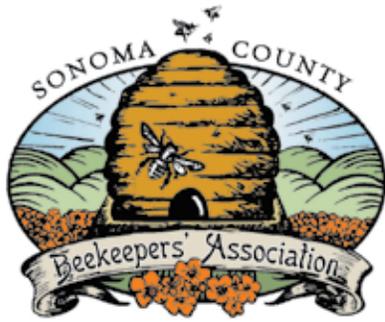


The Monthly Extractor



Volume 43, Issue 8

August 2018

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

President's Message

Greetings Fellow Beeks,

~Firstly I want to thank ALL of you who helped to create our 2018 Summer SCBA Picnic. So many of you contributed to making this event such a SUCCESS!

I especially want to thank Susan Kegley for allowing us to use Bees N Blooms, (the perfect space), for such a great event and for doing so much preparation. Our Cluster and Volunteer Coordinators and their teams really outdid themselves and it showed in spades!

Additionally, thanks to all of our wonderful members who outdid themselves in the food department! I couldn't believe all the wonderful dishes.

And, last but certainly not least, to BURNSIDE, the Band. They were the icing on the cake and really helped shape the mood. It seemed many people were making new connections in our little tent city! LOL!

I find it so extraordinary (and feel equally fortunate) that our little pollinator, the honey bee, is the reason why we are all in this community. The SCBA has 450 plus members and of that we saw about 200 plus at our picnic! Through the SCBA I (personally) have made forever friends and I know that to be true for so many of you. This is a wonderful thing!

And.... I'm already looking forward to next year! Additionally, I've been receiving ideas from folks so please continue to let me know if you have any take-aways or ideas that will be helpful for next year!

~It's hot and dry. It is this time every year. Continue to monitor your bees. They may surprise you so don't make any assumptions... Please also remember, swarms do happen late and are just as important to save as in the spring. If you are a swarm catcher, please don't ignore a swarm call because you think it might not be worth it. It is important we (The SCBA) respond to all calls as part of our community service. If you aren't able to help please let the concerned party know and/or help find someone who can. Thank you.

~Our next General Meeting is August 13th. You are going to start hearing me mention SCBA Board Positions that are coming



I will write more about the Board positions in our September Extractor.

Beest,

Kelli Cox
President

This Month's Calendar

Monthly Meeting: Monday, August 13

Social hour 6 pm to 7 pm

General Meeting from 7 to 9 Learn About Mead-Making
This month's speaker is Gabe Jackson from The Beverage People in Santa Rosa. Gabe will tell us all about mead making, including a bit about the history of mead and current market trends, the process of mead making and equipment needed, and the legal ramifications of making your own alcoholic beverages. Gabe will also bring some local meads for people to taste, so we can sample some different types. Hope to see you there!

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Events This Month

Sonoma County Fair

August 2 -12 We will have displays in the Hall of Flowers areas.

Gravenstein Apple Fair

Aug. 11&12 10am to 6pm. We have had a booth there for many, many years.

Looking ahead at our fall programs, we have a good lineup:

- **September**, **Stacey Combes**, UC Davis, Biomechanics of Bee Flight
- **October**, **Serge Labesque**, Preparing Your Hives for Winter
- **November**, **Bill Toone**, Sex Worth Dying For: Stories of semelparity-sex that ends in death
- And of course, in **December**, we have the annual Holiday Dinner and Silent Auction.

Education Meeting

The education committee is planning a meeting to explain the new and improved education program. We have changed the way we prepare folks to go out and make simple presentations to school kids, garden programs, service groups and non-profits. We are hoping that with a simple presentation to explain why you love the honeybees and why a person becomes a beekeeper, we can entice more of you to join our group!

August 11th a Saturday
10AM to 12 noon
Location: Bees and Blooms
3883 Petaluma Hill Rd
Santa Rosa, CA

Please join us. Don't bring anything just yourself and your bee buddy if you have one! To RSVP email education@sonomabees.org or call Thea Vierling 707-483-0426

Get Those Yellow Jacket Traps Out Now!

