

The Monthly Extractor



Volume 44, Issue 7

July 2019

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

President's Message

Greetings Fellow Beeks,

We are now in our first weeks of summer, I hope you are all enjoying the sunshine and keeping cool.

Swarm season is slowing down but we are still getting swarms and there is still a need to manage your hives. Hive management is truly the responsibility of you, the beekeeper and as such should be taken seriously. Not everyone has time to manage bees, probably a good thing. But, it is important to acknowledge that and then decide how to be involved. If you find you are not able to manage your apiary(s) please call a bee buddy to help you or perhaps find someone to give them to. Then plant, plant, plant!

And, speaking of planting, THANK YOU to the G4Bees team for providing us with such a wonderful collection of Bee food! The plant sale at the general meeting was a huge success. So many wonderful choices, you all ROCK!

You don't have to have bees to have bees! Granted you might not be able to collect honey but beekeeping is so much more than that. As honeybee advocates we have to practice what we preach and involve ourselves in ways that are productive not destructive to our furry little friends. Some of the Clusters still have members without bees; please contact your Cluster Leaders if you have bees to share.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Instead of the General Meeting in July we are gathering at Bees N Blooms [click to go to website](#) on July 20th 12 - 4pm for a potluck.

We'll send a reminder a week before but here is a little more info:

Food:

- SCBA will provide meat (sausages) and soft drinks (coffee/tea)

For potluck, to make it a little easier see following:

- Appetizer - A - K
- Salad - L - T
- Dessert T- Z



I am looking for a few helpers to help organize. Please email me at President@sonomabees.org if you'd like to help.

We are still looking for folks to step up to be a part of our SCBA team and fill some of our important positions in this terrific organization. We will have more information available at the picnic so if you think you might want to become involved please let me know.

See you on July 20th,

Kelli Cox
2019 President

This Month's Calendar

Monthly Meeting:

No Monthly meeting in July!

**July 20 12-4 SCBA Potluck
Bees N Blooms
3883 Petaluma Hill Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95404**

See President's message for details!

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My July

Beekeeping To-Do List by Serge Labesque

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A very special person: Anne Teller

The Valley of the Moon offers beautiful scenery, doesn't it? One cannot visit or live in Sonoma County without noticing the sheer beauty and healthful biodiversity of the region. From the Bay to the Coast and throughout the county, natural areas have been saved from unruly development. Besides being enjoyable, these spaces help to preserve the character of the land and provide safety, nesting sites and nutrition for wildlife. But these priceless natural reserves and wildlife corridors did not just happen. They were deliberately secured and there is a plan to achieve that goal. One of the visionaries and masterminds who initiated and sustained this remarkable feat was Anne Teller.

Sadly, Anne recently passed away. Understandably, it was a painful event for all those in her family. It was hard for everyone who knew her. It is a loss for all.

I cannot tell you all the good she has done. It extends beyond what I can fathom. But, having had the good fortune to keep bees for nearly twenty years at her Oak Hill Farm, I can attest to the fact that her management of the land was a world-class model. Oak Hill Farm covers several hundred acres of land on the east side of the Sonoma Valley. It's a beautiful land that will remain protected from human destruction forever. The fields are discretely nestled in the lower folds of the property. They hold widely diversified crops of flowers, vegetables and fruits. Two to three hundred different varieties of plants are grown there every year! Native vegetation surrounds and separates the fields of mixed crops in one of the best examples I know of respectful use of natural resources. As if the bounty of the blooming crops were not enough for bees and any other insects, inviting and nutritious insectaries are also cultivated. Not surprisingly, wildlife abounds on the farm.

Some say that we cannot farm this way and feed the masses. But considering the considerable damage that is caused by grab-all conventional agriculture, do we have any viable, self-sustainable and durable option other than what is exemplified by Oak Hill Farm?

Anne was a beekeeper at heart. I learned much from her from the very first day I met her. In her subtle and generous ways, with very few words, she taught me jewels of knowledge about plants, bees and nature. She knew what really mattered. Unassuming and altruistic, she kept an eye on the colonies and generously supplied me with tools, books and plants. I wish I could have absorbed more of her wisdom.

Anne demonstrated that people can have a positive, far-reaching and durable impact on the world and a clear message has emerged from her life accomplishments and love of nature: We have to take care of our environment, respect and protect the land. We all can help in many ways; for example by planting flowers, by supporting non-profit organizations such as our local beekeepers'

associations or the Sonoma Land Trust she helped create. Anne's advice can be applied anywhere, and her legacy will benefit many generations to come.

Now, it's up to us to carry on.

