President’s Message

Greetings Fellow Beeks,

What a wonderful turn out for the SCBA picnic, around 120 people! The setting was fabulous (if you haven't been to Bees N Blooms you really should!), the weather on our side and the food, well, lets just say, everyone was oohing and aahing and no one went away hungry! I just loved seeing everyone having a good time.

Thank you to all of you that helped, it wouldn't have worked out as well without your help.

Sadly, I didn't have a designated picture taker and was too busy running around to remember to take pics myself so if any of you took any good pictures, please send them into Ettamarie at editor@sonomabees.org and we’ll get them in next months extractor!

As you are all aware, we are in need for some important SCBA positions to be filled for 2020: President, 2nd VP, Secretary, General Meetings coordinator, Regional Cluster Coordinator.

The Board and Task Force have spent a great deal of time creating a revised SCBA organizational structure that has reduced the amount of work for each position. We have done it in a way that provides support on all levels and have created well-defined job descriptions. We are hoping to provide a robust leadership team that shares the work of and for our Association with support committees (teams) so one person isn't doing the work of many. It is also important for anyone stepping into a position to know that the current person in that role plans to provide support as needed during the transition.

I am VERY excited to announce that we have filled the following position:

"Community Outreach Coordinator"

Diana Holmes (from South Cluster) is stepping into the "Community Outreach Coordinator" position. This position oversees SCBA’s outside events (Apple Fair, Butter & Eggs, Heirloom etc.). Diana will need a committee to assist her next year. If you are interested in being on the Events committee please contact Diana at dianaonboard@gmail.com. Thank you, Diana! I am so excited to see you heading up this very important role!

If you are interested in any of the open positions please feel free to contact me to learn more.

(707) 280-4376.

Kelli Cox
2019 President

This Month’s Calendar

Monthly Meeting: Monday, August 12th

6 pm socialize, buy plants, check out material from our library, have refreshments (bring your own cup), and meet your cluster leaders.

7 pm: What can we learn from Kenyan Bee Havers?
Speaker is Maryann Frazier, recently retired from her position at Penn State University as a senior extension associate for the College of Agricultural Sciences. Read more about the talk in this newsletter, pg 6.

Upcoming Events:
Gravenstein Apple Fair, Aug 17 & 18. See page 5 for more information or to volunteer at our booth!

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Relocating feral bee colonies

It’s summertime, and that is when people most often become aware of bees that live near them, in tree hollows, or possibly in the walls or attics of their houses. All of a sudden, they want the bees gone. Hopefully, a beekeeper is called to help with the situation.

When I receive such a request, I first try to make sure that it is really honey bees we are talking about, and not yellow-jackets or hornets. “They are all bees, aren’t they?” Well, to a beekeeper, not exactly.

If the insects are not honey bees and they do not present a direct danger, I tell the callers to just be patient until late fall, when the unwelcome critters will vanish on their own. Then the problem will have been resolved at no cost, and the insects will have lived their lives, as they should have. If on the contrary, it appears that the nest is filled with honey bees, I tell the callers how important the pollinators are and I ask them if they can tolerate and maybe even appreciate and enjoy the presence of the bees.

But there are times when the bees have to go. When I started keeping bees, I collected swarms and pursued every opportunity to retrieve bees from any locations bees might turn into a nest. My goal was to capture the bees. I probably used all the tools and tricks to take the bees out of their nests, including “bee vacs”. Bee colony removal was hard, painful work. And it was brutal on the bees, too! Fortunately, I soon started to take the time to observe how the bees occupy and organize their lives in their natural nest cavities without beekeeper influence. I promptly abandoned the ruthless and noisy bee vacs.

I still relocate bee colonies from trees or buildings, when this is necessary. But I do this as gently as possible. Past mid-summer, I advise people to be patient and let the bees spend the winter in place, as the safest time to relocate bee colonies is in the spring and during the early part of summer. The method I use is actually very simple and it works well in just about any situation. It relies on a one-way exit cone that is set on the entrance of the nest and a trap hive that is placed right next to it to receive the bees. The trap hive contains a frame of mixed brood covered with young bees and several empty frames. A lot of fine steel wool is used to plug any hole or crevice that may become an alternate access opening to the nest.

It only takes one or two days for the foragers to adopt the bait hive as their new home. If the inside of the nest cavity can be accessed, the trap hive and the bees it contains can then be collected and taken away. Frequently, it is not even necessary to wear a bee veil or to use a smoker. Every bee, the queen, and their valuable comb can be placed in an orderly fashion in a hive. In the evening, they are all moved to the apiary where they may be re-united with their foragers. Since these feral bees may be of great quality, I occasionally raise a queen or two by using a small piece of their comb that holds eggs and young larvae.

