

The Monthly Extractor

Volume 50, Issue 3

March 2024

President's Message

Happy March Bee Friends!

Wow! February was a soggy one, wasn't it? It's good to have all the rain and to watch our reservoirs fill, but I'm glad it's slowing down, and spring is finally arriving!

I have been thinking a lot about how much our members keep this organization moving forward.



Just like a beehive, every job is vital. From being a member of the board to volunteering at an information booth, our volunteers keep the SCBA hive buzzing.

At the end of each year, we ask all of you to cast a vote to recognize your fellow members and show them

some appreciation. But I want to spend more time recognizing our volunteers throughout the year, not just at the end. So, I brought this thought to the board, and we created a year of Volunteer Appreciation broken into months, starting at our first in-person General Meeting. Each month we will recognize another group of volunteers who are serving SCBA with all their heart.

So, March is Cluster Coordinator Appreciation Month! Here's who they are:

Regional Cluster Coordinator, who oversees all the clusters: Sacha Lepley
Central: Susan Kegley and Roger Simpson
North: Bernie Leda, Bill Bridges, and Mike Shook
South: Rachel Parker and Gayle Slade
West: Cheryl Koeller and Maile Pieri
East: Tripp Hunter, Mato Hercog, and Jamie Storck

Please join us at the General Meeting to give them a round of applause, and a small token of our appreciation. We want to recognize all the work they



do creating and organizing our Cluster Cafés, Workshops, Garden Digs, and Hive Dives.

March is also the beginning of Swarm Season! So, get your gear ready and be on the lookout. Try to shadow a Swarm Rescuer and experience it in real life, and make

sure to fill out that Annual Survey to get onto the Needs Bees list.

Finally, our March General Meeting is a very important one, filled with information and discussion about how we can manage the Migratory Beekeeping Issue in our county. We are hoping to be able to figure out a way to make it work for everyone. Please join us Monday, March 11 to find out the latest about what's going on and how we can work together to find a solution.

Happy 30th Anniversary Year! See you outside!

Carol Ellis

President@sonomabees.org

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The SCBA newsletter reflects the various techniques, theories and art of sustainable beekeeping.

SCBA March GENERAL MEETING

Date: March 11, 2024; 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm
Location: Druid Hall
1011 College Ave ~ Santa Rosa

Join us at our General Meeting in March as we resume in-person meetings at the Druid Hall. In-person meetings are a great way to meet other members, see what is going on in the association, and get some new pollinator plants for your garden as Gardening for Bees will be hosting their first plant sale of the year!

In addition, this will be an interesting and exciting meeting as this month we are joined by the newly formed Pollinators Advocacy Alliance (PAA). They will be talking to us about how they perceive the dangers of hive density and the challenges both local beekeepers and the pollinators face in Sonoma County with migratory beekeepers and their practice of over-wintering thousands of hives in Sonoma County. It will be followed by Q&A and open discussion about the issue. Please come with an open mind and don't be afraid to voice your own opinions and questions on this issue. Everyone needs to be heard as it is a controversial issue.

(See the PAA opinion article later in the newsletter.)

SCBA March CALENDAR

The SCBA online calendar is updated frequently. Check it out to see current events.

- March 2 – [East Cluster Café](#)
- March 9 – SCBA at [North Bay Discover Day](#)
- March 9 – [Spring Bee Ready Swap Meet](#)
- March 9 – [Frame Making Workshop](#)
- March 9 – [Equipment Cleaning Demonstration](#)
- March 10 – [North Cluster Café/Hive Dive](#)
- March 11 – [SCBA General Meeting](#)
- March 15 – [SCBA at CMSC](#)
- March 16 – [Central Cluster Café](#)
- March 16 – [South Cluster Café](#)
- March 16 – [West Cluster Café](#)
- March 18 – [Beekeepers Zoom Forum](#)
- April 27 – [Spring Fling](#)
- May 19 – [Flower to Table Pollinator Brunch](#)

Board Update February 2024

By Andy Baxter
SCBA Secretary

This month's board meeting was held on February 4th at 6.30 pm and ran until 8.40 pm. We had no external visitors this time so we were able to get straight down to business. In addition to updates from each of the board members in attendance, the board discussed a range of topics including:

- Who are our active volunteers, how can we better track this so we can recognize those people who continue to step up to help our association as well as warm recipients!

