

The Monthly Extractor

Volume 47, Issue 5

May 2022



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

President's Message



Dear SCBA Members,

Let me take a step back to April as we head into May. Many events happened, and I believe it is important to mark those in this message. First, we celebrated National Volunteer Week (the third week of April), an opportunity to recognize the impact of volunteer service and the

power of SCBA volunteers to meet our mission every year. Many people work behind the scenes volunteering their time and energy to this association. They go above and beyond. Our members that volunteer are the heart of the Sonoma County Beekeepers Association. Please join me in saying "Thank you. We appreciate all the hard work."

We celebrated Native Plant Week to honor Califor-

nia's incredible plant life. Every plant, and animal, reflect the balance of nature that has developed over hundreds -- even thousands -- of years in our ecosystem. I recall falling in love with the California golden poppy when I drove through Antelope Valley back in 2017 -- less than a year after I arrived in California. I saw acres of blooming poppies for the first time. It was paradise! We also celebrated Earth day. This is a day to learn about and remember the importance of protecting our amazing planet's health and environment that needs our help to thrive.

Last, but not least, many of our members received their bee packages during the last week of April. This is an exciting moment for those who have just started their beekeeping journey. It is fascinating to learn about beekeeping and honey bees while watching your bees grow from a package to a complete bee colony. Our seasoned beekeepers talked about packages during our April meetings and how to care for those packages. Some of our members generously donated their time to help new beekeepers install their packages. So, thank you for such a service.

There will be no General Meeting in May; instead, we will have our first Spring Fling on May 14th at Bees N Blooms. We will have blocks of workshops, including hive dives, garden digs, and hands-on instructional activities. There will be yard games for kids and adults to play and more. I encourage you to register for this event and your favorite workshops; more details are provided by our Program

Continued on next page

Contents

President's Message	1
From the Program Director: Spring Fling Details.....	2
Gardening for Bees: May Flowers	3
April Meeting Recap	5
Bee Plant for May: Borage	5
Book Nook	6
Business Member Profile: Chris Conrad	6
Neonics Curb in New Jersey	7
Hints from Members	7
Cooking with Honey.....	8
Photo Gallery.....	9
Business Members, Donors & Sponsors.....	10
Contact Information	11

SCBA Member Events May

May 14 – [Spring Fling](#)

May 16 – [New Beekeepers Forum](#)

May 23 – [Seasoned Beekeepers Forum](#)

From previous page

Director, Shannon Carr, in this Extractor issue. I am super excited to see you all and learn more from those workshops.

Along with education and fundraising committees, the board of directors is working on laying out plans for the next fiscal year. We are focusing on financial planning for the coming year, improving our website, updating our Zoom licensing, revising our handbook, and extending our fundraising and community outreach, and more. The board also started working on updating some of the dated items in the by-laws that are not applicable anymore. G4Bs and Beekeeping programs were busy with lots of activities. BeeShare and swarm catchers were closely monitoring the weather. The swarm activity paused somewhat during the April rains. Many more swarm calls are expected during this month.

May the buzz be with you.

*Mohammed Ibrahim,
1st Vice President/Acting President*

From the Desk of the Program Director

By Shannon Carr

SPRING FLING!

Date: May 14, 2022 -- 10am - 3pm

Location: Bees N Blooms
3883 Petaluma Hill Rd – Santa Rosa

To register for a workshop, click on the link below:

[Block 1: 10:30 am – 11:30 am](#)

[Block 2: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm](#)

Spring Fling is right around the corner! Please [RSVP](#) so we know how many people to expect and can order enough food for lunch. We have two time blocks of fun and educational workshops for you to enjoy:

[Block 1: 10:30 am – 11:30 am](#)

Hive Dives: Have you had a chance to go on a hive dive? Join Christine Kurtz, the Petaluma Bee Lady,

and Joy Wesley of Bee Focused Beekeeping Services as these two very knowledgeable beekeepers show you the inner workings of a hive. Space is limited to the first 20 who sign up and we will break up into 2 groups of 10. You must bring your bee jacket and gloves. We don't want anyone getting stung.

Garden Tour: Join Susan Kegley as she shows you around the Bees N Blooms campus. Explore the various pollinator habitats and meet the essential creatures that help make pollinator habitats so special.

Beekeeping 101: Learn the basics of beekeeping! What is the essential equipment every beekeeper needs? What is the essential equipment the bees need to thrive? And learn the basic dynamics of what is going on inside and outside of the hive.

