

The Monthly Extractor



Volume 45, Issue 3

March 2020

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

President's Message

Dear Fellow SCBA Members,

Happy March and surprise early Spring!

The days have turned warm, it's 80 degrees out, pollen and nectar are flowing, and the bees are ramping up. Swarm season is about to burst forth. I have no idea what to expect as we've lost so many colonies, but we are always surprised at the number of swarms and how quickly they happen. Please communicate with your cluster to make sure that they know you either need bees or you're happy to share bees (from your apiaries or a swarm you might catch).

Let's also hope our rainy days are not over yet...

At last month's general meeting, we were treated to a wonderful presentation by Christine Casey of UC Davis Häagen-Dazs Honey Bee Haven. It was fascinating learning about the interaction between our plants (color, attraction, types or nutrition and placement) and pollinators (honey bees and native bees).

A special thanks to Serge Labesque for his informative presentation on "Coming Out of Winter". We had a large turn out and lots of great questions. I appreciate those who volunteered by helping set up and take down chairs. Thank you!

For this month's general meeting, we are thrilled to have Kate Frey, author of The Bee-Friendly Garden as our presenter. Due to her popularity, this was the only month we were able to schedule her. We realize this makes two pollinator gardening presentations in a row, but rest assured, there will be more beekeeping related presentations to come. Spring is almost here and what better time to start planting a healthy sustainable pollinator garden for your bees! Don't miss it!

Have your seeds sprouted? The gardening group demonstrated propagating flowers from seed between 6-7 at the February General meeting. Many lucky members came away with a mini greenhouse cups with freshly planted seeds.

Congratulations to our very own Ettamarie Peterson on your Excellence in Agriculture Award! Did you know that Ettamarie was featured in the February 20, 2020 issue of the Argus Courier? (See page 10 for more details.)

Don't miss our SCBA members-only info section on the website. This new section has lots of great information about swarm reports by city and by week from 2018-2020. There's also an easy form for you to report swarms captured ("member swarm report"), and an SCBA financial report. Be sure to check it out!

Hats off to our Education Program! They are getting ready to launch a new program of library presentations about honeybees at five Sonoma County Libraries. This is an exciting new project! To read more see the article in this newsletter by Maggie Weaver on the community education program.

May your flowers and bees be well!



Ann Jereb
2020 SCBA, President

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This Month's Calendar

Monthly Meeting: Monday March 9, 2020

6:00 p.m. - Come in, check out the library; browse & buy at the plant table; talk about bees with experts and your cluster leaders and have refreshments (bring your own cup please).

7:00 p.m. - Speaker will be Kate Frey and how to create sustainable gardens friendly to insects and the environment. Learn more under General Membership Meeting News.

Location - 4H Center, 6445 Commerce Blvd, Rohnert Park

Membership Program

General Membership Meeting News

Guest Speaker, March General Meeting

Kate Frey, our March speaker, strives to create gardens that are adapted to, express, and are appropriate for the locality, the spirit, as well as climate, soils and biodiversity that lives in each area. She believes that each garden should have a goal of giving to the environment through compositions of flower filled spaces, shrubs, trees for shade and development of healthy soils - that together provide habitat for insects and birds and are vital vibrant spaces that express joy to the viewer.

Kate currently works as a consultant, designer, educator, and writer. She writes two columns for *The Press Democrat* newspaper and is the author of *The Bee-friendly Garden*, co-written with professor Gretchen LeBuhn. Their book, published February 2016 won The American Horticultural Society's Best Gardening Book of 2017.

How to Design Bee-Friendly Flower Gardens

Flower-filled gardens make us happy, support many species of bees and much other biodiversity beneficial to our gardens and our lives.

We all desire our gardens to be full of color and interest for many months of the year, yet what flowers appeal to bees and why? How can we put them together in compositions that work well with the parameters of our site, in combinations that suit us, and cater to bee's needs?

