

The Monthly Extractor

Volume 42, Issue 4

April 2017



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

President's Message

Happy Spring-forth, keepers of the bees, tenders of the land, and supporters of the pollinators - and others doing your part for the ecological web of life. (You're all included.)

"Happy spring," we wish upon one another. Spring is my season (April is my birth month), so it feels like a giant birthday present this time of year, gift-wrapped and covered in flowers. We also celebrate the Earth's Birth Day in April. This springing forward is indeed a time of renewal and rebirth of the land and us; also, it is an intense and frenetic time, I realize and remember.

To remember to remember, I remind myself.

It is time for remembering what spring management for the bees entails and remembering what happened in the previous hive inspection (taking notes helps!). In our lives, remembering to follow through with plans and details and correspondences and such is so very important. Also, remember to take care, to give care to us - to rest, relax, remember to breathe.

Perspective - we are all held with gravitation on this floating Earthship - remember??

I wish you a happy - and healthy - Spring and Earth Day (every day, eh?!)

Sincerely,.



Jason Berkman
President

This Month's Calendar

Monthly Meeting: Monday, April 10

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 – James Cook, The Life of a Commercial Beekeeper – This guy is not your ordinary commercial beekeeper. You will enjoy his take on this view.

Upcoming Meetings

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.

June 12, Panel discussion on topics on which reasonable beekeepers can disagree.

July, no meeting

August 13, Kelton Temby with Keltronics, to talk about EyesOnHives, video technology for monitoring your hives to assess patterns of activity.

Special Event

April 22 – 11a.m. to 3p.m. Event: Earth Day Celebration at QuarryHill Botanical Garden

Apr 29 – Apr 30, 2017 both days 10am - 4pm: Sonoma County Farm Trails' Blossoms, Bees & Barnyard Babies

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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!

Membership Notice

A big thank you to everyone who has renewed his or her 2017 membership! Your continued support and interest in SCBA is greatly appreciated!

If you haven't renewed yet, there are still many great upcoming events and activities to participate in. Remember, membership operates on a calendar year (12/31/16 - 12/31/17)

To renew, you can go to the following link:

<http://sonomabees.org/2017-membership/>

Happy Bee keeping!

Look for Ann Jereb at the membership table at our general meeting. She is happy to help you with any membership concerns.



Bee Hives Wanted

By Nick Papadopoulos of Crop Mobster

I run a local food networking community called CropMobster. <https://sfbay.cropmobster.com/>

Many of our members have interest in hosting beekeepers and hives so we built this map at their request. In a few days there are almost 20 locations in 4 North Bay counties that would love to host beekeepers.

<https://sfbay.cropmobster.com/bee-hives-wanted/>

Any feedback or questions welcomed as well as sharing this resource.

If SCBA members or your organization have any needs that our community exchange is a free place to post alerts, support requests or broadcast your work to 1000's in the SF Bay area.

CropMobster
707.332.9209



My April Beekeeping To-Do List by Serge Labesque

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Growing a new colony

Springtime brings us new colonies. Be they divides, nucs, or swarms, they all need to grow, gain strength, build comb, fill their nests and prepare for winter in just a few months. This can be a tall order! But it is vitally important to them. To achieve this goal, the bees depend to a large extent on the honey flows and their own abilities. Yet, how we manage their hives can make a significant difference in the outcome.

Below is an outline of the procedure I like to follow with colonies that are hived in Langstroth equipment. It's a gradual augmentation of the volume of the brood chamber that may also be implemented in other types of hives, albeit with some modifications. Note that the actual timing may vary substantially from what is indicated here, as it depends on many factors, not the least of which are the strength of the colony and the honey flow.

Let's consider here an average size swarm that is hived on four or five empty deep frames or as many as six or seven medium frames (Fig. 1). The frames and the bees are placed between follower boards, inside a super. The hive entrance is kept rather small initially, at about two inches in width. While some of the bees begin to forage actively, others, inside the hive, start building comb. The bees place honey, nectar and pollen in the combs that are under construction even before the cell walls are completely drawn. Frequently, queens lay eggs in cells that are barely started.

A week later, the little brood nest is beginning to noticeably grow. Yet the adult bee population continues to lose bees until three to four weeks after its hiving (Fig. 2). That's when the first of the young emerge from the brood nest. Combs are now being constructed in all the frames, but the outer ones are still lagging behind the others (Fig. 3). It's time to add a little volume to the nest cavity in order to allow for the expansion of the population and to permit more comb building. This is easily done by inserting one frame between the nest and each of the follower boards (Fig. 4).