Dive in Compost: Join the Waste Sleuth, Todd Sutton, and learn all about compost! Why is compost so essential to the garden? What goes into making good compost? Todd will answer all your questions.

Build a Swarm Trap: Join Assistant West Cluster Coordinator, TL Ginn, and learn how to build a swarm trap. We will provide all the supplies you need to build your own swarm trap during this workshop. Suggested \$15 donation to cover the cost of materials.

[Block 2: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm](#)

In addition to a second round of Hive Dives and a Garden Tour, we will have

Beekeeping 102 -Thea Vierling has been a beekeeper for more than 13 years and will talk to us about the life cycle of the honey bee, honey bee reproduction, the relationship between the honey bee and the varroa mite, and will show us how to use all this information to judge the quality of the queen in the hive.

Harvesting Honey with the Sun - Join Leonard Riepenhoff as he shows us how to harvest honey in one day using the power of the sun without any mechanical or electrical devices. Learn how to build your own device to harvest honey with the sun.

In addition to the two sets of workshops:

Gardening for Bees will host a Pollinator Plant Sale and a "Seed Bomb Make and Take," as well as share their Seed Library.

Continued on next page

From previous page

Library – We will be bringing the SCBA Library. Members will be able to check out books and/or DVDs and if you have a book to return, this will be your chance.

Lunch – We will provide sandwiches and chips for lunch, followed by an Ice Cream Sundae Bar!

Raffle – We have some fun items to raffle off, including a nuc, handmade and donated by John McGinnis; VIP wine tours donated from Korbel, Wellington, and VJB Cellars; gift bags from Shikai, Pawsarotti's, and Dutch Brothers Coffee; and so much more. Each member will receive a raffle ticket upon check in and more can be purchased.

Wine Pull – We have had more than 40 bottles of

wine donated, and are still taking in more wine. Each bottle will be in its own brown bag. \$20 donation and you get to pick a bag at random to take a bottle of wine home to enjoy later.

VOLUNTEERS AND DONATIONS! We are still accepting donations for the raffle and need volunteers to help with the event on the day of. Jobs include helping with check in, helping with set up, selling raffle tickets, serving lunch, and clean up.

If you have something to donate, gift package or wine, or can help on the day of with volunteering, contact me, Shannon Carr at programdirector@sonomabees.org or 707-548-0681.

Gardening for Bees

G4B Events -- April Showers Bring May Flowers

By 2nd VP Ann Gallagher White

Recent rains this month remind me to hope, having endured, as we all have, Covid, more Covid, after wildfires and now drought. I am hopeful for May flowers (and forage for our pollinators). Along with the rain, since I volunteered to join the board as 2nd VP of gardening, I've been enjoying these G4B programs and immersed in gardening. Here's what's been going on in G4B so far:



G4B Meetings have been a regular occurrence remotely with the leadership of Angelo Sacerdote – the last one was April 26, at 6:30 (just after my deadline for *The Extractor* publication) but if you want to join us, please reach out to our Program Director Shannon Carr programdirector@sonomabees.org.

Garden Digs - Last year in October, G4B went to Ellen

Sherron's Sebastopol Garden to dig up plants and see an amazing and inspirational pollinator space. I can't wait for mine to bloom and hopefully spread, especially the asters and Maximilian sunflowers! A month before the dig, seeing one of the sunflowers blooming in the fall of 2021 at the Sebastopol Grange hedgerow and how beautiful and enchanting they are, I shopped but could not find seeds. Luckily, I scored plants from Ellen's dig and come summer, they will debut in my garden. On the topic of new plants: Calamint – also at the Grange hedgerow and bees love it, plus it is drought tolerant and hardy and the fragrance! I found the seeds (a difficult task) – and they are growing well in my greenhouse and soon will be planted into my garden.

On a spring-like February day this past winter, G4B went to Franny Minervini-Zick's garden (also in Sebastopol). Inspired by the intertwining of plants, trees, textures, shapes and colors -- like an artists' palette -- I learned from Franny that her white hellebore spread magically in largely dappled shade. I got home and divided up one that was not blooming at all and transplanted it into my pollinator garden, realizing that gophers won't eat it, neither will deer (poisonous) and it is drought tolerant. (Checks all the boxes, is gorgeous and hopefully will bloom/spread next year and after.)

