
THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

Volume 12, Issue 9

October 2020

FROM THE EDITOR

October signals the beginning of fall for bees and beekeepers alike. In a typical year, this means the hard work over the spring is long forgotten and the summer honey is ready to harvest. The work load jumps up a bit as we get our hives ready for winter, but in general we can look forward to the dark days where we can sit cozy in our dry homes and read beekeeping catalogues to feel connected to our beekeeping practice. Or, if you count beekeeping as a source of income, you'll be planning what you will build and repair these next few months during the upcoming winter.

As I sit here preparing to put together the month's newsletter, what strikes me most is the extreme heat and equally extreme number of smokey days that we and our hives have been experiencing these past few weeks. August and September were the hottest months on record for California, and the number of acres that have burned this year have more than doubled the existing record set in 2018 for acreage. This means our hives have been experiencing a dearth like none we've seen, with flowers holding back nectar and pollen, coupled with many days where the bees haven't been able to forage at all. This is the time when many hives count on that last nectar flow to get them to the sweet spot with a super full of honey for the winter, but this year many of us are feeding our hives, especially those that were started as splits or late-season swarms. Stress from the smoke has added to the list of tasks for beekeepers, who would normally be concentrating on reducing mites so their winter bees will develop fat and healthy.

All I can say is that I'm ready for winter to arrive, and then maybe we can all relax a little.



OCTOBER SPEAKERS

We have something new in store for this month's meeting with a DOUBLEHEADER! The meeting will start at 6:00 pm instead of the usual time.



October 1, 2020 at 6:00 pm: Join us via Zoom for our second meeting of the Sept '20 - June '21 speaker series! This meeting will focus on invasive and native species, and will feature two speakers Dr. Samuel Ramsey and Dr. Paul da Silva.

Dr. Ramsey will be joining us for ***"Invasive Species: The Vexing Reality of Our Global Ecosystem"***

Asian Giant Hornets, Zebra Mussels, Fire Ants, Giant Snails, Death Mushrooms, Parasitic Bee mites, Feral Pigs, Snakehead fish and Asian Stinkbugs! A host of organisms now call our ecosystem home and we're just beginning to realize the broader impacts. Further, North America has exported some nuisances of our own to rest of the world. We'll discuss ongoing issues with the famed Asian Giant Hornets and the prolific Zebra Mussel. And Samuel will detail what we can do individually and on the policy level to prevent the establishment of additional non-native organisms or to eradicate them altogether in the aftermath of their introduction.

Ramsey's enduring interest in insect biology started 23 years ago and shows no signs of waning. Having earned his doctorate from Dr. Dennis vanEngelsdorp's lab at the University of Maryland; Dr. Ramsey maintains a focus on how insect research can benefit

the public through the development of IPM strategies and STEM-based outreach initiatives. His award-winning research on Varroa biology has changed the standing paradigm on how this parasite ultimately kills honey bees leading to opportunities to share his work nationally and internationally. His current work, aptly named the Fight the Mite Initiative, was funded largely by the beekeeping community. It focuses on the poorly understood Tropiclaelaps mite which is rapidly establishing itself as the next threat to apiculture globally.

We'll take a break from our speakers and have a 15 minute Q&A from 7:00 to 7:15pm.

Then at 7:15 we'll have our next speaker, [Dr. Paul da Silva](#), retired professor of Biology at College of Marin. "Beyond Pollinators**".** The public in the United States has tended to have a strong aversion to all insects.

Beekeepers have helped greatly to overcome this "entomophobia." Yet when we consider all of the diverse roles that insects play in the world around us, there are still many exciting stories to be told and a long way to go before everyone will appreciate and delight in these little animals. Dr. Paul da Silva, recently retired from the College of Marin, will tell a few of these stories as a way of illuminating a little more of the trail that beekeepers have so well begun.

Paul is [running for the Board](#) for College of Marin in November.

