
THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

Volume 12, Issue 10

November 2020

FROM THE EDITOR

The days have been getting noticeably shorter each evening, and I'm finally starting to rest and recover after a busy late summer of feeding syrup to my hungry hives, harvesting honey from my larger established hives, and completing the fall mite treatments. Fall is one of my favorite times of year, when it's still warm enough to see the bees actively coming and going from their entrances, and when all my hard work has paid off and I can finally take a break. The shorter days force me to quit when I should, not when the work is finished. Parts of Marin have seen their first sprinkling of rain, and in many places ivy and other landscape plants are in bloom, bringing with them a mild nectar flow. By now hopefully all of you have made plans on storing your precious extra combs in a safe dry place so they will be ready to be used again in the spring. And if you're like me, you're already planning ahead for the winter eucalyptus bloom, with the swarm season right on its heels. But for the next month or two let us turn our attention to our friends and families and the holidays. May warmth, peace and health be with all of you and your families.

This newsletter will be short, and yes- it's late. All I can say is that the last few weeks have been a wild distraction and I had trouble sitting down at my desk to put this together. I'm sure you can all sympathize.



DECEMBER SPEAKER

December 3: 7:00pm PST

[Maryann Frazier](#) "Beekeeping in Kenya", with auction to benefit a new bee education center in Kenya.



Maryann Frazier received her bachelor of science degree in agriculture education from Penn State University in 1980. In 1983 she completed a masters of agriculture in entomology at Penn State, specializing in apiculture. She has worked as the assistant state apiary inspector in Maryland, and for two years as a beekeeping specialist in Sudan and later in Central America.

For over 25 years, Frazier held the position of senior extension associate in the Department of Entomology at Penn State and is responsible for honey bee extension throughout the state and cooperatively across the Mid-Atlantic region. She worked collaboratively with other members of PSU Department of Entomology to understand how pesticides are impacting honey bees and other pollinators. In addition, she works with a team of U.S. and Kenyan researchers to understand the impacts of newly introduced varroa mites on East African honey bee subspecies and helping Kenyan beekeepers become more productive.

Maryann has taught courses in beekeeping, general entomology and teacher education and was involved with the Department of Entomology's innovative public outreach program. Maryann was a participant of the 2016 Bee Audacious event in Marin, and is featured in the documentary "The Pollinators."

Stay tuned for the December newsletter for the Zoom link and more info.

WHAT YOU MISSED

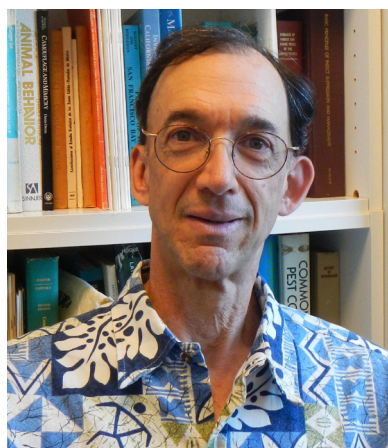
October's meeting featured two guest speakers. Sammy Ramsey joined us from the East Coast to talk about invasive species, and sheared stories of



invasive species past and present. Species that were once separated by geography are no longer so far apart with modern transportation, and they can arrive via multiple methods. Of course the hot topic was Giant Asian Hornets, otherwise known as Murder Hornets, which have been detected along the border of Canada and Washington

state. These 2 inch long hornets shift into fall with a diet almost exclusively preying on honeybees, and the race is on to locate the suspected 3 nests before they go into their reproductive cycle. (As of this writing, one of three nests have been located and destroyed.) Sammy also shared the reasons why protecting biodiversity is important, particularly the 1 million named insects and the 10-30 million that still remain to be identified.

Sammy was enthusiastic as always in his talks, and shared his "love for symbiosis and the embedded complexity of our global ecosystem." Following Sammy was Marin county's own Paul da Silva, recently retired professor at College of Marin and newly elected to the board



for College of Marin. He shared the complex relationship Americans have historically had with insects, beginning with programs to eradicate all insects with pesticides based on widespread 'entomophobia' that many people seem to possess. He hopes that has begun to change as more and more people become aware of how important insects are to all ecosystems. Paul showed gorgeous slides of native insects, especially native bees, with a wide

variety of colors, sizes and adaptations for pollinating the native plants species they're evolved with. It turns out there's still a lot of unknowns about native insects in Marin and the Bay Area, and biological studies are still being done to this day to see who is here and what their home ranges may be, but there are an estimated 10 species of insect for every 6 species of plants. Coyote Brush is one of many plants that support a huge amount of insects- and estimated 200+ species! Paul encouraged us to plant for pollinators and insects in our backyards, and to allow some plants to be eaten, knowing they will feed the baby birds in the spring.