Garden Tours - On another warm March morning, G4B toured Ellen Sherron's Garden and saw how tenderly she cares for the planet's inhabitants (birds and bees). Each beautiful garden area spills into the next. Simple ideas (a carnivorous plant) and bold

Continued on next page

G4Bs update, continued.

concepts (what to grow over a septic system, how to get mulch for free (ask the tree trimmer that comes to your neighborhood before your neighbors do) and worm bin composting) amazed and delighted our group. I met others, both new to the group and quite experienced, noticing the collective talent and knowledge. Ellen gave advice on how recognizing baby plants gives a gardener an edge to know what to do when “weeds” appear. I then observed calendula, mullein, red amaranth, and more “weeds” from last year’s garden. I saved some of these volunteers and some are still out there! But honestly, there’s a lot to do this time of year (weeding), right?

Connie Alexich is working on coming up with a garden tour plan at the cluster level so that we can tour gardens together with people who live in our clusters. Look for more on upcoming garden tours!

Home Nurseries - Many of our G4B volunteers are growing plants to sell at pop-up plant sales in home nurseries to SCBA members so look for information in your email soon. You can expect G4B plants that are pesticide-free and excellent forage for pollinators. If you are a beekeeper or a bee tender, you already know that plants flourish when the bees and other pollinators regularly visit. (My apple tree produced like never before this past year - all from being visited by my bees.) Angelo Sacerdote, our fearless G4B leader, plans to have some plants for sale soon at the Spring Fling (May 14) grown by G4B home nurseries, an important aspect of spreading healthy forage for bees and fundraising for SCBA.

Education - Susan Kegley (SCBA member and scientist, plus owner of Bees N Blooms and Pesticide Research Institute) spoke eloquently at our April general meeting about the alarming and prevalent use of pesticides, especially neonics, addressing what we should know about them, how they impact pollinators and we learned what we can do to mitigate impacts. Susan mentioned a door hanger to educate the public about pesticides at the meeting. Soon SCBA will be rolling out its own pesticide doorhanger onto the website for our members and printing some as we are working on getting a mockup together. Stay tuned!

Educating myself about where I can safely buy plants and what to do if the plants may have been treated (always ask when you buy), I’m sharing what I am learning. I encourage everyone to pass the word that those pesticides are poison for pollinators. My next-door neighbors said to a family member that they

stopped using pesticides after I stated concerns at a homeowners’ meeting about impacts in the neighborhood. I also put a sign outside of my neighborhood (Save the Bees – No Spray Please!) to keep people thinking about pollinator health, plus the signs are lovely. If you want a sign, look for one at our next general meeting or ask Shannon Carr.

Pollinators and School Gardens - We are going to get our school pollinator garden program back up and running for 2022- 2023, picking up where SCBA left off before Covid intervened. We need as many home nurseries and/or greenhouses as we can get our seeds into to grow specific plants for school pollinator gardens. Working through the school garden network in Sonoma County, we will choose schools with existing gardens, irrigation, and teacher support to supply with plants to restart the G4B school pollinator garden program. SCBA’s education committee is establishing a network of education-oriented volunteers to give school presentations. If you have greenhouse space or a home nursery and want to help with this project, please reach out to Angelo at Gardening@sonoma-bees.org or reach out to me. If you would like to give school presentations in Sonoma County schools, please reach out to Shannon Carr.

Seed Saving Program – We are lucky to have a seed saving program. Elizabeth Holdmann is the keeper of the seeds. SCBA gets seeds donated from businesses and from our G4B volunteers. A lot goes into the packaging and labeling of these precious goods. I have been growing a variety of seeds that I otherwise would not have known about. Let’s keep it going strong, growing and collecting what we already have or can share.

G4B Web page – Improving instruction and information sharing - In the summer of 2021, I attended a G4B lavender propagation workshop and realized how many plants I could get from my own garden and have continued since then to learn to propagate plants at home with some success and some failure. (By the way, NOW is the time to propagate plants.) Propagation is one example of a hot topic for discussion with G4B gardeners and G4B is discussing how to improve our web page with garden tips on what to do and when, with steps to take to ensure success so you can work on propagation at home and ask specific questions (what should I plant on that giant hillside) and get responses from other gardeners in the area who may have been there and done that. If you want to help SCBA improve our web page to make it inter-

Continued on next page

G4Bs continued

active and informative, please reach out to Shannon at Programdirector@sonomabees.org. We need volunteers to help us monitor the G4Bs web page and answer gardening questions.