The bees respond very well to this widening of their brood chamber. The young hive bees that produce wax festoon in the newly opened spaces and they start building combs from the top bars. Meanwhile, the brood nest expands further and stores amass above and around it (Fig. 5). Soon,

when the outer combs are half built, it's time to provide the growing colony with more space. Although we could add another frame, let's instead bait the bees into a second super by moving the original follower boards and the outer frames into it. Three new frames are also inserted in the new super and two new follower boards are placed around the brood nest (Fig. 6). In doing so, we transfer the odor of the colony into the new space and the bees move in immediately.

In less than two months after hiving, the young colony has developed a nice brood chamber and a strong forager force. It is now accumulating stores in the second super (Fig. 7). The entrance may be safely widened by



Fig. 1

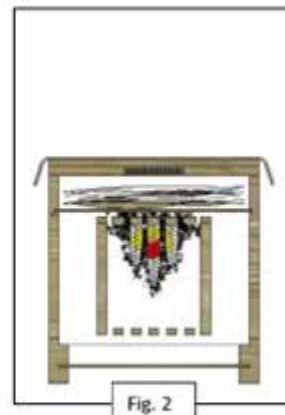


Fig. 2

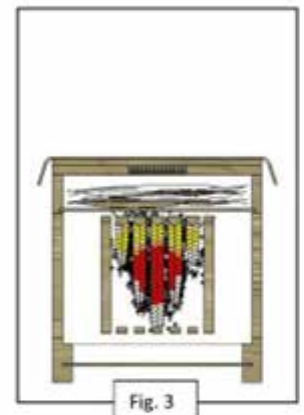


Fig. 3

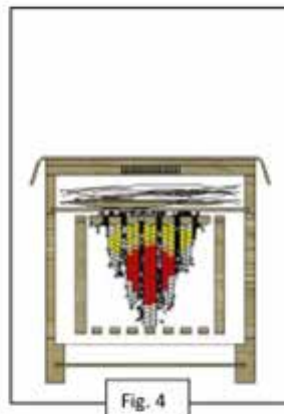


Fig. 4

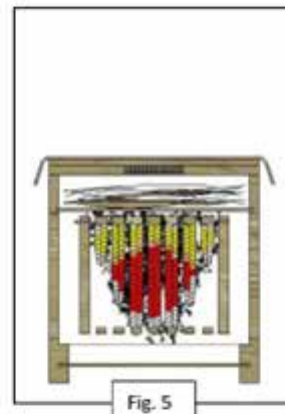


Fig. 5

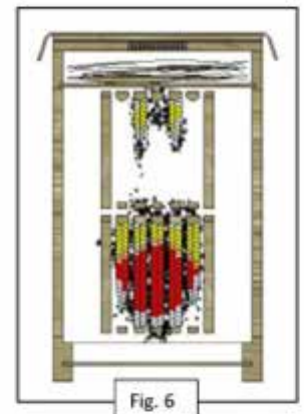


Fig. 6

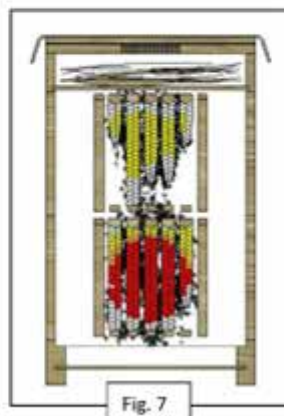


Fig. 7

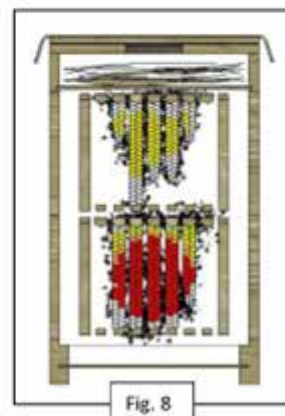


Fig. 8

Starting and Growing
a New Colony

(See text for explanations)

Serge Labesque © 2017

two or three more inches to facilitate the foragers' traffic. The follower boards are spread apart from the frames to make room for four new frames, two in each super. These frames are placed alongside the existing ones that hold capped honey, pollen or brood along the top bars, as this ensures that the new combs are nicely built (Fig. 8).

