeping tools and equipment, educational posters, how to distinguish honeybees from yellow jackets and honey extraction equipment.

It is a great opportunity to connect with kids, their parents and teachers and share some of our knowledge about honey bees. The kids always bring a lot of enthusiasm and questions. Even if you are a new beekeeper, it is a good opportunity to get involved and help out.

If you are interested in helping, please contact Steve Lamb at stlamb1@gmail.com.

If you are not familiar with Farm Day, it is a free, public event in which over 30 exhibitors provide hands-on interactive activities targeted for elementary school youth. It is sponsored by the University of California Ag Extension. It is a little bit like the county fair, but much smaller, without the traffic and parking congestion.

There is more information about Farm Day at:
http://cemarlin.ucanr.edu/Program/4-H_Program/Farm_Day_98/

Help Wanted

The club is looking for a new newsletter writer/editor. After 11 plus years of putting the newsletter together I have decided it is time to give it up to another Beek.

The job entails:

- Attend monthly Marin Beekeeper meetings to report on the speaker's presentation (if you need to miss a meeting, there are others who will provide you with this report)
- Gather articles from others, usually Hive Tips from Bonnie Morse and Library News from Marina Wright. Others from the NUC will provide articles and/or announcements throughout the year.
- Combine everything into a newsletter format (I use Text Boxes in Microsoft Word).
- Convert all that to a pdf and distribute it to the members via The Buzz and posted on the Club's website.

If you are interested please email me at rob@tysingerengineers.us or come talk to me at the monthly meeting. I am not leaving Marin Beekeepers so I will be around to help and give advice about how I have done things until you get comfortable. If you feel the newsletter is an important asset of the Club please consider jumping in and being a part of it.

Rob Tysinger

Bee Classes

Intermediate Beekeeping class series (9 hours, \$185)

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 8 & 15, 9am – 12pm (2 classes, drop in fee = \$65/class, if space available)
Field Day: Sat., March 21, 1:30pm – 4:30pm, location TBD, tent. San Rafael (drop in fee = \$75, register in advance to get address and additional information) Rain date March 23.

[Location & Registration: The Fairfax Backyard Farmer](#),
135 Bolinas Rd, Fairfax
Limited to 12 people.

Backyard Beekeeping (Saturday, March 7 or April 18, 9:00am – 12:00pm, \$65)

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 & Registration: The Fairfax Backyard Farmer](#),
135 Bolinas Rd, Fairfax
Limited to 12 people.

From the Librarian's Desk

Please drop by the Club library this week & check out some new materials, thanks to generous donations by fellow Beeks:

- Storey's Guide to Keeping Honey Bees by Sanford & Bonney - a primer for all things beekeeping, especially suited to beginners
- Beekeeping in Coastal California by Jeremy Rose - a practical reference with special emphasis on the challenges of the California coastal environment
- Bees in Your Backyard by Wilson & Carril - an illustrated guide to bees in North America with great directions to help you identify them

The library has a few books designed to explain bees to children. If you are planning to give a talk at a local school or community event, they are available to borrow - just send me a note at marinamay53@gmail.com so that I can get them to you.