

# THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

Volume 12, Issue 8

August 2020

## From the Editor

You may have noticed a few changes to the newsletter for the Marin Beekeeping Club. After more than a decade of serving as editor, Rob Tysinger has stepped down from his role, though rest assured he will continue on as a member of the Nuc. Its been more than two decades since I wrote for my college newspaper, but when he asked if I'd be interested, I thought it might be fun. My goal as editor is to bring you the Buzz each month, with Bonnie's hive tips, information about guest speakers, upcoming workshops and classes, and general announcements as always. I welcome any suggestions and feedback as to what we could add or change for readers, [jrobinberry@gmail.com](mailto:jrobinberry@gmail.com).

You may know me from the Buzz and a talk I gave in May for the club. I began keeping bees in 2003 and have a background in biology. I maintain apiaries for commercial farms and homesteads, mentor beekeepers, and raise queens and nucs for sale. Beekeeping has become a full time job over the years, and during breaks in the season I still prune trees and consult for permaculture and resources management as before.

Newbies send me questions, and when the same one comes up more than once or twice I'll post my replies to the Buzz. Right now the big question is the effect of smoke on hives. I somehow didn't lose any hives in the fire that swept the Russian River last year, though the trees and earth were scorched all around them. Fingers crossed that the fires will spare us this season. The best advice I can give now is to be sure your hives are in good working condition and free of cracks and gaps so they're more fireproof, check on their resources when smoky days keep them cooped up for long periods and feed when necessary, and to take good care of yourselves.

*Jennifer Berry*



## Upcoming Speakers

The club took a break from meetings in August. The next meeting is coming up soon.

**September 3, 2020 at 7:30 pm:** Join us via Zoom for our first meeting of the Sept '20 - June '21 speaker series! [Sam Comfort of Anarchy Apiaries](#) will be joining us to discuss splits and simple



queenrearing.

He is working on some split research and will discuss his findings to date. Sam is a treatment free, top bar beekeeper in New York and is a proponent of minimally invasive beekeeping.

to join the Zoom meeting, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86712841998?pwd=eklYamF5MlpFdTR6WTVMb3pYZ3pkdz09>

Meeting ID: 867

1284 1998

Passcode:

593869

One tap mobile

+16699006833,,8

6712841998#,,,,,0#,,593869# US (San Jose)

-or-

Dial by your location

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 867 1284 1998

Passcode: 593869

**October 1, 2020:** [Paul da Silva](#), professor of Biology, College of Marin. "Beyond Pollinators". Fall is a great time for planting. Paul will discuss native plants that are not only pollinator favorites,

---

## Speaker Series, continued

but also support other native beneficial insects.

**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](#)

**February 4, 2021:** [Michael Palmer](#), Commercial Beekeeper, French Hill Apiaries, St. Albans, Vermont. “The Sustainable Apiary”

**March 4, 2021:** [Tucka Saville](#), “Queenrearing”

**April 1, 2021:** [Frank Mortimer](#), adjunct instructor at the Cornell University Master Beekeeping Program, “Bee People and the Bugs They Love”

**May 6, 2021:** [Sevan Suni PhD](#), Assistant Professor of Biology and head of the SUni Lab at the University of San Francisco. “Bay Area research on pollen preferences of bees”.



## Fall Honey Extraction

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](mailto:dpeterson307@aol.com)

**Nary and Neil Nordquist** manage the twenty-frame extractor. They are located in Novato. Their contact info is [neilmary@verizon.net](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:thewoollyeggranch@gmail.com)



**Some apiaries are experiencing significant yellow jacket problems right now.** This is the time of year when their populations will peak and they can cause a problem for bee colonies.

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. A plate or bowl with balsamic vinegar may also help to deter.



**Robbing by other bees** tends to become more problematic at this time of year. If you have a smaller colony, keep an eye out and perhaps consider reducing the entrance (if you haven't done so already) to help make it easier for the colony to protect itself. If robbing starts, you need to stop it immediately.