The meeting will be online. To join the Zoom Meeting, follow this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81605098362?pwd=OGN1SUxLdSttUkZLS2JlOGVvRUhQUT09>

Meeting ID: 816 0509 8362
Passcode: 579138
One tap mobile
+16699006833,,81605098362#,,,,,0#,,579138#

US (San Jose)
+12532158782,,81605098362#,,,,,0#,,579138# US (Tacoma)

Check out the supplemental info on Plant Resources at the end of this newsletter

UPCOMING MARIN MEETINGS:

November 5, 2020: [Meghan Milbrath](#), Academic Specialist, Michigan State University, College of Agriculture & Natural Resources, Entomology Department. "Why Bees are the Coolest"

December 3, 2020: [Maryann Frazier](#), Senior Extension Associate Emeritus, Entomology, Penn State University. "Beekeeping in Kenya", with auction to benefit a new bee education center in Kenya.

January 7, 2021: [TBD](#)

WHAT YOU MISSED

Last month's September meeting featured queen breeder and commercial beekeeper [Sam Comfort of Anarchy Apiaries](#). Sam runs hives along the East Coast from Maine to Florida. His passion is grafting queens, and he runs his baby nucleus colonies on 3 week cycles, selling thousands of queens per year. Sam described his philosophy of beekeeping as centering around three conditions; Environment, Methodology and Genetics.

Sam does not use chemical treatments for managing mites, instead mimics swarming with breaks in the brood cycle and by splitting and selecting for the most mite tolerant and resistant queens.

Beekeeping is a "deep personal practice" for Sam, who began keeping bees when he was 24. One of his mottos is, "Can we make this easier?" He runs his multi-state operation on hand-built equipment. He views the current crisis we're in as a "People Collapse Disorder".

Sam's talk was lively and energetic, and he finished his presentation by performing an original song, singing while accompanying himself on the guitar.

FALL HONEY EXTRACTION

Just to remind everyone, due to COVID-19, David Peterson will NOT be hosting the Group Extraction Party this year. Many folks look forward to this fun community event every year, but luckily the club has several extractors you can borrow to extract at home.



Each setup comes with a cappings tub, honey bucket, straining screens and uncapping knife! Your membership is all you need to rent them free of charge.

The club has four extractors. The two six-frame extractors will fit in most SUVs and some cars. The twelve-frame will fit in station wagons and SUVs, and the twenty-framer will need a truck to transport. Only the twelve-framer or the Novato six-framer will take deeps. We also have a three-frame hand crank kit for the energetic.

To reserve an extractor, contact one of the people listed below to see if the extractor is available. You'll be expected to clean the extractor when you're finished with a pressure washer and hot water.

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

Nary and Neil Nordquist manage the twenty-frame extractor. They are located in Novato. Their contact info is neilmary@verizon.net

Rob Tysinger manages the other six frame extractor. This is the one that takes deeps. He is also in Novato, rob@tysingerengineers.us

Please remember that fall is a popular time for extractions, so plan ahead and have your frames ready to extract before you bring the extractor home. That way you can pass it along quickly to the next person on the reserve list.

For those who prefer to have someone else do the hard work, the Woolly Egg Ranch in Tennessee Valley (MV) will extract your honey for a small percentage of the harvest. Contact Ken Kirkland thewoollyeggranch@gmail.com



HIVE TIPS BY

BONNIE MORSE

Hive tips: Your bees may need a little assistance!

FEEDING: We are observing more hives than usual needing feeding right now. Some colonies that hunkered down with all the smoke went through their food stores. It's unusual for us to need to feed overwintered colonies, but that's exactly what we've been doing lately. New colonies – which used nectar resources earlier in the season to build comb – are even more likely to need feeding. And in many areas of the county, coyote bush blossoms are still not open.

A small colony (approximately 8 frames or less) should have about 50:50 brood:food ratio. A full sized colony should have about 30 lbs of honey (a full super or 4.5 deep frames) for winter. If you're not already seeing that, give your bees a hand by feeding 2:1 sugar:water or drivert sugar. (Drivert sugar can be difficult to find, but the Fairfax Backyard Farmer has some available.)

YELLOW JACKETS: They can be seen around many apiaries now hauling off dead and weak bees around hives. While this activity can be beneficial, it is prudent to keep an eye out. If you see yellow jackets entering healthy hives, it would be a good time to reduce entrances (or add a robber screen) to help make it easier for the colony to protect itself. If the population (and

cluster size) of your colony is already reducing in preparation for winter, it may be time to consider harvesting excess honey or removing unneeded boxes to reduce amount of space the bees need to defend.

