

The Monthly Extractor

To increase interest in and knowledge of bees and beekeeping for the hobby and commercial beekeeper, and to educate the general public in the value of bees.

Calendar of Events (all monthly meetings are now at New College 6th and Wilson St. Santa Rosa)

April 10- Monthly Meeting- Dr. Gordon Frankie, UC Berkeley on bee friendly gardens and other types of bees. To learn more about Professor Frankie's teamwork at UCB look at

<<http://nature.berkeley.edu/urbanbeegardens/>>

May 7 – Day Under the Oaks at Santa Rosa J.C. Volunteers will be needed!

May 8- Monthly Meeting-Speaker will be Dr. Eric Mussen, U.C. Extension Entomologist

Dear Beeks!

Can you believe this weather??? It is affecting me, and all Northern California queen breeders, too. I have had to stop grafting queens in March, because of bad weather. Most queens that did hatch, either did not get out for a mating flight, or they had a brief encounter. What I have observed in the regular hives that were split to make their own queens, and in the mini-mating nucs with the grafted queens, the queens were not getting mated, or had a quick mate, and I believe they don't produce heavy pheromones with a single mating. What happened next was we would find 4 eggs in the hive and one of them would be in a supercedure cell. So the bees are not finding the new March queens acceptable. What this means is that I will be pushing back the delivery date for nucs and queens. Pray for good weather soon. I left Seattle, Washington for this?? This has been a record breaking year for wet weather...the wettest since 1904!!!! Let's hope that all that rain will provide loads of flowers with nectar for our lovely girls. That better be the payoff!!!

I think most of you who attended our first meeting at New College, found it an excellent central location. For those who didn't attend, just make sure to take this hint on parking: drive past the driveway to New College and over the railroad tracks and make an immediate left into the gravel parking area. There is limited parking in the New College lot, but this is almost as easy to use.

My observation hive has eaten up all of its stores. I have some syrup for them, so they won't starve in this rainy season. The queen is only laying a few eggs per day. She was mated in Italy, so I know that she is well bred, but the weather is making the hives remain smaller and the queen has not yet decided to ramp up her laying.

I still have equipment I need to paint and swarm season is upon us. Any dry, warm day we get, the phones will be ringing. Are you ready? Swarms usually issue in the time from 10am to 2pm. If the swarm lands in the afternoon, it is more likely to stay the night. Do you have a swarm box? If not, a cardboard box, that you make 3 or 4 square openings for ventilation, which

are then taped with 8 mesh hardware cloth, will work. Benjamin Schmidt recommends that you put old smelly comb in the box to attract the bees when you are hiving them. You can put in a branch that you have previously cut off a tree with a swarm on it, back in your swarm box for the bees to hang from. It also has wax and queen pheromone on it to attract the bees.

In the meantime, order any parts or equipment you need. Order something to put in the raffle, too. An extra bee brush, a hive tool, a bee note pad... Use this time to try to wire some frames for the brood nest. The bees really like this and it allows for stretching, which means the possibility of more drones, which I've said before, I don't believe we have enough of them in our hives, as in natural hives I find in doing extractions.

Let's hope April showers bring May flowers!

Kathy Cox

Did you know that if you bring a raffle prize, Leonard would give you three free tickets? That's right! 3 free tickets!



Such a deal!

It doesn't have to be new nor bee related, just something someone would like to win.

Last Meeting Donors: bekind, Thomas Elleray, Kathy Cox, Richard Wallenstein, Jackie Whitford, Leonard Riepenhooff, Western Farm, Carlos Bottini, Ettamarie Peterson and Hector Alvarez.

Note: This edition will not have the SCBA Board meeting minutes, as the meeting was not held until April 2, 2006.

Our condolences go to our treasurer Donna Nelson and her family on the loss of her father in late March.

SCBA General Meeting 2006-03-13 @ 7:10 pm

Held at the new meeting location, New College in Santa Rosa.

Announcements:

You get 3 extra tickets if you buy \$5 worth of raffle tickets.

If you bring an item for the raffle, you get three tickets for each item.

Our Treasurer, Donna wasn't able to make it to the meeting.