Oak Hill Farm website:

<http://oakhillfarm.net>

Sonoma Land Trust website:

<https://sonomalandtrust.org/>

July in the apiaries

Summer is in full swing with hot and dry weather conditions. The location of our hives makes a difference for the bees. While the colonies that depend on natural vegetation may have access to very little nectar, pollen and even water, others, may benefit from irrigated gardens, parks and crops that can create and sustain generous honey flows.

Since the populations have reached their maximum size for the year and the brood nests are shrinking, large numbers of bees can become foragers. Therefore, the flight paths in front of the hives are very busy. The bees supply their colonies with all the nectar and pollen they are able to gather. They may also bring water, especially during the heat of the day when cooling and humidifying the brood nest areas becomes necessary in order to protect the young. If the hives receive the early morning sun the foragers are stimulated to collect nectar early in the day, before it becomes dehydrated by the hot sun and the dry summer breeze.

The nectar flow being reduced, the shrinking brood nests tend to move upward on the combs, sometimes to the point of leaving the lower combs empty. With the exception of hives that may still be benefitting from a sustained summer nectar flow, in most instances, comb construction has essentially stopped.

During the summer, the addition of nectar storage space is done more measuredly than in the spring. This is particularly important when large DD frames are used, because in these cases, we want to make sure that the brood nests and the stores will be entirely located in the double-deep brood chambers by the end of summer or early fall.

To prevent their hives from overheating, the bees collect water or hang outside the hives. Unfortunately, this reduces the attention they would otherwise be giving to the brood or it hinders their capacity to gather nectar and pollen. So, beekeepers may provide shade to the hives, as this can minimize the impact of the sun on the colonies. In some locations it is also helpful, if not necessary, to keep water constantly accessible to the bees. Although

the screened upper ventilation slots of the hives are to be kept open to make sure any excess heat can be released, it is good to avoid excessive ventilation of the hives. The bees need to control the temperature and relative humidity around their brood. For this reason, I leave the monitoring trays in place under the screens of the hive bottoms.

Beekeepers have shifted their attention to the honey supers at the end of the spring honey flow. Now, ripe surplus honey may be harvested. The combs must be promptly processed to avoid Small Hive Beetle damage. Still, it is important not to miss assessing the colonies' health and queens at this time of year. The level of varroa mite infestation is one key indicator of some of the characteristics imparted by the queens to their offspring, and a predictor of the future of the colonies. Monitoring trays are invaluable tools that help to figure this out, as they do not harm the bees while collecting the mites that fall from the nests. Monthly or more frequent examinations of the trays help to document how the colonies handle the parasite. From the observations and notes that are made, it becomes possible to begin planning any justifiable hive combination or requeening.

Although the inspections of the brood chambers are less frequent during the summer than earlier in the year, the timing of these manipulations is to be chosen carefully to prevent triggering robbing. Most often this means avoiding the middle of the day, when nectar is scarce or not available to the foragers. The best time to

inspect hives during this season is in early morning, when foragers are out, active and finding nectar and pollen to collect, or in late afternoon or early evening, when they begin to return home. It is prudent to pay particular attention to the bee activity in front and around the hives to spot any would-be robber bees or other problems before opening the hives. The entrances are somewhat reduced in order to keep them defensible against robbers and the yellow jackets that will soon begin to threaten the hives. And of course, smokers have to be used and manipulated with great caution in areas of dry vegetation.

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 the hives fit tightly to prevent secondary entrances that might allow robber bees to enter hives.
- Adjust the size of the hive entrances to reduce the risk of robbing, particularly in developing colonies.
- Ensure that sources of water are continuously available to the bees.
- Provide afternoon shade, if at all possible.
- Follow-up on the development of young colonies (Keep notes!)
- Evaluate the quality of young queens. Replace failing or undesirable queens.
- Monitor the mite population build-up.
- Consider combining or requeening inherently weak colonies or those that are not developing properly.
- 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 that are 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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Bee Plants of the Month

By Alice Ford-Sala

Hedgerow Bee Plant *Rhamnus californica* Family Buckthorn (Rhamnaceae)

Coffeeberry is a pretty evergreen shrub that is common in many parts of California. It has small, yellowish flowers that are not showy but are highly attractive to bees and other pollinators. It is the larval host plant for the pale swallowtail butterfly. It later sets berries that turn from green to red to black and are enjoyed by birds and small mammals.

It is very adaptable in the garden, able to thrive in either partial shade or full sun. Leaves will be bigger in the shade and narrower in the sun. It can take some water or, once established, will be drought tolerant. It doesn't like standing water, though. The bright green of Coffeeberry contrasts nicely with grey-green sages. It can make a nice hedge, informal fence or background plant, and responds well to pruning. As it is attractive and evergreen year-round, it makes a nice privacy screen. A nice characteristic of Coffeeberry is that it doesn't get too rangy, needing minimal pruning to keep a nice shape.