By Ettamarie Peterson

There are a number of traps sold in garden departments. I have found the ones with plastic bags with water seem to attract the yellow jackets faster than the re-useable plastic tubes. I have also made some homemade ones by putting soapy water in the bottom quarter of soda bottles, dish soap bottles and milk jugs and hanging bits of meat down in the bottles as an attractant. I made holes in the sides with a heated screwdriver. This is a picture of one I made with an old dishwasher soap bottle. You can see dead yellow jackets in the soapy water. I put it in the center of a cinder block just so it wouldn't tip over. I also discovered that replacing the cartridges in those plastic tube traps with cheap cat food works better than the stuff sold for the purpose! I got three little cans for a dollar at the Grocery Outlet and each can filled three traps! Those nasty yellow jackets went right for it!

If you know where the nest is the Marin-Sonoma Mosquito Vector Control District will remove it for you for free. Call Monday to Friday Phone: 1 (800) 231-3236 or (707) 285-2200. They are very helpful and protect honey bees.



Dishwasher Soap Bottle Yellow Jacket Trap

Here is a whitepaper that may be of interest:

***Why is anyone still using those three letters?
(Spoiler Alert: The letters are CCD; Colony Collapse Disorder)***

<http://pollinatorstewardship.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/July-20-2018-Pollinator-News.pdf>

My August

Beekeeping To-Do List by Serge Labesque

© 2018

Keeping an eye on Varroa

Barely noticeable during the spring, the mite populations grow at an accelerating pace during the summer, to the point of harming many colonies in the fall or winter. Remarkably though, there are colonies that remain strong and healthy in spite of the presence of the parasites. Consequently, a little triage is warranted.

Confronted by the threat of colony losses that the varroa mites can cause, beekeepers can choose among a wide range of varroa control methods. Some shrug off the thought of losing colonies, simply ignore the issue, or adopt a “que sera sera” attitude. At the other end of the gamut, we find beekeepers who systematically treat their hives just because it’s that time of year, because they think or were told they should, or basically because they are afraid of losing their bees. Frankly, not one of these reasons can be considered valid. In between those groups, we find a very diverse crowd of beekeepers that follow more measured varroa management strategies.

Most conventional beekeepers treat their hives in one way or another. Among them, there are some who rely on various tests to assess the level of mite infestation of their hives before subjecting their colonies to various miticidal concoctions or other questionable practices. These beekeepers count the mites they collected during the tests and compare their numbers to pre-established “thresholds”. The decision to treat is made when the mite counts exceed these thresholds. In large operations, only a few colonies may be tested before miticides are applied to entire apiaries. Although this way of proceeding simplifies the beekeepers’ decision-making process and their apiary work, it ignores the fact that different colonies handle the mites differently. The mite load (the number of mites per bee) indeed is not the only criterion that determines the future of the colonies. Some colonies will thrive in spite of harboring apparently large numbers of parasites while other may succumb when their mite counts are relatively low.

I, too, track the presence of mites in my hives. To obtain the information I need, I use monitoring trays that are inserted under the screens of the hive bottoms. Focused inspections of the brood nests provide additional clues about how the colonies are faring or how they are fighting the mites. But since I do not treat my hives, my goal in monitoring the mite populations is not to decide when to treat. My goal is to find out which colonies are handling the mites well, and which ones are not.

There is no doubt in my mind that in the absolute, letting the process of natural selection simply take its course is the right thing to do. But since I do not keep bees in isolation from other beekeepers, just abandoning the failing hives to their fate would be irresponsible. Therefore, during the summer I strengthen my colonies by somewhat shrinking the volume of the hives. It is actually what the bees do spontaneously as they make the contents of their

brood chambers more compact in preparation for winter. So, I gradually remove frames and supers that are in excess of what the bees need and the honey flow justifies. Most importantly, in addition to this rather normal summer hive management practice, a few obviously failing colonies are given a second chance by changing their genetic make-up. This is done by requeening them with queens issued from good stocks before it’s too late in the season. This one-on-one summer hive management complements the periods of broodlessness that happen in winter and during colony reproduction. The best aspect of it is that it relies entirely on the bees’ innate capabilities to keep the mite populations in check. Many years ago, I abandoned the use of chemicals and entrusted the bees to control the mites. So far, the bees have not disappointed me.

