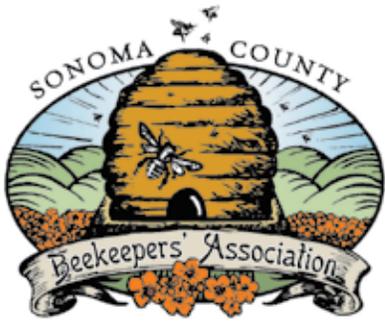


# The Monthly Extractor



Volume 43, Issue 7

July 2018

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

## President's Message

Here we are moving toward the last half of the year! With the longest and possibly hottest day past us we are also mostly past swarm season.. or are we?!

Thanks to a new process that is being monitored by **Bruce Harris, Brian Martinelli, Joy Wesley and Lizanne Pastore** and with the continued help from you, our members, we have recorded 242 swarms caught thus far.

These recordings are so helpful for a plethora of reasons; among them, saving and giving bees an appropriate home to prevent them from being exterminated, the ability to plot when our local swarm season is and where the swarms are concentrated and, data collection for future grant writing.

If you haven't yet reported a swarm you've already caught it is not too late!

PLEASE email [swarm@sonomabees.org](mailto:swarm@sonomabees.org). and to your Cluster Coordinator.

We need the date, where (approximate area) swarm was caught and size.

Please also remember no swarm is too small to catch. There have been a more than usual amount of hives reported (from all Clusters) becoming queen less and a possible way to right it is by introducing a swarm. If you are a swarm catcher please continue to represent the SCBA by answering your phone if you should get a swarm call.

Beekeeping is community work and the SCBA is our community. It has evolved over the last few years to include a wonderful mix of humans all working together to help our pollinators. Beekeeping is evolving and we as a community have to also learn how to work together to support this huge endeavor.

We are so fortunate to have our Clusters and the wonderful Cluster Coordinators who are all dedicated to moving this association forward by coordinating and managing the Cafes, Hive dives and workshops, and by getting groups of you together forming friendships that otherwise might not have happened. We together are making exciting changes in our communities and I feel extremely fortunate to be a part of this.

Our Education Committee is ramping up and are in need of folks who would like to be a part of education children either as presenters or helpers. Please, if this sounds appealing email [education@sonomabees.org](mailto:education@sonomabees.org).

The Gardening Committee is still looking for someone to help with organizing their Gardening meetings. If this is something you'd like to do please email Ellen at [gardening@sonomabees.org](mailto:gardening@sonomabees.org).



I'm really looking forward to seeing you and your families at the July 21st picnic.

Until then,

*Kelli Cox*  
President

## This Month's Calendar

### Monthly Meeting:

**No regular meeting in July!**

### Upcoming Meetings/Events.

**See details of our Annual Picnic on July 21 on page 3.**

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# SCBA Members and your families are invited to The Annual SCBA Summer Picnic

**Saturday July 21st  
12 - 4pm  
@ Bees n Blooms  
3883 Petaluma Hill Rd, Santa Rosa, CA 95404**

If you have never had the opportunity to visit Bees n Blooms, now is the time! Apart from hanging out in this idyllic site we will be providing the following:

- A Scavenger Hunt (with great prizes including a full framed super),
- Swimming (we will have a lifeguard on duty but please note: parents will be asked to stay with their children).
- Hive Painting (we will provide paint and stencils, you just have to bring your box(es)
- Live music by "Burnside"
- Games including (corn hole, croquet and interactive educational stations)

**FOOD!** SCBA will be grilling sausages and veggie burgers and will provide the soft beverages. We'll have coolers provided if you want to BYOB.

As it's a pot luck we are asking you bring a dish to share. To make it a little easier here is a suggestion (organized by first letter of the last name) as what to bring:

A - E Appetizers  
G - L Sides  
M-R Salads  
S - Z Desserts



2018 SCBA July Picnic team

- In an attempt to be green we are asking you bring your own plates/cups/cutlery, portable chairs (if you have them) bathing suits, hats and sun screen!
- The Bees n Blooms farm stand will be open.
- There will be parking but please car pool if you're able.
- Lastly, as a reminder, this is a farm so wear sensible shoes to avoid the prickles!

If you have any questions call: Kelli Cox @ 707 280-4376 or email [President@sonomabees.org](mailto:President@sonomabees.org)



# My July

## Beekeeping To-Do List by Serge Labesque

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### No bells and whistles, please.