This talk will show you how to look at your garden with new eyes, and how to create beautiful and inspirational landscapes that will forever transform your relationship with your yard.

Exciting News Regarding Future Events

by Kelli Cox, Events Manager

- Diana has a wonderful team that are busily creating a float for the **Butter & Eggs Parade on April 25th**. Thank you to the 20 South Cluster folks who volunteered to help. If you are interested in participating the day of parade please contact Diana or find her at our general meeting.
- **Earth Day at Quarry Hill** - More info in the April Extractor
- **Barnyard Stories/Pollinator Day at Finley Park June 20th** - Sign up at our general meeting(s) or email events@sonomabees.org
- **Sonoma County Fair** - More in the April Extractor (starting Saturday August 1st)
- **Gravenstein Apple Fair - August 15-16th** - sign up at general meeting(s) or email events@sonomabees.org

If you are interested in participating in an event or know an event you'd like to coordinate please let me know.

SCBA General Monthly Meeting Minutes, February 10, 2020

Location: 4H Building, Rohnert Park

Meeting started: 7:00 p.m.

Attendance: 114 people

Beverly Hammond and Kayla were here from County Ag Commissioner to answer questions about registering your hives. Go to <https://beewherecalifornia.com> to register your hives.

Carol Ellis, 2nd VP:

- Request from snack team for healthy snacks from your trees/garden.
- Request for volunteers for post-meeting cleanup. Signup sheet sent around.

Rorie Sweeney, Regional Cluster Leader:

- Looking for volunteers for leading the Central Cluster activities (hive dives, bee cafes, bee share)
- Thanks to Cluster Coordinators

New members introduced.

Miles Sarvis-Wilburn, Program Director:

- Made an announcement about the Swarm Capture List (people willing to go out for SCBA to capture swarms that people want to have removed). No new members of Swarm Capture team will be admitted this year. An email went out to the entire membership with this info. Bee Share is different than Swarm Capture and is run by the Cluster Coordinators. Members should contact their Cluster Coordinator if they want to be on the "Needs bees" list or have bees to share through splits or swarms.

Maryle Brauer from Gardening:

- Plants will be available at the monthly meetings in March, April and May for sure. Gardening group needs lots of 4" pots, if people have them. They also need the square nursery trays. The Gardening group is also looking for 55-gallon drums (steel or plastic) for temperature regulation in the new greenhouse.

Thea Vierling gave a presentation on how bees make wax and comb.

Guest Speaker:

- Christine Casey, Ph.D., Academic Program

Management Officer at the Häagen-Dazs Honey Bee Haven in Davis, CA.

- If you are interested in learning more about "Bee-ing a Better Gardener: Using Research to Create a Bee-Friendly Garden," please explore the following links:
 - <http://beegarden.ucdavis.edu> www.facebook.com/HoneyBeeHaven.UCDavis
 - <http://ucanr.edu/blogs/TheBeeGardener/index.cfm> www.flickr.com/photos/HDHoneyBeeHaven

Meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Kegley
Secretary

Ordering of SCBA Name Badges and Hangers

By Angy Nowicki

SCBA name badges are now available to be ordered via email. Those interested in ordering a badge please email Angy at Badges@sonomabees.org for a badge application.

- Magnetic back badges are \$10.00
- Pin back badges are \$8.00
- Hangers are \$2.50 each

If you want a hanger, please let me know what you want on the hanger (your cluster, your board position, your group like Education, Gardening for Bees, etc.).



Regional Cluster Coordinator News

Much FUN was had at the February cluster activities. Swarm Biology education enjoyed by many and who knows how many peat-pot swarm traps have been built this past month? MANY! We look forward to swarms being caught in those cozy temporary homes! For sure swarm season has launched a few swarms this past week. We anticipate RAIN in the months to come so be on the ready to take down your peat-pot trap if it is going to be wet. Keep in touch with your Cluster group for March activities. If possible, lend a helping hand when you can!