A large empty gravel lot is available for parking, just a bit further up 6th from Wilson ("kitty-corner" from the New College building across the railroad tracks).

We will have space to store our library at the new location.

The Secretary announced the swarm list has been mailed to the various public agencies and pest control offices, approximately 90 in total. We expect to enclose a copy of the swarm list as an insert in the April newsletter, though members are still encouraged to access the list online.

Membership data is being centralized to streamline membership-swarm-newsletter handling. We would like to collect additional information volunteered by members - email addresses (NOT for unsolicited mail, but rather for library notices), (beekeeping) Business Names. Address and name corrections. Our new website is officially online. You can find it at <http://www.sonomabees.org/>. Further updates and tweaks will continue, but the most significant thing to note is that the swarm list is online and "jumbles" the listings within each zone, so that when people visit the site to find someone to tend to a swarm, the order in which the names are presented will vary, this is being done to improve the distribution of calls among participants.

We may be considering adding links to member sites from the [sonomabees.org](http://www.sonomabees.org) site.

Kathy reminded swarm participants that it is imperative that they return swarm calls in a timely manner, and if they cannot handle a call, refer the caller to a beekeeper from the list who can. Also, underscore that the caller should not interfere with the bees in any way, even spraying them with water.

The new meeting location is costing us \$50 per meeting, plus a jar of honey. Each month, we need someone to volunteer a jar of honey for the next meeting. This is an excellent opportunity for individuals to advertise their apiary, as the honey is used in the New College dining area.

March 22nd & 23rd - Sonoma County Ag Days. SCBA and Liberty 4H Beekeeper group working together on a beekeeping display. More adults invited to participate. Lots of beekeeping experience isn't necessary, and it's a great way for newbies to get more exposure to the craft.

The first Sunday in May (7th May) is Day Under the Oaks, and we'll need volunteers to staff the

booth there. There's an excellent plant sale held there as well.

People who would like to demonstrate making frames for the April meeting should contact Katia (at Beekind).

Kathy will be arriving early at the April meeting at 6:30, so that interested parties can participate in a more lengthy Q&A session prior to the regular meeting start. Answers to those questions will be reviewed in the Q&A during the regular meeting. If you've got questions, plan to show up early!

Q&A by Kathy Cox

Q: **When should you start feeding your bees syrup?**

A: Several members do not give their bees supplemental sugar syrup, instead relying upon ensuring that their bees have sufficient stores of honey entering the winter. In other cases (such as Kathy Cox, who raises queens), supplemental feeding is necessary because the bees in the nucs are busy nursing, not foraging. It is important to monitor your hives and have a good idea what their honey stores are like, and if they don't have sufficient honey stores, to provide supplemental feeding. The long rainy season this year is unusual, which can contribute to the need for supplemental feeding if the colonies were not left with sufficient honey -- the number of days which the bees will have been successfully foraging is impacted by the rains.

If the weather has been cold, the bees may remain in the brood cluster, and actually be unwilling to move over a frame or two where there may be stores of honey. If you suspect this, you should use your hive tool to scrape the face of the honey adjacent to the brood, to break the surface of the cells, exposing honey for the bees.

Q: **At what point do you renew your queens?**

A: If you re-queen in the fall, you get better winter bees and the colony is less likely to swarm the following spring. If you didn't replace her in the fall, then if you replace her in the spring, you'll at least prevent swarming that spring. You should replace the queen on a 12-month cycle, but fall is preferred because the hive enters spring stronger.

To raise your own queen by hive division, basically, you're moving a frame with 1-day eggs from another hive which have not hatched into a new or queenless colony so that those bees have an opportunity to recognize they're queenless and start to raise some of the developing larva as queens.

Differences between raising your own queens (hive division, etc) and buying a mated queen: 15 days for the queen to hatch, an additional 7-10 days for her to get out and successfully mate (assuming the weather permits), and THEN 3 weeks for the eggs she lays to hatch, versus a mated queen is integrated into the colony in 3 days, and is able to start laying immediately, 3 weeks later has new bees being born.

