

THE MARIN BEEK NEWS

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 Join Us This Thursday – Marin Beekeepers Meeting

 Thursday, October 2, 2025 – 7:00 PM

 American Legion Log Cabin, 20 Veterans Place, San Anselmo, CA 94960

For beginner, intermediate, and advanced beekeepers

Please join us for our meeting for our monthly meeting "Extraction: No Pain While You Strain,"

Thursday evening, 7 PM, at the American Legion Log Cabin, in San Anselmo.

Feel free to come a little early and hang out with fellow beeks in the downstairs bar.

CLUB NEWS

Extraction: No Pain While You Strain - Robert MacKimmie

"Extraction: No Pain While You Strain" is a honey goal that is very achievable, and with a little guidance, pain can be completely avoided. New Beekeepers have spread newspaper throughout their entire kitchen to accommodate a massive traumatic event. Others go to great lengths to pretend basic work is not required. By that, some beekeepers have purchased very expensive hives, such as the Flow Hive, which eliminates one problem that is not really a problem, and potentially only works under ideal circumstances. But the issue of not even having to disturb the bees to get honey out and into a jar avoids most of the process of beekeeping.

Beekeeping comes down to accomplishing a number of tasks, sometimes in a repetitive way, or sometimes in a predictable way, to achieve very specific required accomplishments. When it gets down to it, it's a very basic process of taking the finished frames out of the hive, shaking off the bees, taking the capped honey frames back to a workshop or kitchen, uncapping the frames by one of several means, putting the frames into

a set up Extractor situation, spin the honey, let it drain into a bucket, skim off the wax that floats the top (a labor saving tendency of wax), pour it through a commercial kitchen strainer into the bottling bucket, with the added feature of having a 600 micron filter in the honey bucket (snags all the little tiny black and brown specs from comb that has had Brood connecting with it.) From there, one can simply use the Honey gate of the bottling bucket to fill individual bottom bottles of whatever quantity is required, or until the bucket is bone dry. It took more effort to write that description than it takes to actually achieve it.

The basic suggestion for any beekeeper is to keep it simple, and keep it painless. Work carefully, keeping Honey completely under control, cleaning up as you go, but minimizing your process so you don't create a gigantic mess. By keeping extraction simple, and managing the honey through to the bottling process, all kept simple, you can get back to the joys of Beekeeping with minimal impact of trauma to your life because of honey.

When one extracts honey 100 days a year, twice a week as a baseline without the frills of extra projects, you want a system that is easy, painless, something that avoids the trauma of making a mess. In our monthly meeting this Thursday, we will extract a super of honey, skim

the wax cappings, filter it into the bottling bucket, and fill a few jars. That's it. Simple, easy.

Extraction of honey can be as elaborate, using the most beautiful and highfalutin equipment ever lusted over in bee equipment catalogs, or can be kept extremely simple and painless. If one is processing major amounts of honey, and have significant amounts of money, one can set up of a beautiful Honeyhaus, so go for it! On the other hand, if one wants to keep the honey extraction very simple, honey extraction can be easily achieved by keeping your equipment and process very basic. Simple equals painless.

Join us for, "No pain, lots of gain!"

What's Going On In Your Hives Right Now - Robert MacKimmie

We are at a most critical moment of the bee year, where the workers have supported the polishing of the brood nest at the end of the dearth, then have been very responsive in providing royal jelly as the queen laid frame after frame with worker eggs, laying in the population of "winter bees," the workers who will go the long distance of darker days, keeping the hive warm through cold nights, and flying for resources on the nice, sunny, windless days. They will continue building their stores of pollen, getting ready for the moment when the next round of laying will start the measured build of population in anticipation of Spring, then the increasing populations as the early Spring weather supports the build of bee numbers. Spring arrives in earnest when multiple brood frames become filled with capped brood, and when the healthy population of bees suddenly hatch from their cells, the seemingly vast increase by comparison provides heat deep in the hive, and the growing expanse of warmth from active bee bodies supports a rapid rise of population again, and suddenly as nectar and pollen become ample, warmer day and night temperatures greet a population filling bee boxes to the point of excess.

