

# The Monthly Extractor

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## President's Message

Hello Friends,

I am writing this message on Earth Day 2023. As we are collectively turning our focus and attention



to all the beauty we enjoy and the responsibilities that we have for this lovely planet, I feel a great pride in the work the SCBA has been doing for nearly 30 years. I hope you feel this too when you contemplate your membership. Our Cluster Program provides education and support

for anyone who wants to keep bees, and provide forage for them, in their corner of Sonoma County. The Community Education Program is growing, and we are reaching more students, beekeepers, and gardeners than ever before. For more than 5 years, the Gardening for Bees Program has been propagating and sharing forage plants by the thousands. And our Swarm Rescuers have been running all around the county, helping bees find safe, new homes with eager beekeepers.

Hopefully, you all saw the April 17, 2023 Press Democrat front page article about swarms. It was a fantastic piece that our very own Roger Simpson has been working to get published for over 2 years! Congratulations to Roger and everyone who contributed.

Now that the sun has come out to stay, it's time to get as busy as the bees. Go outside and tend your bees and your gardens like our pollinators depend on it, because they do!

This is our newsletter that reflects the various techniques, theories and art of sustainable beekeeping.

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Don't forget that our website is a wonderful place to answer some of your burning questions. The "SCBA MEMBERS-ONLY INFO" section is the place where you can find out about getting a name badge, watch video recordings of past speakers, rent equipment, and peruse newsletter archives. When you take a break from being outside this month, escape to the website and get your fill of all things SCBA.

As a member of SCBA, you are part of something great. Hopefully you will participate more in our activities this year than ever before.

Volunteerism is what makes this organization accomplish all that we do, and the call is out. Write to [programdirector@sonomabees.org](mailto:programdirector@sonomabees.org) to get involved.

Remember our message whenever someone asks you how they can help the bees. Simply reply "Plant! Plant! Plant! And Don't Spray!"

Happy May everyone! Get out there!

Carol Ellis, SCBA President

# From the Desk of the Program Director

By Shannon Carr



Spring is here and Summer is right around the corner! Can you believe how fast this year is going? Before you know it we will be enjoying the long summer days. With Summer comes opportunities to be outside, in our hives, gardens and in our community.

This past month, we had an amazing time on April 29th at Spring Fling! Over 145 members and their families came out and joined us at Bees N Blooms. We had hives dives hosted by Christine Kurtz and Joy Wesley, Garden Tours hosted by Susan Kegley, classes on beekeeping with Thea Vierling and Chris Conrad, members got to learn more about building habitats for bees from our G4Bs group, Waste Sleuth Todd Sutton returned to teach about compost and we got to build Peet Pot Swarm Traps with Leslie Perlman. Members won some fantastic prizes in our raffle, a Basic Deep Hive from Beekind, and Nuc Hive from John McGinnis – Buzz off Honey, beautiful gift baskets from Susan Kegley – Bees N Blooms and Candice Koseba – Sonoma County Bee Company, Wine Tour and Tasting experiences, and so much more! It was an amazing day getting to know our fellow members, having fun in the sun, and learning new things.

As our days continue to get more gorgeous, community outreach opportunities will be more common. These community outreach events give us the opportunity to reach out to our community and educate on the importance of bees, forage for bees, and how everyone (not just beekeepers) can help the bees.

We are excited about our upcoming exhibit, in August, at the Sonoma County Fairground. The theme this year is the “Jurassic Era” and our G4Bs teams will be putting together a beautiful interactive Pollinator Garden and I am sure many VIBs (Very Important Bees) will be visiting our booth, just like

## SCBA Calendar

The SCBA online calendar is updated frequently. Check it out to see current events.

[May 6 – East Cluster Café & Hive Dive](#)

[May 7 – North Cluster Hive Dive & Potluck](#)

[May 8 – May General Meeting](#)

[May 15 – Beginner Beekeepers Forum](#)

[May 18 Special Educational Forum: Bee Diseases](#)

[May 20 – South Cluster Café](#)

[May 22 – Seasoned Beekeepers Forum](#)

[June 3 – New Member Social](#)

they did last year, and help teach our community how important they are to the environment and to our future. We will also be back at the Gravenstein Apple Fair in August with observation hives and activities for kids.

