

The Monthly Extractor

Volume 50, Issue 5

May 2024

President's Message

Happy May, Bee-Tenders!

The May flowers are coming, just as the adage says, and the bees are loving it. The honey bees are swarming like crazy, and all the bees are visiting every bloom they can find. What a great season this is turning out to be.

I spent some time recently looking back on decades of our SCBA newsletters, and I realized that our organization has been begging members to volunteer for years. I feel very lucky to serve as President these days as we recover from the isolating global pandemic and so many of you are stepping up, answering the call, and volunteering!



public about how to help the honey bees and all the native pollinators in our county.

Kelli Cox and I spoke at the Sonoma County Forum, last month, which resulted in a bunch of people watching for swarms and planning their pollinator gardens! Soon, we

will talk with the local radio stations and newspapers. This is the perfect time for all of us to talk to everyone we know about SCBA's goals. You would be surprised about how uninformed people are about pollinators. So, let's get them informed! Plus, it will help you get you ready to volunteer for the fairs and festivals coming this summer.

My hope is to have the most informed membership of any bee organization around. This is why we share all the latest information and invite you to the best lectures, festivals, and gatherings that we can find.

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Thank you to all the people in leadership roles, making the programs happen, as well as all the people who step up to help every time we ask for help. When we call for volunteers, the jobs always get filled.

None of the amazing SCBA events and workshops could happen without our generous volunteers making it all run smoothly. So, to continue our monthly shout-outs, this month is Spring Fling Volunteers Appreciation Month. Please join me in thanking the volunteers who helped plan, set up, cook foods, run workshops, and clean up at the end of this annual event. You made it a fabulous day!

We'll see all those amazing volunteers when we gather for the "Honey-Centric" General meeting, on May 13th, and we will fill the room with rousing applause to thank them all!

The month of May also marks the beginning of many speaking engagements for SCBA, talking to the

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The Monthly Extractor reflects current practices for sustainable beekeeping and gardening for bees.

President's Message, from prior page

SCBA is a flagship association. This means there are many other organizations looking to us for guidance and to be a model for how to be great stewards of the environment. It is quite an honor.

So, thank you for all you do. You make this organization an example of the best of the best.

Have a wonderful May, everyone.
See you outside!

President Carol Ellis

SCBA May GENERAL MEETING

Date: May 13, 2024; 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm

**Location: Druid Hall
1011 College Ave, Santa Rosa**

SCBA's May General Meeting is going to be a FUN honey-centric meeting. Local seasoned beekeepers and honey experts will be sharing their experiences extracting honey, the challenges, and what they are looking for in the honey they extract. Doug Vincent, owner of Bee Kind, will be talking all about "everything honey" and Candice Koseba, owner of Sonoma County Bee Company, will talk about products from the hive and ways to use honey and wax. You will have the opportunity to ask local experts in the field your questions about honey, honey products, and products of the hive.

Bring a jar of honey -- and other products -- you harvested from your apiary to share with members so we can taste the different flavors of Sonoma County. If you can, please bring an extra jar of honey to donate for Pollinator Brunch. We will also share how you can enter your honey and products of the hive into a local competition at the Sonoma County Fair.

SCBA's general meetings are on the second Monday of each month and in person. They are open to the public and a great way to meet fellow beekeepers, bee-tenders, and pollinator habitat enthusiasts.

There will be light snacks and beverages, and you are welcome to bring something to share.

SCBA May CALENDAR

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

May 4 – [East Cluster Café](#)

May 5 – [Alternative Hive Dive: Top Bar Hive](#)

May 12 – [North Cluster Café/Hive Dive](#)

May 13 – [SCBA General Meeting](#)

May 17 – [SCBA at CMSC](#)

May 18 – [Central Cluster Café](#)

May 18 – [South Cluster Café](#)

May 18 – [West Cluster Café](#)

May 20 – [Beekeepers Zoom Forum](#)

July 21 – [Flower to Table Pollinator Brunch](#)

Board Report April 2024

*By Andy Baxter
SCBA Secretary*

This month's board meeting was held on the 1st of April at 6.00 through 9.15pm. No external visitors this month.