Continued on page 3

If you have a weak hive you want to introduce into another colony, you can swap the hive position with a stronger colony. As the foragers return to the wrong colony, they'll be accepted into the other colony (being loaded with nectar and/or pollen). Bees are very community oriented: as long as they show up with nectar or pollen, the guard bees will let them in. This way, bees returning from the stronger one boost the weaker colony.

Q: What is the failure rate of new hives and novices?

A: Both Kathy and Ettamarie related stories of their first years as beekeepers. Kathy put two hives in the shade - the location was not good for the bees. Her second year, of the six hives she had, one exited winter with a laying worker. Fortunately, she had Serge to ask questions of. Ettamarie kept moving her hives around her property to put the bees close to nectar sources, not knowing they would get lost trying to return to where the hive had previously been positioned.

Hans suggested that people should move their hives so that the openings are facing away from the primary direction of the wind, thus reducing the chill inside the hive.

Also from Hans: if there's a shallow of honey above the brood, the heat will accumulate there, and the honey should remain useable by the bees. If not, you can mix honey and pollen to form patties to place inside the hive.

Presentation - swarm wrangling

Presenter: **Larry Mead**. Has been doing beekeeping on and off for about 30 years.

Started getting a lot of calls for swarms, and so started buying and making new equipment. Uses a 5-frame deep box for swarm catching. Tries to find out how far off the ground the bees are - often they're in a tree. Brings a small folding ladder, though often does not use that - instead, he uses a telescoping pool net - extends to 25' or so.

Typical swarm capture takes him 10-15 minutes. Leaves the box for the day, comes back that evening to pick it up. Hive box has a bottom nailed to it.

Uses wire cones for taking bees from walls. Has learned a lot from the "XYZs of Bees". Bring a frame of brood to put in your capture box, and the bees extracted from the wall will cluster on that frame.

New swarms start drawing comb immediately. Give them foundation to work.

Has had swarms go to the same tree year after year. If they land on a shrub, he'll cut the limb off.

When transporting the swarm box, you can stuff some screening into the opening, though he does not.

After the colony has been removed from a structure (and been out for several days) you can give them access back to the wall, and they'll enter and rob the honey out. One can leave it open for a while longer to let wax moths consume the wax, then seal it up. You

don't want to leave the honey in the wall. Does not carry insurance. Deals with the destruction - the homeowner is responsible for hiring someone to put things back. Did an extraction from a 3-storey barn about 10 years ago.

Switches them over to a larger super when he returns to his home.

Destroying the bees is a last resort. You can employ any pesticide you can purchase over the counter, so long as you're not charging for the service (which only licensed exterminators can do).

Various people contributed different experiences with using vacuum cleaners to extract bees. Success seems to require some finesse. Avoid suctioning to the point that you begin to pull honey, since once that happens, all the bees will be gummed up and lost.

Presenter: Benjamin Schmid.

He catches swarms by "attracting" them to hives in his yard. Swarms are attracted to dark (brood) wax. Places boxes in the sun, in the shade, high up, etc. Removes the middle 4 or 6 frames from the CENTER of a standard hive box. Bees are attracted to the cavity in the middle.

Leaves just a little bit of honey in the hive as an attractant.

Cities hold a greater number of feral bees than the countryside. The bees he catches this way are darker.

You might reduce the hive entrance to make the hive appear more appealing to the bees. Any bee that comes to the box is a scout bee.

Benjamin grew up in South America. Went to a farm school. Down there, they have Africanized bees. Believes that Northern California will be dealing with them in a couple of years.

For dealing with hostile bees, light up smoker with half-teaspoon of Ammonium Nitrate. This puts them to sleep with 3-4 puffs. Don't use Ammonium Nitrate from a local store. Get a pound or two online (98% purity). [Ed Note: read the MSDS for this material before you consider handling it:

<<https://fscimage.fishersci.com/msds/01290.htm>>

When properly prepared Ammonium Nitrate transitions into Nitrous Oxide, commonly known as Laughing Gas. However, it can also give off some undesirable toxic components if prepared in a metal container (such as your smoker), or when less than 100% purity. Then there's that whole issue with the potential for explosive reaction.]