Between now and then, SCBA will be popping up at multiple community events including Friedman's on May 7, Healdsburg's Future Farmers of America's Fair on May 26, and Petaluma's Art and Garden Festival in July.

It is a lot of fun to share our passions with our friends, families, and community. We will see you at these events and more. If there is an event going on that you would like to see SCBA at, reach out and let us know, we will see if we can get an education table there.

While our member's hearts might belong to the bees and their gardens, our members are the heart and soul of SCBA. Thank you for being a part of this great association and all you do to support, educate, and help us grow.

Shannon Carr  
Program Director  
[programdirector@sonomabees.org](mailto:programdirector@sonomabees.org)

# Bee Talk!

by Mohammed Ibrahim, 1st Vice President



May is my favorite month of the beekeeping season. In May 2019, I rescued my first honeybee swarm since I stopped beekeeping with my dad right before college. I had no idea that May 14th, Mother's Day, would get me back into beekeeping. On an early afternoon week end as I remember while I was lounging under a pine tree,

and then I heard the buzz!! I saw them landing, and I thought, that's it! I am back into beekeeping. I joined the association a year after that day.

This time of the year brings the best in beekeeping. Productive, strong colonies, new splits growing, swarming, new queens and the honey flow all keeps you on your toes. It's the afternoon of orientation flights, the hum of foragers in the air, and the sweet fragrances coming out of the hives. This is the time of the season that we inspect the hives regularly, no more than two weeks between inspections. The brood nest is rapidly growing, with new nurse bees emerging from the cells.

Besides ensuring the bees have enough space for nest expansion, we provide enough air circulation in the hive to avoid overheating the nest and ending up in bearding, which is a natural occurrence for the bees in the summer but disturbing for the productivity of the hive. I usually under-super the hive; if you are new to this term, under-supering is placing a super with empty frames under the brood box on the bottom board. This will provide a space for the drones and the forger to hang out rather than causing congestion in the brood nest, resulting in overheating the nest.

Perform hive division if you expand your apiary and provide supers for nectar stores; some colonies have a surplus for spring honey harvesting. Watch out for spring diseases and pests.

Some beekeepers start rearing queens for queen productions or hive requeening. It is also the time of the second shipment of bee packages for those who order later in the year.

SCBA swarm rescuers have been busy answering the public calls for swarms across our county.

Members on need-bees lists start getting their donated swarms.

The clusters have been busy with many activities, bee cafes, hive dives, and gardening activities. Speaking of gardening, it is the time of the year that you think about foraging resources and what to plant to support the pollinators through the rest of the year.

Do not hesitate to reach out to me for any questions, suggestions, comments, and feedback at [1stvp@sonomabees.org](mailto:1stvp@sonomabees.org)  
Let's get buzzing!

## SCBA General Meeting

[Date: May 8, 2023 6:00 – 8:30 \(pst\)](#)

Join us for our monthly General Meeting at the Druids Hall in Santa Rosa on Monday May 8.

We are excited to welcome local Monarch Expert, Suzanne Clarke to our May General Meeting. Suzanne is a Master Gardener and the Founder of Sonoma County Butterfly Alliance. As well as being an expert in pollinator gardening, having created many diverse pollinator habitats and waystations for Monarchs over the years, she is a Pollinator Advocate. Suzanne has over 20 years' experience studying pollinators and how climate change has affected them and their habitats. She will discuss with us her research over the years on pollinators and pollination and how we can help ensure a better future for them, as well for us.