August in the apiaries

For any given location in a temperate climate zone, colony life follows a fairly predictable yearly cycle. This sequence of phases and events, however, may be influenced to a certain degree by various factors, including the weather and the beekeeper. Yet, there is a consistent logic in what the bees do spontaneously.

Consider the preparation of the nests for winter, for example. It begins as soon as colony reproduction is over. The first step is the accumulation of nectar and its transformation into honey. This activity, which lasts as long as nectar or honeydew is available, is familiar to beekeepers. But subtler, yet important changes also occur in the hives during the summer and in early fall.

A decrease in incoming nectar, or dearth at times, usually accompanies the reductions of the bee populations and of the brood nests. As the bees need to keep their brood in close proximity of their stores, they gradually relocate their shrinking brood nests higher up on the combs. The lower combs may then become mostly empty, setting the stage for the actual preparation of the brood chambers for fall and winter. Indeed, some of the August foragers unload their pollen loads in these empty cells. Soon after, some nectar or uncapped honey can also be found there. Within a month the bees will begin to drive the brood nest back down into these areas of the hives by relocating uncapped honey or placing nectar in the upper parts of the brood chambers. This will ensure the good nutrition of the developing bees that will ultimately nurse the winter bees. As the downward move of the brood nests happens, the bees leave bee bread they have not consumed in the upper combs of the brood chambers. This bee bread will possibly be used by the bees next January and February, when poor weather prevents foraging for fresh pollen.

Beekeepers may take advantage of this opportunity to remove old, empty combs from the lower parts of the hives, but some of the lower combs and the still sparsely stocked combs of the upper part of the brood chambers should be left in place in summer. Otherwise, the colonies might not produce enough well-fed winter bees or they may face

malnutrition six months later.

There is particularly hard work to do for the bees during the dog days of summer, as they must keep the temperature and relative humidity around their brood nests within tolerable levels. To do this, they collect water, especially when nectar is scarce. The configuration of their hives can make a significant difference in the amount of effort required in this task. The bees have to be able to control temperature and humidity around the brood. Compared to a hive that acts like a heat trap, a good hive can noticeably reduce the demand on the foragers. The bees that live in less stressful cavities do not have to fan or collect as much water as those that are placed in simple boxes. This reduced water need leads to a better care of the young and a more effective defense of the hives from would-be intruders, such as robber bees and yellowjackets. To this end, I use follower boards and keep an eye on Varroa.

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The monitoring trays deserve special attention during the summer. The accumulation of hive debris on the trays provides the wax moths with places to lay eggs and for their larvae to develop. As this happens, the moths tend not to move into the brood chambers, and their larvae can be discarded before they pupate. Once the trays are cleaned, this is a good time to monitor the varroa-mite fall. A thin coat of vegetable oil may be brushed on the clean trays to keep in place the mites that fall. Alternatively, the water-filled moats of the molded trays I use keep the mites on the trays until I check their quantity, a day or two later. From the examination of the monitoring trays, the build-up of the mite population becomes obvious. Most importantly, it is possible to discern how the colonies are handling the mites. Other hive health problems may also be spotted without opening the hives and exposing them to the risk of robbing.

Open-hive inspections are brief and infrequent during the dry hot months of the year. They are limited to observing the brood nests only when clues of hive problems are spotted in front of the hives or on the monitoring trays, and to verifying the performance of the queens. The honey supers may be checked a little more often, but their contents should not be left exposed more than necessary, or else robbing situations may be triggered. It is best to inspect the hives in early morning, when the foragers are flying, or in late afternoon, when the foraging activity is subsiding. The smokers should be lit and at the ready, but not used at the entrances, as this would prevent the guard bees from

identifying foreign bees and yellowjackets. As their fire pots can become very hot, the smoker should be used with great caution in areas of dry vegetation.