Some good suggestions for options on how to do so are available on the website of Michael Bush: <http://www.bushfarms.com/beesrobbing.htm>

### **Comb building is done for the season**

While there are places in the county where some bees seem to be finding the nectar

resources to build a little new comb, in general, comb building is done for the season by this time of year. Don't expect bees to be able to build out on new frames.

If your bees have a lot of honey, you might consider extracting some now and returning the wet frames to them so they can refill with more nectar. It won't be long before the coyote bush is in bloom!

**Varroa mites.** Now is the time to start monitoring your mite levels, if you haven't started already. As fall approaches, we tend to see decreasing colony populations and increasing varroa mite populations. This can be a deadly combination for your colonies. "But we're hardly into summer!" you might be saying. While that may be true, mite numbers are building up now – or may be building up

---

## Hive Tips, continued

now in your colony.

By regularly monitoring the levels of mite infestations in your colonies, you'll have a better idea if high mite levels are due to your bees inability to deal with mites in the colony (which some bees do through hygienic behavior (often observed as uncapped pupae), grooming, broodless periods, etc.) or whether a sudden spike this fall might be due to your colony finding and robbing out a nearby crashing hive.

Information on [how to do a sugar roll to determine varroa infestation % is available from the University of Minnesota](#)

There are passionate voices on both sides of the debate on whether to treat or not to treat. There is logical reasoning on the pros and cons on both sides. Keep in mind that your bees' problems could quickly become another hives problem. And because of the increasing number of beekeepers – and increasing hive density, particularly in some neighborhoods - a moderate approach to consider would be to treat if mite levels go above a certain threshold. If your bees have shown no method of resistance (you should be looking for it every time you inspect), you might consider requeening the colony with more resistant stock when that option next becomes available. If you have been monitoring your bees and they have shown mite resistance, you might consider a treatment as a way to help them reduce the number of introduced mites, but consider giving their queen another chance.

Visit [www.scientificbeekeeping.com](http://www.scientificbeekeeping.com) for information from Randy Oliver on treatment options and application information. Get as much information as possible on the pros/cons

of different approaches before/if you decide to treat for mites.

**Seeing queen cells?** Not just cups, but cells with larvae floating in royal jelly. This is the time of year when bees may supersede their queen prior to winter. It is unlikely in Marin that they are preparing to swarm....at this time of year, it would be a suicide mission! In preparation for winter, you may also notice more propolis in the hive and a reduced rate of laying by the queen, observed as bees fill cells in the brood area with nectar rather than allowing the queen to lay eggs once the brood has emerged.



**What about all this smoke?** This Bear County Bees blog posting has some practical info and advice: <https://www.bearcountrybees.com/blog/wildfires-effect-on-honey-bees/>

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

## Upcoming Classes and Workshops

### ...with Michael Thiele

#### **Arboreal Apiculture Salon**

Interactive, international Live Stream  
September 12, 2020; 11:30 – 1:00pm PST  
Hosted by Jonathan Powell, Natural Beekeeping Trust, UK, Cheyanna Bone, USA, and Michael J. Thiele, Apis Arborea, USA.

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

#### **Log Hives – a tutorial for design & construction**

Interactive, international Live-Stream  
September 26, 2020; 10am – 1pm PST (San

---

## Classes and Workshops, continued

Fransisco time zone, CA, USA)

This lifestream event will explore various arboreal

hive/nest designs and integrate groundbreaking research data and fundamental changes in life sciences as resources for a paradigm shift for apiculture strategies in the Anthropocene.

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

### ...with Bonnie Morse

**Overwintering Your Bees: Class** (Saturday, September 19, 9am – 12:00pm, \$65)

Preparing for winter, how to handle common winter problems, how to clean up / store equipment.

Location: The Fairfax Backyard Farmer, 135 Bolinas Rd, Fairfax.

Register through [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.