Agenda items included:

- Spring Fling: Preparations are going very well, and the event should be great. Workshops are finalized and the G4B group has a lot of plants ready.
- We received an amazing donation of \$1500 from the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. The board would like to thank them on behalf of the whole SCBA !!
- Bylaw refresh completed.
- Info cards we are creating to distribute to 1st responders (swarm rescue details).
- Budget planning for 2024/2025.
- Privacy policy, terms of service and cookie policy for the website.

April Swarms Top the Charts

By Kelli Cox, Your 1st VP of Bees

Fellow Beeks,

What a spring and what an April! Our devoted Swarm Rescuers have been busier than the bees gathering small and amazingly large swarms around the county. As of April 20th: North Cluster has rescued 25 swarms; South 73; East 11; West 35; and Central 68. We're up by 55 from April 2023. And if we go by the numbers in 2023, swarms diminish markedly in May. We'll see what this year brings. For all you Swarm rescuers out there, please make sure you are recording your swarms. This information is helpful in so many ways.



There are some important things to remember for those of you on the **Needs Bees List: PLEASE get your hives ready to add bees now!** April was a busy month and swarm season is not over. If you are on the Needs Bees List and have not received bees, don't worry, we will get to you. If you have any questions, contact your Bee Share Coordinator at "cluster"beeshare@sonomabees.org (for example southbeeshare@sonomabees.org) or our Swarm Coordinator, Bill Genthe, at swarm@sonomabees.org.

Help make our Beeshare and Swarm Rescuers jobs' easier by doing your part. Send in your pictures. Have (or get) the right equipment. Have a bee buddy. Bee READY.

Suffice it to say all Clusters are reporting lots of activity. Drones are droning and comb is being built feverishly. Make sure you're checking your hives. Don't go too long (follow Spring recommendations) without checking to see if you need to add a frame or two. Make sure you don't leave space in your supers while they're building comb, we've all done that! It can lead to a big mess. Take notes!

Please go to your Cluster meetings. I can't stress enough how helpful these cafes are both for beginners and seasoned beeks. Hive dives are starting to happen more frequently and these are the best ways to get hands-on information about what's going

on right now in your hives. Take the time to share your knowledge or help a newbie, find a bee buddy or just share a cuppa Joe with someone from your Cluster community and talk bees. Your Cluster Coordinators are working hard to create cafes that matter. There is always a gardening component so, if you don't have bees no worries, you'll learn some new gardening info pertinent to your part in helping our pollinators!

Plant, Plant, Plant!

Beest,

Kelli



Gary and Lynn Grant wrangled this enormous swarm with the help of new beekeeper, Anna Versweyeld, seen above.

Serge's May To-Do List

By Serge Labesque

- 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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THE POLLINATOR GARDEN

May is the Time to Add Pollinator Plants

By Ann Gallagher White, 2nd VP

Plants for native pollinators and for honeybees: At our general meeting this past month we listened to Tora Rocha of the Pollinator Posse with an excellent turn out of members. Tora repeated several kinds of plants to plant and said them three times when she mentioned them. Phacelias, Verberna De La Mina, and Tithonia (Mexican sunflower) are three I recall her mentioning. Along with those, Tora is a strong proponent of Anisodonteia Strybing Beauty. You can find these amazing plants on her website resource along with the bloom times and the food source (pollen/nectar). These plants are excellent choices for nectar flow in the fall and here is the low down on each of them.



Timing is Everything: Now is the time to plant and if you wait past May, you are getting into the summer heat when it is harder for plants to thrive. Summer solstice is June 21 so the earlier the better. Ideally, it is best to plant new plants in spring to let them get acclimated before the summer heat or wait until the coolest part of fall. We've already gotten into some high 70s and it is only going to get hotter!

Lacy phacelia or phacelia tanacetifolia is a native to North America and is an annual plant that comes back and reseeds. There are many varieties of phacelia, and they grow upright off multiple stems, up to 2 feet tall and wide, provide purple flowers that are nectar-rich. Their bloom time is summer! They attract native and honey bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinators. They like sun and thrive in loamy conditions (not wet). They are drought and heat tolerant plus, the deer will not eat them. Quick growing, and nitrogen-rich, they may be used as a cover crop. They are also called Fiddleneck, Tansy Phacelia, Blue Tansy, and Lacy Scorpion Weed. They may become invasive.

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Pollinator Plants, from prior page

Lacy Phacelia self-seeds easily. Last year I planted a large pot of wildflowers and this year the pot is full of lacy phacelias, and it will be stunning when it blooms.