MEMBERSHIP INFO

Dues Paid After the February 6th Meeting, Will INCREASE TO \$30.00

NOW is the time to Renew Your Membership for 2021.

Membership Dues remain at \$20.00 for another year. Memberships include all family members residing in the same household and are for the calendar year. Renewals are due by the January 2 Meeting and delinquent after the February meeting.

We need to hear from you.

Please renew your membership Online at www.marinbeekeepers.org Doing so will make it much easier to update the Roster. Even if you can't make it to the meetings you should continue to support the club with your membership dues. There are many benefits from being a member:

Use of the Club's extractors, electric uncapping knives, wax-melter, hive carrier, embedding tool, and other beekeeping equipment;

Free subscription to the Marin Beekeepers Newsletter (multiple times a year). Back issues on the website make for good background information and beekeeping tips; Preferred registration for beekeeping workshops (usually 4 or 5 per year) and special

events,
Check out books, magazines and catalogs from the Clubs extensive library.
Free admission to our monthly meetings where we have speakers among the foremost bee experts in the country (normally a \$10 donation);
Subscription to our “BUZZ” email listserv which is where we converse online about beekeeping in Marin;
Subscription to our “SWARMS” email listserv which is where we notify members of any swarms that need hiving;
Subscription to our “Event List” email listserv which is our general notification list of events and workshops.

The [best and easiest way to](#) pay your 20201 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



UPCOMING CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

With Bonnie Morse of Bonnie Bee & Co Backyard Beekeeping (Via Zoom, 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](#), 135 Bolinas Rd, Fairfax

With Michael Joshin Thiele

Arboreal Apiculture Salon

An interactive, international Live Stream free event. November 7, 2020; 11:30 – 1:00pm PST

More info at <https://www.apisarborea.com/events/>

With Jennifer Berry

Jennifer will be leading Intro to Beekeeping workshops through AirBnB Experiences until the rainy season, Fridays and Saturdays from 10:30 to 12:30. Beekeeping Experiences max out at 9 people and are \$50/person. Geared towards those who are interested in checking out beekeeping for the first time, but Jennifer can also tailor a workshop to any experience level or specific topic for groups wanting to sign up. More info at <https://www.airbnb.com/experiences/1154725>

HIVE TIPS BY BONNIE MORSE

Some reminders that are worth repeating!

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.

Can't I just leave the honey for the bees?

Harvesting excess honey is part of good fall management.

While it is a nice gesture to consider leaving all for the bees, you're actually not

doing them any favors. Depending on the size of the colony, they might not be able to defend the additional space from robbers (ants, bees from other colonies, etc). And now that small hive beetles are well established in Marin, you could be setting up your colony for a beetle larvae



explosion, and subsequent slime out.

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 continuing to raise drones – 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.

Get ready to wish your bees well for winter!

Once you've reduced excess boxes and removed honey, it's time to wish your bees well and plan to leave them alone. While there can be good reasons to open a hive in the winter (stay tuned in later newsletters), inspecting for curiosity sake can cause more harm than good: breaking propolis seals, releasing heat of the cluster, potentially injuring the queen, etc.

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

EXTRAS BY

JENNIFER BERRY

A Unique Method for a Unique Climate

We have a unique climate here in the Bay Area, and for some beekeepers, the largest honey crop is from the Eucalyptus that are common in open spaces. Eucs begin blooming in November and will continue to early March, depending on the microclimate.

For years I'd winterize my hives by knocking the bees down into small spaces with just enough honey to overwinter, thinking this was the best practice. We read in the books that when it's cold, bees will hunker down in a winter cluster and will even stop raising brood. But here in the Bay Area, it rarely gets to freezing even at night, and most days are warm enough for bees to forage. Many of us have drones all winter long. Plus, hives are activated to produce more bees and increase their size during a nectar flow, and the eucalyptus nectar flow can be a strong stimulus if any are near your apiary. So what's the best way to prepare for a winter nectar flow?