- Apiary registration – issues, potential fees and what the SCBA's position should be once this starts in 2025.



- Upcoming events (i.e. Swap Meet [West], March 9; Spring Fling, April 27; Pollinator Brunch, May 19) and website updates to support donations.
- Swarm season planning.
- How we might improve audio quality at meetings for hearing aid users.
- Update from the anniversary committee. Big year for SCBA this year!
- Update from the Pollinator Advocacy Alliance.
- Membership update – 351.

Spring Starts With Gusto!

By Kelli Cox, Your 1st VP of Bees

And so, it begins! First swarms reported were from our East Cluster member in Shellville and South Cluster in Petaluma! Very exciting! As I write this the sun is shining and it's going to be a warm 72 degrees today, BUT we still have rain and possibly frost coming so be mindful if opening your hives.



Mike Turner reports that his managed hives in Sausalito are ramping up feverishly and he intends to split (weather permitting) next week. Clayton Cook is reporting his hives, mostly in Central,

are bringing in lots of stores (nectar and pollen) raising brood and clearly waiting for the main nectar flow. Most of the other reports from Central to North are reporting the same. Remember, we all live in different climates so be mindful and patient but be ready! South generally seems to be ahead but, you never know!

Review the information of what to expect with your bees.

The Swarm Rescuers list is being updated as is the Needs Bees list. And speaking of Swarm Rescuers, I'm happy to announce our latest member of the team, Bill Genthe, who has volunteered to be the "Swarm Coordinator". Thank you, Bill! This super important role supports both the Swarm Rescuers and Bee Share coordinators, who are all busy at work getting their lists ready for swarm recipients!

On another note: I am overseeing the food committee for both our Spring Fling and Pollinator Brunch. I have a wonderful committee of Darlene McGinnis, Cathy Kopshever, Cheryl Leda, and Sara Bard. I could use a few more and will have a signup sheet at the March general meeting. Additionally, we are going to have a "honey inspired" dessert competition at the Spring Fling so get your thinking caps on! Please contact me if you'd like to be a part of our committee for either of both events.

Kelli Cox, 1st Vice President
1stVP@sonomabees.org
707-280-4376

Serge's March To-Do List

By Serge Labesque

- If you can, 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.

Continued, next page

There's Plenty to do In the Winter Garden

By Ann Gallagher White, 2nd VP

Although we are still in the thick of winter, and heading towards spring, we are getting soaked, and the plants are getting enough rain to thrive during the coming year. Here's what's going on in my garden: weeding, thinning out plants, transplanting/planting, growing seeds, pruning, and adding compost or mulch and finally asking: what is blooming (now and in every season) to make sure I have year-round pollinator forage?



Weeding – The best way to keep the weeds out is to prevent them from growing in the first place by covering the areas with mulch, straw, cardboard, etc. If you do discover you have some growing, and don't we all, try to pull them out before they flower and spread their seeds and keep them out of the compost pile. They should

go in the green waste bin.) I use different methods for different areas to kill weeds, depending upon the weather and what's in the soil. My preferred method involves elbow grease when the soil is wet, and the weeds are big enough to come out easily.

Thinning – Some plants spread a little, some plants spread a lot but if you see you have pollinator plants that are spreading, please consider potting them up with good potting soil (Happy Frog is what G4B uses) and becoming part of our home nursery group. Examples of plants that you might want to divide are asters (New England/tall and the lower growing varieties), Maximillian sunflowers, California fuchsia, mantilla poppies, calendula, California poppies, etc.

Planting Seeds – I like to get a head start on my growing season and start plants inside and recently purchased some grow lights to help keep them growing when it is still so cold and dark outside. I have a mix of flowers and herbs growing in my mud-room on heating mats. I can't wait to move them out to the indirect light as soon as it gets warmer. Outside, I also planted some winter veggies (sugar peas, onions, kale, and mustard greens) and am looking forward to a late winter/early spring harvest.