De La Mina Verbena or Verbena Lilacina is a perennial that blooms all year with the most purple flowers in spring. It gets 2-3 feet tall and grows 3-4 feet wide, has purple blooms and is fast growing. Plus it is a native, drought tolerant, attracts bees and butterflies and likes dry loamy soil. It has a mounding habit, tolerates clay soil and is nectar rich.

Tithonia (Mexican Sunflower or Mexican Torch Flower) is an annual and prefers dry weather. The plant is native to Central America where it may become invasive. The plants grow off a central stem 4 to 6 feet tall. It is drought tolerant and may reseed in subsequent years. Deer reportedly do not like them but stay tuned. I planted some in my yard and we will see if this is true. This red or orange multi-branching sunflower is a hummingbird favorite with a bloom time of mid-summer to frost. It is a source of nectar and pollen.

Finally, **Anisodonteia Strybing Beauty or Cape Mallow** is an amazing plant with two-inch wide pink flowers with magenta centers resembling mini-Hibiscus flowers that is a year-round bloomer, even in winter. I propagated some last spring from a friend's plant and most of the cuttings grew quickly into plants. It likes sun but tolerates some shade and it has been slow growing in my garden partly due to the shade factor. They bloom year-round with full sun but may not bloom in winter if in shade. The plant is drought tolerant and grows up to 6 feet tall and wide and prefers well-drained soil but is tolerating my clay. There are different varieties that are smaller in size but still prolific bloomers and one small plant has been blooming all winter into spring in my garden where it gets more sun, growing happily with little care. It is native to South Africa. Look for Kim Bergstrom's cutting propagation workshop coming up soon. Sign up if like me, your garden must have one of these amazing plants.

What to do with a messy looking garden. Tora mentioned that if she put a sign out to explain why weeds were there and not being pulled (for pollinator habitat) people would respond positively. These same folks would have complained otherwise. I suggest that if you feel that your neighbors don't understand why your garden looks a bit unkempt, you could add a sign that says you are creating pollinator habitat. Let me know if it helps because the same

people who might otherwise complain about weeds might just thank you. The sign could start a conversation about why you don't use pesticides in the garden. If we all show our neighbors that we are creating pollinator habitat, the same neighbors may appreciate your efforts and may even try to create pollinator habitat in their own gardens. SCBA has no spray signs and Xerces also has signs for sale. A beautiful yard sign can help explain no mow May activities and why you choose to leave the leaves in fall/winter.

Swarm Sightings



Could the bees have confused Cheryl Caletti's beesuit for the queen? Below, one of our new Swarm Rescuers George Ellison demonstrates you don't always need a pole extension.



SCBA Volunteer Positions

SCBA is run by its members. There are lots of ways to help and volunteer. If you are interested in one of these positions, OR if you have ideas on other ways to contribute, reach out to our Program Director, Shannon Carr at programdirector@sonomabees.org.

General Meeting Committee – We are looking for a team of members to help the monthly general meetings run smoothly and be fun for all. The more the merrier ... and the quicker setup and clean up will be.

- Setup – Come in at 5pm to help set up chairs and tables
- Food – Bring a homemade snack to share and help set up the snack table
- Honey – Monitor our honey table monitor
- IT – understand and set up all the electronics for the meeting
- Clean up – stay an hour later and make sure all tables and chairs are put away, all materials have been put away into the office, sweep the hall

Education Coordinator – Help SCBA's Education Program with connecting educators and schools looking for a presentation. Reply to emails from schools, assign an educator, and keep record of school presentations. Presenting to classrooms does not need to be a part of this position unless you want to do that too.

Grant Researcher – Research grants and donation opportunities locally in our community as well as financial opportunities available outside of our county. Find potential grants and send to the Grant Writer.

Fun Facts!

Honey bees fly about 500 miles during their 2-3 weeks of foraging.

They will visit more than 1,500 flowers for one full load of pollen.

It takes about 2 million flowers to make 1 pound of honey!

FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

SCBA Members Spring Into the Community

By Shannon Carr, Program Director

April was a busy month!! Our Swarm Rescuers were all over Sonoma County catching swarms! And we saw some pretty amazing swarms! Swarm season is not over. If you are on the Needs Bees List and have not received bees, don't worry, we will get to you. If you have any questions, contact your Beeshare Coordinator at "cluster"beeshare@sonomabees.org, SBCAs Swarm Coordinator, Bill Genthe, at swarm@sonomabees.org, or 1st VP, VP of the Bees, Kelli Cox, at 1stVP@sonomabees.org. See her article for more information about this year's swarms.



It was a pleasure to have Tora Rocha from the [Pollinator Posse](#) join us at our April General Meeting! We learned more about the relationships between plants, bees, and pollinators and what we can do to create a better habitat for the pollinators. You know those moments when you know something, but the way someone else states it, it becomes a clarifying moment? When Tora Rocha spoke about bees and plants, how everyone knows the relationship between bees, plants, and food...well what about oxygen? Plants make oxygen, plants need bees to pollinate, to make oxygen. We need oxygen, we need plants, we need bees! WOW!!

April 13 and 14 SCBA Beekeepers went to Friedman's Santa Rosa and Petaluma for their Garden Event. Our members had a great time visiting with the community, answering questions about bees, and discussing what to plant for bees. Thank you Ettamarie Peterson and Benson for bringing your observation hives, Gary and Lynn Grant, Dan Berry, George Ellison, Kristin Merri-



Ettamarie Peterson and George Ellison explain bee activity at Friedman's.

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Program Director, from prior page

hew, Liz Holdmann, Sylvia Cool, and Zoe Osborne for spending part of your weekend with us at our community outreach event.

We wrapped up April with Spring Fling. We had more than 140 members pre-register for Spring Fling, and what an amazing day it was! Thank you to Gardening for Bees for all they do propagating pollinator plants and providing another amazing pollinator plant sale for our members to create their own pollinator habitats and to our workshop leaders for putting on amazing workshops this year! (See photos of Spring Fling on page 8.)

Michael Turner: Beekeeping 101
Cheryl Caletti: Beekeeping 102
Thea Vierling: Beekeeping 103
Kelli Cox and Carol Ellis: Native Bees
Christine Kurtz and Joy Wesley: Hive Dives
Ellen Sherron and Kelly Corbet: G4Bs Diverse Pollinator Habitat
Gülten: G4Bs Pruning Workshop
Susan Kegley: Bees N Blooms Garden Tour
Angy Nowicki and Karen Cappa: Stenciling Your Super
Roger Simpson: Equipment

At Spring Fling, we had a fun raffle with hives from Beekind and Buzz Off Honey, products of the hive from Sonoma County Bee Company, a pollinator habitat start up kit from G4Bs and Friedmans Home Improvement, plus many more items that were donated from local businesses.

Lunch included a variety of delicious salads made by our members and a dessert competition featuring 10 amazing "Honey Forward" desserts. Spring Fling was a fun and amazing day where our members got to get together, hang out, with opportunities to learn more about beekeeping and gardening for bees, take home some fun prizes, and share an amazing meal. What more can one ask for? Thank you for everyone who came out, participated, helped along the way! We will do it all again next year.

What's Happening in the Garden in May?

By Kim Bergstrom, Gardening Coordinator

Several wonderful bee plants are best propagated by taking cuttings of stems or stalks, dipping them in rooting hormone and potting them up to root before transplanting them into your garden. Plants such as lavender, rosemary, California lilac, and mallows are all plants that are generally easy to propagate via cuttings. Many of these plants allow you to take cuttings almost year-round. In May, Gardening 4 Bees will be hosting a "mallow" propagation workshop on **Sunday, May 26 at 10am** in Kim Bergstrom's garden in Sonoma. Be on the lookout for an invitation and be sure to sign up. Attendance will be limited.

We will share cuttings of different types of mallows including 'Strybing Beauty' Cape Mallow, a white "marsh" mallow and chaparral mallow and teach you how to take cuttings and propagate these wonderful plants for you to pot up and take home.

If you don't already have a mallow in your garden, you need to get one! My favorite is the Cape Mallow (*Anisodonteia* 'Strybing Beauty'). It blooms in fairly drought tolerant soil in partial sun, partial shade, and full sun locations. It can grow quickly to 6 feet tall by 6 feet wide, and it has honey bees and native bees on it 365 days/year. It is a beautiful plant in your garden and is a wonderful source of nectar for your bees. Pick one up at our future plant sale in June or find one in your local nursery....you will be happy you did!