By proceeding as was just described, beekeepers do a lot of very good work to help young colonies grow. All the while, the bees respond very well to this measured expansion of the hive and thanks to the use of follower boards the manipulation of the frames is always easy.

April in the apiaries

This spring is a bees' and beekeeper's delight around here. Thanks to the unusually abundant winter rainfall that saturated the ground, a generous honey flow is on. The colonies are growing beautifully, filling new white combs with brood, colorful pollen and light honey.

Yet, our main goals at this time of year remain the multiplication of our colonies, the production of young queens, obtaining new combs, and providing our bees with ample nectar-storage space. As a side benefit of executing these tasks, we see the risks associated with swarming reduced.

At this point in time, many hives have already been divided, and there are more hive divisions to do to produce yet many more colonies. Young queens are developing. They are the future of our apiaries.

As the first honey supers fill up, we are prompted to harvest some of the early spring bounty or to add more nectar storage space. It is good to note that the presence of forager clustering space between the hive entrances and the brood nests is beneficial, as it helps reduce the congestion of the brood chambers. In addition to this apiary activity, the opportunities to chase swarms abound. Is it necessary to say that bees and beekeepers are very busy during this season?

In order to stay on top of fast-evolving hive situations, we inspect our hives regularly at this time of year. Weather permitting, we aim for weekly visits until the colonies have been divided or the risk of swarming has subsided. This pace is necessary to determine the optimum timing for the division of the colonies.

As always, during the inspections of our colonies we keep an eye on their health. Chalkbrood, European foulbrood and queen-related problems are the issues most frequently encountered in the spring. These various conditions must be addressed without delay, as they can be corrected easily at this time of year. Along with the excellent nutrition offered by this year's generous bloom, the period of broodlessness that is an integral part of the hive division during the queen-rearing process and the removal of contaminated brood combs from the hives help ensure good colony health.

Once we know that young queens are developing, the colonies are left undisturbed until follow-up inspections are performed to ensure that the queen-rearing process concluded satisfactorily.

Since the conditions during this season are nearly ideal for the development and mating of young queens, we do well to produce some from our best colonies. Issued from our good, locally adapted stocks, these queens will be available to requeen poorly performing hives or divides that failed to produce satisfactory queens. These good queens may also be given to neighbor beekeepers, as this helps develop healthy bee populations around our apiaries.

The honey supers also deserve some attention. Quite often, the bees fill the centermost frames faster than the side frames. Their positions may be switched to hasten the filling of the supers. However, my preference is to harvest and process individual frames of surplus honey as they become filled with ripe honey instead of waiting for entire supers to be filled. Placed in a beeswax-finished frame stand, a beautiful comb can adorn our dining room table. That is, before it vanishes rapidly under the assaults of our spoons! In recent years, I have come to let the extractor idle. This was not just the result of the drought and poor honey flows, but a deliberate decision, as crushing combs has become my preferred method of processing the harvest. Anyway you do this, enjoy it all!

This is a wonderful spring.

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.
- Inspect the hives regularly.
- Ensure unimpeded development of the brood nests. Add frames to provide egg-laying space and comb-building opportunities, as necessary.
- Add supers to provide nectar storage space.
- Ensure the presence of clustering space between the brood nests and the hive entrances.
- Perform divisions when the hives are initiating their preparations for swarming.
- Rear a few queens from good stock.
- Observe the monitoring trays, particularly for signs of brood diseases, possible chalkbrood mummies, EFB-affected larvae, or other health-related problems.
- Gradually open the entrances of the hives to match the increasing forager activity.
- Monitor the swarm traps that were set out.
- Requeen or combine hives that are not performing satisfactorily, and those that have failing queens.
- Keep some equipment at the ready to catch the occasional swarm.
- Maintain sources of water for the bees.
- Pull weeds from in front of the hives.
- Discard old and misshapen combs.
- Render wax from discarded frames.
- Routinely clean and scorch tools and equipment.
- Harvest only surplus early spring honey.
- Make sure you leave enough honey in the hives.

Serge Labesque
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Local Candle Maker
Looking for Beeswax!!
 I am a SCBA member looking to buy beeswax in large and small quantities.
 If you have some for sale or trade, please contact Jonah at:
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BEE WISE: A Heart for Bees by Emery Dann

I am frequently asked, “So how did you get into beekeeping? I have found that bees don’t really let me “keep” them! Bees have their own plan, and sometimes they let me assist them! I was doing tree work for Bobby Winston. He had about 12 hives at his home in Sebastopol. I figured, if he could keep bees close to his home, so could I. From my childhood I wanted to become a beekeeper—I just did not realize having beehives close to homes within the city limits was possible! Non-allergic neighbors and non-aggressive bees are essential for this. Always try to be on good terms with your close neighbors!