However, when the nest cavity will remain inacces-
August in the apiaries

Beekeepers may give less attention to their hives during the summer than during the spring. Yet, this is a good time to become better acquainted with our colonies and their queens. We can find out what some of their qualities and shortcomings are, and still have enough time to make necessary adjustments and to address health or other issues before the preparations of the colonies for winter are started in earnest.

Varroa mite monitoring ranks high on the list. Two or three tests during the month of August after testing in July are a good measure to figure out how the colonies are handling the pest. Assessing the level of mite infestation of a hive can be done easily by placing a sheet of wax paper coated with vegetable shortening on the monitoring tray. Twenty-four hours later, a quick count of the mites that are found on the wax paper gives an idea of what is going on. This needs to be done at the same time for all the colonies in a given apiary, because the weather and the location can shift the results significantly. We can then at least tell which hives in that particular location are doing well and which ones may have to be kept under watch or possibly requeened before the fall.

Typically, the honey flow decreases or even ends around my apiaries during the summer. Two years after the fires that devastated this area, this drop in nectar production is still particularly noticeable in locations where the hives depend to some extent on the natural vegetation.

Not surprisingly, the brood nests, which are shrinking at this time of year, have moved higher up into the hives. The lower combs which may have been completely occupied in late spring and early summer are being vacated. This is a good opportunity to remove some of the older combs, but not to the point of entirely eliminating the lower supers. The bees are actually beginning to use this space to deposit pollen and some nectar, stores that they will use in early fall to feed the developing winter bees.

Unless the bees benefit from a generous summer flow, we can let the honey supers become fuller without adding more nectar-storage space. This helps the bees begin to reverse the gradual move of the brood nests, and it is particularly important in hives with double-deep brood chambers. As the brood nests inch their way down on the combs, they frequently leave some bee bread they did not consume in the upper combs of the brood chambers. It is important to leave these brood-chamber combs in place, as the bees will need the pollen they contain next winter.

For our comfort, it’s best to visit the apiaries in the morning on in late afternoon in order to avoid the heat of the day. The bees have to work hard to prevent their nests from overheating. It is good to understand that the choice of the hives we use, their location, and how they are protected from the afternoon sun can affect the colonies significantly. Any work the bees need to do to cool their hives is done at the expense of nectar collection and care of the young. Without any doubt, the use of follower boards and upper ventilation slots is helpful. However, air circulation through the hives should not be excessive, as the larvae may suffer from dehydration. The ventilation of the hives should also be provided safely, by preventing robber bees or yellowjackets from entering the hives. This can be done by placing a double screen over the upper ventilation slots and by keeping the hive entrances defensible. Removing the monitoring trays is not a good way of providing ventilation in the hives. Indeed, the airflow may become excessive, especially in apiaries exposed to the wind, making it hard for the bees to control the temperature and relative humidity inside the hives.

Debris accumulates rapidly on the monitoring trays at this season. It attracts wax moths and Small Hive Beetles. This is a good thing, as these pests are drawn away from the heart of the hives. However, they must be removed when wax worms and beetle larvae develop in the debris. Soaked in water for a week, these deposits and their inhabitants can become a good fertilizing tea for a few garden plants!

Open-hive inspections expose the brood nests. They are infrequent and brief at this time of year. They should be performed only when the risk of triggering robbing is low, and they should be interrupted at any time robber bees come to the hives. These summer hive inspections may be justified when we see signs of possible health problems on the monitoring trays or in front of the hives. It is also good to find out how the young queens are performing. The brood they produce is a good indicator of their prolificacy and of a few additional characteristics, such as the very-desirable hygienic behavior. Having the
smoker at the ready is a safety measure, but no smoke should be applied to the honey supers, or else the honey will acquire the taste of the smoke.

Monitoring and managing the honey supers, including occasional harvests of ripe surplus honey needs to be done without letting honey be exposed to robber bees.

By the end of the month, the colonies will have been assessed, and plans will be made and initiated to prepare them for winter. Their queens, health condition and their stores will be determinant factors during the beekeeper’s decision-making process.

The management of our hives at this season and over the next two months is the opposite of spring hive management. Instead of adding more space, we begin to reduce their volume, and we allow their contents to become more compact.

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. Solar wax melters work very well at this time of year.
- Routinely clean and scorch tools and equipment.

