

The Monthly Extractor

Volume 42, Issue 3

March 2017



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

President's Message

The spring season is tapping on our (soggy) doors of our homes and on our hive boxes. Are you ready for the mystery and the intensity of the springing forward into spring beekeeping?

Apis mellifera, the Latin name for the western or European honey bee, means "honey-bearing" bee. Humans, with their desire for honey, have long had an involved relationship with honey bees. And, we know that it's more than honey for us to be so interwoven with the bees. So, I have some questions for you...What is your bee relationship about? Why do you keep bees? Are you continuing to learn? What are your techniques, philosophies, and goals? Do you feel supported in beekeeping? Is it a practice, a profession, a hobby, a service, or other? I like to ask myself and others these questions, at times, to stay current.

We hope that you do indeed feel supported by the SCBA, the Sonoma County Beekeeper's Association. There are many people working collectively, on the board and as associated non-board members, as cluster/regional leaders, as volunteers, as teachers, educators, etc. There is even a portable library that is available each month at the general meeting. We are all learning to work more effectively together, to learn, to communicate, to share information, to understand how to care for the bees (and other pollinators and plants as well). It's a practice. I like to say that practice makes practice.

Spring promises an abundance of mysteries in the beekeeping world. Spring rains! Flowers, blooms, blossoms and grasses aplenty! The nectar flow! Exponential colony growth! Swarms! Hive divisions! Bee sharing program (our first season)! And everything else...

May you find yourself in good health, with adequate rest, as we linger a bit longer in winter mode.

Thank you for being part of the SCBA.

Jason Berkman
President

This Month's Calendar

Monthly Meeting: Monday, March 13

6 pm – Check out books and videos from our library, buy plants at our fabulous plant table, buy raffle tickets, talk to expert beekeepers willing to share their knowledge with you and help with any problems, socialize with refreshments and meet your cluster leaders. Bring your own cup, please. If you like to bake we also would appreciate donations of your cooking skills!

7 pm – Serge Labesque. Recognizing when to split your hives

Upcoming Meetings

April 10 - James Cook, The Life of a Commercial Beekeeper

May 8 - Rich Morris, CEO of BroodMinder Bee Health Telemetry-- how to learn about what's going on inside the hive without having to disturb the bees.

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Spring 2017 Beekeeping Classes at SRJC

This time, Serge will be presenting a series of the Introduction to Beekeeping class at the Petaluma campus in addition to the classes in Santa Rosa.

Here is the info for the remaining classes:

[Intermediate Beekeeping for Spring & Summer](#) [\[Click to open\]](#)

Class Date(s): 03/01/2017 to 03/08/2017

Weekly - Wed 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM;

2 sessions starting 3/1/2017, ending 3/8/2017

Bech Hall, 1999

Number of Sessions: 2

Number of Weeks: 2

Class Web Description: This class will expand on the beehive management techniques that were explored during the Introduction to Beekeeping course. The focus of the class will be spring and summer management of beehives in Sonoma County. Detailed explanations of techniques that are used in apiary expansion, swarm prevention and capture, queen management, and hive division will be given.

Save the Date for the Bee Symposium at UC Davis

Our third annual Bee Symposium: Keeping Bees Healthy will be hosted at the UC Davis Conference Center on Sunday, May 7, 2017, preceded by the first California Honey Festival in Woodland, CA on Saturday, May 6, 2017. This educational program is designed for beekeepers of all experience levels, including gardeners, farmers and anyone interested in the world of pollination and bees. In addition to our speakers there will be lobby displays featuring graduate student research posters, the latest in beekeeping equipment, books, honey, and much more.

This year, our lead speaker is Dr. Steve Sheppard, Thurber Professor of Apiculture and Chair of the Department of Entomology at Washington State University. Other speakers include Santiago Ramirez from the College of Biological Sciences at UC Davis, Maj Rundlof from the Department of Biology from Lund University, and Margaret Lombard, CEO of the National Honey Board. Elina Niño, the Extension Apiculturist from the Department of Entomology and Nematology at UC Davis, will be honoring the Apprentice-level students from the Master Beekeeper Program.

Editor's note: SCBA has three members in the Master Beekeeper Program!

Time Is Running Out

Has your SCBA membership expired?

You will no longer receive email notices, be able to participate in any cluster activities, or be on the swarm list with an expired membership.

RENEW NOW and don't miss out! <http://sonomabees.org/2017-membership/>

Your clusters are buzzing and planning lots of great activities, events and hive dives. The clusters have already started having workshops and late winter/early spring hive management sessions. You must be a current SCBA member to participate in these.

There's a lot of bee activity going on now. Don't delay, renew today!



Has your membership expired?