Right now, we are at the moment just before the upcoming annual bee cycle begins in earnest. Mite population sampling determines which path

a beekeeper is on. Is the colony still strong and vibrant? Is the colony weak, low in population, and suffering the start of viruses and other diseases, most health issues easily noticed in the brood cells? Do the bees have good stores of pollen to support brood rearing over the Winter and especially at the beginning of Spring population gain, or are the pollen and honey stores skimpy, requiring feed?

Mite counts are essential now using these methods: sugar roll mite test, alcohol wash mite test, or soapy water mite wash tests. All are accurate methods for identifying the average mite populations in each hive. Anything is possible; all low mite counts, all high mite counts, mostly low counts with a few mite overwhelmed colonies, mostly high mite numbers with a few minimal mite hives, all low mite numbers. Some colonies might be weeks away from full mite collapse, some colonies might have already collapsed with every bee having a disease-ridden mite in with them causing them to hatch out with shriveled wings. They didn't fly away - you let them die a gruesome, unnecessary death of mite collapse. Some hives might have mite resistance traits, and have low mite numbers with minimal inputs from the beekeeper. Please note: this is only about 10% of hives that have hygienic or resistant behavior at this time.

If the mite numbers are high, immediate action is needed. Oxalic/Glycerin Swedish dishtowel sponges should be deployed to the top bars of the bottom brood box, (4 strips of the 1.5x6" dimension, or two halves of the of the 6x7" Sponge. Remember the formula is 50 grams Oxalic Acid dissolved into 50 grams [by weight] of vegetable glycerin, heated and stirred to 150 degrees F.) If the mite numbers are extremely high, applying one strip from the Formic Pro or Mite Away Quick Strips package is recommended to knock the mites way down to manageable levels. A second mite wash will be needed to see if you have the mite levels down below the 2% level, which is the threshold for action. Also remember that both the Oxalic and Formic do not migrate into the wax, do not migrate into the honey, and do not cause resistance in the mites. Also note that Apivar

strips use Amitraz miticide as their active ingredient. Amitraz DOES get into the wax. Thymol gets into the wax also.

Controlling the mites at this time of year has a strong outcome regarding the health of your bees in the Spring. A strong, powerful, healthy hive now will set you up for very successful hives in the early Spring. Weak, mite impacted hives now will predict sickly, weak hives through the winter, with potential mite collapse in the coming few months if the mite levels are too high. Anything near or over 2% (6 bees in a mite wash from 300 bees) is the action threshold when you need to minimize mites.

If a beekeeper is working with VSH (Varroa Sensitive Hygiene) bees, any of the mite roll tests will provide baseline information about how successful a particular queen's genetics are. The same is true with those who are following a non-treatment regime. By testing the mite loads at various times through the year, the beekeeper can determine whether particular colonies possess any of the mite resistant traits, or whether they are becoming overwhelmed by reproducing mites, and will need to treat the mites to not overwhelm their beekeeper neighbors.

Ants, Ready To Overwhelm Any Time - Robert MacKimmie

A call came in last week regarding a swarm in Novato. The homeowner checked back with the next door neighbor who was the source of the swarm. The parent beekeeper claimed he didn't have an extra bee box, and was not interested. The contacted beekeeper visited the fruit tree where the swarm was located. They had been in the tree for one week, and had built three little growing combs, each having a significant amount of sealed brood. The beekeeper transferred the three combs into an open frame with large rubber bands, and scooped as many of the bees into the box as possible. By the next morning, the mass of the bees had not moved into the hive, staying on the outside of the box. That was a telling

mystery. By the end of the second day, the bees had moved into the box ---- Or Had They?

The beekeeper was delayed in picking up the bee Nuc hive that had been strapped into the fruit tree. When the beekeeper did pick up the hive one week later, the hive seemed quiet, and opening the bee box revealed that those evil Argentinian Ants had overwhelmed and decimated the small fledgling colony. When possible, pay attention to even the smallest details, for they can undermine a growing civilization.