Yet, as the end of summer approaches, a round of more detailed hive inspections becomes necessary to assess the colonies and to actually start the preparation of the hives for winter. We will then verify their health condition, the quality of the queens, their stores and the organization of the contents of the brood chambers, which denotes a good response by the bees to seasonal clues and a desirable level of adaptation to the local conditions.

Bees often collect honeydew at this time of year around my apiaries. Sometimes, the live oaks are so intensely visited that they seem inhabited by swarms. But since the bees do not overwinter well on honeydew honey, this dark and tasty treat will be harvested in priority, and the lighter honey will be left in the hives for the bees. I harvest only modest amounts of surplus honey in summer in anticipation of the colonies' winter needs, because fall seldom delivers enough nectar to add significant amounts to their stores. If more honey can be harvested, it will be collected later, at the end of the preparation of the hives for winter.

Overall, the management of the hives during this season is the opposite of spring management: Instead of adding volume to the hives, we gradually make them more compact by harvesting a little and by removing unused frames from the hives.

In summary, this month:

- Observe the performance of the queens and colonies. Take notes for later selection, and for hive combination or queen replacement, as warranted.
- Requeen or combine hives that are not performing satisfactorily, and those that have failing queens.
- As always, keep an eye on the health of the colonies.
- Monitor the development of the mite population.
- Beware of yellowjackets and of the risk of robbing.
- Avoid hive manipulations that can trigger robbing.
- Keep the entrances of the hives defensible. Reduce them, if necessary.
- Ensure that the bees have access to water at all times.
- Ensure that the hives are adequately ventilated. Providing afternoon shade is helpful.
- Begin to reduce the unused volume of hives.
- Cull old and misshapen combs.
- Beware of the fire danger when using the smoker in areas of dry vegetation.
- Harvest only surplus summer honey.
- Give extracted supers and wet wax back to the bees for cleaning. To avoid triggering robbing, this should be done in the evening, when foragers are returning to their hives.
- Render wax from discarded frames and from cappings. The solar wax melter works very well at this time of year.
- Routinely clean and scorch tools and equipment.

Serge Labesque
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Santa Rosa Jr. College Bee Courses

by Serge Labesque

Class Name: Introduction to Beekeeping Class

Date(s): 08/23/2018 to 09/13/2018
Weekly - Thu 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM;
4 sessions starting 8/23/2018, ending 9/13/2018
Santa Rosa Campus; Lark Hall, Room 2009
Number of Sessions: 4 Number of Weeks: 4

Class Web Description: This short course will introduce students to beekeeping with a strong emphasis on beehive management techniques as practiced in Sonoma County without reliance on any treatment whatsoever for pests or diseases. Topics include: overview of the honey bee colony; beekeeping tools and equipment; how to start with honey bees; swarming; honey flow and harvesting of hive products; diseases, pests and enemies; hive and queen management; and beekeeping throughout the year.

Max Class Size: 90

Class Fee: \$78.00
Materials Fee: \$16.00
Registration Fee: \$2.00

Class Name: Introduction to Beekeeping Class

Date(s): 10/03/2018 to 10/24/2018
Weekly - Thu 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM;
4 sessions starting 10/03/2018, ending 10/24/2018
Petaluma Campus; Call Building, PC 697
Number of Sessions: 4 Number of Weeks: 4

Class Web Description: This short course will introduce students to beekeeping with a strong emphasis on beehive management techniques as practiced in Sonoma County without reliance on any treatment whatsoever for pests or diseases. Topics include: overview of the honey bee colony; beekeeping tools and equipment; how to start with honey bees; swarming; honey flow and harvesting of hive products; diseases, pests and enemies; hive and queen management; and beekeeping throughout the year.