Another beekeeping supply catalog was in the mail today. It went unopened directly into the recycling bin. Several of these catalogs still come my way every year even though I have not bought any of their ware in over a decade. The fact is I want less equipment to manage my bee colonies, not more. Instead of adding to my beekeeping equipment inventory, I'm ridding myself of what the bees or I do not really need. Long gone from my storage shed are the Boardman feeders, bee escape boards, Cloake boards, and many, many other pieces of beekeeping paraphernalia I once thought I had to have. Good riddance! Whatever I retain is also simpler to fabricate, easier to use and maintain, and more hospitable for the bees than most of my older equipment.

The frames I presently use are a good example of this purgative shift. They are just that: frames. They hold no foundation. Therefore, they carry no contaminated or unsafe molded wax or plastic that imposes a comb cell size on the bees. There are no wires in the honey super frames, and consequently no eyelets. So, I've discarded the frame-wiring jigs that occupied much of my workbench.

Nowadays, assembling a serviceable frame takes me only a fraction of the time it used to when I thought I had to mount foundation. It's also worth noting that open frames are easy to clean and that their useful life is significantly extended, because they are less subject to damage during handling or storage. Moreover, the cost savings that are achieved by not buying foundation are as substantial as the time saved! And since I crush the combs to harvest the honey, I no longer need an extractor that requires tedious cleaning and maintenance.

Best of all, with open frames in the hives my bees have gained a degree of freedom in building their comb and in organizing their nests. They no longer have to contend with sheets of foundation that arbitrarily partition their nests. Isn't this doing a lot more good with less?

Certainly, top bars are even simpler contraptions than frames, and I may end up using them at some point in time. But I am not there yet, as I still see more disadvantages than benefits in them, especially for the bees.

This simplifying rationale can be applied to most of our beekeeping equipment regardless of the size and purpose of our beekeeping operation. As long as we keep the wellbeing of the bees in mind while we sort the gadgets out of our beekeeping gear, there are benefits to be reaped in the process. Granted, having some good tools and

equipment may be convenient or necessary, but certainly not as much as we are often led to believe. Our tools and equipment are supposed to facilitate our lives, not to make them more complicated and more expensive. They have to function well for the bees and for the beekeeper without becoming burdensome.

Now that I've saved time and money on the production of my frames, I have to make sure my name is removed from the mailing lists of the beekeeping supply houses. That will be time well spent, and it will help to save trees, too.

### July in the Apiaries

Hot and dry weather conditions usually prevail at this time of year. Pollen and nectar availability varies greatly, depending mainly on the location of the apiaries. Indeed, colonies only one or two miles apart may experience very different conditions, some having to endure dearth while others may have easy access to generous blossoms. For example, the foragers of colonies that rely on natural vegetation might struggle to find anything to carry back to their hives whereas hives placed in residential areas or near irrigated blooming crops may be thriving. In dry areas some nectar may be available to the bees during the early morning hours, however, but only before it becomes desiccated by the sun and the breeze. By placing our hives so that they receive early morning sun, we incite their foragers to fly out early and collect this short-lived manna. On the other hand, plants may produce nectar throughout most of the day in locales that have higher ground moisture and moister air. To reduce the amount of energy the bees spend collecting water in the afternoon, we may provide some protection from the intense summer sun and we keep the sources of water replenished. This is no longer spring weather. Bees and beekeepers need to adjust.

The populations have reached their maximum for the year and, the queens having reduced the rate of their egg production, the brood nests are gradually shrinking. Because less nectar is brought back to the hives than during the spring, most of the brood nests tend to move up on the combs, sometimes leaving the lower part of the hives nearly vacant.

The inspection of the exterior of the hives, the observation of the bees around them in the flight paths, at the entrances and on the ground provide information that is indispensable before opening hives at this time of year. Open-hive inspections are performed less frequently in summer. The brood or the contents of the hives should not be exposed during the heat of the day or any time we

see bees looking for abnormal ways of entering the hives. These bees are potential robber bees. The best time to inspect hives in this season is in early morning, when foragers are out, active and still finding nectar and pollen to collect. Smokers have to be used and manipulated with great caution in areas of dry vegetation.

The main focus of summer open-hive inspections is the queens. They can be appraised by looking at the pattern and quantity of the brood they produce. There is still plenty of time to requeen or combine colonies that have aging, failing or otherwise unsatisfactory queens, but we need to be prepared.

I frequently reduce the size of the entrances of my hives in early summer. This keeps them defensible against robber bees. Soon, yellowjackets will also begin to harass the colonies. I adjust the entrances when the foragers are flying. The bee traffic should be dense enough to necessitate the openings I provide, but not congested to the point of slowing down the work of the bees. Sliding entrance shutters or moveable blocks facilitate this important task, while the use of follower boards and screened upper ventilation slots ensure that adequate air circulation is maintained through the hives.