Anisodonteia Capensis, Cape Mallow (dwarf), from [North Carolina Extension Gardener website](#).

SCBA Spring Fling: Great Food, Fun, and Bee Games

Cheryl Caletti (left) ran a bee-focused version of the TV game show Jeopardy for Beekeeping 102, Christine Kurtz (below) led the morning hive dive, and more than 140 members and guests enjoyed a satisfying lunch! See page 16 for the recipe that won the Honey Dessert Competition. Photos from Christine Kurtz, Carol Ellis, and Dan Berry.





Alternative Hive Dive In Photos



Alternative Hive Coordinator, Cheryl Caletti (above with our young member Nicholas Bard), Central Cluster Bee-share coordinator Frank Gibbons (bottom left) and Jim Spencer (top left) shared their experiences and advice on keeping bees in hives other than the common Langstroth.

April Clusters Showcase Tools & Hive Dives

Sacha Lepley, Regional Cluster Coordinator

The April Cluster Cafés focused on Hive Inspection and Garden Tools. Garden Liaisons presented their favorite tools, while cluster coordinators presented hive set-up and hive inspections in a variety of ways. I attended Central Cluster's Café, where Garden Liaison Angy Nowicki shared her favorite garden tools (Hori Hori knife, and 5-gallon bucket with an apron to hold various tools ranked high on the lists). The excellent G4Bs handout, "[Gardening Tools and Resources](#)" with photos of recommended items is available for downloading (click on the link). Thank you garden liaisons and G4Bs for your awesome contributions to SCBA, helping pollinators and assisting us to plant, plant, plant.



Read each Cluster Coordinator's article in the Monthly Extractor to learn what is happening in the five clusters' cafés. Thank you to Christine Kurtz for presenting to West Cluster about hive biology. We really appreciate our seasoned beekeepers who share their wealth of knowledge.

Speaking of Christine Kurtz, please check out her presentation on **Bee Diseases**, the focus of May's Cluster Cafés. Available to all members through the SCBA website, we recommend viewing the online presentation before attending your Cluster's Bee Café. Go to "SCBA Members Only" section of the SCBA site; click on the dropdown tab, next "Video Recordings," next "May 18, 2023, Christine Schwartz Video, Bee Diseases". Bring your questions and own experiences with bee diseases and pests to your café for learning and discussion.

Reminders for future events:

- [Bay Area Butterfly Festival](#) on Sunday, May 19, 2024, 10am to 5pm on Mare Island, Vallejo. SCBA will be there I've got my tickets, do you? For tickets go to the link above.
- [Flower to Table Pollinator Brunch](#), Sunday, July 21, 2024, 11am to 3pm, Sebastopol Grange. Registration will be open soon. We need donations from businesses, tourist attractions, restaurants, etc.

for the silent auction. If you need more information about donations contact Shannon at programdirector@sonomabees.org.

- **Sonoma County Fair, August 1 – 11, 2024.** I hope we have a good showing of exhibits in the honey and beekeeping sections of the fair from our SCBA members! Registration opens May 1st to June 30th. Sign up early to beat the deadlines for entering the competitions. <https://sonomacountyfair.com/pages/competitive-exhibits>

- **Cluster Cafés** – East, Saturday May 4; North, Sunday

May 12; South, West and Central Saturday May 19. Check out the [SCBA calendar](#) for more information and registration.

I hope to see you all at the General Meeting on Monday May 13, 2024, at 6pm along with some honey from your hive. We are focusing on all things honey, including tasting.

East Cluster News

The East cluster had their monthly meeting Saturday April 6 at the home of Joe Cutler & Ellen Schwartz. Ellen led a group of us to their back garden to view their wild hive created by Gina Brown, a Sebastopol resident. It is made of a fiber bucket and placed in a tree to simulate an opening to provide a safe residence for wild bees. Gina is part of The Wild Hive Project. We did a mock Lang hive inspection led by Tripp Hunter who gave us some tips when inspecting your hive and showed us some interesting gadgets in his hive bucket. We received a handout on the life cycle of the queen and did some bee math. Maralee Joseph reported on the Beeshare program, emphasizing that you must send a photo of your hive set-up to eastbeeshare@sonomabees.org to get a call from our swarm catchers. Maralee also reiterated the need to complete the SCBA survey to be placed on

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East Cluster, from prior page

the Beeshare check list.

