

THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

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March 2020

What You Missed

Our last meeting featured presentations by local beekeepers, "Beekeeping in Other Countries"

Chikara Motomura, a club member and also a documentary film maker, was unable to attend the meeting in person but sent a video that he had shot of beekeeping featuring a Japanese farmer harvesting honey.

Bees and beekeeping in Thailand. Bonnie Morse

There are several different bees in Thailand:

- Apis Dorsata – the giant honeybee.
 - They are headed for extinction due to:
 - Over harvesting, bee harvesters take the entire hive in order to harvest the honey.
 - Loss of habitat and pesticides are the big problems.

A lot can be found in Buddhist temples which are a safe haven for them.

- Live in a single comb outside.
 - They tend to be aggressive.
 - The colonies tend to live close together.
 - Combs can be as large as a meter wide. Each comb will have several thousand bees.
 - They use a shimmer method to discourage predators.

They tend to move every three or four months to follow the nectar flow.

Some that harvest the honey will leave a portion of the comb so that the bees will return to the comb and rebuild.

- Apis Florea – dwarf honeybees.
 - Locals call it the mean bee.

See What You Missed continued on Page 2

What's the Buzz?

Our next meeting will be on Thursday March 5, 2020 at the American Legion Log Cabin, 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo, CA. starting at 7:30 pm. The meeting will feature a panel of local beekeepers. They will discuss swarm capture, bait hives, and extractions.

Upcoming Meetings:

April 2, 2020

Club member, Jennifer Berry. She will discuss requeening.

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"

July 2020

Marin County Fair

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- Dwarf bees nest outside on combs built in trees
- Stingless bees tetragonula spp
 - These are one of the types of bee that they keep for honey production.
 - They are long lived and tend not to abscond.
 - They build tubes to nest in.
 - They are pretty small bees that don't produce a lot of honey.
 - The honey tends to be expensive. Used mostly for medicine.
- Apis ceranae
 - Another bee that they keep for honey.
 - They don't like to be disturbed and tend to abscond.
 - Subject to raiding by Asian hornets.
 - Like a large opening in their hives.
- Apis Melifera
 - Now most common production bee in Thailand.
 - Hive design is a little different from Langstroth.
 - Two small entrance holes to combat the Asian hornets.
 - Sides of hives have flaps that are screened but can be opened for ventilation.

Bees in Honduras – Peter Bauer

Peace Corp Beekeeping 1985-1988

Don't bring your equipment to another country if you are traveling to work bees. This will limit the transmission of disease and pest.

Peter was invited to work with bees in the Honduras via the Peace Corp.

- Melapona – another stingless honey bee.
 - Traditional beekeeping in log hives.
 - ¾ of beekeepers are women. Keep the hives near their houses.
 - Used mostly for medicinal purposes.
 - Top bar hives – they use the Kenyan Top Bar Hive.
 - Top bar hives are cheaper to build and to extract the honey.
 - Normally they cut the honey comb off and crush it by hand.

Africanized Honey Bees (AHB) – usually work with a buddy, one to operate the smoker and the other to manipulate the hive. They use a jumbo smoker to keep the bees calm.

Bait Hives – Peter introduced them to the bait hive up in trees. Hondurans were used to just putting them near the ground which worked well for them. The key is to use old comb in the bait hive. They also used a lot of lemon grass.

AHB swarms make it a challenge to collect a bait hive in a tree.

- American Stingless Bees – tetragonisca angustula
 - Store honey in honey pots.
 - Honey is used for medicine.
 - They don't sting but they do bite.
 - You have to harvest quickly in order to not suffer an attack by the bees.
 - They tend to try to crawl in your ears or nose and attack the soft part of eyes

Hive Tips

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

- **Warm, sunny days are here and swarm season has started!**
 - **Strong hives are building quickly.** If your bees are starting to get crowded, add more space. Most importantly – be sure there is contiguous space in the brood chamber. If you add additional space, but there is only honey between it and brood area, you will not prevent brood area congestion – which is the cause of swarming.
 - **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”.

See Hive Tips continued on Page 3

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

- **Adding a new hive body above the brood with new frames?** Help entice bees to move up by adding a frame of with built out comb in new box. Are you a new beekeeper who doesn't have any frames with built out comb? Help entice the bees to move up by pulling a frame with young brood (young larvae & eggs) up into the new hive body from area below. Nurse bees will stay with these bees and their presence above will entice building in the new hive body. If you do this:
 - Be sure frame you pull up is kept directly above other brood frame(s) for easy access by nurse bees.
 - Replace frame you pulled in lower box. At this time of year (warmer temps so bees can break cluster to access food in different parts of the hive), you can place the replaced frame in the brood cluster area, OR between outermost brood frame & food frame, OR outside last frame in the box.
- **Bees not quite ready for more space above?** But you are concerned about swarm prevention? Add space BELOW. A super below your other hive bodies will give queen potential space to expand into and also give space to returning foragers.
- **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.
- **If you haven't done so already, it's 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 two move-ins 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 or two medium boxes
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

Need Equipment Fast?