Location:  
Druids Hall  
1011 College Ave - Santa Rosa



# May's Hive To-Do List

By Serge Labesque



*Members enjoying a hive dive led by local experts Christine Kurtz and Joy Wesley, see more pictures from Spring Fling on pages 11 and 12*



*Swarm Photo by Roger Simpson*

- \* Inspect hives regularly when foragers are out in large numbers.
- \* Open the entrances of the hives to match their forager activity.
- \* Avoid congestion of the brood nests.
- \* Offer comb-building opportunities.
- \* Add supers to provide nectar storage space.
- \* Maintain adequate clustering space between the brood nests and the entrances.
- \* Watch for signs of spring diseases. Remove infected brood combs when they occur.
- \* Ensure adequate air circulation through the hives.
- \* Perform hive divisions.
- \* Follow up on earlier hive divisions.
- \* Maintain sources of water for the bees.
- \* Monitor swarm traps.
- \* Keep some equipment at the ready to catch the occasional swarm.
- \* Rear queens.
- \* Harvest only surplus early spring honey.
- \* Discard old and misshapen combs.
- \* Render wax from discarded frames.
- \* Routinely clean and scorch tools and equipment.
- \* Pull weeds from around the hives.
- \* Keep swarm-catching gear ready.
- \* Render wax from discarded frames.

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# Spring in the Garden (Finally)

By Ann Gallagher White, 2nd VP



We are finally out of the wet weather and now our minds shift to watering, weeding, mulching and all the tasks to set us up for having a great garden in the warmer seasons to come. A few thoughts as we approach earth day next week to keep your garden growing...

**Planting** – Spring is the time to look around our gardens and add to the areas where you don't have blooms happening all season long. Resources about what to plant (nectar and/or pollen) and what blooms in each season can be found here. [https://smsf-master-gardeners.ucanr.edu/Pollinator\\_Plant\\_List/](https://smsf-master-gardeners.ucanr.edu/Pollinator_Plant_List/) Remember to consider water, sun/shade, soil conditions, and whether you have predators (deer/gophers) that will deter growth of new plantings and to plant in groups of two/three or more to enable pollinators to easily find the nectar/pollen sources.

**Hopefully you got plants at Spring Fling**, grown by our home nurseries gardeners so you can get busy planting.

**Seed starting** – As a seed collector, I have a treasure trove of seeds and have been growing plants from seeds this winter and early spring. Read the package if store-bought and if not, you can always find what you need online. I have been able to grow nigella and pansies from seed but they are all still small. This year I was able to get tomato seeds to grow on grow mats and now they are in good shape in the greenhouse. Remember to check out SCBA's seed library at the next general meeting. We have lots of seeds to share.

**Growing plants from cuttings**. Naturally, I like to grow flowers and herbs but the plants and shrubs I am growing are from cuttings from the garden including lavender from the workshop G4B held last fall and mallows (Strybing beauty and cape mal-

low).

Once you realize how easy it is to take cuttings and grow your own plants, you'll be hooked. It is amazingly simple to grow plants from cuttings and spring is the best time.

Here's a resource to use

[https://www.homegroundhabitats.org/plant\\_sourcing\\_topics/plant-sourcing/growing-plants-cuttings/](https://www.homegroundhabitats.org/plant_sourcing_topics/plant-sourcing/growing-plants-cuttings/) or you can attend a workshop offered from G4B.

**Dividing plants** – right now there are plants that are waking up and spreading beyond what you may want to have in your garden, so it is a good time to divide/remove plants (and hopefully, share with other gardeners). For example, asters (purple haze) in my garden are spreading and this is the first year I can share them with other gardeners or use them in school pollinator gardens.

**Weeding** – I have been pulling them left and right before the ground gets hard. You can smother them with cardboard and mulch too. Now is the time to get them before they get away from you. Resist the urge to poison them and choose another method to keep them under control and remember weeds are really just underappreciated plants.

**Soil enrichment** – Healthy plants start with healthy soil. Does your soil need to be improved or enriched? You can always add compost to soil and add mulch around your plants to keep the nutrients and moisture in the ground. Now is the time to add compost to your soil and add mulch to your beds too.

Enjoy your time outside in the sunshine and enjoy planting for pollinators this spring now that it is beautiful outside.

If you want to reach out, my email is:

[2ndVP@sonomabees.org](mailto:2ndVP@sonomabees.org)

Happy Earth Day and Happy Spring!