'Eve Case' is a well-know cultivar, with wide leaves and large berries. It grows 8 to 10 feet tall, and can be fast growing. 'Mound San Bruno' has narrower leaves, and grows to 5 feet tall and wide. In my experience, they are slow growing (I have two 'Mound San Brunos') and well behaved. 'Leatherleaf' has very dark green leaves and grows to 5 feet in height and more in width.

Coffeeberry is deer resistant, drought tolerant, and fire-resistant (especially if hosed off a couple of time in summer).

Plant a native and sit back and see how many honey bees and native bees buzz in!

Alice Ford-Sala



Coffeeberry

Summer Introduction to Beekeeping Course

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.

Instructor: Serge Labesque

Course # 7616 4 Tuesdays, July 16th – Aug. 6, 6:30 – 9 pm Class is in Lark Hall, Santa Rosa Campus. Fee: \$94 (Includes \$16 of materials) (707) 527-4372

<http://communityed.santarosa.edu>

Opportunity to Volunteer Help the IT/Tech Team

By Miles Sarvis-Wilburn

Members:

Are you technologically savvy? Do you have experience working on websites, social media, Google apps, or related? If so, we'd love to hear from you!

Volunteering is the essence of SCBA where we put our time and energy towards helping the bees thrive, and some of this important work requires specific skill sets. Among many other things, we are currently working on our organization's website and drive systems and are in need of volunteers to help. Work can be systems/back-end or can involve helping other members with technology-related questions.

If you're interested, please contact Kelli at president@sonomabees.org or Peter and Bruce at support@sonomabees.org.

Join the IT/tech team and help SCBA migrate seamlessly into the 21st century!

Late June Flowers Seen in Sonoma County

By Ettamarie Peterson



Evening Primrose



California Poppy



Crawford's Vivarium



Bachelor Buttons

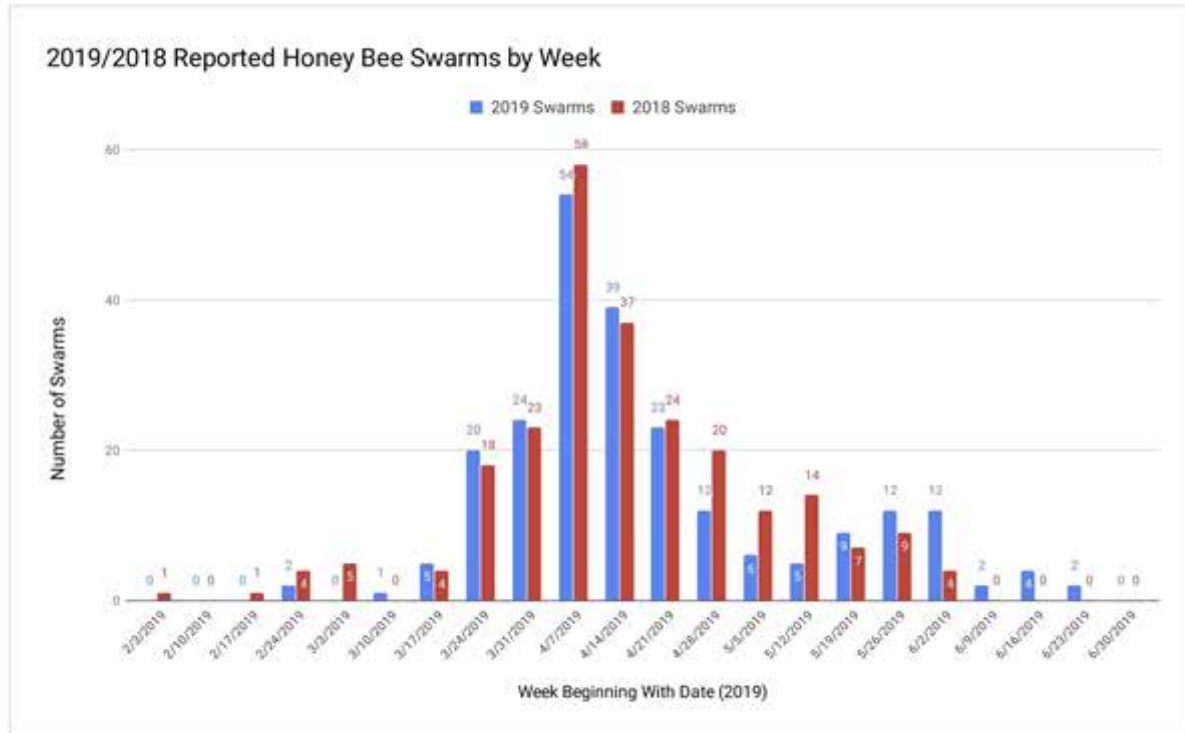


Dusty Miller

Late June Bee Sharing Program Update

The Bee Sharing program is winding down for 2019 as the swarm season draws to a close across Sonoma County. Our June swarms were mostly in west county - Bodega Bay (2), Forestville (1), Graton (1), Healdsburg (1), Santa Rosa (3), Sebastopol (8), Valley Ford (1), West Santa Rosa (3) and Windsor (1).