Typically, the varroa mite populations increase during the summer. Therefore, this is when we can see how our colonies are handling the pest. The monitoring trays are a non-intrusive means to do so.

Cursory inspections of the honey supers can let us find out how full they are and how ripe the honey is. If there is any surplus honey, a few frames can be rapidly harvested and replaced by open frames without annoying the colonies. The honeycombs we harvest are processed without delay in order to avoid damage by Small Hive Beetles. The wet wax is allowed to drain for a few days. Then, it is washed. The honey-laden water is used to make mead, and the wax rendered in solar wax melters, which function very well at this time of year. The wet frames are not left exposed. Instead, they are given back to the bees in the evening, at a time when the foragers are returning to their hives.

With bees, nothing goes to waste.

### In summary, this month:

- Keep an eye on the health of the colonies.
- Provide adequate and safe air circulation through the hives (upper ventilation slots and follower boards).
- Be aware of situations and manipulations that can trigger robbing.
- Make sure that the components of hives fit tightly to prevent secondary entrances that might allow robber bees to enter hives.
- Ensure that sources of water are continuously available to the bees.
- Provide afternoon shade, if at all possible.
- Adjust the size of the hive entrances to reduce the risk of robbing, particularly in developing colonies.
- Follow-up on the development of young colonies (Keep notes!)
- Evaluate the quality of young queens. Replace failing or undesirable queens.
- Consider combining or requeening inherently weak colonies or those that are not developing properly.
- Monitor the mite population build-up.
- Monitor swarm traps.
- Keep some equipment at the ready to catch the occasional swarm.
- Manage honey supers (less space is needed as the nectar flow decreases).
- Finish harvesting surplus spring honey, but do not overharvest, particularly from hives kept in the dry hills, where the bees will be consuming more honey during the summer than they will be producing.
- Extract and bottle surplus honey.
- Return wet frames and wax to the bees for cleaning or re-filling.
- Discard old and misshapen combs and frames.
- Remove frames of undrawn beeswax foundation from the hives.
- Render wax from discarded frames and from cappings (separately). Solar wax melters work very well during this season.
- Beware of the fire danger while using the hot smoker in dry grass.
- Routinely clean and scorch tools and equipment.

*Serge Labesque*  
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## Beek(s) Of The Month

I am taking a break for Julys BOM. But I'd like to propose something.

I'd like to hear from you, our members, with YOUR recommendations for the Beek of the Month. I know there are so many extraordinary beekeepers doing so many extraordinary things out there that we (the Board) don't hear about. I'd love to hear from you and get your recommendations of who to recognize that has made a impression on you. Please email me @ [president@sonomabees.org](mailto:president@sonomabees.org). We, the Board will review all entries. Looking forward to your stories.

*Kelli Cox*  
President

# Bee Plants of the Month

By Alice Ford-Sala

## Passion Flower Passifloraceae

What an exciting name for a calming plant! Although Passion Flower is used medicinally for relief of anxiety and promotion of tranquility, there are some very passionate qualities to this vining plant. Its name actually comes from some Christian mythology about the appearance of the flowers.

First, the vine itself is very vigorous, so much so that you may want to plant it in a container and then train it along a trellis. I did that, however it has still escaped and I find vines coming up 10 feet away. They are very easy to pull up, and you can plant new starts to give to your friends. It is not as aggressive as wisteria, for example, but be forewarned.

You can prune back the deciduous and evergreen varieties in winter or early spring, and throughout the year when needed.

The vines are very adaptable to most soils and only have moderate water needs. They do well in sun or part shade

Second, bees are absolutely passionate about the nectar-rich flowers. I have a white-flowered type, and have observed bees working in the center of the flower for minutes at a time, circling ever deeper into the flower in search of sweet rewards. Gulf fritillary caterpillars use it as a larval food source, and I have often seen the adult butterflies visiting the vine.

Third, many people are passionate about the fruit that some varieties bear. *P. incarnata*, aka Maypop is native to the eastern United States. It has fragrant, pale purple or white flowers and oval fruit. There is also a Passion Fruit vine, *P. edulis* that is native to South America. The fruit is said to be citrusy in flavor.

Fourth, many people use the flower and fruit medicinally for relief of anxiety, gastrointestinal problems, sleep promotion and relief of depression. It is one of the flowers in a common and delicious tea Siete Azahares, or Seven Blossoms used throughout Mexico and Central and South America.