I soaked up all the bee (head) knowledge I could from books, Serge’s classes, volunteering, bee research and information on the internet and became a member of the Sonoma County Beekeepers Association. I attended Beekind’s Bee Symposiums, classes and other bee events. Head knowledge can get us into beekeeping.

A very important question is, “How can we assist bees for many years to come?”

I believe we all have a HEART for bees, or we would be doing something else!!! As we work with bees, we grow more passionate about how amazing honey bees are to each of us. It is a gift for me to have the privilege of working (it is work!) with bees that keeps on giving. Observation and experience are two of the most important ways to increase our bee passion. What are the bees telling us about their environment? What do they need or do not need from us? I have had the privilege of learning, hands on with Serge Labesque, Doug Vincent, Ettamarie Peterson, Christine Kurtz, Chris Conrad, Hector Alvarez, Geoff Whitford, and others who are bee passionate.

A 9-year old granddaughter of a very good friend of mine gave a 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle to a family member as a gift. She put all the puzzle pieces in a brown paper bag. When she was asked, “Where is the box it came

in?” She replied, “I threw the box away because I did not like the picture!” Sometimes beekeepers lose heart and give up. They do not like the “picture” they are seeing. It is like throwing the puzzle box away. There is no picture to see—just the overwhelming problems in front of them. Sometimes discouragement hinders beekeepers... We all need bee support!

The beekeepers that continue beekeeping are willing to endure some hard times but see the “big picture”. The cluster group meetings in the S.C.B.A. are designed to motivate us through both head and heart experiences. This can happen by volunteering, planting landscapes for bees, catching swarms, rescuing bees and assisting beehives. Again, we need to see the whole picture when it comes to our bees and taking care of them. We need support to have the best results.

We need to help one another—like the bees help other bees in their hives. Beekeeping is a way of life that enriches and benefits our life experience with bees and one another. Beekeeper “pride” can divide us. We need to be patient with one another in both head knowledge and heart experience! Not only do bees sting. Beekeepers can also sting other beekeepers with their words and comments. We want to maintain good relationships among beekeepers. Beekeeping can improve our lives with each other, and our personal environment. We see bees protecting and serving one another every time we look inside the hive! We can do the same...bees teach us how they cooperate in their “bee community” because their “hearts” for one another!



SCBA General Meeting

March 13, 2017

Held at the RP 4H Center, about 350+ people present.

President Jason Berkman brought the meeting to order at 6:56pm. Jason introduces Thea Vierling who explains why everyone should become a member and get involved in his or her cluster groups. At the general meetings we provide educational information, but you get hands on experience from working with your cluster. The clusters do hive dives so you can see and experience what we talk about in the general meetings. The membership dues also pay the fees for renting out the 4H building each month for meetings with guest speakers. Before each meeting there is a social hour (from 6-7pm) where experienced beekeepers make themselves available for questions. Come early to ask questions and meet new friends! Jason gives a warm welcome to all new members. The raffle prizes this week included a swarm catcher, some Girl Scout cookies, milk chocolate honeycomb, and netted \$205 for a winner and the Association. Christine demonstrates how to use the swarm catcher and shows the table where they are available for purchasing.

Susan introduces the Volunteer Committee. You can volunteer at festivals and fairs, which means you go for free! Even if you think you don't know enough about bees to volunteer, you do! You know more than the average person and teaching is a great way to learn more.

Alice tells members about the Gardening for Bees group. The group has starts and cuttings for sale. Alice also gives a recipe for a bee safe weed killer. There are instructions for making the weed killer in the Gardening for Bees brochure. Take 1/3 gallon 30% vinegar; mix with 2 gallons of water, 2 cups of Epsom salt, and some blue dawn. Make sure to wear a mask and gloves while mixing because it will spray and burn. For best results, use this when the temperature is 65 F or higher.

Jim Spencer is the coordinator for the Top Bar Group. Any SCBA member can join the group and go to the top bar bee cafes.