These G4Bs programs and our volunteers are always inspiring. I'm looking forward to each season and feeding the pollinators in my garden, one flower at a time. 2ndVP@sonomabees.org is my email if you have comments, questions, or suggestions on how to better help G4B work towards helping our pollinators in our communities.

April General Meeting Report

Nature has its ways

By Rachel Parker

The April General Meeting on Zoom featured Les Crowder of Texas. Les has been tending to bees – at times thousands of hives – for decades. He is the author of *Top Bar Beekeeping: Organic Practices for Honey Bee Health* and has studied beekeeping practices around the world.

Les has a wry sense of humor, and speaking of varroa mites, he said this: “Any parasite that kills its host is a dumb pest.” The unstated follow up was “Surely, the very clever bees – and we humans – can outsmart the varroa mite.”

Indeed, he does not treat his hives, but relies on the bees' own grooming and hive management to get rid of mites. For example, he said, mites target drones to lay their eggs. So, worker bees will remove drone larvae to reduce mites in a hive.

Off the topic of mites, Les shared that the flower of coffee plants (not to be confused with our local Coffeeberry) is very popular with bees, and that the resulting honey is slightly caffeinated.

There appears to be bee-to-plant communication – at least with respect to Evening Primrose flowers. They can sense a bee's approach and make their nectar extra sweet to attract the pollinator. This creates a static electric charge, which the bee's electromagnetic charge senses. The next bee to come along senses the first bee's electromagnetic charge and knows that that flower has already been visited.

May Bee Plant of the Month:

Blessed Borage

By Elizabeth Newton

In my garden, borage (*borago officinalis*) is a sacred cow. I let it meander wherever it wants and try not to impede its path unless necessary. Why? Because borage (a Mediterranean native) is one of the most beneficial plants for honeybees. Its flowering season is long, spanning mid-spring until frost, providing reliable nectar and pollen for bees throughout the dry season. And it's edible for humans as well! Borage flowers taste like cucumber and look great topping a green or fruit salad or deviled eggs. It's also fun to freeze the blossoms in ice cube trays, adding color and a refreshing taste to summertime drinks. From Germany to Italy, its leaves are eaten, cooked into various traditional recipes and it boasts several medicinal uses.

Borage is also quite beautiful, offering a steady supply of deep blue, star-shaped flowers that fade into various shades of light purple. In the right conditions, it literally grows like a weed, meaning that it faithfully re-seeds itself wherever you toss an uprooted plant that has flowered. It's easy to pull, if you use gloves to avoid the fine, hairlike thorns that can irritate skin.

You're unlikely to find borage plants in a nursery, as most know that it's best started from seed. Ask a fellow gardener to supply you with a young plant, which should root with very little attention or care. Better yet simply toss a plant that has already flowered under a rose bush or other spot that gets semi-regular water. Once you have borage, you'll always have borage. And the bees will thank you.



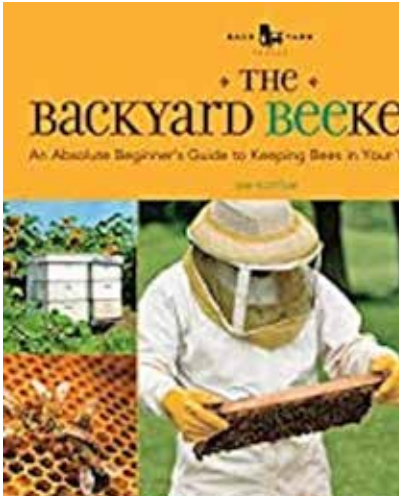
Book Nook

[The Backyard Beekeeper: An Absolute Beginner's Guide to Keeping Bees in Your Yard and Garden](#)



By: Kim Flottum

In *The Backyard Beekeeper*, Flottum makes the time-honored and complex tradition of beekeeping an enjoyable and accessible backyard past time that will appeal to gardeners, crafters, and cooks everywhere.



We have more than 250 books and DVDs in the SCBA Library. *The Backyard Beekeeper* is just one of many books about bees, and gardening for bees, in our collection. You can view all our books available to you at [SCBA-Library](#).

If you are interested in checking out a book, email our librarian at Librarian@sonomabees.org to make arrangements to pick up one or two of the books or DVDs available to SCBA members.