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. Open Wed – Sat noon – 7pm, Sun noon to 5pm. 135 Bolinas Rd, Fairfax.

Farm Day



Volunteers Needed for 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!

The 3 hour event is attended by about 1300 school children and 800 teachers and parents, so it is a busy, fun time. The Marin Beekeepers exhibit is always a favorite. It will feature Dave Peterson's observation hive, beekeepers' tools, educational posters, flashcards on honeybee vs. yellow jacket identification and extraction equipment.

This will be the first time many of the attendees will have an up close look at honey bees and beekeeping equipment. It is a great opportunity to connect with children, 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. Six to eight volunteers are needed. If you are interested, please contact Steve Lamb at stlamb1@gmail.com or 415-412-6125.

The last several years, a few of us have had lunch afterwards at McInnis Club Restaurant and we are planning to do so again this year. All who would like to join us are welcome. Dutch treat.

If you are not familiar with Farm Day, it is a free event, open to the public, sponsored by the University of California Ag Extension. It features over 30 exhibitors. It is a little bit like the county fair, but without the traffic and parking congestion.

For more information about Farm Day, go to <http://cemar.ucanr.edu/Programs/4H/FarmDay/>

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

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.

Spring Management of Your Beehive
Sunday, March 8, 2-4:30pm, \$35

Sticky Art Lab, 1682 University Ave., Berkeley
Learn how to work with the bees natural growth in spring (February - June) and keep your hive healthy. Learn what the bees are focused on in spring, so you can work with their natural instincts. Each spring is different in terms of the amount of rain and how cold/warm it is. We will learn how each kind of weather influences the bee's behavior, so you can be prepared for any kind of spring. We will cover swarm prevention, plus talk about getting wax drawn-out and honey production.
To register, go to: biofueloasis.com/workshops/

Year Round Varroa Mite & Virus Management: Keeping Your Hive Healthy

Saturday, March 14, 2-5pm, \$35

Sticky Art Lab, 1682 University Ave., Berkeley
Learn what to do each season to keep mite levels low and your bees thriving. It is each beekeeper's responsibility to keep their mites low, as it means lower mite & virus levels for all the surrounding hives (mites/viruses transfer easily between hives). The instructor will demonstrate detection and preventative measures, so you will be prepared to do it in your own hive in the next couple months. We will cover the sugar roll test, organic treatment methods like drone comb frames, oxalic & formic acid treatment, and broodless periods/splitting your hive. Taking care of mites will allow your bees to overwinter smoothly and live multiple years.
To register, go to: biofueloasis.com/workshops/

How to Split Your Hive

Sunday, March 22, 1-5pm, \$55

Sticky Art Lab, 1682 University Ave., Berkeley
Learn how to work with the bees as they expand in the spring by making successful splits. Splitting your hive is the number one thing you can do to reduce the varroa mite population. It also enables you to have 2-3 hives so you have more flexibility in helping out a weak hive. We will cover how bees make new queens, the timeline of queen mating, and how to make a basic split. This class will go into more details of making splits and nucs, including specific splits that work well, what can go wrong and how to fix it, and which months/timing works best. We will go into detail on a specific split that reduces varroa mites on both sides of the split. In order to make certain splits, you will need to be able to spot your queen, so we will go over tips for learning how to see your queen and how to find her.

To register, go to: biofueloasis.com/workshops/

Pollinator Plant Sale



Marin Master Gardeners are holding a sale of 35 varieties of flowering plants selected for their ability to attract California native bees and butterflies. We are offering a wide variety of beautiful garden plants that provide pollen and nectar from February to November. Plants will be sold in 4-inch pots for \$4 each. Please note that only Cash or Check will be accepted for payment. A list of plants is available upon request (elwoodrow1@earthlink.net).

Marin Master Gardeners will be present to advise on plant selection and cultivation, as well as establishing a garden to attract and sustain pollinators.

Date: Saturday, March 7, 2020 from 9:00am to noon.

Location: Greenhouse at the Falkirk Cultural Center
1408 Mission Avenue, San Rafael