The Annual SCBA Survey has been sent and Cluster Bee Share Coordinators will soon be readying the data for swarm/split sharing. If you have requested bees, they know. If your status changes, please reach out to them. Once swarm season really takes off, it can be a daily frenzy. Making sure your Cluster Bee Share Coordinator is aware of your status is very helpful!

Central Cluster has been able to coordinate a couple of activities thanks to volunteers. They would like to do more... if you can simply offer your home as a "host site" for a Cafe, great! If you like to spend a little time on the computer, they could use help putting together the Café invitations. It's FUN! If you like to review/assess data, they may have a task for you! Many helping hands make light work! If you are interested in helping Central Cluster with 2020 coordination of business please reach out to centralcluster@sonomabees.org.

Rorie Sweeney
Regional Cluster Coordinator



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: Diane Solari, (707) 322-0862
southcluster@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
Susanjsimmons@gmail.com

North: Candace Koseba (312) 593-2584
sonomacountybeecompany.com

North fruit press: Mike Turner (415) 871-4662
Marincoastalbee.com

The Top Bar Hive also group has a fruit press available for use in honeycomb crushing. Contact Jim Spencer at alternativehives@sonomabees.org



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My March Beekeeping To-Do List

by Serge Labesque © 2020

March in the apiaries – It's time to spring into action

According to the calendar, we are reaching the end of winter. However, as I write these lines, the weather looks and feels like any season but winter! Normally, the equinox would usher in spring and one of our best honey flows for the year. But will it, this year? Will we instead see cool and wet conditions return for weeks on end or yet another prolonged dry spell, either one of which can hurt bee colonies or even bring them to the brink of starvation? Ah! If only we knew what this year's spring has in stores for our bees...

My plan is to keep the number of colonies my apiaries hold at a relatively low count this year. Doing this will ensure that there will not be excessive competition for possibly scant available food resources. Besides this overall plan, I intend to follow my usual spring hive management protocol, as it allows the bees to act as they wish and to respond to environmental stimuli or constraints. This does not pressure them into performing more work than what they would do on their own. This approach seems to safely address most sets of weather conditions. If in the end I am overcautious, then the colonies will be thriving.

An essential aspect of this approach is to make sure that the volume and configuration of the hives are adequate. When they are, the brood chambers do not become congested and the colonies are not driven to initiate swarming or to produce queens too early. Several hive space management practices are helpful in meeting this goal and their combination is quite effective. They include increasing the volume of the brood chambers with the addition of frames, adding supers, making sure that there is ample forager clustering space between the hive entrances and the brood nests and providing comb-building opportunities. Together, they can help delay colony reproduction by several weeks. Often, this is enough time to allow the colonies to gain more strength before swarm preparations are initiated. Meanwhile the weather conditions usually improve and become favorable for the mating of the young queens that will be produced and for the development of budding colonies. In some instances, we find colonies that do not show any inclination to swarming, however, and they carry on as very strong units.

The use of queen excluders is detrimental. By placing an artificial limit on the expansion of the brood nests, these devices can lead to congestion of the brood chambers and

consequently force the colonies to swarm. Queen excluders work against nature. They are totally unnecessary once the workings of bee colonies are understood by the beekeeper and counterproductive as they make it difficult for the bees to access the honey supers. I simply do not use these contraptions in the management of my hives.

The addition of empty frames to the brood chambers is quite effective and brings several benefits to the bees. The growing clusters can immediately use the space they provide. Since I use open frames with no comb or foundation, young bees eagerly build comb in these frames. As soon as some of the new comb is started, it is put to good use as egg-laying space or nectar-storage space. Early in the season, or when the colony at hand is still relatively fragile, these frames are placed alongside the brood nests. Later, when the weather becomes mild and the colonies have gained strength, the new frames may be moved to the center of the brood nests. As usual, the new frames are placed near combs that hold capped honey, pollen or brood along their top bars. This ensures that the new combs are built correctly.