Serge Labesque

FREE 5-Gallon and 4-Gallon Buckets
At the next General Meeting of the SCBA Lisa Clay-Jack will have stacks of 5-gallon and 4-gallon food grade buckets (with lids) out in the lobby of the Center. Take as many as you feel you need. They are FREE. These buckets are part of Oliver’s Markets’ recycling program and they are thrilled to share them with us. She hopes to have a supply of them at each monthly meeting.

If you have a picture of one or more of the buckets being used in some fashion for your beekeeping hobby, please send Lisa Jack an email at sonoma-goat@comcast.net. Oliver’s would love to have some pictures of these buckets in their new lives, perhaps to use in their marketing efforts.

Serge’s Fall Course Schedule
Santa Rosa Jr. College

Class Name: Intermediate Beekeeping for Fall, Winter, & Early Spring
Class Date(s): 08/20/2019 to 08/27/2019
Weekly - Tue 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM;
2 sessions starting 8/20/2019, ending 8/27/2019
Location: Lark Hall, RM 2009

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 management for winter will be given.
Max Class Size: 90
Class Fee:$50.00
Materials Fee:$8.00
Registration Fee:$2.00

Class Name: Introduction to Beekeeping Class Date(s):
10/02/2019 to 10/23/2019
Weekly - Wed 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM;
4 sessions starting 10/2/2019, ending 10/23/2019
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: 52
Class Fee: $78.00
Materials Fee: $16.00
Registration Fee: $2.00
Hedgerow Bee Plant
Toyon Heteromeles arbutifolia
Family: Rosaceae

Toyon is one of California’s iconic plants. The bright green leaves with showy red berries often cover hillsides, including in Southern California, where they named a city—Hollywood—after the plant’s resemblance to holly—without the spiny leaves, though.

This evergreen native can grow to the size of a large shrub or small tree, from 6-8 feet tall, and 3 to 5 feet wide. They take a while to get established in the garden, we have had one for about 10 years, it took about 3 years to bloom, needing some time to gain height and root strength. The creamy white flowers are bee magnets, for honeybees and native bees and other pollinators. The berries are enjoyed by birds, and can be used for Fall/Winter holiday decorations indoors. Native people used the berries, wood, leaves and bark for tools, medicine and food.

An interesting cultivar is ‘Davis Gold’ which has yellow berries and is said to be more disease resistant than the species.

All Toyons would make a very wildlife-friendly hedgerow. You could plant a large hedgerow of just Toyon, or mix it with some other drought tolerant natives such as Manzanita, coffeeberry, ceanothus and/or Baccharis (coyote bush).

Toyon can be pruned to shape as desired. You can cut them back lightly any time, but should only prune them extensively in the late summer months.

They grow in a wide variety of soils, but don’t want to stand in heavy damp soil. Toyons are drought tolerant, though they do well with some moderate summer water. They are deer resistant, though they might nibble in a dry year.

Toyon is also fire resistant, especially if given an occasional watering in the summer.

They are said to be a host plant to fire blight, a disease that affects apples and pears. If it develops, prune off the affected branches, do not compost the prunings and sterilize your pruning tools between cuts.

We have enjoyed our single tree, watching the bees buzzing about as soon as the blossoms begin to open, and then cedar waxwings, Western bluebirds, robins and other native birds in a feeding frenzy in late fall when the berries ripen.

Alice Ford-Sala

The SCBA will be having a booth at this wonderful annual event.

Marcus Sugihara is our chairman of the booth. If you’d like to volunteer, please contact him at 707-326-2515 or at mcsugihara@gmail.com

See you at the fair!
August Meeting Talk

Speaker: Maryann Frazier
Topic: What can we learn from Kenyan Bee Havers?

Abstract: Bees have inhabited East Africa for thousands of years. In Africa, humans first hunted bees and then learned to use hollow logs to provide nesting cavities for migratory swarms. Today “beekeeping” practices in Africa differ from the ways bees are kept in other parts of the world. Despite efforts to introduce top-bar and frame hives, 95% percent of Kenyan honey is still harvested from log hives. Is this because Kenyan beekeeping is undeveloped or does “keeping” bees in this way provide other advantages?

Speaker is Maryann Frazier, recently retired from her position at Penn State University as a senior extension associate for the College of Agricultural Sciences. Her work focused on integrated pest management in crop production, pollination, and control of parasitic mites. She has worked with African bees and beekeepers in Kenya Sudan, Uganda, Costa Rica, and Panama. Find out more about Maryann in this 2018 Bee Culture article. [https://www.beeculture.com/meet-maryann-and-jim-frazier/](https://www.beeculture.com/meet-maryann-and-jim-frazier/)

“Bee Educated” - Online!
For Beekeepers & the Public
By Jen Espinoza

Have you learned something about bees from our WEBSITE? You might want to check out what’s available at [http://www.sonomabees.org/education/](http://www.sonomabees.org/education/). This Education page links to news, past newsletters, bee biology, beekeeping basics, gardening tips, and best practices… and MORE!