Time is running out!

On February 14th, all memberships that have not yet renewed will become expired. Renew now and don't miss out!

If you have already renewed anytime after September 1, 2016, your membership will be current through December 31, 2017. If not, please renew now so you can enjoy the many benefits of membership, including workshops, cluster events and hive dives, and swarm list participation. On February 14th, all expired memberships will be dropped from the membership roster and will no longer receive email notices about events and cluster activities.



General Membership: (\$50)

For a listing of membership benefits please refer to the sonomabees.org website.

Business Members: (\$100)

Business membership has been simplified. Business membership is now a straight fee of \$100. For a listing of benefits and how to place an ad on the website or in the Extractor, please refer to the following links on the sonomabees.org web site:

www.sonomabees.org/new-membership-page

www.sonomabees.org/business-member-info/

How to renew:

- Online at:

www.sonomabees.org/new-membership-page

- Download and complete a membership application and mail it with your payment to:

**SCBA, P.O. Box 98,
Santa Rosa, CA, 95401**

- Apply at the next SCBA meeting. Bring the completed application to the meeting, and payment can be made by Cash, Check, or Credit Card.

Everyone (new and renewing) must complete an application with his or her payment. This is the only way we can ensure that the information we have for you is current.

If you make a payment with a PayPal account that has a different name than your listed membership name, please indicate on the application that the business or other family members name is associated with you. We otherwise may have difficulty knowing that a payment is yours.

Thank you,

Ann Jerel

SCBA 1st VP Membership

1stVP@sonomabees.org

Please read the Best Management Practices page before you fill out your membership. We want all our beekeepers to have a good, safe apiary for themselves and everyone nearby. Here is the Link to SCBA BMP - <http://sonomabees.org> - there is a button in the middle of the page. <http://sonomabees.org/new-membership-page/scba-best-management-practices/>

My March

Beekeeping To-Do List by Serge Labesque

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When to divide a colony?

Depending on how and when we divide our colonies, the results can be anything between outstanding successes and... nothing to be proud of. This is particularly true when the divides are expected to raise their queens, which is what colonies do when they swarm. And this is what these lines are about. The dismantling of hives to form nucs, "shook swarming" and other methods that impose the beekeeper's arbitrary timetable upon the bees won't be considered here.

From this perspective, the best time to perform a hive division is when the bees initiate the process, i.e. when they prepare to swarm, reproductive swarming being the spontaneous and natural division of the colony. Indeed, it's in these circumstances that the in-hive conditions are optimal to obtain excellent queens. When this is not the case, we do well not dividing the colony, at least for the time being. Yet, there are other situations when colonies should not be divided. Cases in point are when the colony is diseased, when it is too small or too weak, when the hive is superseding its queen, or when it's too early or too late in the year, to give but a few examples.

How do we know that a colony is preparing to swarm and that the timing is right? Finding several undamaged swarm cells during a hive inspection is a pretty good signal as swarming is imminent then, if it has not already happened. If the strength of the colony permits, we may divide it immediately. But this is an emergency situation that can be avoided, because the bees actually begin their preparations for swarming many days before they build queen cells. And that is what we need to identify. Note that an abundance of drones, drone brood or queen cups is not necessarily a sign of imminent swarming by the colony. These are only indicative of the season of reproduction.

The clue we are looking for can be found by examining the brood nest and, in particular, the young brood. Here is why: In late winter, the queens lay eggs profusely. Come early spring, the brood nests are swollen and the adult bee populations are large. As we inspect our hives at this season, we easily find lots of sealed brood. But sealed brood is only a testimony of the past performance of the queens of two to three weeks ago. The more elusive open brood, on the other hand, is the result of the current or very recent egg production of the queens. Since prolific queens lay their own weight in eggs every day at this time of year, their ovaries are heavily loaded with chains of egg cells and nurse cells. They must lose weight before they can fly out with a swarm. This takes several days, and it happens when the queens are forced to reduce their production of eggs, either because the brood chambers become honey bound, or because their nest mates prevent them from laying large masses of eggs.

These conditions lead to a sudden and drastic reduction of the amount of young brood and to its scattering throughout the nest instead of appearing in solid masses, changes that become visible several days before swarm cells are started. Dividing colonies at this stage pre-empts the loss of the swarm and ensures that the developing queen larvae will be well fed in the splits, because there are very large numbers of nurse bees in the hive, and there is little brood to compete for their attention and royal jelly.

Therefore, an important goal of our regular hive inspections in the spring is to find open brood, eggs and young larvae. By comparison to the older brood its quantity and its pattern help us figure out when to divide colonies.