Supering alone is not sufficient to significantly delay the onset of swarm preparations. The addition or expansion of honey supers is only a supplement to the above-mentioned addition of frames to the brood chambers. It provides nectar storage space and therefore helps to avoid the excessive deposition of nectar in the brood areas, which would lead to honey-bound conditions of the brood chambers.

However, and contrary to the conventional approach of supering generously, I have come to prefer adding nectar-storage space with moderation with my DD hives. This helps to maintain a crown of honey above the brood and entices the queens to stay in the double-deep brood chambers. The relocation of the lateral standard frames of honey from the brood chambers to the supers is a good complement to this manipulation, as it makes more space available to the bees in the brood chambers. At times, when there is surplus honey, harvesting some of this honey is actually a pretty good move for both the bees and the beekeeper. Since the colonies used very little of their stores during the first part of this mild winter or they were able to compensate for whatever they consumed, the upper parts and the sides of the brood chambers still hold much honey.

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This makes the relocation or harvest of the lateral frames of honey into the supers a particularly important point, this year, in order to open space in the brood chambers.

Forager clustering space provides shelter to the foragers during the nights, or when the weather prevents foraging. It consists of open spaces that are located between the brood nests and the hive entrances. The foragers represent one-third of the population of the hive. Since they are the colony's older bees, they regroup with their sisters by hanging at the periphery of the cluster, and mainly below it, not in the heart of the cluster. The forager clustering space happens spontaneously in double-deep brood chamber hives or in hives that were not reversed. When this space it is not present, the foragers are forced to hang outside the hive. Often, they form a "beard" that may warn of impending swarming. If it is necessary to create this clustering space, it is easy to add a super with frames between the hive bottom and the brood chamber. I suspect that adding a few bars or frames between the hive entrances and the brood nests of horizontal hives would possibly bring similar benefits.

Together, these measures usually permit delaying colony reproduction until sometime in April or early May. Then, the colonies will have gained greater strength and the conditions will be more favorable to the production of well-mated queens and to the development of the young colonies. The manipulations that are required can be implemented at the same time the hives are inspected during late winter and early spring.

As the season of colony reproduction draws near, I perform regular inspections of the hives. Every week to ten days and weather permitting, I access the brood nests without spending any time examining in detail the honey supers or anything else. Care is taken not to chill the brood or the queens. This permits the additions that were discussed above and figuring out in a timely manner when colonies are preparing to swarm. The focus of these very brief inspections is to find young brood. A single comb that holds young brood can provide much valuable information. Large patches of contiguous eggs and young larvae that are bathing in nice puddles of royal jelly indicate that the queen is laying eggs profusely and that the nutrition of the young is satisfactory. When this is the case, the colony at hand is not preparing to swarm. If no signs of health problems or other issues are encountered, the hive is promptly closed and I make notes of the hive manipulation. The colony will be checked the following week, if possible.

On the other hand, finding only sparse open brood and large areas of sealed brood is a strong indication that the colony is preparing its queen to fly out with a swarm. When this happens, the in-hive conditions are good for queen rearing. Dividing the colony under these circumstances usually brings excellent results. The division does not have to be executed immediately unless swarm cells are present. In fact, one can wait a few more days until queen cells are built, but this is taking a chance that may lead to missing a great opportunity.

The whitening of the combs and of the inside of the hives is a delightful sight to the beekeeper. It is caused by the almost uncontrollable production of fresh wax by young bees that are well fed. It's a sure sign that the honey flow is on and that nice new combs can be built.

With nutritious pollen and nectar aplenty, colony health is most often good at this time of year. Nonetheless and unfortunately, we may find colonies that are ailing. Indeed, there are diseases, such as chalkbrood and European foulbrood (EFB) that can appear more frequently at this time of year. For this reason, they have been called "spring or stress diseases". Discarding safely all the contaminated combs and reducing the volume of the hives to strengthen the affected colonies can give them a good chance to recover.