Transplanting and Planting – I am always on the

lookout for plants that are not thriving. I transplant them to another part of the garden where it is sunnier, shadier, or less accessible to deer/critters. Winter and early spring are good times to add new plants to the garden to get them established while dormant and during plentiful rains!

Pruning – Many kinds of fruit trees, roses, salvias as well as other plants need to be cut back so they will thrive when the weather warms up. Look it up online if you are not sure if this is the best time to prune before you get out your clippers or loppers.

Compost – After you give your plant a trim, remember to give it a layer of compost to keep the soil healthy and the plant nourished. Compost will help suppress weeds as well. Over time, the value of adding compost to your soil over and over will be evident as you discover worms have taken up residence in a compost-rich garden.

Observe what's blooming – Mustard flowers, rosemary, many bulbs (including crocus, daffodil, and narcissus) manzanitas, giant marigold/tagetes, and acacia trees are blooming in my neighborhood.

Should SCBA support AB 1042? At our last General Meeting, we heard from two attorneys at the Natural Resources Defense Council who are fighting for regulations and laws to be enacted to help pollinators thrive and to close a loophole on neonic-treated seeds. One of our members suggested we start a petition to support recent upcoming legislation, [AB 1042](#). Do you think this is something we should support? Please send an email if you agree or think we should not. 2ndVP@SonomaBees.org Look for more on this topic soon!

Serge's To-Do's continued

- 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.

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FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Spring: Rebirth and Renew

By Shannon Carr, Program Director

Spring is right around the corner and as the weather starts to get nicer the community outreach opportunities will be flowing in! We had a great time last month at the Redwood Empire Scion Exchange.

Thank you to Maureen Bufton-Landwehr, Pam Murray, Gary Grant, Sylvan Eidelman, and Kelli Cox who helped at our booth. We saw many SCBA members browsing the tables of scions looking for new fruit trees to get grafted and add to their pollinator habitats. We also met many members in our community who wanted to talk about bees, learn about beekeeping, and learn about ways to help them.



Coming up in March, we are looking forward to North Bay Discovery Day, a fun-filled day where kids of all ages get to run around, explore, and learn some of the latest of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math). We will be there with information about bees and what kids, and their parents, can do to help pollinators.

April 27 is our annual [Spring Fling](#). This amazing MEMBERS ONLY event is going to be a lot of fun! Held once again at the gorgeous Bees N Blooms, it is an event you don't want to miss!

Gardening for Bees will host an amazing plant sale, as well as two workshops centered around gardening and habitat. Seasoned beekeepers will lead hive dives and beekeeping workshops. We have a workshop on equipment – maintaining and cleaning, as well “Stenciling your Supers.” And, Susan will once again lead a tour of the gardens and pollinator habitat on the Bees N Blooms campus. In addition, we will serve lunch and host a bee-centric raffle!

May 19 is our 2nd annual [Flower to Table Pollinator Brunch](#). This event is SCBA's main fundraiser. The brunch itself will be filled with dishes inspired by pollinators. Speakers will share what our community is doing to help pollinators, and the silent auction will be set up in a way that will represent and highlight each cluster, highlighting the uniqueness of each region.

Tickets are on sale! \$60 for members, \$75 for non-members, \$500 for a VIP table for 6!

SCBA Volunteer Positions

SCBA is run by its members. There are lots of ways to help and volunteer. If you are interested in one of these positions, OR if you have ideas on other ways to contribute, reach out to our Program Director, Shannon Carr at programdirector@sonoma-bees.org.

Education Coordinator – Help SCBA's Education Program with connecting educators and schools looking for a presentation.

Website Coordinator – Help keep the website current and update it with current events and news of what is going on in SCBA and the beekeeping community.

Be a Host – Connect with your Cluster Coordinator if you can open your space for a Cluster Café, Hive Dive, or Garden Workshop

Intro to Beekeeping at Beekind in Sebastopol

Beekind has been operating in Sebastopol for 20 years. They will be hosting their "[Introduction to Beekeeping](#)" class at the Sebastopol Grange on Sunday March 17th, Cost \$25

This three-hour class will focus on basic beekeeping information, how to get started with bees, use of equipment and what to expect in your first year.