March in the apiaries

In spite of the most unusually wet weather we have been experiencing this winter, overall the colonies are building up quite nicely for spring. Once again beekeepers have to remain flexible in their management of the hives, responding to ever-changing conditions while staying ahead of the needs of the bees.

Starting in mid-winter, we have been adding frames and supers to provide the bees with the space they needed to expand their brood nests and to store the nectar they could collect on nice days. This attention needs to continue, as this time of year is a season of rapid colony growth, which leads to colony reproduction. So, weather permitting, we regularly inspect hives once a week to ten days at most to discern the early signs of the preparations for swarming. As always, we also keep an eye open for possible health problems. Our inspections are directly aimed at the brood nests. They are kept brief in order to avoid chilling the brood or the queens. Along with any additional space we provide to prevent congestion of the brood chambers, we offer comb-building opportunities to our bees.

Since the season of colony reproduction is upon us, we keep enough equipment at the ready to divide hives when they signal that they are ready for this, and to capture occasional swarms. Setting any of our unused beekeeping paraphernalia as swarm traps may also bring us new residents.

With nice queen cells appearing in hives and divides, one may question the value of dedicating any time to raising queens. Certainly, it's not an absolute necessity, but it is worth obtaining a few daughter queens from our very best hives while the drones abound and the conditions are favorable. These conditions seldom last to the end of spring in my apiaries. The queens we produce as well as the queen cells that are found in excess may be used to requeen colonies that have failing or unsatisfactory queens, or the divides that fail to generate queens successfully. To this end, hobbyists and small-scale beekeepers may use very simple queen-rearing methods, as they do not need

to produce large numbers of queens. Doing this is one important step toward maintaining or improving the overall quality of our apiaries.

An alternative to requeening weak hives and laggard colonies is to combine them, as long as they are otherwise healthy. When this is to be done, I most often use the newspaper technique, which consists of stacking the reduced brood chambers of the colonies with a sheet of newspaper between them. Two or three 2"-long slits are cut in the center of the paper. The colony with the more desirable queen is placed in the upper part of the stack to add a level of protection, as the older bees of the other colony will not run into her on their way to the fields. One week later, we verify that the combination was successful, and we consolidate the brood chamber.

During the latter part of the month, as the temperatures become milder, the growing brood nests begin to expand downward into the lower part of the hives. We make sure that adequate forager clustering space remains between the entrances and the brood nests. On occasion, placing a super with empty frames on the hive bottom may be necessary to create this space.

Frames that fill up with the light mustard honey need to be harvested without delay, or else the honey will crystallize in the combs. However, these early harvests should not expose the colonies to the risk of starving, which can be significant in the spring.

Yes, there is a lot to do in the apiaries at this time of year. But it's a lot of fun, too!

Queen Rearing Workshop a Big Success

To start the bee-sharing program Christine Kurtz is in charge of this year, she had Bernardo Niño, Staff Research Associate from the Laidlaw Bee Lab in U.C. Davis come for an all day workshop. Over 30 SCBA members were able to come and learn the how and whys of queen rearing.

Bernardo Niño did his research in North Carolina so he explained to the group about how know your local climate and weather patterns are important to queen rearing. He does queen rearing in Davis now so he was able to explain when we need to start ours. He described the various tools and equipment needed. His pictures were very helpful.

Christine Kurtz is doing a great job promoting bee sharing in the area. The goal is help beekeepers have local bees that are the best for our area. The colonies that will be shared by splitting and raising queens from them will be colonies that have proved to be gentle, hygienic and good survivors.

In summary, this month:

- **Do NOT buy or bring package bees, nucs and queens from outside our immediate area! Instead, arrange to obtain bees from neighbor beekeepers.**
- Inspect hives on nice days, at a time when foragers are out in large numbers.
- Look for signs of preparations for swarming.
- Watch for signs of spring diseases and other health problems.
- Provide additional egg-laying space in the brood chambers.
- Place supers.
- Maintain forager clustering space between the entrances and the brood nests.
- Remove frames with old empty comb that bees have vacated.
- Add new empty frames, thus providing the bees with comb-building opportunities.
- Perform the first hive divisions of the season (but only if and when the hives are ready and when weather permits!)
- Place swarm traps.
- Clean or dispose of the equipment that held colonies that failed, as appropriate.
- Open the entrances of the hives to match the increasing forager activity.
- Ensure that the bees have access to water.
- Ensure that the hives remain adequately ventilated.
- Observe the performance of the queens and colonies.
- Requeen or combine hives that are not performing satisfactorily, and those that have failing queens.
- Harvest and process surplus honey.
- Give extracted frames, supers and cappings back to the bees for cleaning.
- Keep the hive tops secured.
- Pull weeds from in front of the hives.
- Keep swarm-catching equipment at the ready.
- Cull old and misshapen combs.
- Render wax from discarded frames.
- Routinely clean and scorch tools and equipment.

