

The Monthly Extractor

Our goal is 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.

Monthly Meeting March 12th at 7 pm- Held at the new Wine Country Honey Building 2971 Guerneville Rd., Santa Rosa one half mile past Fulton going West. Second right turn driveway past Abramson Road. If you have an easy-to-carry folding chair, please bring it. Dr. Eric Mussen from Davis will speak on the latest disease and other topics.

From Your President

February finally brought us some much-needed rain! It was wonderful to see so many fruit trees and daffodils and some other bulbs spring into bloom towards the end of the month. I hope it reminded all of you that this means swarm season could be very soon. I hope you saved some of your old brood comb to use as an attractant in your swarm catching box. Believe me; it works like a magnet. If the swarm is on the ground, those bees will walk in like they were invited if you have an old brood comb in the box. I did it once in front of an old timer beekeeper and his eyes just about popped out of his head! He couldn't get over how those bees were bee-lining it for the entrance!

We all need to thank V.P. Sean Straw for getting the *Press Democrat* to come out and do a good story with photos to encourage the public to call us when they spot a swarm. Hopefully this will be remembered when the season starts and people will be interested in saving our critters instead of running for the insecticides!

Thanks also go to Kathy Cox and Scott Nelson for the generous use of space in their new building. They are not charging us one red cent! There is a lot of parking near the building and it is out in the country so we should all feel safe after dark. If you know of a source of free or inexpensive chairs, Kathy and Scott would like to hear about it. Call them at Wine Country Honey 707-578-0797. For our first meeting there we are asking people to bring their own if they have those stadium chairs in a bag.

Ettamarie Peterson

General Meeting, Monday February 12th

Meeting called to order by our aptly accessorized president Ettamarie who was sporting a bee bonnet and matching scarf. Fifty-five plus or minus in attendance to hear presentations by Kathy Cox and Sean Straw.

Q. & A. This segment of the meeting began immediately with the latest news regarding an as yet undetermined cause to hive failure termed "Colony Collapse Disorder" or CCD. In some states losses have been as high as 80% in a given bee yard. It is not known whether bees in California have been affected. Pennsylvania State College is currently leading the investigation into this latest affliction to otherwise healthy hives. Dead bees dissected to pinpoint the cause of CCD have been found to

have foreign fungus and bacteria by entomologists. Serge had reason to believe a strain of nosema may be causing CCD.

Fred Nelson explained that high bee mortality in fall, (most often due to mites), can reduce the cluster to a size insufficient for the necessary warming and penetration of cappings therefore reverting accessibility of food stores and any remaining bees die of starvation. Vince added that chemicals used to treat hives mask the queen's own pheromone which can result in the collapse of a hive. Fred reiterated that bees need to be given the opportunity to facilitate their own resistance to mites and related virus' by keeping hives free of chemical treatments. Those hives with queens possessing appropriate genetics to stand up to mites and related ills will survive and each successive generation will become even more resilient.

Expanding this focus, Serge later explained the value of favoring the genetics of bees suited to the rhythms of our local climatic conditions. Working together as a beekeeping community, we can reinforce the bees' ability to withstand the many challenges to their viability. Preferring nucs and queens raised locally along with hive division to begin or expand our apiaries, means stronger bees and more successful hives. For the many benefits given us by our bees, we can reciprocate with choices in hive management that maximize the chances for the bees' perpetuity.

Both Ettamarie and Serge advised against offering frames of stores to bees from hives that have collapsed. If the hives were not treated the honey should be still be suitable for human consumption.

Announcements

Our speaker for next our next monthly meeting will be Dr. Eric Mussen. Please note the new location at top of this page.

Our club librarian, Michael, announced that we have two new titles for member enjoyment:

The New Complete Guide to Beekeeping and Backyard Beekeeping

Michael will be e-mailing members to remind them to return any borrowed materials.

Katia announced a one-day event coming to Summerfield Waldorf School March 10th. Speakers will include our own Serge Labesque, Dr. Eric Mussen, Priscilla Coe and Randy Oliver presenting the latest on beekeeping practices, apitherapy and the importance of

bees to our ecosystem. Tickets are available through Beekind or same day at the door. Awesome, Katia! Thank you! Regenerative Designs, located in Bolinas, will host Serge in a two-day workshop on home apiary management. Check them out on the web... www.regenerativedesign.org It looks like they have many fabulous events planned for 2007! Congratulations to Rick Wallenstein and Glen Murphey winners of tonight's door prizes. VistaPrint.com. is an online resource for anyone wishing to create his or her own business cards. Tonight's Program: Package Bee Installation Presented by Kathy Cox

Have all necessary equipment prepared and easily accessible. Ideally your hive box should contain drawn frames of comb and even frames of stores that were collected from healthy hives. Kathy recommends having your new arrivals in a double deep configuration. The bottom box is frame free and the upper box contains your drawn frames and stores if available. (If you do not have drawn frames feed your bees a one to one cooked syrup in an entrance feeder so they can draw their own comb. Using a top feeder, give honey cappings that you know are chemical free.)