Years ago I was having a banner winter- the eucs were in full bloom, my hives' populations had more than doubled in just a few weeks, and were filling honey supers as fast as I could add them. It was only January. Then a series of storms and cooler weather settled in and lasted for weeks. Inspections during the warm breaks in rain revealed that many of the brood combs toward the outsides of the brood nests had been abandoned as the bees went back into winter clustering. Mold was severe as ripening honey made the inside moisture levels



higher than the cold air could hold, too. The advice I kept getting was to ventilate to solve the mold problem, but I was looking for a solution

that would save the brood, too. It was then that a more experienced beekeeper than myself showed me that a commercial beekeeper in a really cold climate was using sheets of insulation as inner covers under his migratory covers.

I was intrigued. If everyone had advised me to ventilate to remove the excess moisture, then wouldn't adding bubble-wrap to the inside, which would seal it and reduce ventilation, make the mold issues worse? Or was I really only dealing with a problem of condensation, and if I moved the point of contact between the cold and warm air further from the brood nest would the problem be solved? One of the problems with Langstroth hives is that they're just too thin-walled to insulate hives the way that natural nest cavities do. When it gets cold outside, the inner walls of the hive get cold too. What's worse is that the moist air from the bees rises up and condenses on the inner cover, then drips onto the bees where it chills them and can cause fungal problems. This guy was using insulation to push the condensation points, where the cold outside air meets the warm moist inside air, to places where the excess moisture isn't a problem- outside of the hive.

I set up an experiment. Ten hives got the insulation above the inner telescoping cover. Ten hives were wrapped in insulation in addition to the sheet above the inner cover. The other ten hives in that apiary did not get wraps. The rain continued. The results were clear even on the next inspection. The hives



with insulation on top were no longer having mold trouble. Every single hive that was wrapped on the outside showed dramatic signs of recovery, and brood nests had expanded back to where they had been before the cold had arrived. I went on to having a great spring and began making splits in March as soon as the weather cleared. Many other beekeepers around me suffered severe losses. When I tried the experiment again in the summer to test if the extra insulation would keep the hives cooler, I found that worked beautifully as well.

Seems to me that what we've always thought of as normal winter behavior- clustering- may only be a product of the hive boxes we keep them in. My hives wear their insulation all year long, secured with velcro so I can get them on and off easily during inspections. All hardware stores carry it. For my winter preparations, I now configure my hives so that the brood nest goes on just before the top honey super above them, and I place any empty drawn combs under the brood nest. The insulation keeps the hive warm even with the extra space, and when the nectar flow arrives, the bees simply backfill the brood frames with honey as they move down. I find the bees can move freely in a hive that's better insulated and don't ever need to cluster. Instead of storing my empty hive boxes somewhere else and worrying about critters, I keep them with the hives, where bees can keep them clean and free of pests. I no longer worry about knocking my hives down into small boxes, I simply put the brood box near the top and let them do all the rest of the work.



OTHER BEE EVENTS, ONLINE

Alameda Beekeepers meeting: November 10, will Wally Shaw. "Rust never sleeps" Natural selection approach to beekeeping.
<https://www.alamedabees.org/membership/>

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





LOCAL BEEKEEPING SUPPLY STORES

BACKYARD FARMER in Fairfax

We always keep in stock plenty of assembled waxed and ununassembled pine mediums and deep boxes and frames

We also have great quality British made bee jackets , plenty of hardware and tools

We have Honeybuckets with gates and plenty of

honey jars for harvesting as well as an extractor for rental as well as robbing screens for late season yellow jacket control.

Jim Normandi

[The Fairfax Backyard Farmer](#)

135 Bolinas Rd
Fairfax Ca 94930
Fairfaxbackyard-farmer@gmail.com

415-342-5092
Open Wed-Fri
11am - 6pm
Sat 12 - 6pm
& Sun 12- 5 pm
Closed Mon - Tue



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

BIOFUEL OASIS in Berkeley

Beekeeping supplies, backyard chickens, and more. Classes online.