Serge Labesque
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Queen Rearing Workshop Up In Ettamarie Peterson's Barn
– Photo by Chris Dicker

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BEE WISE: BEE HUMILITY

by Emery Dann

A survey was conducted by best-selling author, Jim Collins and a team of researchers. They spent 5 years studying the question, "How can a good company become a great company?" He wrote a powerful book, "Good to Great". Collins identified 2 specific qualities that turned good companies into great companies.

The first quality was that leaders, both men and women, were willing to endure anything to make their company exceptional. They were driven to pay whatever the price was required for their company to become great.

However, the second most important quality surprised the researchers: humility! The greatest leaders pointed to the contributions of others and never wanted to draw attention to themselves. Collins interviewed people who worked for these leaders. He said, "These workers used words to describe their leader, such as: quiet, humble, modest, shy, gracious, mild-mannered and self-effacing to describe working for these exceptional leaders."

They found two of the primary ingredients for greatness are: #1. A DRIVING PASSION TO SUCCEED and #2. AUTHENTIC HUMILITY!

I have often thought about the PASSION BEES exude and their BEE HUMILITY that attracts and fascinates me whenever I assist and work with honey bees. As amazing social insects, bees contribute to their hive community, helping one another by thriving together. Bees are HUMBLE! Bees learn from each other, cooperate and serve one another without complaining or arguments. Bees do not draw attention to themselves. Bees are humble without

self-promotion, supporting one another. Bees use consensus building to make intelligent decisions as a group.

Swarms stay visible only long enough for the scouts to find a secure home—then they agree and then quickly disappear from view as a swarm.. Yes, bees work hard, visiting up to 2 million flowers for every 1 pound of honey they make. Yes, bees are defensive of the bee space around their hive entrance. Yes, all bee efforts are all made possible by the contributions and sacrifices made by each individual bee for the good of the entire colony.

Bees are non-predatory, while giving amazing benefits and value to surrounding vegetation, agriculture, eco-systems and the environment. Bees do not exploit the natural resources or create tons of "bee trash" or pollution like we humans create. Honey bees are doing incredible feats of aerial agility, transportation and storage, memory, strength and endurance with complex advanced mathematical calculations instinctually. Bees are largely unnoticed and unappreciated by many humans. Bees have their own "BEE.P.S." guidance system to "MapQuest" their location and directions with their brain the size of 1 sesame seed. They know their queen by her unique pheromone that is different from every other queen bee, similar to our fingerprints that are all different from every other human! Both inside and outside beehives the daily activity is none other than miraculous! I am thankful for all that bees contribute to human life and our well-keeping!

So honey bees deserve my greatest respect for authentic "BEE HUMILITY"! It is a one of the greatest privileges of my life, learning from honey bees to become a more humble beekeeper, as I follow their amazing examples.

SCBA General Meeting

February 13, 2017

Held at the RP 4H Center, about 120 people present.

President Janson Berkman brought the meeting to order at 6:58pm. Jason introduces Thea Vierling who explains why everyone should become a member and get involved in their cluster groups. There are many educational opportunities available to SCBA members, which are made possible by the membership dues. The raffle netted \$126 for the winner and the Association.

President Jason announces the Auction Committee and Volunteer Committee which need members. Darleen McGinnis is the head of the Auction Committee and needs help putting together the annual holiday party and auction. The Volunteer Committee will take the place of one volunteer coordinator, a very important job getting together volunteers for events and helping everyone complete their volunteer hours for the year. Jason asked all the new members to stand and everyone gave them a warm welcome.

1st VP Ann Jereb reminds everyone to renew their membership because the cut off date is 2/14/17. There are many great opportunities planned this year.

Bee Sharing Coordinator Christine announces upcoming workshops to teach hive management. These workshops are free for members and will occur within the cluster groups. There is an SCBA Queen Rearing group on facebook, open to all members.

Swarm Coordinator John McGinnis asks everyone on the swarm list to come to the next general meeting early (5:30pm) to attend a refresher training. You will be removed from the 2017 swarm list if you do not attend one of these trainings. You do not have to be on the swarm list to receive a captured swarm. You can get a swarm from the Bee Sharing Program by talking to your cluster group. You can contact John about the swarm list via email at swarm@sonomabees.org.

President Jason introduced the speaker, our very own 2nd VP Susan Kegley. Susan announces the California Honey Festival's honey contest is taking entries until March 15th. The festival itself is in May. Susan is a chemist at the Pesticide Research Institute (PRI) and has a farm in Santa Rosa called Bees N Blooms.