The forager activity in front of the hive is becoming more intense and warrants wider entrances. The size of the hive entrances may seem like an unimportant detail, but it is in fact a hive feature that affects the colonies all day long, day after day. An opening that is too small slows the work of the foragers and reduces the influx of supplies into the hives. Kept too large, an entrance can become indefensible against robber bees or some other predators. During the spring, I gradually adjust the entrances according to the forager traffic: They are kept densely used though, but not to the point of becoming bottlenecks.

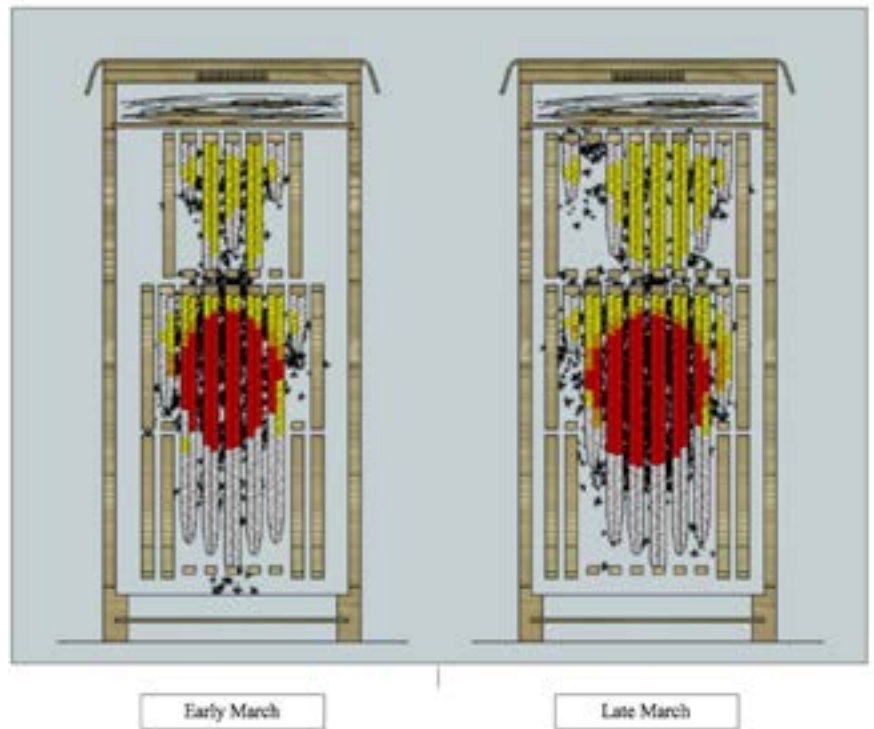
Having some spare pieces of equipment at hand to augment the volume of the hives or to divide colonies is very convenient. As part of my spring routine, I also place a few supers a little further away from the hives to serve as swarm traps. They occasionally attract swarms that are on the move.

After a few months of relative inactivity in the apiaries, it's time to reconnect with the bees. For sure, there is a lot to do with them in the spring!

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In summary, this month:

- I highly encourage all beekeepers NOT to order, buy or bring in package bees, nucs and queens from outside their immediate area! Instead, arrange to obtain bees from neighbor beekeepers. Local associations can help beekeepers to connect and source bees.
- Inspect hives regularly, on nice days, at a time when foragers are out in large numbers.
- Observe the performance of the queens and colonies.
- Look for young brood and signs of preparations for swarming.
- Ensure unimpeded development of the brood nests. Add frames to provide egg-laying space and comb-building opportunities, as necessary.
- Add supers to provide nectar storage space.
- Make sure there is clustering space between the brood nests and the hive entrances.
- Ensure that the hives remain adequately ventilated.
- Remove and replace old and misshapen combs that the bees have vacated.
- Perform the first hive divisions of the season (but only if and when the hives are ready and when weather permits!)
- Keep the hive tops securely held in place.
- Observe the monitoring trays, particularly for signs of brood diseases, possible chalkbrood mummies, EFB-affected larvae, or other health-related problems.
- Gradually open the entrances of the hives to match the increasing forager activity.
- Move equipment to the apiaries.
- Set out and monitor swarm traps.
- Keep some equipment at the ready to catch the occasional swarm.
- Keep sources of water available for the bees.
- Pull weeds from in front of the hives.
- Clean or dispose of equipment that held colonies that failed, as appropriate.
- Render wax from discarded frames.
- Routinely clean and scorch tools and equipment.
- Harvest and process rapidly only surplus early spring honey.