# What's Happening in the Garden?

*Gardening for Bee's Update*  
*Kim Bergstrom, Gardening Coordinator*

About 3 weeks ago as I was mowing grass in my bee suit in front of my 2 hives, I nearly ran straight into a swarm that had settled in a small oak tree at eye level. I was shocked, amazed, and excited to see this beautiful basketball size ball of bees and knew that I had to catch it and put it into a hive before I left for a 2 week trip the following day and impending rain the following week.

All was successful, the swarm was caught and I headed off for vacation but I couldn't get this swarm out of my mind. Living in the southeast part of Sonoma, I was worried about how I was going to feed the now 3 hives I had on our property where we usually hit the dearth by mid-June.



*Swarm Photo by Roger Simpson*

I envisioned starting my raised and inground vegetable and cutting flower garden as soon as I returned from my trip. So, on Earth Day, I spent about 9 straight hours weeding, amending soil, planting seeds and transplanting tomatoes and flowers that I had been growing in my greenhouse over the previous 2 months.

Like tending to bees, tending to one's garden is made infinitely easier when you have the right tools! In our April Cluster meetings, your Gardening Liaison's will be introducing a "Garden Tools and Resources Document" which is a compilation of our favorite gardening gadgets from the G4B's group. I encourage you to try out some of these tools of the trade. I know that I couldn't be the productive weed-er that I am without my Cobra head weeder! And other members of G4B's swear by the versatility of their Hori Hori knives for just about anything you need to do in the garden. This resource will also be placed on the SCBA website under "Gardening Program/Resources"

The G4B's group has also been busy raising plants for sale at the Spring Fling and beyond. We have held another propagation workshop at Ellen Sheron's home where, this weekend, we propagated Rosemary-one of the best, most versatile and long blooming plants for honey bees. We also potted up Salvia's and Abutilon which will be coming to an SCBA plant sale in the late summer/early fall.

After coming back from my trip, the weather has changed for the better! The sun is out, it is warm and there seems to (for now) be an abundance of natural forage for my hives made better by the crimson clover seeds I spread across my field last fall. The swarm's queen is laying eggs and the hive seems to be settling into their new digs. And I feel hopeful that with a plan for the garden, the right tools, a lot of elbow grease, some seeds and plants, that I can sustain these now 3 hives through the dearth. After all, I have a responsibility to take care of this ball of bees that decided to make my oak tree their new home.

## South Cluster Bee Café

*by Gayle Slade*

South Cluster was treated to a surprise at Becky Jackson's house where we met for our April Bee Cafe. There was a swarm hanging high in a tree for us to admire! It was from one of the hives of Becky's own admirable apiary. Surrounded by her lovely garden, she presented information about how, when and why to feed bees. Long-time members were pleased to greet two new beekeepers and even some East Cluster beeks who joined us. May's cafe will feature hive dives at Nick Freedman's fabulous property above Petaluma.



*Becky Jackson hosting South Cluster Bee Cafe*

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## SCBA Swarm Rescuers to the Rescue!

*By Ettamarie Peterson*

The day before thousands of people were going to be in Petaluma someone from the Petaluma Museum called John McGinnis to report a swarm on the back of the museum. John called me to take care of it. I was able to get right over and discovered a huge swarm on the back window near the back door.



*Huge swarm on the Petaluma Museum*



*Dave Barry getting the last bees in the box*

The docents were able to supply a ladder. Dave Barry had offered to help with any swarm, so I called him. He was able to come over to help reach the bees that were just a bit higher than I could reach. My swarm box attracted a lot, and we hastened the bees' entrance by scooping and dropping them in. As we were almost finished getting the bulk of the bees in the box, John Rathkey came by. This was great because he was on the needs bees list and lives just two blocks away! We assigned him the job of taking the box home at 8 o'clock that evening. We were all very happy that the people coming to the parade were not going to be frightened by the bees!