Swarm scouts are looking for space, so use a brood box, not a medium super. Keeps used boxes, bottoms, tops, and frames together, so scents are homogenous.

What's In Bloom

By the end of April we should see the apples blooming. Dandelions, vetch, oak trees, willow trees, hawthorn, tulip trees, California poppies, lilacs and roses will also bloom this month.

My April Beekeeping To-Do List

By Serge Labesque © 2006

In spite of the cold and wet weather we have experienced during the past month, the hives are gaining strength, and honey is being produced.

Our bees have been forced to remain clustered more tightly and much longer than usual for the season. This, happening at a time of intense brood rearing, creates conditions that are favorable for an early build-up in the varroa mite population. So, I am preparing to use the drone brood method of trapping varroa mites earlier than in other years, and possibly a couple or even three times this season (May-June-July).

In the bee yards:

Most of what applied to March is still valid. However, it needs to be done at an accelerated pace.

Throughout the month:

- Catch up on hive inspections and manipulations in order to:
 - Manage brood nests and stores.
 - Assess colony health status.
 - Reduce stress on colonies.
 - Build colony strength.
 - Continue with swarm prevention measures (reduction of congestion in the brood chambers, brood nest expansion, forager and brood equalization, reversing, introduction of frames of foundation, supering, hive division, etc).
- Hive divisions.
- Queen rearing.
- Nuc formation and evaluation.
- Pull weeds.
- Supering.
- Discard old and misshapen frames.
- Harvesting.
- Add clustering space at bottom of hives.
- Enjoy the bees and the blooming plants around the apiaries.

At home:

Catch up on what did not get done in March.

- Make more supers.
- Assemble frames (some with drone brood foundation).
- Have swarm-catching equipment ready.
- Routinely clean and scorch tools and equipment.

Mayan Stingless Bee Keeping The Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI), with headquarters in Panama City, Panama, is one of the world's leading centers for basic research on the ecology, behavior and evolution of tropical organisms. <http://www.stri.org> Many people have heard of the Mayan stingless bees that are native to Central America. If you would like to know about this honey bee that is in danger of becoming extinct, take a look at <http://www.beesfordevelopment.org/info/info/stingless/royal-mayan-bee.shtml>

Day Under the Oaks

Photo from 2005 event



For the past few years Larry Bertolini of Western Farms has asked us to be part of his space at the Day Under the Oaks Santa Rosa Junior College event. The members take two hour shifts talking to the public about honey bees. This is a great opportunity to promote bees. The visitors to the display are usually families and have great questions (more than "Where's the queen?").

The display is set up on the East side of Baker Hall (the building shaped like a propeller). It is close to the parking at the Armory Dr. end of Elliott Avenue. Please call Ettamarie at 765-4582 or e-mail editor@sonomabees.org.

Funny Bee Poem (Original in French, translated by Serge and re-worked a bit by Ettamarie

Shoot!, said Henrietta, the worker bee
My baskets are heavy and my back is killing me

Relax, said the Queen and stay in my home
I have lots of honey in this lovely comb.
Maybe you will go out tomorrow and fly
To gather pollen from flowers so don't cry
Sleep tight this Saturday evening, my dear.
For all the workers, yellow and black, I cheer.

(Note: the original author named the worker "Henry" but that would never do!)

Member Ad Space

(free ad space to all members)

For Sale by Kathy Cox: Queens for sale in May (Sorry long rainy spell delayed rearing and mating.) \$19, \$20 if marked. **Nucs** available in May \$120. This includes 5 frames with pollen and nectar, approx. 3 pounds of bees and their queen. **Full size hives for sale in May-** 8 frames of drawn comb, honey, pollen and a 2006 queen. Bottom, deep and migratory top. (This hive will bring you honey this year.) \$200.

Bee class: Hive inspection class, \$35.

Call for dates and reservations. See eggs, larvae, capped pupae, capped honey, nectar, pollen, drone cells and adults, worker cells and worker bees, nurse bees, queen supercedure cells, swarm cells and more.