Before picking up your bees, have a place in mind for them to sit, not too cool (to protect the fertility of the queen) not in the full sun....

Kathy says to hive your bees late in the afternoon to discourage the bees from flying even absconding. The queen and the bees themselves are a conglomerate and are disassociated with one another. When you get your bees gently spray them with water, as it is likely they have not been able to drink and cool themselves.

You need to take apart the cap and hang the queen cage on the center frame in the top box. You may need a paper clip if the cage does not have a hanger. After a few days you will need to check and see if the bees ate through the candy to release the queen. If not, you may need to help by gently poking a hole in the sugar candy to get the bees to eat it. (Be careful or you can injure the queen obviously.)

Kathy has found that the bees respond very well to one gentle banging to move the bees from the top of the box. Shake a few bees on top of the queen and place the bees remaining inside the box between your double deeps. This way you don't have to keep banging the box over your hive body. In a short time, the bees will move out of their carrier to the upper box with frames. Remove the package box, align the two boxes and in a few days remove the bottom empty box and place the top one bottom board. A few days after confirmation that the queen has been released, check to see that she is laying. You should see larvae. Continue to feed your hive until the colony has matured sufficiently to begin stores in a super.

Kathy uses menthol to control trachea mites. She uses one ounce of menthol to one cup of oil. She applies this combination onto paper towels and places them in the hive between deeps. (I assume and I further assume she cuts the towels into strips or pieces)???

Swarm Season Around the Corner Sean Straw

Members wishing to be included on the swarm call list need to get their information to Sean even if you were on the list

last year. It is important that the list be current and accurate because we do not want swarms to be reported to members who are no longer available to take calls. Please consider placing your name on the swarm list carefully as it is important you are confident in your skills to safely handle a swarm. It is also essential that you are willing to respond to a swarm call quickly not only for the sake of the bees but to minimize the anxiety of the property owner involved. Depending on the situation, you may be the first person with the opportunity to demonstrate the importance and value of bees to bystanders. As Ettamarie declared, "You are an ambassador for the honey bee!" She suggests if possible to bring an extra bee suit or protection because people are sometimes curious and comfortable enough to want to get an up close look at what you are doing and may even want to help.

We may have swarms early this year so have your equipment ready. Your "must haves" include a swarm box or hive body, smoker, rope, ladder and perhaps something for cutting branches. Be sure to check with the confirmed property owner before cutting any branches. Remember you are not allowed to spray bees on some one else's property. Plan to return after dark to make sure you have not left any foragers. Even if you have a swarm immediately, there will be some foragers who will be returning later in the day.

If you would like to accompany a more experienced beekeeper on a swarm call you can let Sean know this and he will post that information as well. Those wishing to be involved with swarm collection this season need to e-mail Sean at www.sonomabees.org/swarm Meeting adjourned 9:30

Notes submitted by Kathy Kellison, Secretary

Sonoma County Beekeepers Assoc. Board Meeting Minutes

Feb. 26th at Donna Nelson's home Feb. 26, 2007 Present Donna (Treas.) and Fred Nelson, Pres. Ettamarie Peterson, 1 VP Sean Straw (Secretary Kathy Kellison couldn't find us in the dark ad 2 VP Mike Johnson had another meeting.)

It was decided to make our move to Wine Country Honey Building permanent. Concern is lack of enough chairs for now. Fred Nelson offered to check with his former employer, Calif. Dept. of Forestry to see if he can borrow some. The best way to get the word of the new location out is new posters, our web site, and our newsletter.

Next speaker is Dr. Eric Mussen. If he can come early enough, officers will be invited to meet with him at dinner somewhere near the new meeting place. We will also write a thank you letter and donate \$200 to Dr. Mussen's department at U. C. Davis. Meetings for April, May, June were discussed. We will invite the 4-H beekeepers to put on presentations at the April meeting. Sean will try to get Mea McNeil for our

May meeting. August will be a presentation on how to get honey ready for the Harvest Fair competition and also how to market honey.