Serge Labesque

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Community Education Program

By Maggie Weaver

Are you interested in helping with the SCBA school education program? We are actively searching for people who think they might want to be a part of our education efforts. This could include assisting with any/all of the following:

1. Helping with our school presentations. If you think you might enjoy the classroom environment and the enthusiastic students we address, this could be a good option. Most of the requests are for K-6 and middle school classroom presentations but we also do preschool and high school classes too. We have material that spans the entire range of ages.
2. The Education Program also participates in events and fairs throughout the county, adding an educational element to the SCBA involvement. This might include manning a table with other volunteers helping kids do bee-related activities. If this sounds more appealing, that's an option too!
3. Lastly, you could help with our new Sonoma County Library Program where we will be visiting libraries throughout the county in the next three months talking to both adults and kids about honey bees. We will be utilizing a PowerPoint presentation giving the attendees a general knowledge of this most important pollinator. Sound good to you? It could be the perfect fit.

The first step is to get in touch with us. Drop me an email at education@sonomabees.org. I'll be in touch to give you the details and answer all your questions.

This could also fulfill the six hours of volunteer time the SCBA requests of each of our members....and you could have some fun too! Come on...give us a try! Send me a message today! Thank you,

Maggie Weaver
education@sonomabees.org

Educators Make a Big Splash In 4th Grade Science

By Thea Vierling, Stevie Lazo, Deborah Phillips and Jackie Mendoza

In February four education volunteers went to a fourth grade class and told the students about the amazing hexagonal cells. The teacher who is also a beekeeper was surprised not only that they were interested for the entire hour and 20 minutes but that she learned a lot! The fascinating hexagonal cell is worth a second look by all of you! We covered lots of topics which included art, science, math, job opportunities all of which use wax and the hex cell.

I know you are wondering what kinds of job opportunities are involved with wax, beekeeping, hex cells, and/or honey. Students thought of so many jobs.

Jobs such as candle making and managing beehives for other people were mentioned. They thought of other jobs like tile setting for bathroom floors and walls and landscape work with hexagonal patio stones. Some jobs in areas like cosmetics can be very profitable. Yes, wax and honey are used in lipstick, salves, lotions, massage oils, but also laundry detergent, fabric softener (Downy has a lot of wax in it to make clothes soft), furniture polish, even polish for surf boards! And don't forget the many jobs in the jewelry business which could be of interest to young folks. Many of the jobs mentioned can be found in the Mall. It's important for young folks to start thinking about job areas that interest them.



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One activity that we included was measuring the storage capacity of wax comb. We also did this activity for the entire association at the monthly meeting in February. Everyone was amazed at the quantity that can be stored in the comb and all because of the hexagonal cells. Hexagonal cells fit together perfectly, better than circles and other polygonal shapes: no wasted space and no wasted wax! The bees really know how to do it! Here are some of the pictures of the activities we shared with the students.

Join the education groups in your area to help out with presentations. It's a lot of fun and you also will learn a lot! Go to: education@sonomabees.org



Gardening Program

Gardening for the Bees Prepares for Seasons Ahead

By Kitty Baker

Greenhouse-Keepers Report

A sincere round of thanks to all the G4B volunteers who have joined the rotation of greenhouse keepers who water and tend plants on a regular basis, week after week. This volunteer team is helping G4B raise a larger and more varied crop of forage than in any previous season. We couldn't do it without you!