The class will be taught by Doug Vincent, Owner and Beekeeper of Beekind.

Click on this [link](#) to sign up.

Introducing the Pollinator Advocacy Alliance

By Pollinator Advocacy Alliance - North Bay
Contact: pollinatoradvocacyalliance@gmail.com

When driving around Sonoma County, you may notice large congregations of bee hives on the side of the road that are not there earlier in the year but start to show up around the end of March. We have witnessed a huge increase in migratory beekeepers placing their apiaries in the county after almond pollination. This unsustainable increase in honey bee populations in the county has created a series of environmental issues that need to be addressed.

The Pollinator Advocacy Alliance (PAA) was formed in 2023 by a coalition of local pollinator business owners and organizations in response to Sonoma County's decision to lease public property to a migratory beekeeper. This decision opened the door to the discussion of the impacts that migratory bee hives have in our local landscapes. PAA reached out to the Sonoma County Ag department to find out how many migratory bee hives were in the county in the fall of 2023 and received numbers of upwards of 20,000. When asked if these were all migratory hives or if they included backyard hives, we were told that most hive registrations are migratory, and a negligible number were backyard/hobby.

We began asking important questions such as, what are the effects of this influx of bees on backyard colonies and local businesses? What are the effects on native bees and other pollinators? The results so far have been eye opening. [Do managed bees have negative effects on wild bees?: A systematic review of the literature | PLOS ONE Gauging the Effect of Honey Bee Pollen Collection on Native Bee Communities](#) With these facts and observations, we are drafting legislation to limit the number of migratory beehives that can be brought into the county. Such legislation is not new and has precedent. Our mission is to promote protections for diverse pollinator communities in Sonoma County, bring awareness to the environmental impacts of migratory beekeeping, safeguard backyard beekeepers from the impacts of migratory apiaries, and to advocate for the adoption of a county ordinance, one similar to that which [Randy Oliver](#) drafted and that Nevada County implemented recently.

We are pleased to meet the SCBA community at the

general meeting on March 11 and discuss the progress of this work. We hope that you will join us and share your thoughts and support, and that we can broaden the dialogue on our shared community, ecosystem, and future. In an effort to be clear about the parties involved, we have defined the following:

Migratory Beekeeper: A beekeeper who receives most of their income from moving and placing hives for pollination of crops.

Commercial/Professional Beekeeper: A beekeeper who receives most of their income from providing services and/or products related to honey bees but does not move hives for pollination of crops.

Backyard/Hobbyist Beekeeper: A beekeeper who may sell their honey to friends and family, as well as some hive products but does not receive most of their income from this hobby.

PAA is composed of a small group of individuals representing local businesses and organizations: [Sonoma County Bee Company](#) (Candice Koseba, Owner); [Petaluma Bee Lady](#) (Christine Kurtz, Owner); [Bee Focused](#) (Joy Wesley, Owner); [Apis Arborea](#) (Michael Thiele, Founder); and [Pollen & Fox](#) (Sierra Castillo, Owner).

Seeding Your Pollinator Garden

By Kim Bergstrom, Gardening Coordinator

With seemingly no end in sight to the rain, I am taking comfort in the ability to start some pollinator plants indoors in the form of seeds! Did you know that we have our very own "Seed Maven?" Elizabeth (Liz) Holdmann has been curating seeds for SCBA members for more than three years! By writing to seed companies about our Gardening 4 Bees program she can obtain pollinator plant seeds for free and occasionally also purchases them. These seeds usually come in bulk, meaning that she must then create seed labels with specific instructions for that particular seed, affix the label to an envelope, fill the envelope with seeds and get them ready for use by all of you! Liz creates hundreds of seed packets each year. It is a lot of work and an act of pure love for the bees and dedication to their needs.

This month, in your cluster meetings, your gardening liaisons will be using these seeds to show you how to start plants from seeds. You will get to pick out the seeds you want to grow, plant them into 6-packs and take them home with handy instructions sheets for growing. Our curated seed library is also always available at our general meetings. Seeds are an inexpensive and wonderful way to grow pollinator plants for our bees. Donations to the seed program are also always welcome!