Education coordinator Maggie talks about another way to volunteer. The SCBA presents at schools to children and you can volunteer to be a presenter. There are already 18 presentations set up for spring. Contact Maggie at education@sonoma-bees.org to sign up for an education event that fits your schedule.

Swarm coordinator John talks about the Auction committee and the auction ad cards Darleen created with the date and time of the auction and ways you can help. John encourages members to take some and pass them out. The SCBA is looking for auction items.

2nd VP Susan introduces the speaker for the evening, Serge Labesque. Serge has kept bees all around Sonoma County for 20 years and he teaches beekeeping classes at the Santa Rosa Junior College.

Serge addresses the question: When should you divide a hive?

There are several ways to know when you should divide a colony. Serge tries to divide as close as possible to when the bees would naturally divide on their own. He tries to time divisions with the production of new healthy queens to create strong new colonies.

Before splitting your hives, there are several factors to consider. You must check for good quality of nutrition while the queens are larvae. Additionally, you should not divide a colony if it is too small. The colony should have at least 6 frames of brood with bees covering them. More than 6 are recommended. Make sure the colony can grow before attempting to split. Provide space in January/early February to give them time to grow.

If a colony is coming out of winter too early or too late, they may be too weak to divide. Shrink the volume of the hive to strengthen them and observe them until the middle of the spring honey flow. If they are still struggling, they may need to be requeened.

Avoid dividing a colony if it is diseased because it will only spread the problem. If a colony is not handling varroa mites well (you see an overload of mites in Spring), do not divide it because the new colony will not be able to handle mites either.

Keeping detailed apiary notes will help you discover lack of resistance or genetic sensitivities in your related colonies. You can track the patterns of genetic weaknesses and learn which colonies are the strongest and would therefore be good to propagate.

It is not an ideal time for division if a colony is rearing a queen. The colony will need the new queen if the old queen is failing. The colony is not in a good state for division if they are rearing an emergency queen for supercedure.

If a colony has already swarmed and you see no opened queen cells but undamaged queen cells can be found in the

hive, the conditions are no longer good for the production of a healthy new queen. When a hive swarms, 50-80% of the bee force leaves. Do not disturb the hive until the new queen is laying.

If a colony is exhibiting dangerous innate defensive behavior, splitting will most likely create a new colony with the same behavior. In fact, avoid splitting any colony that exhibits any undesirable behavior. You may want to try requeening them instead.

If you try to split too early in the year, conditions for rearing a healthy queen are not ideal because there will likely be a lack of food and drones.

If you try to split too late in the year, the colonies won't have adequate time to prepare for winter. Avoid dividing past early summer. It is good to aim for splitting during the honey flow in spring. Once it gets past early summer, it is time to focus your attention on preparing the hive for winter.

Young brood tells you a lot about what is going on in the hive. The capped brood will not tell you much, so look for the very young brood. If you see eggs, you know the queen has been laying in the last 3 days. If the queen is laying, she can lay 2,000 eggs per day, so her ovaries will make her too heavy to fly out and swarm. When the queen is laying a lot (you're seeing lots of the same size eggs and larvae) the colony is growing. So many young larvae will create competition with potential queen larvae for food, making it a bad time for queen rearing and splitting. If the colony is growing, wait a couple weeks before checking on them again.

The queen's ovaries will slow down before swarming. When there are very few young brood, the nurse bees can focus on providing nutrition for queen larvae.

The bees will tell you it is the right time to split when they are preparing to swarm. With good colony strength, you will see a large population of bees with good nutrition and overall health. Don't wait for queen cells to appear, read the other signs from the bees. Creating a queen cell is the last step in splitting, so it might be too late by the time you check the hive next. Keep new boxes and frames ready next to your hives so you can be prepared to split them at any weekly hive inspection during spring.

The best sign it is a good time to divide the hive:

- Sudden reduction in young, open brood in the hive during the spring honey flow. Most brood will be capped with scattered patches of open brood. (Brood exists as eggs for first 3 days, then open larvae for 6 days, finally they will be capped brood for 12 days)

After you divide the hive, the original colony's numbers will bounce back fast because they will be producing bees at the same rate the queen was laying 3 weeks ago.