Susan has conducted research looking at trends in honeybee health. Honey production is a good way to measure health. 2012 was the lowest year for honey production since keeping records of honey production started. Everyone with 5 or more hives should complete a yearly survey for the USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service: https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide_to_NASS_Surveys/Bee_and_Honey/

"Colony Collapse Disorder" is a list of symptoms which has become the common name for the phenomena which could be better described as unsustainable bee loss.

Possible causes under consideration for the loss of honeybees:

- Pathogens- viruses, bacteria, microsporidia
- Parasites- varroa mites
- Pesticides-acute kills, chronic effects
- Habitat- degradation and poor nutrition

There is probably not one cause, but an interaction between multiple factors reducing the overall health of the hive.

The PRI and PSC hive tracking study was performed with 3 commercial beekeepers. The study measured:

- Colony strength
- Pathogen levels
- Pesticide concentrations
- Number of mites.

There were four sampling times throughout the year. One sample was taken before almond pollination season, and another was taken after exposure to almond groves.

Varroa mites reproduce in the hive, so beekeepers may try to treat with formic acid but fail to kill the mites in brood cells. This can lead beekeepers thinking their hive has been reinfested, when in reality, they did not successfully get rid of the original infestation. That the presence of varroa mites in addition to exposure to certain pesticides can negatively impact colony health.

The study screened for 180 chemicals which can be found in the hive due to the presence of pesticides. Before almonds, the colonies were healthy with little pesticide residue found. After pollinating almonds, 11-18 different chemicals were found in the tested pollen. Luckily, there was not much found in the honey. 14 of the pesticides in the study showed no significant effects, but 9 did show significant effects on colony health. Fungicides were more statistically correlated with poor colony health. Neonicotinoids are highly toxic to honeybees and they are commonly used. Even small amounts of neonicotinoids impact the honeybees' immune systems and affect overall colony health. Both insects and humans use an enzyme called cytochrome P450 to detoxify pesticides. Some chemicals found in the pollen pesticides inhibit the production of this enzyme, making the honeybees more vulnerable to the effects of all chemicals they come into contact with because they can no longer detoxify them. Colonies with reproductive health failures die more often than colonies with good reproductive health.

It is not just the big almond groves which use these pesticides. Plants from large commercial sellers like Lowes and Home Depot contain pesticides that are toxic to bees. Home Depot is improving, but always be careful and look at the label on any plants you buy. Trees can also have neonicotinoid residues on them.

From this study, small beekeepers can learn mites by themselves are not the problem. Mites in combination with pathogens and pesticides significantly impairs hive health.

Questions:

Q: Since fungicides are so toxic, is sulfur a good alternative?

A" Yes, just make sure you know the actual composition of the sulfur. Sometimes it has chemicals added to remove the smell and yellow color. It might not be considered safe and/or organic depending on the additives.

Q" Did you test for round-up or other herbicides?

A: The study did not include an analysis for round-up. Many herbicides are probably not acutely toxic (won't kill the bees right away) but may have chronic effects on colony health.

Q: How can we reduce the impact of pesticides on our bees?

A: Make the EPA do their job! The EPA is working on label changes to reduce impact, but they need to hear from you. If you push the EPA, they will make changes. The Almond Board is trying to make changes by suggesting farmers do not use pesticides that harm the bees, but they are not enforced rules, only suggestions. The PRI has an app called PestSmart. It is a great resource for information about pesticides. The State has a rule about informing beekeepers of spraying before it occurs, but your bees need to be registered with the county. It could be effective to have everyone in the SCBA to register their bees.

Q: How do we teach consumers not to buy products like pesticides and toxic plants from commercial sellers?

A: Work with environmental organizations to raise awareness. There are many local and national groups you can get involved in. The SCBA has a gardening group, which is a great place to start. Suing the EPA also works well. Sometimes the EPA has their hands tied until they have a big threat like being sued which finally pushes the government to make a change.

Meeting adjourned at 8:49 pm.

Melissa Hanson
Secretary

These were the results of the PRI study:

(This summary of results was written by Susan Kegley)

"The primary findings of the study showed:

- 1) Exposure to both fungicides and neonicotinoid insecticides (except dinotefuran) were significantly correlated with poor colony health. The effect was stronger for fungicides, potentially because the exposures were higher, since these pesticides are applied during almond bloom when the bees were foraging. There are concerns also about exposures to multiple chemicals at the same time, since certain types of fungicides impair the bees' ability to excrete toxins. For most of the pesticides found in the colonies in the study, a patent exists for a mixture with another chemical also found in the samples that has synergistic interactions that increases the toxicity of the chemical to insects.