Sean Straw demonstrated how our new telephone system will work. It is through the computer. The company is Skype and the cost is only \$38 per year. The number is 707-703-5699. It is an automated message which will have current information on meetings. Sean suggested members might pay a little extra to have their numbers as swarm catchers mentioned on this phone message. He will present that idea at the meeting.

Sean gave us a swarm list up-date. He said not as many people had signed up as before. Donna Nelson gave him some more names that came in with the dues money.

March 21 & 22 Ag. Days – Liberty 4-H children will set-up and “man” the booth but if any members want to help, that would be great.

Treasurer’s Report:

Opening Balance	\$3326.30
Income total	\$887.00
Expense total	(\$223.70)
Net Income	\$663.30
Current Balance	\$3989.60 (checking account)
Savings account balance	\$3055.08

My March Beekeeping To-Do List

Serge Labesque © 2007

Leaving aside the all-too-frequent lamentations about the problems our bees are facing, I would like to suggest an idea that brings the perspective of happier days in the apiaries. All beekeepers can participate in this. Actually, the more of us that do, the better the outcome will be.

The thought is about strengthening our local bees, and giving them a bright and healthy future. To achieve this, I am proposing that we all raise bees from the ones we have here, locally, *without bringing any from outside our area*, and in sufficient quantity to cover our needs and those of the beekeepers who are just starting out or who want to increase the size of their apiaries. Sounds farfetched? No, it is not.

As a starting point, try not to dwell on the colonies you lost this winter. They are gone, and this may even be a good thing after all. If they were not been poisoned and you did not do anything wrong, call this “natural selection”. Tell yourself that the colonies you are left with are jewels. Indeed, these had the strength to survive the stresses of the past winter months.

Next, help your good colonies grow during as much of the spring as possible. And finally, when they are ready for it, divide them. The key here is to allow the queenless splits to raise their own queens. The young queens will mate with drones coming from other survivor colonies.

Much is to be gained by performing hive divisions and letting the splits raise their own queens. In fact, I consider this to be the focal point of spring hive management. When done correctly, this procedure brings with it a remarkable number of benefits. Here are the most obvious of these:

- You can largely control swarming with hive division.
- You can raise young queens from stock you know.

- You can increase the size of your apiaries if you wish to do so.

or: You can have nucs to sell.

and:

- You can strengthen colonies.
- You can gain an element of control over the varroa mites.
- You can increase honey production.
- You can generate new comb to replace older ones.
- and there is more...

This is much better than good hive management! This is taking care of the bees in our apiaries and well beyond, as it eliminates a major mode of introduction of foreign strains and pathogens. It also reinforces the adaptation of our bees to our climate and area, because your good queens will spread their “survivor” genes around. What a gift to our environment!

So, I am proposing that each one of us produce through simple hive division a little more than one nuc, on average, per pair of colonies we have beyond our own needs. This will, in most cases, compensate for mishaps, and will make local bees available to other beekeepers.

As you raise these young queens, don’t miss the indescribable joy of seeing the first brood they produce. These will be young queens from your very own hives!

In the bee yards:

March comes at the beginning of the busiest time of the year for beekeepers.

At this time of the year, the major factor that can influence the development of our colonies, and our beekeeping activities, is the weather. March weather is typically unstable, unreliable, and medium range weather forecasts appear to be more the result of guesswork than true science. So, as beekeepers, we have to be prepared for anything, because events happen quickly in the apiaries at this season.

For sure, the nectar and pollen flows are on, as blooming plants are everywhere. If the weather allows foragers to fly, they gather nice amounts of nectar and pollen. The colonies develop at a fast pace, and they may be storing sizable amounts of nectar. But if the weather is inclement, the populous hives can, in a matter of days, be at risk of starving. And this is the beginning of the swarm season too!

Throughout the month:

- Open hive entrances as the colonies gain strength.
- Perform hive inspections and manipulations to:
 - Ensure that stores are adequate and accessible to the bees.
 - Assess colony health status.

- Manage hives to:
 - Reduce stresses on colonies.
 - Encourage their development.
 - Build colony strength.
- Implement 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).
- Place honey supers as needed.
- Discard old and misshapen frames.
- Pull weeds in front of the hives to keep the entrances easily accessible (this is easy to do while the ground is moist).
- Enjoy the bees!

Mid-month:

- Start raising a few queens.
- Set up a few two-queen colonies.
- Combine weak or slowly developing colonies.
- Perform a few hive divisions, as needed.