Questions:

- How far apart should I keep my hives?
- If they are in the same location/apiary, keep them at least 2 feet apart. Rotate the entrance so the queen does not enter the wrong hive. She will be attacked even if related to the colony if she enters the wrong hive. Changing the direction of the hive opening will differentiate the flight paths into the hives.
- How do I know I have a queen after division?
- Wait 4-7 days, and then open the hive to look for eggs or queen cells. If you have eggs, you have a queen. Queens must mate within 3 weeks of their birth or they will be drone layers. If you have queen cells, your split is queenless. Don't disturb the splits during the queen rearing process. The developing queens are incredibly delicate because they are hanging vertically within the queen cells. If the cells is shaken, the queen can drop and rest on her legs, rendering her unable to fly and therefore unable to go on a mating flight. It is very hard to remove queen cells from plastic foundation without harming or killing them. It is much easier to cut out queen cells from the bee's own comb with a knife or hive tool. Never handle the queen cell itself, cut it out with comb around it.
- How many splits should I make when I divide my hives?
- It is good to divide hives into 3 so that each hive has $\frac{1}{3}$ of everything in the original hive. The original colony must sense it has swarmed. Dividing into 3 will also strengthen the hives by giving them enough room to grow and enough starting resources. If you have many queen cells, you can put 2 cells per hive and do subsequent splits for propagation.
- Do you divide your hives every year?
- Yes, but Serge does not divide every hive every year. He only divides the strong colonies that can produce a strong queen and the hives that initiate the swarming process themselves. He does mass propagation of his strongest hives and rears queens with them to get strong bees and share queens with his other hives.
- How is this year compared to others?

- It is a great season. The colonies are increasing and expanding very well. Lots of honey and nectar so far!
- Have you done any splits yet?
- No, but soon. Possibly even this weekend because some signs are appearing.
- How was this winter for your hives?
- Serge only lost 1 colony, so the winter was not particularly hard for his bees.
- How do I know which frames of brood should go into the splits?
- Set up equipment for split next to the hive. Go to the heart of the brood nest during the split and make sure you have a little bit of young brood. Put it in the center of the new hive. They can build a new queen from the young brood, but make sure there isn't so much young brood that there would be competition with a queen larva for food. You want the frames to have uncapped honey so the bees can consume it right away without uncapping. So get a mix of uncapped honey, sealed brood, empty comb, and small amount of open brood.

Meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm.

Melissa Hanson
Secretary



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Bee Plants of the Month

By Alice Ford-Sala

We move to an exploration Ribes, or the Currant and Gooseberry family.

A diverse and incredibly beautiful family, they benefit pollinators and native birds and mammals in a variety of settings.

Wild Currants Ribes

Species Grossulariaceae family

Ribes malvaceum Chaparral Currant

I love Ribes so dearly, it is hard to have a favorite, but I must confess R.malvaceum is right there at the top of the list. I have had one by the side of my driveway for about 8 years, and it never ceases to charm. What's to like?

1. This native can thrive on dry slopes, mixed woodland, and scrublands. It also does well in a suburban garden, getting summer water once a week during the dry season.
2. R. malvaceum takes well to pruning if necessary (like if you planted it a little too close to the driveway), grows into a pleasing upright shrub 4-6 feet tall and wide.
3. The leaves are resinous and slightly sticky, smelling like a woody hike on a warm summer day. They are also quite attractive, clean green and lobed with an interesting rough texture, growing in an open pattern on the straight branches.
4. In inland Sonoma County, the blooms start in November and continue with dangling pink flower clusters through the end of March. That means nectar throughout the cold winter dearth for honeybees, hummingbirds, and in early spring, native bees. On a warm winter afternoon, I will walk by and the whole plant is buzzing, with at least one hummingbird zipping in for a quick snack.

What's not to like?

Only one warning- R.malvaceum will lose it's leaves at the end of summer, and looks like it has died, as most of your garden will still be going strong. Just remember, California natives are dormant in summer, so it is just taking a nap. As soon as the rains start, she will green up again and you'll have a cheerful companion for your bees and wildlife through the winter.



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The Regional Buzz

By Sally McGough and Kelli Cox

Spring has sprung! We are in full blooming buzzing swing and it is going to be a doozy! Bees are swarming or getting ready to swarm, and we're fast approaching the optimal time for making splits and collecting swarms. Things can move very fast at this time of year, and whether you plan to split your hives or catch swarms, or are waiting to receive a split or swarm; we hope you're prepared.