2) For pathogens, there were no trends in the abundance of pathogens with colony strength. Deformed wing virus was found to be associated with varroa mite loads.

3) As for mites, all three of the commercial beekeepers treated for mites 3-5 times during the year. There was no correlation of mite loads with colony survival, with even colonies having relatively high mite loads (up to 21 mites per hundred bees) surviving through to the end of the study. Overall, the data show that colonies treated for mites still show significant impairment of colony health that correlates strongly with exposure to certain fungicides and insecticides. What this means is that controlling varroa mites, while important for colony health, does not preclude colony collapse when there is exposure to certain pesticides. 4) One of the commercial beekeepers in the study, as well as three other commercial beekeepers with 3,000-10,000 colonies each, have noticed rebounding mite populations after treatments with formic acid. They are concerned enough that they have reported this failure of formic acid to the US EPA. This observation provides an alternative explanation for the reinfestation that is often blamed on neighboring beekeepers who do not treat for mites. If formic acid is not killing the mites or even if it is only killing the phoretic mites (those that are on the adult bees, and not in the brood cells), the rebound in mite population could be explained by the mites in the brood cells hatching out with the brood. Because there are fewer brood cells and a declining population of bees at this time of year, the number of mites per hundred bees increases dramatically. The commercial beekeepers do not see the same rebound in mite populations when treating with different miticides, like amitraz. The speaker explained this observation in more detail and with reference to the scientific literature on colony population modeling and experimental data on mite introduction into colonies from others nearby. There was clarification that it is NOT that the mites are becoming resistant to formic acid, but more likely that it is a difficult miticide to apply and ensure the correct dose is received by the mites.”

Melissa Hanson
Secretary

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Bee Plants of the Month

By Alice Ford-Sala

Manzanitas *Arctostaphylos* species *Ericaceae* family

Manzanitas are cornerstone ecological plants in California floral communities. Besides being important food plants for native animals and humans, the roots act symbiotically with soil mycorrhiza to aid in absorption of water and nutrients in the soil, which contribute to long-lived (up to 100 years) Manzanita groves.

Here are some low-growing ground cover varieties:

A.uva-ursi 'Kinnikinnick'

Kinnikinnick occurs in coastal regions and mountain high country from California all the way up to Alaska, and south to high altitude volcanoes in Guatemala.

'Point Reyes' grows about 18 inches tall and up to 6 feet wide. Imagine cool, rocky or well-drained soil along the coast and you can see how hardy this attractive plant is. The short branches are covered with whorls of bright green leaves. The flowers are whitish pink and give way to deep red berries, making this an interesting plant year-around. Does not appreciate super-hot afternoons, but can take full sun in most areas.

'Wood's Compact' is only 6 to 8 inches tall, but will spread out to 6 feet wide, making a nice selection as a ground-cover. The leaves are alternate, shiny green, with reddish bark. Flowers are pink followed by large red berries.

A. edmundsii Edmunds Manzanita

There are many varieties of Edmunds Manzanita, some hardly ever bloom, others are very floriferous. They all tolerate garden conditions such as clay soil and some summer water. Partial afternoon shade is appreciated in hot inland areas.

'Bert Johnson' grows in mounds of 12 inches high by about 6 feet wide. Does very well on hillsides or cascading over a retaining wall or container.

Very dense green foliage with pinkish flowers and small rusty-red berries make it a nice hiding place for birds and small mammals.



Manzanita

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Swarm List 2017

By Swarm Chairperson John McGinnis

2017 SCBA Swarm List Closes for Submissions March 15, 2017

Swarm season is approaching soon. The swarm list will be closing for submissions on March 15, 2017.

- You must have a current SCBA membership to participate in the SCBA Swarm List. If your membership has expired, you can renew by going to this link: <http://sonomabees.org/2017-membership/>

- Members must also have at least one year of beekeeping experience to be on the list. Please see the list below for the other requirements. **Previous Swarm List member requirements: For members who have been on the swarm list in the past, and want to be on it again this year, We need to update your information and share some new ideas regarding the swarm list. This is different than the orientation that is for members who have never been on the swarm list.**

For members who have been on the swarm list in the past, and want to be on it again this year, you must attend a **MANDATORY** Swarm List Update meeting or speak with the Swarm Chairperson. We need to update your information and share some new ideas regarding the swarm list. This is different than the Swarm Orientation/Training Session that is for members who have never been on the swarm list.