# Cluster News!

By Kelli Cox, Regional Cluster Coordinator

Fellow Beeks,



April showers bring May flowers and multiple swarms! What an interesting month it's been. These creatures don't cease to amaze and surprise us. Your Cluster Coordinators have been busy organizing hive dives and cafes and it's so awesome to see the numbers of

attendees of these events growing.

If you haven't attended a Cluster event you're missing out! There is a plethora of information for seasoned and newbees shared at these events. Please make sure you reach out to your Cluster Coordinator if you aren't receiving the announcements. I have heard from so many of you about multiple swarms being sent out from individual hives. This is yet another learning curve for many of us.

One of my hives that I received as a swarm in an alternative box (that really couldn't be manipulated) swarmed. Luckily it was when I was having lunch so I was right there and it landed in a small rose tree 20 feet from its original home. It was the easiest swarm I've hived. I have been hearing of other such stories and would love to hear from you. If you have a swarm story please send it to me, AND don't forget to join us for the Beginner and Seasoned Beekeeper Forums on the 3rd and 4th Monday of the month. Yet another great way to meet other beekeepers and glean knowledge.

On another note; I'm excited to say we will be bringing back "New Member Socials" soon. This will give the newbees a chance to get some general SCBA info as well as meet other new members. Stay tuned for dates/times.

Looking forward to seeing you at the May General meeting, until then, bee well.

Kelli Cox  
Regional Cluster Coordinator  
[regionalcoordinator@sonomabees.org](mailto:regionalcoordinator@sonomabees.org)



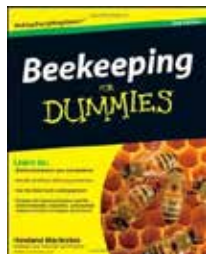
*Member photos of busy bees*



# SCBA BOOK NOOK

## Beekeeping For Dummies

By: Howland Blackiston



Beekeeping For Dummies is a great book for both beginner and seasoned beekeeper and is a great guide to becoming a successful back yard bee keeper. For the beginner beekeeper this book gives you information on safely keeping your own bees, including complete instructions for

assembling and maintaining bee hives, handling all phases of honey production, using the latest tools and equipment, and much more. It has information for keeping bees in both suburban and urban environments. It covers harvesting and marketing your honey. It explores the impact the sudden disappearance of the honey bee has on our environment and economy. And for the more seasoned beekeeper it provides information on how to raise your own queen bees and improve the genetics of your colonies.

Editor's note: Years ago I was called to collect a swarm of bees hanging on a dress dummy in Petaluma. I couldn't resist taking this photo and calling it "Beekeeping for Dummies"!



# SCBA LIBRARY

We have over 250 books and DVDs in the SCBA Library. Beekeeping For Dummies is just one of many books about bees, gardening for bees, and products from the hive in our collection.

You can view all our books and DVDs available to you at [SCBA-Library](http://SCBA-Library)

We are looking to expand the SCBA library with current books and resources. If you have any suggestions for books related to honeybees, beekeeping, native bees, gardening for bees, and products of the hive, please email your suggestions to [Librarian@sonomabees.org](mailto:Librarian@sonomabees.org)

SCBA Library is now available to members during the week by appointment. If you are interested in checking out a book, email our librarian at [Librarian@sonomabees.org](mailto:Librarian@sonomabees.org), to plan to pick up one or two of the books or DVDs available to SCBA members.



*G4Bs' Gulten Eicher giving tour of her garden*

## COOKING WITH HONEY

# A Savory-Sweet Combo for Dinner

Honey appears in many savory recipes to balance out some strong flavors such as sesame (think of Panda Express's Sesame Honey Chicken Nuggets). This recipe from The New York Times website pairs honey and apple cider vinegar for a sweet-spicy-sour marinade for chicken. I swapped in thighs, but I can see how popular drumsticks would be with small children. This one goes into the weeknight rotation: simple, fairly tidy, and delicious!