Business Member Profile

Chris Conrad

by Ettamarie Peterson

Chris Conrad calls his business “Bee Conscious Removal.” His business is unique because he tackles removing and relocating entire colonies of bees including the comb, brood, and food. Sometimes these colonies have decided to set up housekeeping in extremely difficult places to reach. I remember one time I was asked to deal with a colony of bees way beyond my reach high in a historical building in downtown Petaluma. Of course, I referred the request to Chris knowing he would tackle it. Amazingly he had to go up in a giant lift as I was watching from down below on the sidewalk. He is extremely careful and has mastered his art of saving bee colonies from pest control companies. He has also helped volunteering his time to the public. He spent many hours working with the Sonoma County Children’s Museum’s giant observation hive. This was not an easy task either!

SCBA thanks Chris for all the help he has given the organization over many years. You can see his contact information in all our monthly newsletters on the business members’ page. Remember to pass his contact information on to people when asked to remove colonies that you know are well beyond your skills. The public will appreciate it and so will Chris.

New Jersey Curbs Use of Neonics

By Ann Gallagher White, 2nd VP Gardening

In a groundbreaking attempt to help pollinators, New Jersey has curbed the use of neonics, a class of pesticides known to be harmful to pollinators, in non-agricultural settings such as lawns and golf courses. The ban is the strongest measure in the US to date to rein in the use of chemicals that harm pollinators, ecosystems, and likely humans according to the Natural Resources Defense Council. <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/lucas-rhoads/new-jersey-enacts-ground-breaking-neonic-legislation> The legislation, signed on January 18, 2022, will make neonicotinoids “restricted use” (meaning any person using these pesticides

must have a valid New Jersey pesticide applicator license) and further prohibits any use except agricultural use. According to the Rutgers University review, “the intent of this law is to reduce pollinator exposure to these pesticides, and the practical affect is to prohibit use of these pesticides in home gardens and landscapes, golf courses and other non-agricultural settings.” The law takes effect beginning October 31, 2023. <https://pestmanagement.rutgers.edu/new-state-law-p-l-2021-c-386-restricting-neonicotinoid-pesticide-use/>

Helpful Hints from Our Members

Two terrific ideas from Roger Simpson

From Bananas to Bees: Especially this time of year, it seems there's never enough wooden hive boxes to sort into or store frames in. One secret weapon I have come across is the lowly banana box. Turns out it is exactly the right size to hold 12 deep frames or 16 medium frames. This is very nice as I'm assembling frames from a stack of pieces, they can drop into a banana box and then next pulled out for wax foundation or wire to be strung on them. Slide the two boxes



together and there's a stackable storage unit waiting for wooden boxes to be deployed into. One word of warning: The banana box is not good for drawn comb storage, as the closed in environment makes for ideal wax moth habitat.

environment makes for ideal wax moth habitat.



Clear Notetaking! I found a new favorite pen for making notes on top of the frames in my hives. I got tired of Sharpie pens skipping and blurring when encountering propolis or scraped off burr comb. The Milwaukee tool company has come out with a fine point black pen designed to write on dusty, wet, or oily surfaces. The next best great thing is that Friedman's sells a package of four for \$5. Wow!

And Another One from Ettamarie Peterson

I have found that being able to hang swarm boxes in trees or on fences or fence posts really helps. Years ago, there was a commercially made swarm box that had handles on it. I still have two of these. They are not available anymore, so I created my own swarm boxes by cutting the ends off of old bee boxes and making the tops and main box out of recycled campaign poster boards. I used frames to measure the length of the sides and the wooden end pieces to measure the height. I drilled holes for ventilation and cut an entrance space at the bottom of one end. I like to have a bottom entrance because bees can walk into it. My entrance is closed with a flap of the poster board held in place with hook and loop tape. Each end has two screws with "eyes" so I could attach two cords for carrying and later hanging the swarm boxes. Sometimes these boxes are hung with Bungee cords and sometimes I can just loop the cords around branches or posts.



The first box is the older one with handles that I bought. The one farther back is my handmade one with cord handles. This was one of those days when there were two swarms, and they were from two different colonies!

Cooking with Honey

by Rachel Parker

For many of us hobbyist beekeepers, the deluge of the sweet stuff may be a mixed blessing: the presence of honey validates our good beekeeping practices, but beyond the handful of recipes in bee books, the suggestions may be hard to find. I'm an avid home baker and have tried a bunch of honey-sweetened recipes that I'm happy to share with you. I'll credit the original recipe author, and note my modifications, for your own baking brainstorming.