- The last Swarm List Update meeting for 2017 is scheduled on:
- Monday, March 13 at 5:30pm, before the SCBA General Meeting. Rohnert Park 4-H Center (behind 24 Hour Fitness). [Directions](#)

New Swarm List member requirements:

- For members who have not been on the swarm list, they must have at least ONE year of beekeeping experience and must attend the Swarm Orientation /Training Session.
- The **final** Swarm Orientation/Training session for 2017 was held on February 25th. **There are NO further training sessions scheduled.**



Looking forward to an awesome swarm catching season in 2017. E-mail me if you have questions at swarm@sonomabees.org. See you all soon.

John McGinnis
Swarm Chairperson



John McGinnis
Buzz Off Honey Goah Way Ranch
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Bee Sharing

By Christine Kurtz

By now the second tutorial on “How to watch and grow your colonies” has gone around the cluster groups taught by your cluster coordinators. Again, I give many thanks to them for learning and then teaching. Understanding what bees do when is so important to understand how to manage colonies efficiently. Being able to provide education and having a way through the cluster groups to do so in smaller groups really helps raise up the skills for beekeeping for us as a group. It is so crucial to help our bees in the housing we provide for them. We, as beekeepers, can hinder colony growth and set up our colonies for pre-mature swarming before weather conditions are optimal, enough extra stores are gathered and enough mature drones are out in the congregation areas for good mating. Knowing when to add space initially around the brood nest and/or an additional super with a few frames without disturbing the brood nest, ideally with some drawn out comb, can help prevent that congestion that initiates swarm preparation before maturity has been reached as a whole colony. The bees think ahead and so must we.

If you have missed this tutorial, don't miss the March General Meeting, as Serge Labesque will go over some of this information again. This will then be followed by the third and final tutorial in your cluster groups, touching on it more intricately with the most efficient ways to split colonies. We will also discuss the bee sharing program a program being developed to share our locally surviving stock. Not only will we need recipients of splits coming from our locally surviving stock but we will also need beekeepers willing to share. Through a survey coming soon a list will be created and we will do our best to match the donors and recipients. There will be monetary compensation for donors

for their resources. There won't be any guaranties though because we cannot predict how many colonies will be ready to split and how many will participate. Patience will be paramount.

In the meanwhile, so much work can be done to help the bees and other pollinators in our own gardens. In our communities we should be educating from everything about honey bees to environmental health. Sometimes bigger impact can be made there than keeping bees in one's backyard. Bees need food and the more colonies we have, the more food they will need. Think one acre of bloom a day to sustain a colony (every time I say this it still floors me, it's a lot). Not only that, bees need clean natural food for good health, to help them detoxify, to boost their immune system so they can fight pests and pathogens, to have healthy ovaries and sperm to reproduce successfully. To look at bees holistically we must look and work wide. The scope of influence of your hives is a five-mile radius for forage and mating. There is lots of work to be done to fully help our dear honey bees.

Extra swarms will also be intertwined in the program, beekeepers that are well established often get more than their apiaries can handle because they have a name in their community and are called directly or are lucky to be in a swarm thoroughfare.

This is another reason for volunteering for the SCBA. This is the best way to get connected and creating for yourself opportunities for learning. Being proactive activates things; being passive lets things pass by. At least that is my motto.

Christine Kurtz

beesharing@sonomabees.org



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The Regional Buzz

By Sally McGough and Kelli Cox

The Cluster Coordinators' beekeeping year is already moving so fast; it's hard to keep up with them! These wonderful volunteers have been putting lots of time and great energy into organizing interesting bee cafés and workshops for their members – and that's only part of it. They've also been attending Serge Labesque's excellent tutorials in support of Christine Kurtz's new Bee Sharing Program, and then passing that invaluable information on to their Cluster members. By the March general meeting, all Clusters will have had 2 follow-up workshops on managing our hives in midwinter and growing our colonies as spring approaches. The last tutorial is coming soon and will be about splitting our colonies – an essential part of helping our colonies reproduce without the dangers inherent in swarming. From everything we've heard and seen, the Cluster Coordinators are doing a fantastic job and members are walking away excited and inspired to put what they've learned to use in their apiaries.



Be on the lookout for a quick online survey from your Cluster Coordinators. In fact, by the time you read this, you may have already received a link to it. This survey will help the Cluster Coordinators assess our members' wants and needs and gather data essential to making the Bee Sharing Program a reality. It's quick and it's easy, so please take the time to answer it and submit your responses when you're done. The more we know about our members, the better we can serve them.