**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](#), 135 Bolinas Rd, Fairfax

## Extras

So far the fire season is underway with fires in all eight Bay Area counties and many more to the north and south of Marin. There have been no reports of members losing hives in the club, and Sonoman beekeepers have also been spared so far. However, reports of two beekeepers in Vacaville losing their businesses is heartbreaking.

Clay Ford of Pleasants Valley Honey Company has lost 73 of 81 hives in the LNU lightning complex fires that swept through Vacaville late August. Clay has a go fund me campagin started [link here](#) Caroline Yelle of Pope Canyon Queens has experienced significant losses as a result of the fires in Vacaville, including 500 hives, a significant amount of harvesting equipment and woodenware. She has a gofundme campaign started, <https://gf.me/u/ys2vtw>.

Bonnie has generously offered to coordinate donations of extra equipment to Caroline. Email Bonnie directly at [bonniebmorse10@gmail.com](mailto:bonniebmorse10@gmail.com)

What they could use :

Likely have here...

- Frames/Foundation
- Shallows/medium supers
- Queens excluders
- Bulkbees cages

Less likely to have here in Marin...

- 8 framers deep super/box
- 8 framers lids
- 4 ways Pallet
- Pollen patties mixer
- JzBz grafting bar
- JzBz grafting frames
- Drivert bags
- Nucs for queen breeding (4 ways) or any type
- Sugar syrup totes (250 gallons)
- Cloake boards
- Incubator
- Extractor, any size
- Shaker boxes/funnel
- Bottling tank





---

## Other Bee Events, Online

This is something new I've decided to add for the duration of social distancing during COVID, and maybe beyond. Club meetings all over the world are now available on Zoom and other online platforms, allowing us to travel at the speed of light and go to all sorts of talks, conferences and meetups. I'll include what I think will be of interest, and welcome folks to clue me in to other meetings for the list.

**San Francisco Beekeepers** meeting: September 2, 6:30 pm. Dr Tom Seely "The Bee Colony as a Honey Factory". Members only, \$30/year. <https://www.sfbec.org/membership/>

**Alameda Beekeepers** meeting: September 8, 7:00 pm. Dr Samuel Ramsey, TBD. Members only, \$10/year <https://www.alamedabees.org/membership/>

**San Mateo Beekeepers** meeting: September 10, 7 pm. Dr, Samuel Ramsey "Despicable Mites" Members only, \$35/year <https://www.sanmateobee-guild.org/store/>

**Washington State Beekeepers's** Conference: Oct 3, 2020 at 9:00 AM to Oct 4, 2020. \$55. <https://www.accelevents.com/e/WASBA2020PacificNorthwestBeekeepingConference>

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

## 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](mailto:karen@hyderanches.com) — Club Meeting Refreshments

Richard Hyde: [rh@hyderanches.com](mailto:rh@hyderanches.com) — Workshop Coordinator

Steve Lamb: [stlamb1@gmail.com](mailto:stlamb1@gmail.com) — Farm Day Coordinator

Bonnie Morse: [bonniemorse10@gmail.com](mailto:bonniemorse10@gmail.com) — Speaker Coordination, Survivor Stock

Gary Morse: [gpmorse@comcast.net](mailto:gpmorse@comcast.net) — Survivor Stock

Mary Nordquist: [neilmary@verizon.net](mailto:neilmary@verizon.net) — Club Treasurer

Neil Nordquist: [neilmary@verizon.net](mailto:neilmary@verizon.net) — Equipment Coordination

David Peterson: [dpeterson307@aol.com](mailto:dpeterson307@aol.com) — Membership Coordinator, ListServ Management, Equipment Coordination

Dan Stralka: [stralka.daniel@epa.gov](mailto:stralka.daniel@epa.gov) — Annual Marin County Fair Coordinator

Rob Tysinger: [rob@tysingerengineers.us](mailto:rob@tysingerengineers.us) — Equipment Coordination

Marina Wright: [marinamay53@gmail.com](mailto:marinamay53@gmail.com) — Librarian

Jennifer Berry: [jenniferberrybees@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferberrybees@gmail.com) — Editor of the Newsletter