Do NOT hang yellowjacket traps on or near your hives. The pheromones that help lure the yellowjackets into the trap may actually be attracting more yellowjackets to your apiary.

A fake hornets nest can be hung nearby to try to discourage them. This can be in the form of a paper bag. We've had mixed results with this, but hey – it's just a crumbled up paper bag so it's inexpensive and worth a try if you're having trouble. You can also pick up a "wasp scarer"....a slightly more impressive looking fake hornet's nest....from the Fairfax Backyard Farmer. We have observed that when the fake hornet's nest remains more or less stationary (as opposed to blowing around in the wind), it seems more convincing. A plate or bowl with balsamic vinegar may also help to deter.



VARROA MITES: If you haven't done a sugar roll yet to determine level of mite infestation, it's time to do so! Gratefully, we have been seeing less evidence of diseases vectored by the mites this season (discolored/open pupae, discolored and/or misshapen larvae), but we are seeing growing mite levels in untreated colonies.

Note: If you decide to use formic acid (Mite Away Quick Strips or Formic Pro), check the long term weather forecast first! Temperatures above 85 degrees during the treatment period can harm bees or can cause the queen to cease egg laying.

Hive Tips is written by Bonnie Morse. To find out more about her online, visit <http://bonniebeecompany.com/wp/>

EXTRAS: FEEDING HIVES

As Bonnie mentioned in her Hive Tips page, depending on the strength and location of your colony, you may need to feed your hives right now. I'll share a few different techniques I've used over the years and let you decide the method that works best for your situation. Each has its pros and cons.

Give dry sugar to hives that have food reserves now but may not have the full super they'll

need going into winter. [Mann Lake](#) sells overwintering covers that provide a deep reservoir for dry sugar under the telescoping cover, or you can use a spacer on top of your inner cover. Bees prefer drivert sugar, which has a finer granulation and no additives to keep it from caking. Just remember that the bees will need to add water before they can use the dry sugar so this is not adequate as an immediate food for starving hives.



Always remember that dry sugar takes time for the bees to process. Hives that are starving will need sugar syrup as an emergency food.

Do a 2:1 sugar to water solution if you make it yourself, but Mann Lake also sells a syrup with better nutritional value and more

complex mix of sugars than just table sugar and water.

There are many feeders available for feeding syrup, but I prefer the quick and dirty method when there is little risk of bees building crazy comb. I use a dish tub with straw above a queen excluder or in my deep bottom boards under the hives.



Purchase tubs that are 16 or 18 quarts to fit in a medium super. Do this only in an emergency, and monitor the tub weekly so the bees don't build rogue comb around the tub. (My deep bottom boards have an inner floor to keep the bees from building comb in the tubs.)

I never recommend Boardman aka entrance feeders. They're prone to attract robbing bees and they don't deliver syrup fast enough to big colonies.

Never open feed hives, and avoid feeding honey you've already harvested or risk introducing Foulbrood to your hives.

Remember that feeding pollen supplement should be done very carefully to avoid inviting Small Hive Beetles (SHB) to lay their eggs in the patty. The pollen sub should be consumed at a rate to outpace SHB reproductive cycle. I discard any old pollen patty in case it's loaded with eggs and SHB larvae, then I feed a bit less the next time. Best solution is a patty right over the brood nest where nurse bees can easily access it.

You may be asking yourself, "How will I know if my hive needs pollen?" Simple trick is to check the margins of the brood nest for 2 to 3 day old larvae. Those larvae will not be touching the cell walls, and you'll look there to make sure they are floating in a pool of shiny white royal jelly. If those larvae look dry then it's time to feed.



Remember that pollen is the protein source for developing larvae, and any deficit means they will live shorter lives and

be more prone to pests and pathogens. JB



UPCOMING CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

...with Michael Thiele

LocApiary – how to design self-sustaining apian networks & apiaries

Sat, October 24, 2020

10:00 AM – 12:30 PM PDT

Live-stream online event

Info and registration at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/locapiary-how-to-design-self-sustaining-apan-networks-apiaries-tickets-121635999>.