For the public there is a link to a page about our presentations. This includes a form where one can fill out a request to have volunteer SCBA members come speak about a variety of topics. Click on the link called “Topics Covered in School Presentations” and you will see a list of exciting possibilities for students and service organizations, including:
- Pollination with ping pong ball pollen and flowers
- Honeycomb rubbings and bee stamps
- Making and filling seed packets
- Honey Tasting
- Making a collage of food pollinated by bees (1 in 3 bites!)
- Beekeeping ‘inspection’ of a hive (no live bees)
- Making native bee hotels
- Making seed bombs
- Making posters to ‘save the bees’
- Observing a demonstration hive with live bees (if available)
- Jobs inside the hive role play
- Dissecting flowers
- Why do bees choose to make hexagonal cells?

If you have family or friends who are connected to a school or organization that would be interested in learning about bees, please share our webpage. If you are interest-
SCBA Public Ed Program
July 2019 Meeting Results

The core group working on making SCBA’s educational outreach work to help as many people as possible learn about honey bees got together in July and the following is what was agreed upon. They hope this will assist in recruiting as many members as possible to take part in it.

Goal: The goal of the Public Education Program is to provide presentations to school classes, school gardens and gardening groups, summer camps, science fairs, libraries and community service organizations.

Program Functions: The Education Committee will be composed of members who maintain curriculum and supplies, recruit and train educators, communicate with schools and the public to set up presentations, and pursue opportunities to teach our community about the importance of bees and how to support them. The number of children and adults served by our presentations will be documented each year.

Job descriptions for committee members:
Request & Email Communication/Data Coordinator: (Jen Espinoza)
• monitors email education@sonomabees.org
• responds to all requests
• forwards school presentations to regional liaisons
• forwards community event requests to President, Program Director and Event Coordinator
• maintains data and Google docs folders
• sends quarterly presentation reports to Program Director

Materials and Supplies: (Maggie Weaver)
• orders supplies as needed
• coordinates supply needs with the education liaisons
• monitors education budget and communicates with Program Director regarding budget

Recruitment/Training Coordinators: (Thea Vierling, Ettamarie Peterson and Marianne Barrell)
• Recruit presenters from SCBA
• Provide presentation training
• Outreach to the clusters
• Short presentation at the beginning of every SCBA meeting

Education Liaisons: educator identified in each region
• Store Education bins and checks them in/out to educators as needed
• Communicate with Materials Coordinator to maintain inventory
• Secure presenters for requests in region
• Report data back to Communication/Data Coordinator

Education Liaisons:
Maggie Weaver ...........................................Central
TBD ..........................................................North
Jackie Mendoza ...........................................West
Marianne Barrell ...........................................South
Carolyn Watson ..........................................East

See Flow Chart of Communication for Presentation Request Process

Meetings: The Education Committee and Program Director meets quarterly before the general meeting. Additionally, The Recruitment/Training coordinators meet with the education liaisons and the Program Director quarterly.

Goals:
1. Continue Education Outreach: The committee will include a new position called Community Outreach Coordinator to pursue bee education opportunities in the public. This person will contact schools, gardening groups, summer programs, libraries, camps etc. This will be an ongoing effort to increase the number of requests.
2. Collaboration with Events Committee on filling public requests other than schools.
3. Create a welcome packet that outlines the liaisons’ duties and share this at the next quarterly liaison meeting.
4. Designate one person to be in charge of Education, who oversees the committee and its efforts.
The Sierra Garden at Los Guilicos

The East cluster and some in the education group have a real treat in our back yard: “The Sierra Garden”!!! The Sierra Garden is cultivated by the Sierra Garden Club providing educational and mentoring activities for at-risk youth in Sonoma County. Coordinated by Claudine Latchaw who is a member of our SCBA beekeeping association. Claudine has coordinated this program for the past three years and assembled a large number of volunteers mostly from Oakmont to do all the gardening as well as sell the produce and flowers on Saturday mornings from 9AM to 12 noon. The prices are reasonable and all the proceeds go for scholarships, the FISH Food pantry, Valley of the Moon Children’s Home programs, as well as a weekly program for former Sonoma Developmental residents.

Claudine has taken Serge’s classes and been a participating member of East cluster attending all of our workshops. She has become quite the beekeeper. She now maintains the two beehives located at the gardens with a “little help from her friends”.