End of the month:

- Possibly enjoy a small, early spring harvest.
- Perform a few more hive divisions, as warranted.
- Assemble nucs.
- Add clustering space at bottom of hives.

At home:

- Make supers.
- Make frames.
- Render capping wax.
- Render wax from discarded frames.
- Have swarm-catching equipment ready.
- Routinely clean and scorch tools and equipment.

Also consider attending:

- Beekeeping workshop and classes in Bolinas, on March 3 and 4 www.regenerativedesign.org ; (415) 868-9681.
- Beekeeping Symposium, in Sebastopol, on March 10. Tickets are available at Beekind, in Sebastopol, (707) 824-2922.
- Intermediate Beekeeping Classes at Santa Rosa Junior College, on March 21 and 28. www.santarosa.edu (707) 527-4371 Direct link to the class description: <https://busapp02.santarosa.edu/CommunityEducation/ListCourse.aspx?CourseVrsnNbr=00982001&ID=2007315&AvailToPublic=1>

A busy month indeed

Serge Labesque's Beekeeping Classes Schedule

Intermediate Beekeeping for spring and summer

Sect: 9093

Wed. March 21-28, 6:30 PM-9:00 PM
2707 Maggini Hall, Santa Rosa Campus
Fee: \$45.00
2-session class.

SRJC web site:

<https://busapp02.santarosa.edu/CommunityEducation>
or

Call (707) 527-4824

Reminder to those who want to purchase ad space that the business card size ad is \$5, the 1/4 ad is \$10, and the 1/2 page ad is \$20. Classified ads are free to members.

Member Ad Space

(Free ad space to all dues payers)

April Lance and Linda Clary have a lovingly cared for 'up and running' healthy beehive with bees that can be delivered to your location. Please call us! Fine, established, producing, very clean and healthy, well cared for bees and hive components for sale. Hives have been requeened with beautiful 2006 queens this year. No pesticides ever used. Bees from 80 dollars --- then you select any hive parts you wish to incorporate (bottom boards, deep and honey supers, additional bees, inner cover, lids and more, or you provide your own ---- all at very reasonable prices to get you started. Simple or elaborate. We will also have nucs for sale in the spring of 2007. Please Call 707-431-1569

Kathy Cox and Scott Nelson:

Classes at Wine Country Honey:

March 24th, noon to 1pm - "**Package Bees**" Free if you purchase bees from us. \$5.00 if you didn't! Call 707-578-0797 to reserve a spot.

April 14th -weather permitting, noon to 2pm, "**Splitting Hives.**" \$15.00, please call 707-578-0797 to reserve a spot.

April 21st - noon to 1pm - "**Package Bees**" Free if you purchase bees from us. \$5.00 if you didn't! Call 707-578-0797 to reserve a spot.

May 5th - 2pm to 4pm - "**Hive Inspection**" Free if you purchase a nuc or hive from us. \$35.00 if you just want the class. Call 707-578-0797 for a reservation.

PACKAGE BEES - 3 & 4-POUND PACKAGES, \$65.00 & \$80.00, includes a free class on installing package bees. Available in April. Pay on ordering.

SALE: 5 Frame Nucs, \$125. '07 queen, her bees and brood, with honey and pollen. 5 frame exchange. Price includes a free class at Wine Country Honey. Deposit of \$60 is required.

For Sale: Whole hives, \$250. '07 queen, her bees and brood, with honey and pollen. Price includes a free class at Wine Country Honey. Deposit of \$125 is required.

For Sale: Queens. \$20. Available May '07. Full amount due when ordering.

Apprenticeship Opportunity. Call to spend a day or a week apprenticing with Wine Country Honey beekeepers.

Wine Country Honey, 2971 Guerneville RD, Santa Rosa, CA 95401. 707-578-0797. www.winecountryhoney.com

Apimondia 2007 Will Be in Australia

Next September 9th to the 14th will be the world conference for beekeepers in Melbourne, Australia. For all the details, go to <http://www.apimondia2007melbourne.com/>. There will be exciting pre- and post- tours too!

We know of a female member of the association who is looking for a person to share hotel rooms with. She is also planning to go to Tasmania. Let us know if you would like to be her room mate (females only, please).

I Learned About Beekeeping From This

By Ettamarie Peterson

One summer day a few years ago Lee Ostrander offered to help me move a hive out to our tent at the Gravenstein Apple Fair. This hive was a two-deep one so we needed to split it. We wanted to take the queen to the Fair. Well, Lee looked at the frames in the two boxes. He pointed at a frame that had fanning bees sitting on it. Then he said, "She is probably on this frame." You know, he was absolutely right!