..with Bonnie Morse

Backyard Beekeeping (Saturday, November 14 or December 5, 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 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.

Registration: [The Fairfax Backyard Farmer](#)

Making Gifts from the Hive & Garden (Saturday, November 7, 9:00am – 12:00pm, \$95, includes materials fee)

Using the recipes from Janice Cox's books and ingredients from the hive & garden and ingredients commonly found in your pantry, we will make: 1) Bath bombs, 2) Bath salts, 3) Hand cream, 4) Lip balm. You will get to take home your creations...a \$45 retail value!

Registration: [The Fairfax Backyard Farmer](#), 135 Bolinas Rd, Fairfax.

OTHER BEE EVENTS, ONLINE

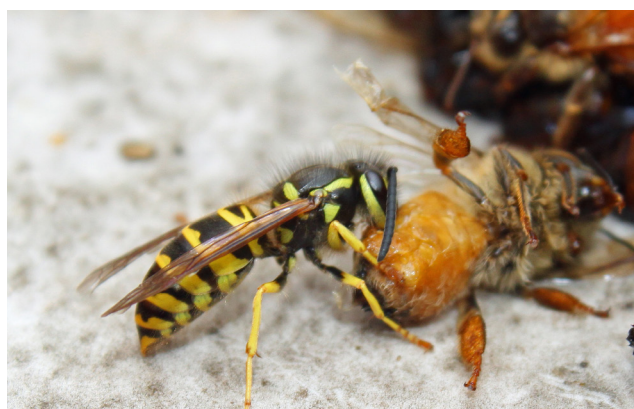
Alameda Beekeepers meeting: October 13, Dr, Dewey Caron, University of Southern Oregon, Program TBD. <https://www.alamedabees.org/membership/>

Santa Clara Valley Beekeepers Guild monthly meeting: October 5th at 7:00 pm. Their guest speaker is Corey Carter, sharing his experiences making mead. For more information and zoom link, go to their website: <https://www.beeguild.org/>

The Fourth International Bee and Hive Monitoring Conference: October 5-9, 2020. \$20
Register at: <https://colonymonitoring.com/events/>. Limited to the first 300 registrants

Becoming 21st Century Leaders: Women in Beekeeping & Agriculture, Oct. 24-25, 2020, will bring together a hive of experienced, diverse, purposeful individuals to expand the opportunities for women (and men) as keepers of the ecosystem to support the health and sustainability of honey bees, native pollinators, and beekeeping. Learn more about our scheduled speakers on our website under "Becoming 21st Century Leaders." [REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!](#)

Have an event you'd like to share? Email the editor at jenniferberrybees@gmail.com



ABOUT THE MARIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB

We are people who share an avid interest in honey and native bees. We are a mix of hobbyists as well as professional beekeepers. We have a wide range of interests, covering bee biology, pollination, survivor stock bee breeding, health aspects of bee products, international beekeeping, and other bee-related topics.

We welcome you to attend our meetings and to become a member. <https://marinbeekeepers.org/become-a-member/>

Monthly meetings are typically on the first Thursday of the month and usually feature a knowledgeable speaker and/or project and includes informal sharing of information by members throughout the meeting (\$10 donation for non-members). Meetings are a good way to learn about beekeeping. Please consider becoming a member whether you have bees or not.

Membership costs \$20 per calendar year and includes:

- Free admission to all meetings
- Access to the Club's honey and extracting equipment
- Subscription to the Club's "MarinBuzz" listserv
- Access to the swarm email listserv
- Free subscription to the Marin Beekeepers



Newsletter (multiple times a year)

Preferred registration for beekeeping workshops (usually 5 -6 per year) and special events (ie: annual Celebration of the Bees)

Subscription to our BeeLegal email listserv which is where we are working to make beekeeping legal across Marin

Mary Nordquist serves as our Treasurer and is the only official officer of the Club. The Nuc serves as the informal team to oversee the functioning of the Club through regular volunteer work. Thanks to all of you who step forward when needed!