The other day Claudine had a call from the director of volunteers for the Valley of the Moon Children’s Home which is right next door to the Sierra Garden saying that a swarm had moved into a tree and he was worried about foot traffic. This tree is located near a sidewalk but the sidewalk is rarely used. Plus removing bees from trees is not 100% successful and who is to say they won’t come back again. We discussed this and felt it was an educational moment. Our education group with the help of Claudine has provided several workshops for the youth and their coordinators and we have now placed a sign to alert folks to the bees. We wanted to give bees credit for finding a “new home” which in fact many of these young people are in the process of doing themselves! Claudine’s son and Jen Espinoza dug the holes for the sign. Thea made the sign and now we have an even bigger educational opportunity. It was a great day for all.

Don’t forget to come to the Saturday market day and say hi to Claudine and all the wonderful people who volunteer there!
Photos from July Picnic at Bees n Blooms
By Ettamarie Peterson

Chaste

Red Buckwheat

Lavender

Purple Cone Flower
G4Bs GARDEN GROUP UPDATE

The Gardening for Bees group, G4Bs, met at Ellen Sherron’s home Saturday July 27 to discuss plans for the group’s future initiatives. The following is good news for SCBA members as well as the greater Sonoma County community.

G4Bs AS A RESOURCE TO SCBA MEMBERS

To help make it easy and affordable for members to add bee forage plantings, G4Bs will continue to offer plants for sale at SCBA general meetings when planting will be most timely and successful. Look for G4Bs sales in April, May, June, September, October, and November. And check the G4Bs Facebook page or your cluster group Facebook page prior to meetings for the current listing of plants for sale.

In months when plants will not be offered, G4Bs will serve as your gardening and plant identification resource. Bring your questions, plant clippings or flower samples to the August meeting, we’ll do our best to offer answers and ideas.

And, as a new addition of general meetings, G4Bs will share information via 5-minute mini-presentations on gardening-related topics. At the August meeting Ellen Sherron will share photos of her experience over the past two years prepping and cultivating good planting beds for bee forage in her backyard. This timely information will help you getting a start this Fall for successful planting next spring.

G4Bs AS A COMMUNITY RESOURCE

Bee-friendly Starter Kits were introduced to SCBA members at the May general meeting. G4Bs now plans to develop Pollinator Starter Kits to supply to 6 school gardens this year as a pilot program. We will monitor and, hopefully, expand the program next year. According to Mari Barrell, G4Bs school contact, these starter kits will be made up of 15-18 well-rooted plants, in groups of three, that provide nectar for bees throughout the seasons. In addition, a planting guide plus information regarding space and care needs for each plant will be included with the kit.

To insure these starter packs go to schools best prepared to raise a successful garden, G4Bs is looking for schools with:
- a dedicated garden educator
- an irrigation system that waters during school breaks
- a “no-spray” policy

Please let Mari Barrell (mbarrell@comcast.net) or Maggie Weaver (mweaver795@aol.com) know if you can help identify schools for this pollinator garden project. We are looking forward to helping students learn about pollinators and the habitat they need.

G4Bs INVITES YOU TO JOIN

Since drought and fire in recent years have raised awareness of the need for sustainable pollinator forage, the G4Bs group has gained an impressive following of commit-
Order Bees in January

Packages can be ordered w/Locally Adapted Queens from untreated Sonoma County Hives that are open mated within 30 miles of Santa Rosa

(707) 824-2905
Open Everyday
921 Gravenstein Hwy. S. Sebastopol

Select Packages w/Locally Adapted, Italian or Carniolan Queens

SUPPLIES & GEAR

beekind.com SEBASTOPOL

EVERYTHING YOU NEED!
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**
Brian Gully
707-391-4727
svo.must@hotmail.com

**West**
Gina Brown
415-828-8459
Boragelane@comcast.net

**East**
Claudine Latchaw
(707) 971-9708
claudinelatchaw@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

---LIVE BEE REMOVAL---

We specialize in removing bees alive from walls, barns, sheds, and trees. “Difficult” extractions are our specialty.

Beekeeping lessons offered at reasonable prices.

Wild bee colonies for sale.

We have been doing wall extractions for 10 years and have done over 450 to date.

Call Chris Conrad at 415-350-5700

Santa Rosa

Free Bee Colony For Successful Referral.
Contact Information

Regular monthly meetings of the Sonoma County Beekeepers’ Association are held on the second Monday of each month 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.

6 pm – Meet your cluster members; ask questions; bring your own cup and fill it with tea or coffee and have some goodies.

7 pm – General meeting starts. (See page 1 of this newsletter for speaker details.)

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

Click Google Map for Driving Directions