Ellen gave us a beautiful color handout on garden tools and gizmos and showed us her favorite garden tool, the Hori Hori knife. This versatile knife can dig holes, open bags of soil, dig out weeds, create furrows for seed, make dinner and much more. She recommends getting a high-quality Hori Hori like the one she purchased from The Celtic Farm \$41.99.



TSA not approved: Ellen Schwartz and her trusty Hori Hori knife.

Lastly, Sofia Dolan from Flatbed Farms in Glen Ellen is looking for someone to manage 1-2 hives on her property. They lost their hives in the fires. This would be a great opportunity for several people to share in the work of managing these hives. However, there would be one person as the single point of contact for the Farm. Please contact

Tripp if you are interested.

Our monthly taco social was on Wednesday, April 17th at Sonoma Eats. Nadya brought everyone beautiful bee shopping bags. We shared what is happening in our hives and helped members sign up for the Spring Fling. We also talked about the need for donation items from East Cluster members and businesses for our annual fundraiser, the Pollinator Brunch on Sunday, July 21 at Sebastopol Grange. Please get creative and consider a donation of something that represents the East Cluster area.

Upcoming events -

May 4, East Cluster Cafe at Alan Ross barn and apiary, hosting Christine Kurtz on Bee Disease. Remember to RSVP.

May 19, Mare Island Butterfly Festival \$5. SCBA will have a booth. Let Shannon know if you can help.

West Cluster's Busy Bees

By Cheryl Koeller

Did you miss our Swarm Trap Workshop? Maile Pieri, co-coordinator for West Cluster hosted a Build a Pulp Pot Swarm Trap Workshop at her home on March 30. We had nine people brave the cold and come together to build pulp pots. Leslie Perlman demonstrated the steps and we all enjoyed talking about wanting to catch a swarm or receive a swarm and our experiences with all things swarm! Everyone is excited to begin a new season of working with bees.

Our April Bee Café was held at the CYO Camp in Occidental. Christine Kurtz brought a mock hive set-up and tools to show the steps of going into a hive and what to look for. We had 23 very attentive members present, beginner to experienced and everyone learned something. Christine had a queen bee encapsulated in alcohol and several drawn frames to show sizes of cells for workers and drones and patterns of brood and food resources in the half-moon shape. With the amazing pictures she takes herself and uses in her presentation we saw swarm, supersedure and emergency queen cells,

queen larvae, a queen laying an egg AND a laying worker laying an egg. There was so much more!



For anyone who is on Facebook, I would encourage you to look up "The Petaluma Bee Lady!" Christine describes in great detail the work she is currently doing in her hives, mentees' hives and catching honey bee and bumblebee swarms and includes amazing detailed photos.

We also took a walk in the CYO Camp Garden where Gulden talked about gardening tools and Ricardo talked about the work they are doing and the new plants they have planted so far this year.

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West Cluster, from prior page

May is going to be A-MAY-ZING! Michael Thiele of Apis Arborea will be hosting 'An Into to the Mission and Projects of Apis Arborea' in Sebastopol. I am so excited to see the actual treenests and see the way they are built. You should have received an email invitation to this event. This event has a member limit.

One of our members has offered to host a hive dive in Guerneville in May. The date is still to be determined as of this writing but watch for an email on this too!



Our May Bee Café is May 18 and will be in Sebastopol. We will be talking about Bee Diseases and Planting Under Trees. This is also a great opportunity to meet other members, talk

about what is happening in our hives and gardens, and maybe get to know a bee buddy. I always look forward to seeing our cluster members and hearing about their experiences and sharing ideas.

We are looking for someone to do a clinic/workshop demonstration of wax rendering for a West Cluster event. If you are interested in doing something like this, please email us. And, as always, if you have any suggestions, questions or want to help with West Cluster, please email us at westcluster@sonomabees.com.



North Cluster: Rain Doesn't Stop Terrific Pot Luck Lunch

By Bernie Leda

We had our April hive dive and potluck with hosts Maureen & Chris Bufton-Landwehr. Unfortunately, it was too cold and rainy to do a hive dive. The bad weather meant we were invited inside, where new and old members were introduced and talked about bees and swarms.