Sibyl Bugarin, co-leader of G4B Nurseries, is super excited about G4B's current crop in the greenhouse. "We're gearing up for a productive and colorful selection that will offer blooms throughout the year – our first G4B plant table of 2020!" G4B will have more variety than ever of bee-friendly pollinator plants rooted and ready for SCBA members at the March 9 Meeting. "I want to point out in particular," Sibi notes, "the beautiful *Agrostemma* 'Milas' and 'Ocean Pearls', *Dianthus* 'Sweet William' multi-colored, and *Limnanthes douglasii* "Meadow Foam". These plants are all showstoppers and newcomers for our plant table. And, of course," Sibi adds, "we'll also be offering our mainstays, like borage, rosemary and clarkia, ready for early spring blooming." Please bring a box or tray to the March meeting to carry home your plants.



Maggie and Sibi team up for the Steel Lane Elementary presentation.

Call for Nursery Pots Continues

The greenhouse crew continues to put your used pots to good use. But thanks to a very productive propagation workshop in January, G4B could still use more pots – 4-inch plastic pots and nursery trays are especially needed. Other sizes are not needed at this time.

G4B Gratitude

G4B Groups is enormously grateful to Doug at Beekind for donating nine recycled steel drums to be filled with water to help minimize temperature swings in the greenhouse. THANK YOU times 9, Doug!

Plan Now for Dearth Forage

G4B Coordinator Maryle Brauer urges us all to include in our gardening plan plenty of dearth-blooming plants that can establish over spring and summer and thrive for the late summer/fall nectar dearth. “If you get bees through the Bee Share program, please – you owe it to those bees to plant plenty of good dearth bloomers to feed them,” she advises. To get you started, Maryle is putting together a list of her personal dearth-season favorites. Please stay tuned for her list of best picks coming soon.

School Pollinator Garden Project

The final two participating schools have started their gardens. Sibyl Bugarin and Maggie Weaver presented in mid-February at Steele Lane Elementary. “Sibi and I had a great time presenting to three different groups of 1st and 2nd graders, for a total of almost 100 kids!” Maggie reported.

“This was my first exposure to the education program,” commented Sibi, “and I was very impressed with the content and delivery. We enjoyed the energy and curiosity of the children. They asked so many good questions and left us with smiles and love pats for the hand puppet bee. The teacher/gardener showed us her greenhouse and was pleased to receive all the plants.” Maggie noted that the planting bed was prepared and the teacher was committed to getting plants in the ground within the week.

The presentation at Mark West Elementary was completed in late February. Stevie Lazo and Maggie presented to a class of 2nd and 3rd graders as well as one special needs class. Program evaluations have been sent out and the pollinator garden team is looking forward to constructive feedback to improve the overall program.

Congratulations Ettamarie Peterson!

Ettamarie is one of our founding members of SCBA and has been beekeeping for 27 years. During this time, she has been dedicated to teaching children and adults about bees as well as being involved in the local agricultural community and the 4-H.

Thank you, Ettamarie, for all you have done for the agricultural and beekeeping world.

Ettamarie was awarded the Excellence in Agriculture award at the Petaluma Community Awards of Excellence. She will be honored at a ceremony April 2 at Rooster Run Golf Club. I hope you have the opportunity to read this wonderful article from the February 20 Petaluma Argus-Courier:

<https://www.petaluma360.com/news/10722256-181/agriculture-community-abuzz-over-ettamarie?sba=AAS>



G4Bs are in need of recruiting volunteers to help with our new School Pollinator Garden Program

By Angela Nowicki

As many of you may know, Gardening for Bees (G4B) and Education have partnered to donate bee friendly plants coupled with a plant and bee anatomy presentation to local schools. We began the project this past fall by submitting an email to the School Gardening Network advertising our new School Pollinator Garden Program. Interested schools were asked to submit an application and be prepared to invite an SCBA Educator and Garden Volunteer into the school for a basic bee anatomy and plant anatomy presentation.