Max Class Size: 57

Class Fee: \$78.00
Materials Fee: \$16.00
Registration Fee: \$2.00

Class Name: Intermediate Beekeeping for Fall, Winter, & Early Spring Class

Date(s): 09/20/2018 to 9/27/2018
Weekly - Thu 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM;
2 sessions starting 9/20/2018, ending 9/20/2018
Santa Rosa Campus; Lark Hall, Room 2009
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 fall, winter, and early spring management of beehives in Sonoma County. Detailed explanations of techniques that are used for fall, queen management, and hive preparation for winter will be given.

Max Class Size: 90

Class Fee: \$50.00
Materials Fee: \$8.00
Registration Fee: \$2.00

Save the Dates for the

Gravenstein Apple Fair

www.gravensteinapplefair.com

Saturday & Sunday, August 11 & 12, 2018
Hours: 10:00AM – 6:00PM
Ragle Ranch Regional Park
500 Ragle Road Sebastopol 95472

SCBA Volunteers Needed!



Bee Presentations in July

By Marianne Barrell

I am so glad that I took the leap and joined the association's Outreach and Education Group! There is an abundance of support for presenters of all levels of beekeeping knowledge and teaching experience. The students I met this month at day camps and summer school loved seeing and smelling the hive products I was able to share. They soaked up information about bees and how humans can help them thrive.



I was on the teachers' side of the SCBA portal for a long time. I'd make a request for a beekeeper to come to my classroom, then wait, then give the classroom to the presenters from SCBA for 45 minutes, then thank them and move on. I knew the presentations were valuable and that the students enjoyed them. They were engaged by the realia and the posters and the activities (and the costume). It fit nicely in my science curriculum and gave me a break from prep for one day.

What I did not realize was that the presenters were getting as big a benefit as the students and myself! The fascination that bees hold for us Beeks is equally powerful for children. They sit for 30 minutes, eyes big and

ears open while a beekeeper gets to go on about this hobby! After each presentation this month I left having learned more about the subject of hive castes, or life cycle, or pollination than when I went in.

The Education Group has prepared bins filled with lesson plans, posters and props to help make presentations successful, but it's the enthusiasm and excitement for bees that presenters bring with them that will really affect the students and leave the presenter feeling energized.

If you are passionate about bees, need to fulfill your membership requirement of 6 hours of volunteer time, want to see the awesome photographs and props that are in the bins, want to reinforce your knowledge by verbalizing it, and if you want to deduct your volunteer mileage from your taxable income, see Thea Vierling or Maggie Weaver. Come to the presenter orientation on August 11th from 10am to noon at Bees and Blooms 3883 Petaluma Hill Rd, Santa Rosa.



Time to Once Again Get Ready for Our Silent Auction!

By John McGinnis

Yes, believe it or not, we need to start planning for our Holiday pot Luck and silent auction. Yes, we are patiently, awaiting your lovely donations and well we will need your help to make this year's auction even bigger and better than last year's. We had a record-breaking year last year, but I have no reason not to believe that we can do even better this year!

Would you be willing to once again ask your favorite restaurant, nursery, spa, massage therapist, hair stylist, or a business that you frequent for a gift certificate or donation? They don't have to be bee related. This is a time for people to pick up some last-minute Christmas gifts for those hard to shop for people on their Christmas list that might not even be into bees. How about some vacation stays? Who doesn't want to get away? We have done this enough times that I think that everyone knows what we are looking for so it's just a matter of getting out there and doing it.

We had our wine pull last year and that seemed to go quite well, so if you are in some way connected to a winery please see what you can do towards collecting some quality wine for the wine pull again this year. If you are able to have a couple of "special bottles" donated, we can add them to the auction as well. If you know of a brewery that might want to help out with some beer that would be great as well. Remember to ask your donors for gift certificates, signage, business cards and other promotional materials before you go to pick up their donation gift.