Current Nuc Members are the following:

- Karen Hyde: karen@hyderanches.com — Club Meeting Refreshments
- Richard Hyde: rh@hyderanches.com — Workshop Coordinator
- Steve Lamb: stlamb1@gmail.com — Farm Day Coordinator
- Bonnie Morse: bonniemorse10@gmail.com — Speaker Coordination, Survivor Stock
- Gary Morse: gpmorse@comcast.net — Survivor Stock
- Mary Nordquist: neilmary@verizon.net — Club Treasurer
- Neil Nordquist: neilmary@verizon.net — Equipment Coordination
- David Peterson: dpeterson307@aol.com — Membership Coordinator, ListServ Management, Equipment Coordination
- Dan Stralka: stralka.daniel@epa.gov — Annual Marin County Fair Coordinator
- Rob Tysinger: rob@tysingerengineers.us — Equipment Coordination
- Marina Wright: marinamay53@gmail.com — Librarian
- Jennifer Berry: jenniferberrybees@gmail.com — Editor of the Newsletter

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Supplemental info for the October meeting:
Invasives and Natives double header**

Plant lists and habitat guides:

Pollinator plants for Marin (commonly available at nurseries):

<http://bonniebeecompany.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Plants-for-pollinators-in-Marin.pdf>

Calscape.org

Find plants native by zip code

Pollinator Partnership: eco-regional planting guides

<https://www.pollinator.org/PDFs/Guides/Calif-CoastalStepperx4FINAL.pdf>

UC Berkeley Urban Bee Lab

<http://www.helpabee.org/best-bee-plants-for-california.html>

Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation: Habitat Assessment Guide for Pollinators

<https://xerces.org/publications/habitat-assessment-guides/habitat-assessment-guide-for-pollinators-in-yards-gardens>

Xerces: Milkweed seed finder

<https://xerces.org/milkweed/milkweed-seed-finder>

Local nurseries for native plants:

California Native Plant Nursery, Mill Valley

<https://cnlnatives.com/>

Mostly Natives, Pt Reyes

<https://www.mostlynatives.com/>

O'Donnell's Fairfax Nursery, Fairfax

http://www.odonnellsnursery.com/ODonnells_Fairfax_Nursery/Welcome.html

Watershed Nursery, Richmond

<https://www.watershednursery.com/>

And more local nurseries that love bees and pollinators:

Annie's Annuals

<https://www.anniesannuals.com/>

Bees N Blooms, Santa Rosa

<https://beesnblooms.com/>

(Buy trees by appointment only. Totally worth the trip!!!)

Chase ACE, San Rafael

<https://www.chaseacehardware.com/>

Marin ACE, San Rafael

<https://www.marinace.com/>

Sloat Garden Center, Mill Valley, Kentfield, Novato & more bay area locations

<https://www.sloatgardens.com/>

Books:

Bringing Nature Home

**By Doug Tallamy
Workman Press**

California Bees & Blooms

**By Gordon Frankie, Robbin Thorp, Rollin Coville
and Barbara Ertter
Heyday**

California Foraging

**By Judith Larner Lowry
Timber Press**

Designing California Native Gardens: The Plant Community Approach to Artful, Ecological Gardens

By Glenn Keator, Alrie Middlebrook, Phyllis M. Faber (Other primary creator)

Reimagining the California Lawn

**By Carol Bornstein, David Fross, and Bart O'Brien
Cachuma Press**

The Bee-Friendly Garden

**By Kate Frey and Gretchn LeBuhn
Ten Speed Press**

The Bees in Your Backyard

**By Joseph S. Wilson & Olivia Messinger Carrill
Princeton University Press**

The California Native Landscape: The Homeowner's Design Guide to Restoring Its Beauty and Balance