The committee selected six schools, to participate in School Pollinator Garden Program. After the school's presentation, they were given a box of Super Simple bee friendly plants to put into their school garden. This spring SCBA presenters will return to follow up with the students and take a look at their garden plot. We hope to build on this program and offer another application process to reach more schools in the near future.

G4B is looking for volunteers from each cluster to present basic plant anatomy to these classrooms. The goal is to offer volunteers the opportunity to present in their own geographic area. This plant anatomy segment takes about 20-25 minutes. It is really basic, and a draft of what has been presented is available. This will be really easy, fun and rewarding for the volunteer.

Anyone interested in volunteering to present to K-6 age kids, please email me at Badges@SonomaBees.Org

Bee Plants for March

By Alice Ford-Sala

Native Bee Bulb Camas Lily Camassia Quamash Family: Liliaceae

This gorgeous bulb is, or has been, useful to animals, humans and insects. Native to North America, it is said to have been an early spring food source for elk and moose, native peoples dug the roots and roasted them as you would potatoes or boiled them for sweet syrup. But we are talking bees here! Native bees are highly attracted to Quamash, and honeybees find the nectar enticing, also.

Quamash sends up spires of blue or purplish star-like flowers held in a loose cluster, about 1 to 2 feet high. It is very easy to grow, can tolerate wet conditions, but can also survive well in places with no summer water.



Plant it in drifts and it will spread, though it is not invasive. In the wild it often turns meadows blue-purple when in bloom. It would co-exist nicely in a wildflower garden, with California poppies, Clarkias, Phacelias, etc for a long-season display. You could also plant it near shrubs such as Ceanothus, Ribes, Coffeeberry (Rhamnus Californica). Plant it in an area that gets sun or partial shade, make sure it gets water in the cold winter and spring months, and then enjoy the show.

C.quamash 'Orion' are deep blue, 'San Juan' are nearly purple.

Great Camas Camassia leichtlinii

Another amazingly beautiful bulb that you can plant once and then enjoy for years to come. It is also edible, and is often found growing near quamash.

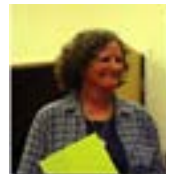
Growing needs are the same, tolerating summer drought but needing winter and spring rain.

It is bigger, though! The inflorescences (flowering stalks) can reach up to 4 feet tall. It would make a nice back of the garden plant for your wildflower/native plant/pollinator garden.

C. leichtlinii has stunning deep blue flowers with contrasting yellow stamens.

C. leichtlinii 'alba' bears white flowers on 2-3-foot spikes.

C. leichtlinii 'pink form' has shell-pink blossoms also, 2- 4 feet tall.



Alice Ford-Sala

What's The Buzz Outside The Hive

Beekeeping Class Schedule

Class: Intermediate Beekeeping for Spring & Summer

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 spring & summer 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.

- **Class Dates:** 3/03/2020 to 3/10/2020
- Weekly - Tuesdays 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM
- 2 sessions
- Lark Hall, Room 2009
- **Max Class Size:** 90
- **Class Fee:** \$60.00
- **Materials Fee:** \$8.00
- **Registration Fee:** \$2.00

Contact Information

Regular monthly meetings of the Sonoma County Beekeepers' Association are held on the 2nd Monday of each month, at 7:00 p.m. 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.

Meeting Location:

4-H Building
6445 Commerce Blvd.
Rohnert Park, CA 94928
[Google Directions](#)

Dues can be paid online at our website, at our monthly meetings, or by mail. Please see our website for the application and various kinds of memberships available:

Website: <https://sonomabees.org>

Mailing address:

Sonoma County Beekeepers'
Assoc.
P.O. Box 98
Santa Rosa, CA 95402-0098



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