Maureen is our G4Bs Liaison and our Swarm Coordinator, a super volunteer for the North Cluster!

She demonstrated how to prepare soil and plant seeds.

We then finished our meeting with a delicious potluck! North Cluster has awesome food at our potlucks (maybe the best).

Next month we will be meeting in Healdsburg at Cindi and Marty Brown's on May 12.



Photos: Top, Maureen Bufton-Landwehr with the plants and greenhouse, which protects the G4Bs plants. (Maureen and Chris built the greenhouse with all recycled materials. Above: Left to right -- Victoria Soto, Steve & Cheryl Caletti, Steve & Jill Plamann, Mike Shook, Vince Dieter, Cindi Brown, Laura & Tommy Chechile, Cheryl Leda, Robin Dieter, Candice Koshiba, Aggie & Anthony Maggio, Julie Gugel, Maureen Bufton-Landwehr

Double-Deep Speak in the South Cluster Cafe

By Rachel Parker & Gayle Slade

South Cluster came out to see John McGinnis' apiary and hear about the advantages of double-deep hives. Surrounded by fresh equipment in his workshop, John demonstrated the construction of a double-deep super (two deeps, or 3 mediums, stacked together) and his double-deep frames, with wire in an X-shape to help give the bees some wax-building guidance. On one end, he installs a medium frame attached to a deep follower board. The double-deep frame more closely resembles a natural hive enclosure – say in a tree. There is a nice vertical space for comb building, and no frame barriers for the bees to cross to go further up into the hive.

For those of us worried about lifting the 18-inch-deep boxes when filled with honey, John pointed out that he doesn't lift the full box,



just individual frames. When the bees have filled out the medium frame at the end of the hive, he moves it up to medium super on top of the double-deep super – baiting the bees up and creating a honey super that the queen won't lay in as she has plenty of room below. He leaves the honey in the double-deep frames untouched, feeling confident that what gets added in the medium super is excess (and he can harvest it).

After a lovely potluck lunch of salads, quiche, and blueberry toasts, we headed into John's colorful and tidy apiary (12 hives, at most recent count) and watched as he inspected several of his hives.

Our next South Cluster Café is May 18. Watch your emails for more information.

John McGinnis demonstrates lifting a double-deep frame. When the bees need more space, he'll add a medium super for honey storage.

Central Cluster Looks at Logistics and Ways to Assess Hive Health

By Susan Kegley

Central Cluster gathered at Bees N Blooms on Sunday, April 21. We discussed preferred meeting days and times and Sacha will be sending around a Doodle poll to get people's availability for meeting day and time.

Angy Nowicki from the SCBA Garden Group got us started with a show and tell of recommended garden implements and materials, from different weeding tools to clippers to potting soils.

We then moved outside to discuss hive inspection, using several of the available hive inspection worksheets as templates for how to plan your hive dive, what to look for once inside the hive, and how to

quickly and easily document how the colony is doing and what needs to happen next.

We also discussed how to get a read on colony health by observing from outside the hive—the monitoring board, the comings and goings at the entrance, what the foragers are bringing into the hive and how to use Serge's technique of 24-hour mite drop counts (done on a monthly basis) on the monitoring board to determine how effective a colony is at managing mites.

Tips For Moving Bees in Nucs

by Ettamarie Peterson

Catching swarms involves moving bees. In my situation it usually requires moving the swarm box twice, once to my house at sunset and then again later to one of my 4-H beekeeper's homes. I have wrapped the nuc boxes loosely in the sheet I always use as a ground cover under the box before putting them in the car.

This year I have also discovered that mesh laundry bags are great for using while transporting the bees. The bags I use were from the Dollar Store (now \$1 + 25 cents). They fit easily over the nucs to keep any bees that escape out of my car. I also discovered that often the bees manage to escape the nuc boxes that I duct tape shut at night to take away the next day.

This week I had two families taking bees home, so we did put duct tape on the lids, closed the entrances, and slipped them into the laundry bags and moved them at sunset. This was much better than

trying to seal them up overnight! The young beekeepers were instructed to put them where they would be permanently, open them, and then move them into their new big boxes after school.

This box (right) was wrapped in the sheet and put into the laundry bag because bees were escaping. They arrived at their new home with no bees lost!