One way to prepare is to learn all you can about splits and swarms and how they come about and how best to help the bees. We owe many thanks to Serge Labesque and Christine Kurtz for preparing Cluster Coordinators these last few months with three very important tutorials: "Mid-Winter Hive Management," "Late Winter to Early Spring," and "Colony Propagation by Hive Division." Your Cluster Coordinators spent many hours organizing and holding workshops to pass this information on to you. Many thanks to them and to those of you who volunteered your homes and time to help make it happen. If you missed any



of these workshops and want to get the handouts, contact us and we'll get them to you.

On the swarm front, we owe John McGinnis, Swarm Chairperson, a big thank you for educating the swarm catchers for this year. We've heard he did an excellent job, and we're looking forward to a busy and productive swarm-catching season!

The numbers of participants attending cluster bee cafes and workshops has been at an all time high and the buzz is they are TERRIFIC! If you haven't yet attended a bee cafe, talk to your Cluster Coordinator and get to your next meeting. We think you'll be glad you did.

This year's bee sharing program is taking off and our Cluster Coordinators are doing their best to help you get local bees if you need them or find someone to take them if you have a split or swarm to give. But – they need your cooperation. Have you filled out your cluster's survey (sent to all of you electronically in March)? It's not too late and gives Cluster Coordinators essential information for managing the bee-sharing program. Do you have your Bee Buddy? Are you prepared – have you learned all you can about splits and swarms, and is your equipment complete and ready to go? Don't get caught short and miss out!

Always feel free to email us with any questions or concerns and we will do our best to help.

Beest, Kelli and Sally Regional Cluster Coordinators

Kelli Cox & Sally McGough
Regional Coordinators

East Cluster News

By Lizanne Pastore co-ECCC

It's been very busy already for the bees in East. Several hives have been divided in Kenwood and Sonoma, and a few lucky recipients have received splits of local survivor bees from beekeepers who understand the importance of sharing these precious splits. Impromptu hive dives have occurred all over East with more to come! Thank you to everyone who has so generously parted with splits in order to help our local bee and beekeeping community!

Like the other clusters, East had a great turnout for the 3 tutorials offered from January through March, and this extra information has improved our skills and confidence as we inspect our hives. We are noticing more and more novice beekeepers perform their own manipulations, inspections, and even divisions this season. Way to go, folks!! These shots are of a recent hive inspection in mid-March at Lizanne's Glen Ellen apiary with several local beekeepers present to observe and help. The bees were not quite ready to divide, but were getting close!



(Photos courtesy of Janet Molinari)

South Cluster News

In March South Cluster got together twice to go over hive management techniques. The cluster leaders learned from Serge Labesque and then used his power point presentation to teach it to the other members of the cluster. The South Cluster appreciates their leaders taking the training and passing it on to the members. Nikki Campbell, Cynthia Rathkey, and Brian Martinelli work well together as the South Cluster team leaders. Thanks to Christo and Kelli for sharing their homes for those two presentations.

In February the South Cluster had an equipment workshop at Ettamarie's barn. John McGinnis demonstrated how to make a better bottom board by converting a Country Rubes one. He sells this design too. Photos by Christine Kurtz.



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Gardening For Bees Group

By Chris Dicker

The Gardening for Bees group started hundreds of plants at the latest Propagation Workshop. These are bee friendly, pesticide free plants that members will be able to pick up for bargain prices at the SCBA monthly general meetings. Ellen Sherron generously shared her garden, expertise and lots of seedlings with all the attendees. Thanks to all who made the morning a huge success.

Plant Starts Available at April 10th Meeting.

Upcoming Events

At the end of April, Sonoma County Farm Trails will be hosting its annual agritourism event: Blossoms, Bees & Barnyard Babies. A great way to introduce people to Sonoma agriculture.

Apr 29 – Apr 30, 2017 both days 10am - 4pm.

SCBA will be hosting an informational booth at the Monte-Bellaria lavender farm and we'll be discussing the importance of "planting for bees." We will be taking small groups into the field to see the apiaries close up and to discuss the lives of bees. Please also note that some of our members and advertisers will be open that weekend, so it would be a great time to visit. [Click](#) for more information.



Hold the date for the Gravenstein Apple Fair August 12 & 13 at Ragle Ranch Park in Sebastopol. This year the theme will be "In Praise of Pollinators!" SCBA will have a booth there.

Contact Susan Kegley to volunteer:
2ndVP@sonomabees.org



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:](#)

February Board Minutes - www.sonomabees.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/3617FebBoardMinutes.docx

2017 Board Members and Other Helpful People

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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
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