**by Greg Rubin and Lucy Warren
Timber Press**

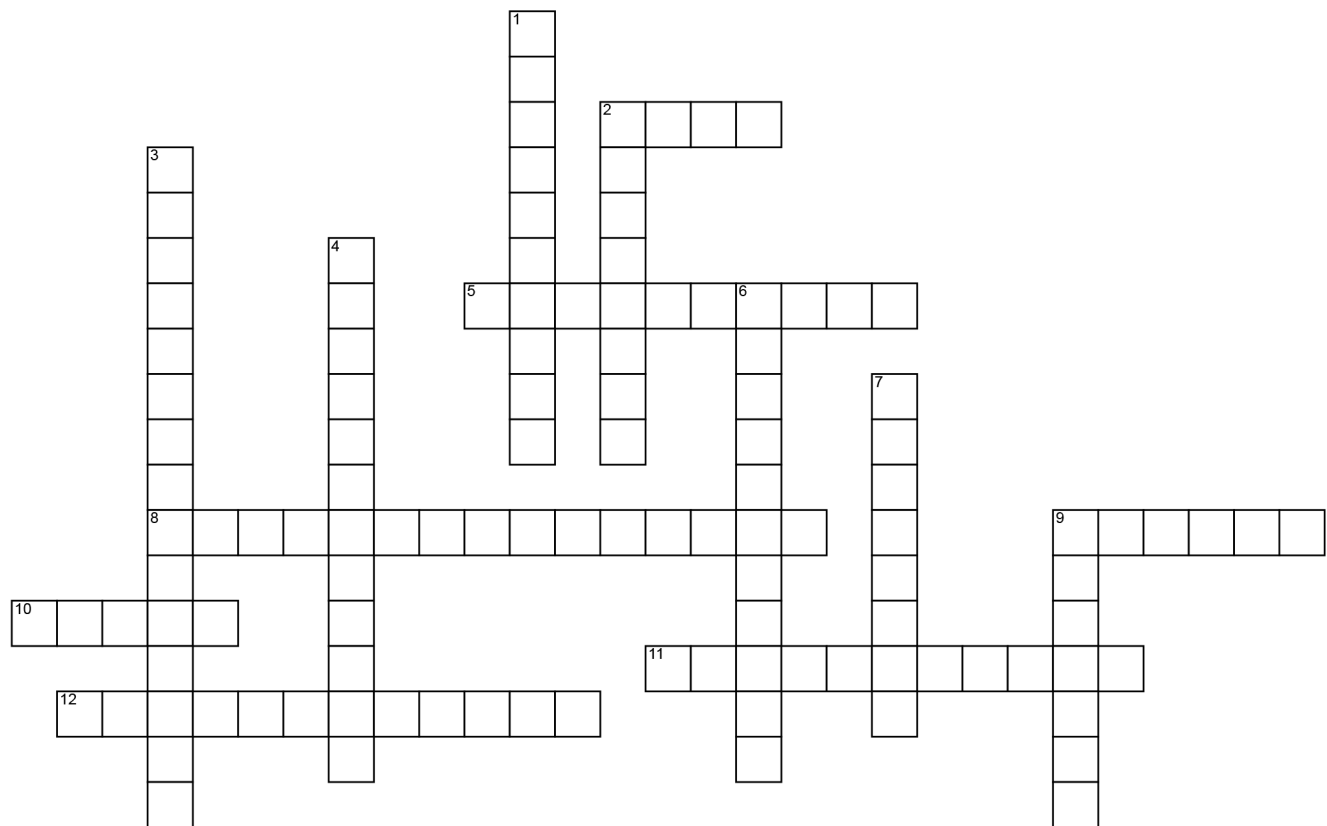
The California Wildlife Habitat Garden

**By Nancy Bauer
University of California Press**

The Xerces Society Guide to Attracting Native Pollinators,
 By Eric Mader, Matthew Shepherdm Mace
 Vaughn, Scott Hoffman Black, and Gretchen
 LeBuhn
 Storey Publishing



MARIN BEEKS NEWSLETTER CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

2. Found in every newsletter
5. The species name for varroa
8. Prevent robbing in the fall
9. Late summer until the rains
10. Goes well with drivert
11. This guy knows bugs
12. The fear of insects

Down

1. Baby bee food
2. Artificial queen production
3. Cause slimeouts in honey
4. The scariest of all mites
6. What's that awful funky smell?
7. Entrance feeder
9. Winter bee food

Answers will be posted in the November newsletter