SCBA BOOK NOOK

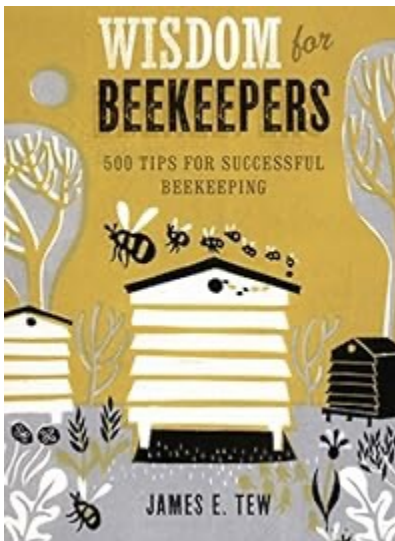
Wisdom for Beekeepers

By Dr. James Tew



This is a book for all levels of beekeepers. *Wisdom for Beekeepers* is a collection of 500 tips for keeping bees. It is divided into 10 chapters that cover different aspects of beekeeping. From becoming a beekeeper, to honey bee byproducts, this book has tips for everyone!

SCBA has more than 250 books, DVDs, and equipment in our Library. *Wisdom for Beekeepers* 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.



SCBA Library is available to members at in-person general meetings and during the week by appointment. If you are interested in checking out a book, email our librarian at Librarian@sonomabees.org, to plan to pick up one or two of the books, DVDs, or equipment available to SCBA members.

And the Winner is ... Honey Almond Cookies

By Rachel Parker

At last month's Spring Fling!, we added an element -- a Honey Dessert Competition. Bernie Leda, Cathy Kopshever, and I had the honor (and challenge) of tasting ten desserts submitted by SCBA members. As anyone who has been to a Cluster Cafe and Potluck or Picnic knows, our association is littered with amazing cooks and bakers. The competition had three baklavas, a six-sided apple galette, honey-lavender cupcakes and cakes that hailed from European traditional recipes! Desserts were judged for their overall flavor, texture, appearance, and how "honey-forward" they were. It was tough to make a final decision, but after careful consideration -- and a few second-tastes -- our winner was Ann Jereb's Honey Almond Cookies. We are running her recipe this month, with congratulations.

Honey Almond Cookies

By Ann Jereb

Recipe adapted from [Honey Almond Cookies](#) by Kathleen Hapa Nom Nom

Prep time: 10 minutes Cook time: 30 minutes
Serves: about 36 cookies

Ingredients

3 ½ cups all-purpose flour
½ cup sugar
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon Kosher salt
1 cup salted butter, cut into pea-sized pieces
2 large eggs, beaten
½ cup honey plus about ¼ cup for top of cookies
2 teaspoons almond extract
Raw almonds (about 36) toasted in oven 350 degrees for about 7 minutes
1 large egg white for glazing
1 tablespoon water

Instructions

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
- Mix eggs, ½ cup honey and almond extract together in a bowl.
- In a Cuisinart, combine flour, sugar, baking soda and salt. Add butter to flour mixture and incorporate. Once incorporated, place flour and butter mixture in a stand mixer. With mixer on low speed, gradually add egg mixture and beat until smooth dough forms.
- Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Roll a tablespoon of dough between the palm of your hands. Place on baking sheet about 2 inches apart.

With finger or back of ¼ teaspoon, make small indentation in top of cookie.

- Drizzle about ¼ teaspoon of honey in the indentation and place an almond on top of honey.
- In a small bowl combine the egg white and 1 tablespoon of water.
- Brush the cookies with the egg wash and bake for 12 minutes or until lightly golden.
- Allow to cool on the baking sheet for a few minutes before transferring to a cooling rack.
- Enjoy immediately or store in an air-tight container for several days.



Sonoma County Beekeepers Association



Flower to Table Pollinator Brunch

Enjoy a menu inspired by pollinators and hear speakers discussing what is being done to help the pollinators in our community.

Date: July 21, 2024

Time: 11 am - 3 pm

Location: Sebastopol Grange

\$60 Members / \$75 Non-Members

VIP Tables Available

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R Honey Pots

Liz & Joey Russell

rhoneypots@gmail.com

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Liz is a beekeeper and potter motivated by the intersection of art and conservation. Along with pottery, she offers live bee removal and backyard beekeeping services.

Sonoma County Bee Company

Candice Koseba

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<https://www.sonomacountybeecompany.com>

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