Seasonal Notes from the Apiary - Jennifer Berry

After an unusually cool summer, the heat finally arrived in late September, and now with scattered showers across the county this week, it feels like fall has begun in earnest.

If you haven't harvested your honey yet, now is the time to plan. Extraction is much easier on warm days while the honey is still fluid; once it cools and begins to crystallize, the job gets harder.

It's also a good moment to think about winter storage for your supers. A few reminders:

Freeze your frames before storing — this kills off pests.

Use sealed containers for smaller numbers of frames.

Avoid climate-controlled buildings, since wax moths thrive in them and will quickly destroy comb.

Consider Certan — an organic bacterial product that targets wax moths without harming bees.

A little planning now will save you headaches come spring.

Club Equipment - David Peterson

The club has electric extractors for harvesting your honey. Each extractor comes with an extraction kit that includes uncapping bin, electric knife, and a scratcher.

David Peterson, in Ross, manages six and 12 frame extractors. He also has a hand crank two frame extractor for those who need the exercise. Mary and Neil Nordquist, in Novato, manage six, 12 and 20 frame extractors.

The six and 12 frame extractors can generally fit into an SUV, station wagon or minivan. The 20 frame extractor requires a pick up truck or something equivalent.

You can schedule a request for use by contacting them at:

dpeterson307@aol.com

neilmary@verizon.net

OTHER EVENTS

A true flower to flute experience! Heidrun Meadery- Bonnie Morse

October 12, 2025

We'll start with a short farm tour with Bonnie to discuss habitat, native bees and honey bee foraging. Then we get suited up for hive inspections ending with pulling frames of honey. Those frames will be taken into the meadery where Gary will teach the extracting process. While Bonnie and Gary get that into jars of honey that participants get to take home, there will be a tour and tasting with the general manager, Michael Zilber, who will explain the process and where their honey is sourced.

<https://www.heidrunmeadery.com/Events>

Learn from the Bees Bee Behavior & Biology Course - Live on Zoom! - Jennifer Radtke

Thursday evenings at 6pm: Nov. 6th, 13th, & 20th, Dec. 4th & 11th, Jan. 8th & 15th
Sliding scale: \$125-\$175

RECORDINGS: You will get both video and audio recordings after the class, so you can rewatch in months to come.

Bee behavior is fascinating and amazing! Learning it will give you a deeper understanding of the "why's" of beekeeping so you can make better decisions to help your hive.

This course will give you a solid foundation in bee biology & behavior with an emphasis on practical applications for San Francisco Bay Area urban beekeeping. We'll cover everything bee: anatomy, communication in the hive, behavior from robbing to making queens, genetics, intelligence, nutrition, the yearly pattern of growth & decline of the hive, and much more!

[Click here to register!](#)

Instructor: Jennifer Radtke has been keeping bees in her backyard for 20+ years, and has developed the beekeeping education program at the Urban Farm Oasis. She has a group [bee mentorship program](#) on Bay Area Urban Backyard Beekeeping.

Film Screening

Local independent film maker (and club member) Chikara Motomura will be showing a screening of his latest film: Journey to Hokusai at the Lark Theatre on 10/14/25. Please follow [this link](#) for information and to purchase tickets.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Membership Dues are now \$25.00 for the year for single members, \$40.00 for families.

We need to hear from you. Please renew your membership Online at www.marinbeekeepers.org. There are many benefits from being a member, aside our monthly meetings, where you can chat with guest speakers from all over the beekeeping world:

- 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 (11 issues a year). Back issues on the website are available for background information and beekeeping tips;
- Preferred registration for beekeeping workshops (usually 4 or 5 per year) and special events;
- We have a great library that includes books, magazines and catalogs on everything from starting your first hive or baking with honey to raising your own queens.
- Free admission to our monthly meetings, where we have speakers among the foremost bee experts in the world (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 2025 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 County Beekeepers Association** to our Treasurer:

Malcolm Goldsmith 105 Molino Ave, Mill Valley, CA 94941.

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, sustainable 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.