We're very pleased to have some new faces among our Cluster Coordinators. North Cluster's longtime beekeeper Cheryl Caletti has joined Candice Koseba, who came on board late last year, and Laurie Smith, who had been handling it all herself. Welcome, Cheryl! All 3 of South Cluster's Coordinators are new this year and already handling it like pros. Welcome Nikki Hull-Campbell, Cynthia Rathkey, and Brian Martinelli! East Cluster's Lauri Dorman came on board late last year, and has now stepped up to take on a more active role, easing some of the load carried by longtime East Cluster Coordinators Lizanne Pastore and Thea Vierling. SCBA's librarian, Nadya Clark, has also quietly slipped into a more formal role with the East Cluster Coordinators. Thank you, Lauri and Nadya! In West Cluster, Bruce Harris has joined Chris Dicker (who, like Lizanne,

has been a Cluster Coordinator since the dawn of clusters). Welcome, Bruce! And what about Central? The 4 dynamos that led that Cluster last year have stayed on for a second year, so hats off to Molly Kuhl, Joy Wesley, Maggie Weaver, and Ann Jereb!

By the way, if you want to get to know people in SCBA, being a Cluster Coordinator is an excellent entrée to the "inner workings" of our organization. Yes, it's work – we won't lie to you – but we think every one of our current and past Cluster Coordinators would say it's rewarding and worthwhile. We're trying to ease the work by seeing that every cluster has at least 3 Cluster Coordinators. West has only 2, so if you're in West Cluster, give it some serious thought. You don't have time to take on the role of Cluster Coordinator? Fair enough – ask your Cluster Coordinators if there's some way you can help! If you're thinking of becoming a Cluster Coordinator sometime in the future, it's an excellent way to get your feet wet, and it helps fulfill your obligation of 6 hours of volunteer work for SCBA for the year. Remember, our amazing Clusters program is one of the things that make our SCBA organization a standout that's drawing attention around the state. Go Clusters!

Questions? We're always at the Monday night SCBA meeting, or you can email us at regionalcoordinator@sonomabees.org (Kelli) or regionalcoordinator2@sonomabees.org (Sally). Here's to a booming 2017 bee year!

Kelli Cox & Sally McGough
Regional Coordinators

North Cluster News

By Candice Koseba

"Hello fellow members! We have two new coordinators this year making us 3 strong! We are welcoming Candice Koseba and Cheryl Caletti. Candice is a new beekeeper and just expanded her home brood welcoming baby Remi! Cheryl is a long time beekeeper with seven strong colonies and deep roots in Sonoma County. Laurie Smith was last year's coordinator and is continuing this year. If you haven't tried her cheeses you are missing out! We are so excited about his upcoming years events. We have so many new beekeepers and new friends. Don't hesitate to come to any of us with your ideas and suggestions."



Contact Information

Regular monthly meetings of the Sonoma County Beekeepers' Association are held on the second Monday of each month, at 7 pm at the Rohnert Park 4-H Building. The meetings cover a wide range of topics of interest to beekeepers. Everyone wanting to learn about honeybees is cordially invited to attend. You do not need to be a member nor a beekeeper to attend these meetings. Dues can be paid online at our website sonomabees.org, at our monthly meetings or by mail. Please see our Website for the application and various kinds of memberships available.

Our mailing address is:
Sonoma County Beekeepers' Assoc.
P.O. Box 98
Santa Rosa, CA 95402-0098

Extractor Techs- Call Ettamarie 707-479-1613 or Janet Leisen 707-528-2085 or Cheryl Veretto e-mail cheryl@cbfreelance.com to rent the electric extractor for \$5 a day. Rental fee is \$5 per day. Cheryl is located in Sebastopol. Janet is North of Santa Rosa. Ettamarie is in Petaluma. There is a hand extractor at Deborah Rogers' home and her e-mail is deborah@olivequeen.net She lives in Glen Ellen.

Links to Association Reports:

January Board Minutes - www.sonomabees.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2617FebBoardMinutes.docx

2017 Board Members and Other Helpful People

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2nd Vice President - Susan Kegley 2ndVP@sonomabees.org
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Librarian - Nadya Clark librarian@sonomabees.org
Regional Coordinator - Kelly Cox – regionalcoordinator@sonomabees.org
Regional Coordinator 2 - Sally McGough – regionalcoordinator2@sonomabees.org

Cluster Leaders:

Central - Molly Kuhl, Joy Wesley, Ann Jereb centralcluster@sonomabees.org
East - Lauri Dorman, Lizanne Pastore eastcluster@sonomabees.org
North - Laurie Smith, Candace Koseba northcluster@sonomabees.org
South - Nikki Campbell, Cynthia Rathkey, Brian Martinelli southcluster@sonomabees.org
Topbar - Jim Spencer topbarcluster@sonomabees.org
West - Chris Dicker, Bruce Harris westcluster@sonomabees.org

Swarm - John McGinnis swarm@sonomabees.org
Webmaster - Bill MacElroy webmaster@sonomabees.org