Call Kathy at 707-823-2804. Don't forget to leave your phone number if you leave a message!

beekind store

We have 25 packages of bees left. 80.00 per 3lb package and laying Italian queen and 5.00 deposit on the cage. We also have plenty of beekeeping equipment. Our classes are open (no reservation needed).

Courses in Beekeeping at

beekind Store in Sebastopol (see ad)

8-Apr Package Bee Installation:
INSTALLING YOUR PACKAGE BEES -
FEEDING - AND INITIAL MANAGEMENT.
no charge

8-Apr Intro to Beekeeping:
BEE BASICS - ACQUIRING BEES - HIVE
SUPPLIES/EQUIPMENT & LOCATION AND
SETTING GOALS.

Noon - 3PM \$ 25

22-Apr Pest Management:
DISCUSSION ON IDENTIFYING PESTS AND
TYPES OF CONTROL AVAILABLE.

11AM - 12:30 \$15

22-Apr Swarming:
DISCUSSION ON PREVENTING AND
CATCHING SWARMS AND THE METHODS
USED.

2PM - 3PM \$10

13-May EXTRACTING HONEY - Rearing
Hives for the Honey Flow:
TIMELY ACTION-GROWING YOUR APIARY-
ADDING BROOD CHAMBERS AND SUPERS
AND DISCUSSION AND DEMONSTRATION ON
EXTRACTING HONEY

Noon - 2PM \$15

May 27 Hive Inspections:
HANDS ON HIVE INSPECTION

Noon - 3PM \$ 35

June 3 Beehive Management with Follower
Boards

DISCUSSION ON IMPROVEMENTS TO HIVE
CONDITIONS THAT CAN REDUCE STRESSES
ON BEES. Approximately one hour class with
allowance for questions and
answers.

Taught by Serge Labesque (SRJC Beekeeping
Instructor)

10AM - 11AM \$25

June 10 Bio Dynamic Beekeeping as taught
by Michael Theile

1-3pm

Cost TBA

17-Jun Pest Management:
DISCUSSION ON IDENTIFYING PESTS AND
TYPES OF CONTROL AVAILABLE.

11AM - 12:30 \$15

17-Jun Requeening and Over-wintering
bees:

DISCUSSION ON GETTING READY FOR THE
WINTER AND REPLACING THE QUEEN

2PM - 3PM \$10

Leonard Riepenhoff

is selling very nice plastic tubs for selling and
storing honey. The 1 \square pound size is \$7 for 50
(14¢ each) or \$65 for 500 (13¢ each).

The 3 pound size is \$9.50 for 50 (19¢ each) or
\$85 for 500 (17¢ each).

These will not melt in the microwave if you are
warming honey at half power properly.

Call Leonard at 525-8424. He will bring samples
to the meeting again this month.

New Librarian

Michael Johnson has stepped forward and
volunteered to be our new librarian. He is a
podiatrist with a practice in Petaluma. This is his
second year of bee keeping. He has a 13-year-
old daughter who is also interested in bee
keeping and who is very brave even when stung!
Michael lives in Novato.

Thanks so much for volunteering, Michael!

Extractor Locations

Spring Maxfield has volunteered to keep
the second extractor and hot knife at her home in
Santa Rosa this summer. This is a big help to the
people who live in the northern areas of the
county. She can be e-mailed at
pastpres@sonomabees.org or telephoned at
707-527-5913.

Swarm List Included

Along with this newsletter you will receive a copy of the 2006 Swarm List. Please keep this list handy to direct callers (friends, relatives, folks that know you like bees) that need help saving a swarm of bees. This list is also available on our web site www.sonomabees.org. Our web master, Sean Straw, also known as our secretary, has cleverly fixed the swarm list on the web so that every time a person goes to it, the names will appear in a different order so the calls can be more evenly distributed.

If you are on the list and later want to be removed, Sean Straw can remove you from the web site. Please notify him if you have changes at secretary@sonomabees.org.

Thanks to Ag Day Volunteers

We want to thank Joanne Wallenstein, Mike O'Niell, Ettamarie Peterson, Dawn Soiland, Cameron Carey and Josh Wilson for bringing the Liberty 4-H Beekeeping children.