This month, I'll start with one of my favorite breads: Whole Wheat Honey. I've loved a commercially baked bread from Alvarado Bakery in Oakland, California, for many years. But, from time to time, I've lived in places that don't carry the bread, like Hong Kong. I started looking for a similarly toothsome, slightly sweet loaf for my breakfast or sandwich slices. This recipe originally called for molasses, but again, in Hong Kong, molasses is difficult to find outside of the Christmas holidays. So, I substituted honey. For a time, I was baking this weekly in my tiny Hong Kong kitchen. Enjoy!

The Monthly Extractor Team

Editor – Ettamarie Peterson

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Whole Wheat Honey Bread

Inspired by Whole Wheat Bread Hayes

by Timothy J. Hayes

INGREDIENTS

2 cups warm water (105°-115°F.)
1/4-ounce package (2 1/2 teaspoons) active dry yeast
1/4 cup honey
5 to 6 cups whole-wheat flour
2 tablespoons sugar
2 teaspoons salt
1/2 cup canola oil
an egg wash made by beating 1 large egg white with
1 teaspoon water
3 tablespoons old-fashioned rolled oats for sprinkling
on the loaves

Step 1 In a small bowl stir together 1 3/4 cups warm water and yeast and let stand until foamy, about 5 minutes. In a measuring cup whisk together remaining 1/4 cup warm water and honey. In a large bowl stir together 2 cups flour, sugar, salt, and oil and add honey and yeast mixtures, stirring until combined well. Stir in enough of remaining 3 to 4 cups flour, 1/2 cup at a time, for mixture to form a soft dough and turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead dough 8 minutes, or until smooth and elastic, and shape into a ball.

Step 2 Transfer dough to a lightly oiled bowl, turning to coat, and let rise, covered with plastic wrap, in a warm place until doubled in bulk, about 1 hour. Punch down dough and let rise, covered, 45 minutes more.

Step 3 Preheat oven to 400°F. and grease 2 loaf pans, 8 1/2 by 4 1/2 by 2 inches.

Step 4 Divide dough in half. Lightly knead each piece of dough and form into ovals. Transfer loaves to pans and let rise, covered with kitchen towels, for about 45 minutes.

Step 5 Brush tops of loaves lightly with egg wash and sprinkle with oats. Bake loaves in middle of the oven 10 minutes, then reduce oven temperature to 350°F. and bake loaves 20 to 25 minutes more, or until golden brown. Turn loaves out onto a rack to cool.

Note: I've sometimes added about a cup of sour-dough starter to this basic dough, giving the resulting loaves a slight tang.

SCBA Member Photo Gallery

The Monthly Extractor is dedicating space to members' photos from their apiary or garden, with captions. Please note, because *The Monthly Extractor* is publicly published, if members send photos featuring human individuals (whether adults, children, or teens) in those photos, we need to have their consent. Email written consent should do the job. Send photos to editor@sonomabees.org.



Beautiful honey bee swarm – Photo by Mohammed Ibrahim



Scout bees checking out a swarm trap in the apiary – Photo by Mohammed Ibrahim



Bee on cranesbill, a common weed I hate because the seed pods curl up and stick in my clothes! -- Photo by Ettamarie Peterson

SCBA Business Members, Donors, and Sponsors

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Habitat Sponsors

Pollinator Garden – \$500

Pollinator gardens are designed and created with specific nectar and pollen producing plants to attract pollinators – honey bees, native bees, and other diverse pollinators. Our Pollinator Garden community partners help create the nutrients for the garden that is SCBA

* Samtec Inc.
www.Samtec.com



Hedgerow – \$1,000

Hedgerows are vital nectar and pollen sources amidst barren landscapes such as vineyards and other monocrops, and our Hedgerow Level Community Partners embodies this support.

Meadow - \$2,500

Meadows are beautiful sights for us and oceans of forage for honey bees and pollinators. Help us transform Sonoma County into one sweet bee-garden with our Meadow Level Community Partnership.



Keysight Technologies -- www.keysight.com

Canopy – \$5,000

Above the meadows and hedgerows is the canopy. These mighty trees sink carbon and water, provide home for wild bees and countless pollinators, shade the ground during our hot, dry summers, and often bloom as well. Our Canopy Level Community Partnership shows the deepest commitment to our work and ongoing mission.

2022 Board Members

and Other Helpful People

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



Helianthus annuus 'Valentine' sunflower



Epilobium canum 'Catalina,' California fuchsia

Support SCBA by signing up for [eScrip](#) and [Amazon Smile](#). A small percentage of each sale will be donated back to SCBA, at no extra cost to the customer.