141 Ashby Ave, Berkeley
(510) 665-5509

Open Mon-Fri 11am - 6pm, Sat 10 - 4pm, and Sun 12 - 4pm

MANN LAKE in Woodland

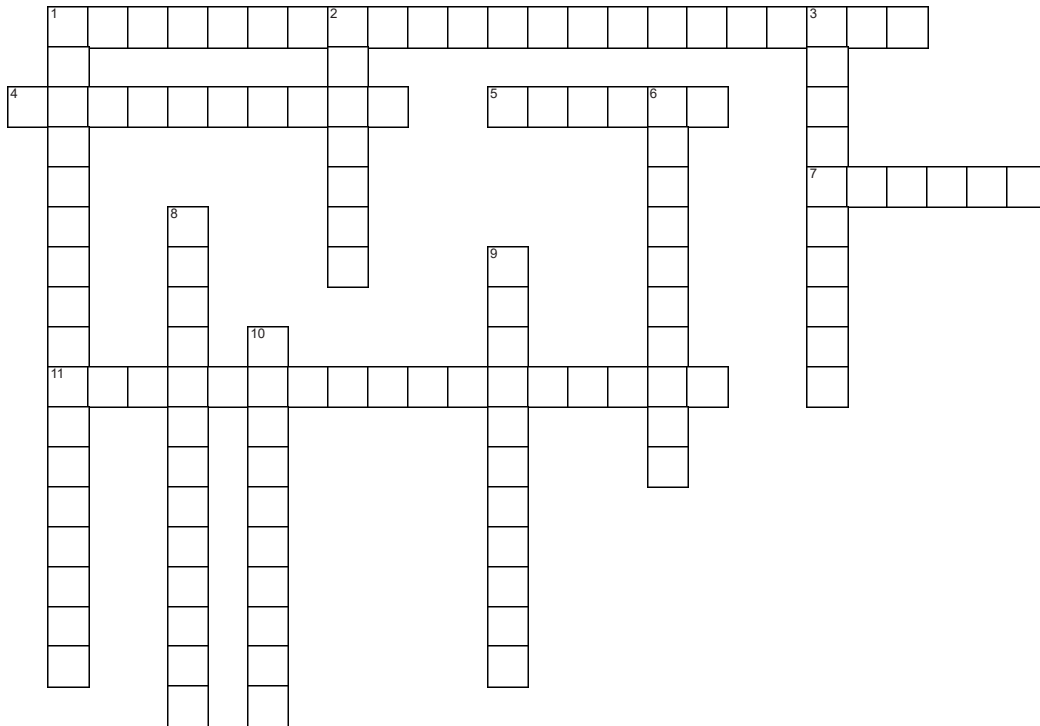
Beekeeping supplies, backyard chickens, and more.

500 Santa Anita Dr, Woodland, CA 95776
(866)880-7678

www.mannlakeltd.com

Open Mon-Fri 8am - 6pm, Sat 8pm - 4:30pm
Closed Sundays

NOVEMBER MARIN BEEKS CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

- 1. Maryann Frazier presented here in 2016
- 4. Extinct Bay Area butterfly
- 5. Winter hives may lack these
- 7. Another name for a bee yard
- 11. really really scary insects

DOWN

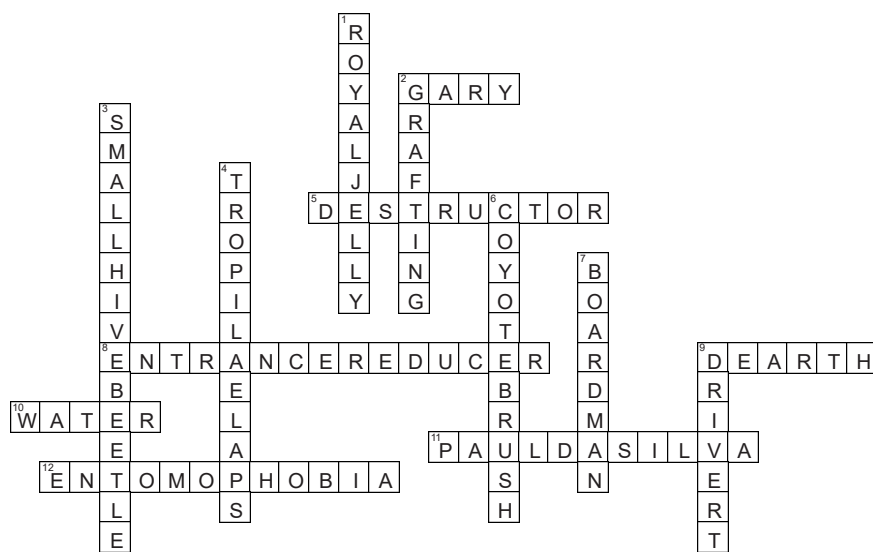
- 1. Maryann's talk for December
- 2. Cold bees do this
- 3. Causes population increase
- 6. Winter nectar flow plant
- 8. Club Treasurer
- 9. Supports over 200 species of insects
- 10. Membership renewals due this day

Answers will be in December's newsletter





ANSWERS TO THE OCTOBER 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