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### Honey Baked Chicken Drumsticks (or thighs)

From Eric Kim in The New York Times

#### Ingredients

2 tbsp olive oil  
2 tbsp apple cider vinegar  
1 tbsp soy sauce  
2 tsp ground ginger  
1 ½ tsp onion powder  
6 tbsp honey  
Salt & pepper  
8 skin-on chicken drumsticks (or thighs) – about 2 ½ pounds  
1 pound root vegetables, such as carrots, parsnips, or potatoes, cut into 1 ½ inch pieces  
4 tbsp unsalted butter  
2 large scallions  
Preparation

In a large bowl, stir together the olive oil, vinegar, soy sauce, ginger, onion powder, 4 tablespoons of the honey, 2 teaspoons salt, and 1 teaspoon pepper. Add the chicken and turn to coat. Cover and refrigerate for at least one hour or overnight.

Heat the oven to 425 degrees.

Pour the chicken and all the marinade into a 9" x 13" baking pan. Add the root vegetables and toss to coat in the marinade. Then spread the chicken and vegetables in a snug but single layer. Roast for 30 minutes.

Remove the pan from the oven and turn up the heat to 450. Turn the chicken and vegetables in the pan juices, then drizzle all over with the remaining 2 tablespoons honey and top with the butter.

Continue roasting until the pan sauce is sticky and the chicken and vegetables are browned – 10 to 15 minutes.

Serve the chicken and vegetables over rice or rice noodles.

Spoon the remaining sauces over the top to make them glossy.

Scatter the scallions over the top.

Enjoy!



# Spring Fling 2023!

*Spring Fling 2023 was a huge success!  
More than 100 people came out to Bees-n-Blooms on a perfect Spring day  
to learn about beekeeping and gardening, and to celebrate SCBA and being together.*









# SCBA Business Members, Donors, and Sponsors

## SCBA Business Members

### **Beekind Honey and Beekeeping Supply**

Doug & Katia Vincent  
[beekind@beekind.com](mailto:beekind@beekind.com)  
[www.beekind.com](http://www.beekind.com)

*Located in Sebastopol, Beekind is the place to get all your beekeeping supplies as well as gifts from the hive.*

### **Bees N Blooms**

Susan Kegley  
[Info@beesnblooms.com](mailto:Info@beesnblooms.com)  
[www.BeesNBlooms.com](http://www.BeesNBlooms.com)

*Sustaining bees, trees, blooms and you. Bees N Blooms is home to thousands of honeybees and native bees, a lavender labyrinth, a butterfly pollinator garden, and acres of pollinator-friendly plants and trees*

### **Buzz Off Honey**

John & Darlene McGinnis  
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*John McGinnis, with his expert craftsmanship, makes all the equipment he sells by hand. You'll find hives, nucs, swarm traps and all the equipment in between.*

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[Kategomes.com](http://Kategomes.com)

### **Marin Coastal Bee Co.**

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[info@marincoastalbee.com](mailto:info@marincoastalbee.com)  
[marincoastalbee.com](http://marincoastalbee.com)

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*Sola Bee Farms prides itself on maintaining healthy bees from safe, local regions. They produce and package honey in a sustainable manner through maintaining innovative, socially responsible and eco-friendly practices*

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Will Ackley  
[willackley@gmail.com](mailto:willackley@gmail.com)

*Beekeeping consultations including bee hive setup for new beekeepers, bee rescue, and full service bee removal. Serving Sonoma, Marin and Napa Counties.*

## Habitat Sponsors

Bees find forage in all kinds of environments -- from pollinator gardens to hedgerows of blooming plants, to meadows of wildflowers, to tree canopies. Your organization can be part of the effort to support the bees. To become a habitat sponsor, click here [www.sonomabees.org/donate](http://www.sonomabees.org/donate)

### **Pollinator Garden – \$500**

\*



### **Meadow - \$2,500**



### **Canopy – \$5,000**



### **Hedgerow -- \$1,000**



SCBA Member Matt Lodge of Sonoma County Properties will donate 10% of the income from a property sale to the non profit of the sellers' choice.



## 2023 Board Members

and Other Helpful People

Click Here  
for the Up-to-Date  
Roster of SCBA Resources

### *The Monthly Extractor Staff*

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