What Lee had learned from years of handling bees is that the daughters will fan to spread the queen's scent when the hive is disturbed.

Try this next time you are dividing a hive.

Colony Craziess Disorder

By Luke Snyder

Posted on our own sonomabees@yahoogroups.com

While I don't have a doctorate in science, nor haven't been able to focus my high powered microscope in years, I think there's another disorder out there. I'm going to call it Colony Craziess Disorder and I am pretty sure I've got it.

Every once in a while, I drop what I am doing, log into eBay and search for anything to do beekeeping. I'll do the same for other websites too. I've found myself spending dozens of hours trying to separate the gunk from my beeswax, squeezing every last little drop out just to make a few candles. I'm also beginning to think yellow and black are a good color to design anything by, whether it be living room furniture, art, or after seeing Ettamarie's hat and scarf, clothes.

Just yesterday, I was perusing my local thrift shop, looking for nothing in particular, but keeping an eye out for any of the "back of my mind" items on my list. Like any good second-hand searcher, I'm always on the look out for a nice musical instrument, wooden bowl, rolling pin, or matching set of clothes hangers. When I saw that little CD in its jewel case, titled "Bees 2.0," I picked it up quickly and held it close for examination. Aside from the title, there was little else, but a little drawing of several hexagons supporting a bee (the ignorant artist forgot to sketch the second set of wings and had the abdomen way too thick). Without any clue of what was in it, I summoned a whole dollar out of my wallet to buy that CD on a grab-bag chance that it was diamond in the rough.

By the way, It turned out to be some program that made spreadsheets for contractors and planners. Nevertheless, if I think about it and had a chance to do it again, I'd probably

wrestle someone to over a chance to purchase a chipped cookie jar designed as a bear trying to get into a straw hive.

So if you find yourself during this winter-to-spring season, waiting patiently next to the phone to ring with your swarm on it, you are at risk for CCD. If you find yourself re-calculating all the potential different ways to house the most colonies this with your 9 supers, 5 deeps, and four telescoping covers, you may be coming down with it. And if you're like I am, and search all the nooks and crannies of the Salvation Army for a top bar hive, you've got Colony Craziess Disorder. Inspired by true events, -Luke Snyder

March Recipes

Skin Improver

For normal skin, mix 6 oz. (one small jar) Gerber Peaches (baby food), 1 Tbsp Honey, and enough oatmeal to create a thick paste. Apply to your face, wait ten minutes, and then rinse well with cool water. The peaches contain large amounts of alpha-hydroxy acids, which gently exfoliate skin; accelerating cell renewal and leading to healthier skin tone. We all know honey's healing properties!

Cranberry, Apple and Jicama Salad

3 Tbsp. each: Extra Virgin Olive Oil and lemon juice

2 Tbsp. Honey

¼ tsp. salt

3 Cups very thin julienne strips Fuji apples

2 Cups very thin julienne strips jicama

1 Cup very thin julienne strips peeled carrots

½ Cup dried cranberries

1 Tbsp. snipped chives

Freshly ground pepper to taste

¼ Cup chopped walnuts, toasted

Whisk together oil, lemon juice, honey and salt in a medium bowl. Add remaining ingredients except pepper and walnuts; toss well to coat. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour to marinate. Season with pepper and top with walnuts just before serving. Makes 12 small side servings.

Note: if you can't find jicama, try Jerusalem Artichokes. They are not sweet but they are crunchy.

What's In Bloom

In February Janet Leisen reported, "So far this week I have seen full blooms of not only the eucalyptus, bay laurel, manzanita and rosemary but ornamental pear, heather, cotoneaster, dandelion, and photinia. I am not sure if these are all attractive to bees since it has been too cold when I am able to observe, but I am assuming they are."

Lots of fruit trees will be joining those blooms this month and many bulbs. I know the daffodils were blooming everywhere the last week of February. The bottle brush and willows are also blooming.

SCBA Executive Board 2007

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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.

21 West 7th St. Santa Rosa
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Frank Bardella, EA
Barbara Bardella, EA

Enrolled to practice before
the Internal Revenue Service

Email: bardella@bardella.com
<http://www.bardella.com>

The Monthly Extractor
 Sonoma County Beekeepers' Assoc.
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New Location!

Meetings are normally held 7 p.m. the second
 Monday of each month at 2971 Guerneville Rd
in Santa Rosa, CA.

⇒Check your address
Label to see if you need to
send or bring in your \$25 fee to
renew! We value your
membership!⇐