To minimize our driving all around Sonoma County please coordinate with your cluster leaders, or you can always bring your donation to the general meeting. Remember there is a lot of work that goes on behind the scene and it happens during the holidays so please get your donations in as soon as possible, Dec 1st being the last day we can accept a donation. We are a 501c3 educational foundation and all donations are tax deductible. You can reach Darlene at auktion@sonomabees.org or you can reach her by phone or text at (707) 529-8053.

Bee Plants of the Month

By Alice Ford-Sala

Chaste Tree

Vitex agnus-castus

Family: Vervain

Like a sweet mid-summer breeze, Vitex bursts into bloom with spikey candles of purple, lavender or pink flowers that literally buzz with happy bees. We welcome such an abundant nectar source during the dog days of late summer.

The fan-shaped leaves are fragrant when crushed, and give the tree a lacy appearance. Said to grow up to 8 feet tall in some areas, here in Northern California I usually see it as a large shrub, about 4 to 5 feet tall and wide. It forms multiple trunks, giving it a very full form. Since it is deciduous, winter or late spring is a good time to cut it back. You can prune as much as you like if you need to manage the size or shape, as Vitex blooms on new growth.

Chaste tree is easy to grow, as long as you don't over-water or fertilize. Give her a sunny location with well-drained soil and occasional water, and you'll have a very attractive specimen plant, or you could plant a hedgerow of several plants. The bees, butterflies and hummingbirds will thank you!

After bloom, small red-brown berries form that are enjoyed by birds, but are also the medicinal part of the plant. They are very spicy, even used in some cultures as a peppery addition to spice blends.

Vitex has been used for centuries to benefit women's health. It is said to regulate the reproductive hormones by acting on the pituitary gland. Very commonly used to treat PMS and menopausal symptoms. Some sources claimed that it is useful in treating depression. In ancient times it was also called "Monk's Pepper" because it reduces libido in men.

I found very few side effects listed, but many sources said it could interfere with birth control pills' effectiveness, and not to use it during pregnancy.

Medicinal uses are for information only, not recommendations.

Alice Ford-Sala



Chaste Tree



2018 SCBA Picnic Album









Providing Quality Hives and Components at an Affordable Price

- ~ Complete Hives ~ Screened Bottom Boards ~
- ~ Supers with Frames and Follower Boards ~
- ~ Top Feeders ~ Vented Top Covers ~
- ~ Wired Frames ~ Follower Boards ~
- ~ Telescoping Top Covers ~ Hive Stands ~
- ~ Wooden Swarm Traps ~ Solar Wax Melters ~

*Designed and endorsed by Serge Labesque
Recommended by Christine Kurtz*

John McGinnis

(707) 478-9787

803 Lynch Rd, Petaluma, CA 94954

By appointment only

goahwayranch@gmail.com

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walls, barns, sheds, and trees.

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Wild bee colonies for sale.

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Santa Rosa

Free Bee Colony For Successful Referral.

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

Central

Paul Quistgard
425-877-5123

PaulQuistgard@aol.com

West

Gina Brown
415-828-8359

Boragelane@comcast.net

East

Susan Simmons
925-408-4529

Susanjsimmons@gmail.com

The Alternative Hives (formerly Top Bar Hive) group has a fruit press available for use in honeycomb crushing.

Contact Jim Spencer at:

alternativehives@sonomabees.org



Bee Hive Management & Local Honey Sales

Michael Turner
Owner/Beekeeper
415/871-4662

info@marincoastalbee.com

The logo for R Honey Pots shows a circular illustration of a tree with a beehive on a stand in front of it. The text "R Honey Pots" is written in a stylized font above the illustration.

R Honey Pots
Pottery, Beekeeping & Metalwork

Liz Russell & Joey Romo R
Forestville, Ca

www.RHoneyPots.com
@RHoneyPots
email: RHoneyPots@gmail.com
cell: (707) 696-0861/540-2551

Swarms & Live Honey Bee Extraction
Dishwasher, Microwave & Oven Safe Functional Original Artwork

2018 Board Members

and Other Helpful People

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Roster of SCBA Resources

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

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Directions