The 4-H'ers shared their extensive knowledge about bee with the school children. Some of their posters were also included in the exhibit. The 4-H children were Kyle Cameron, Jessie Peterson, Griffin Carey, Kaityln and Liam O'Niell, Grayson Wilson; Garrett, Jewel and Rose Soiland.

We also want to thank Julie Dilley for coming and taking a turn.

YEAH, MY EGG WAS LAID
RIGHT AROUND EASTER TIME.
HOW'D YOU KNOW?...



April Recipe Sent to Us by Lela Dowling

Honey Marshmallows

2 c honey (any kind, the lighter the better)
2 envelopes plain Knox gelatin
1/4 c lukewarm water
2 egg whites
1 T vanilla, almond extract, cinnamon, nutmeg, or any other flavoring, spice or food coloring

Line a 9" x 12" pan with brown paper, including the sides.

Dissolve gelatin in water.

Heat honey in a heavy pan over low medium heat to 240 F (soft ball). Remove from heat and stir in gelatin. Mixture will foam, so be sure you have used deep enough pan. Set aside for 10 minutes.

Beat egg whites until stiff, and slowly pour in honey in a thin stream while beating on high. Continue beating until mixture is very firm and frothy. Add any extract, flavoring, spice or food coloring.

Turn out in pan, sprinkle with confectioner's sugar and let sit for 24 hours.

Lift out of pan, place upside-down on a cutting board that has been coated with confectioner's sugar, and moisten the paper. It will peel away from the marshmallow. Cut into 60 pieces, and toss each piece with confectioner's sugar. Marshmallows absorb a lot of sugar, so do not stack the pieces or they will stick together.

SCBA Executive Board 2006

Pres. Kathy Cox president@sonomabees.org 823-2804
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Vice Pres. Katia Vincent - vicepresident@sonomabees.org 869-0430
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Editor Ettamarie Peterson – editor@sonomabees.org 765-4582
Swarm Chairperson- Katia Vincent swarms@sonomabees.org
Extractor Tech- Call Ettamarie 765-4582 or Spring Maxfield 527-5913

Regular monthly meetings of the Sonoma County Beekeepers' Association are held on the second Monday of each month, at 7 pm. The meetings cover a wide range of topics of interest to beekeepers. Everyone wanting to learn about honey bees is cordially invited to attend. You do not need to be a member nor a beekeeper to attend these meetings. Please contact the treasurer to pay dues.

Wanted: Someone to be our new historian. Ettamarie will be happy to train you!

beekind	Order bees now.....Call 824-2905 Open Mon.-Sat. 10am – 5pm
	WE PAY PREMIUM PRICE FOR PREMIUM HONEY.
	S & C Labesque, Mann Lake Ltd, Dadant & Brushy Mt. equipment and supplies. <u>921 Gravenstein Hwy. South, Sebastopol (by Foster Freeze)</u>

21 West 7 th St. Santa Rosa	Western Farm Supply	707-545-0721
Visit them to find many bee supplies and your other animals' feed and supplies.		
Larry and Lou Bertolini, Owners and Sponsors of our Day Under the Oaks Display.		

Honey Bee Trivia

In 1853 a botanist by the name of Christopher Shelton wanted to bring honey bees to the newly planted orchards and fertile valley in San Jose, California. He packed 8 hives on to a sailing ship going down the East Coast to Panama. He took the hives across Panama on a donkey train to the Pacific Ocean. At the Pacific Ocean he put the hives on a sailing ship going North to San Francisco. By the time he reached San Francisco, only one hive had survived. He and that hive got on a steamer going down to San Jose. Unfortunately the boiler blew up in Alviso and poor Mr. Shelton was killed. However, the bees made it to San Jose where thanks to the good climate and great foraging they multiplied and started the bee business in California.

The Monthly Extractor
Sonoma County Beekeepers' Assoc.
P.O. Box 98
Santa Rosa, CA 95402-0098

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Our new location is the New College building
6th and Wilson Streets in Santa Rosa, just one block south of Western Farm Supply. See you Apr. 10th at
7pm!