The fruit is often used in juices as well as eaten like jelly with a spoon. It is said to have many vitamins and minerals, including C,A, and beta carotene, potassium and iron.

Medicinal uses are for information only, not recommendations.

So share some passion with your bees by planting this happy but controllable vine!



Passion Flower

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*Alice Ford-Sala*



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## Honey Extractor Rental

Members have use of the association's honey extracting equipment, as available. Rental fee is \$5 per day. Extractors must be returned clean.

Email or call to reserve:

### **South**

Kelli Cox  
707 280-4376

[president@sonomabees.org](mailto:president@sonomabees.org)

### **Central**

Paul Quistgard

[PaulQuistgard@aol.com](mailto:PaulQuistgard@aol.com)

### **West**

Gina Brown  
415-828-8359

[Boragelane@comcast.net](mailto:Boragelane@comcast.net)

### **East**

Susan Simmons  
925-408-4529

[Susanjsimmons@gmail.com](mailto:Susanjsimmons@gmail.com)

The Top Bar Hive group has a fruit press available for use in honeycomb crushing. Contact Jim Spencer at [topbargroup@sonomabees.org](mailto:topbargroup@sonomabees.org)



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## 2018 Board Members and Other Helpful People

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

# SCBA Monthly Meeting June 11, 2018

Location: 4H Building, Rohnert Park  
Meeting started: 7:02 PM  
Approx attendance: ~ 138  
Items covered

Two Beeks of the month honored. Paul Quistgard, our “badge guy” for organizing our awesome SCBA member badges and Susan Simons from our East County Cluster

July all association picnic discussed. It is July 21, 2018, 12 PM to 4 PM at Bees and Blooms farm.

Tia talked about haploid, diploid, bee sperm and eggs. She also showed an example of a white eyed, blind drone!

- Honeybees have 32 chromosomes
- Worker bees with the same father are called “super sisters”
- Super sisters tend to take care of each other more; they show preference to feeding & caring for eggs from their same father

Christine Kurtz showed reprints of our “No Spray” signs and all were sold

Speaker info: Solomon Parker, Parker Bees, Medford OR  
Title: The Case for Doing it the Hard Way  
(Google “Solomon parker” “The Case for Doing it the Hard Way” to find recorded versions of this talk The Treatment Free Beekeeping Podcast : <https://tfb.podbean.com/>)

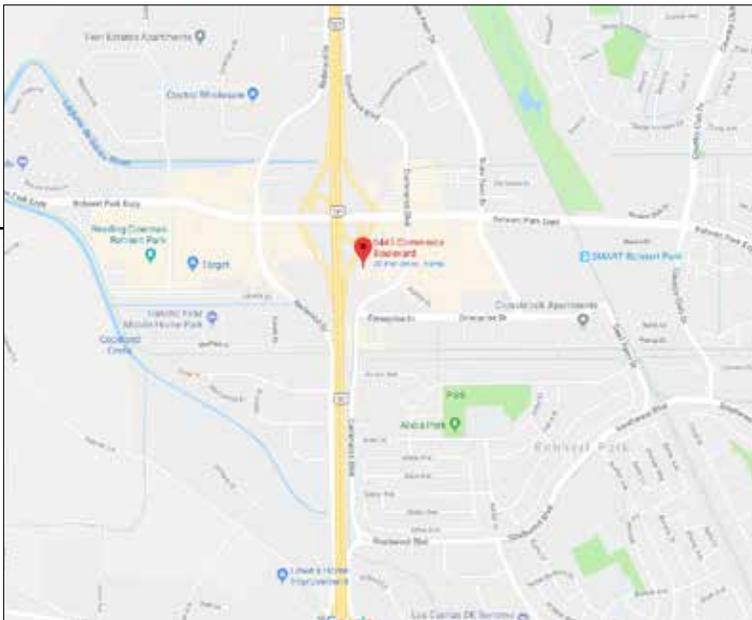
- This is the most lively beekeepers meeting I have seen in a long time”, Solomon
- First year of beekeeping, started with 20 packages!
- natural selection – a natural process that slowly winnows away the worst of the worst
- treatment free beekeeping looks at traits at the population level, not at an individual bee level
- “keep bees like a backyard beekeeper”
- Currently loses average of 5 - 20% of hives annually (which is below national average for loss)
- What you are selecting for when you treat is “strong mites and weak bees” whereas, what you are selecting for when you do not treat is “weak mites and strong bees”
- Natural selection is still “at play” even when you treat hives

Respectfully submitted,

*Peter Jones*  
Secretary

## 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](http://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**

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