The bar chart below is updated through June 28, 2019. Last year (2018 - red) we had a few early swarms in February and this year (2019 - blue) a few later swarms in June. You can see that overall the distribution of swarms is similar for the two years.



With the caveat that some folks may be slow in reporting swarms so the following counts could change, here are some updated numbers on reported swarms to date. As of June 28, a total of 232 swarms were reported throughout Sonoma County. That compares to 242 reported through the same date in 2018, roughly 4% more than this year.

In terms of reported swarms by city for this swarm season - Santa Rosa had 70, followed by Sebastopol at 34, Sonoma with 23, Petaluma with 21, Kenwood at 19 and Healdsburg at 16.

As of June 28, a total of 27 splits were reported throughout Sonoma County. That compares to 36 through the same date last year.

If you haven't yet filed a split or swarm report, it's not too late! Please report your swarms and splits to swarm@sonomabees.org and copy your cluster coordinator. Please put SWARM REPORT in the subject line and in the body of the email include the date, the location of the swarm, the size (eg: softball, football, basketball or beachball!) or split size in frames, and the recipients location (yourself or someone else). Finally, please let us know if you heard about the swarm from SCBA's public swarm list or through some other means.

Thanks for supporting the Bee Share program by reporting your swarms and splits and through your generous sharing of those extra swarms and splits that you make available!

The Bee Share Team



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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

Central

Brian Gully
707-391-4727

svo.must@hotmail.com

West

Gina Brown
415-828-8359

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

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

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SCBA

Monthly Meeting Minutes

Date: June 10, 2019

Location: 4H Building, Rohnert Park

Meeting started: 7:01 PM Approx. attendance: ~ 113

Items covered

- Gardening new set up will begin to setup plants at 5:45 PM each meeting. Welcome Newbees Gardening group updates.
- July Picnic - Saturday July 20, 2019 12 - 4 PM. Potluck. SCBA will cover meat and non-alcoholic drinks.
- Open board and volunteer positions covered: 2nd VP, General Meeting Coordinator, and Secretary
- Speaker info - Panel discussion on SCBA FAQ's about Beekeeping
- Susan Kegley, William Ackley, Chris Conrad, Amber Hamby and Candice Koseba gave their perspectives.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Jones
Secretary

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Santa Rosa

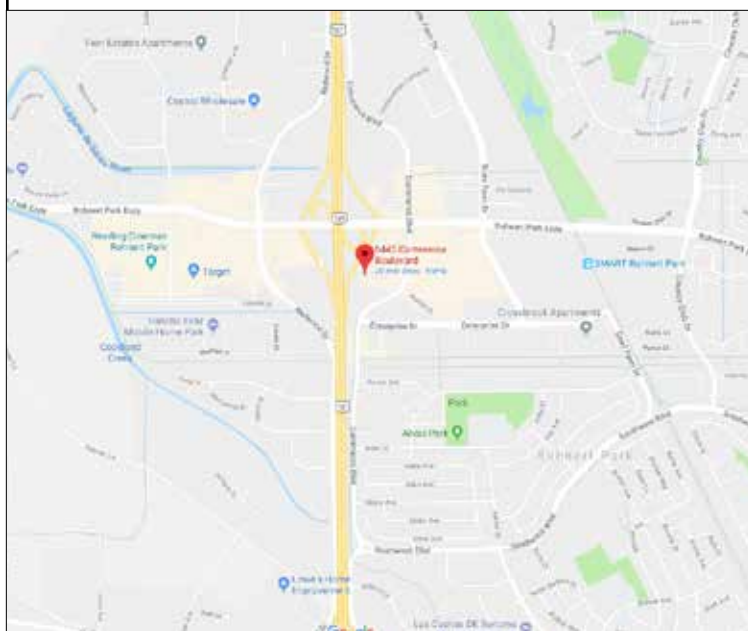
Free Bee Colony For Successful Referral.

2019 Board Members and Other Helpful People

Click Here
for the Up-to-Date
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 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