Spring is the time of rebirth and seeing seedling starts in my greenhouse always reminds me that it is just around the corner.

"Despite the forecast, live like it's spring"
-- Lilly Pulitzer

These early bloomers provide bee forage and are edible! Below, Oxalis (also called sour grass); bottom, miners' lettuce; right, borage. Photos by Ettamarie Peterson



SONOMA COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION'S

SPRING FLING!

(A Members Only Event)

SATURDAY APRIL 27

10:00 AM - 2:30 PM

at Bees N Blooms



[HTTPS://SONOMABEES.ORG/EVENT-5607258](https://sonomabees.org/event-5607258)

Workshops

10:30 - 11:30

Hive Dives

Garden Tour

Beekeeping 101:

All about Honeybee

Beekeeping 103 :

Pests, parasites, and
problems in the hive

G4Bs: Habitat Workshop

Equipment Workshop:
Stencilling your Super

Lunch,
Raffle, &
G4Bs Plant Sale



Workshops

1:00 - 2:00

Hive Dives

Beekeeping 102 :

All about the Hive

Native Bees

of Sonoma County

G4Bs: Pruning Workshop

Equipment Workshop:
Cleaning, storing,
and maintaining

CLUSTER NEWS

SCBA Swarming with Cluster Activities

Sacha Lepley, Regional Cluster Coordinator

Come on out to your Cluster Café and other activities that your cluster is putting together. Check out some of the activities happening in March!

- Saturday, March 2 East Cluster Café at Sonoma Valley Regional Library!
- Saturday, March 9 Swap Meet at Michael Ellis School (hosted by West Cluster), a chance to give away, swap, sell or buy beekeeping and gardening equipment and gear as well as a Frame Making Clinic and an Equipment Cleaning Demonstration.
- Sunday, March 10 North Cluster Café and Hive Dive
- Saturday/Sunday March 16/17 South, Central and West will have their cafés.

See the [SCBA calendar](#) for more details.

Brush up on your bee math, bee genetics, queen mating and propagating plants from seeds at the March Cluster Café! Last month many of us went home with plants for our gardens after the hands-on garden workshop about propagation without seeds: division, layering, cuttings, and grafting. East had four different plant varieties to take away after planting with Ellen Schwartz and Central attendees worked on potting up scabiosa with Angy Nowicki after discussing transplanting volunteer plants from the garden. What plants will go home with members from the March Cluster meetings?

As well as plant propagation, February Cluster Cafés focused on swarm. I loved seeing all of you and getting different presentations about swarms and plant propagation at the East, West and Central Cluster Cafés during February. South Cluster reported the first swarm of the year! Our bees are preparing to swarm and the cafés reminded members of what is happening with the bees and in the hive and how we can get ready for this natural event or attempt to prevent it by splitting. AND also, how to get on the Needs Bees list for our members who need bees. Completing the association survey is the

first step, so if you have not done this PLEASE do. If you can't locate the survey reach out to Shannon Carr, program director (programdirector@sonomabees.org) and she will send you the link.

Cluster attendance is growing, and I hope more and more of our members will come out to see each other, find a bee buddy, share information and knowledge about your hives, gardens and possibly learn something new! This also helps us organize hive dives and other potential workshops. Check out the cluster articles in this *Extractor* to get a taste of your cluster's activities.



Also, we continue to need volunteers. Both in the clusters and with the community events such as North Bay Science Discovery Day (March 9) and Friedman's Santa Rosa (April 12) and Petaluma (April 13) – Contact Shannon Carr at Programdirector@sonomabees.org.

East Cluster needs another cluster coordinator to assist Tripp Hunter with the duties. Are there any East Cluster members with computer experience OR who would love to learn about the computer. We need a volunteer to help with posting the cluster events and sending out the cluster emails through the Sonomabees.org website, which uses Wild Apricot. We can teach you how to do this and then it is a commitment of a few hours a month. Who will step up? Contact me at Regionalcoordinator@sonomabees.org.

Lastly, I encourage everyone to participate in the search for donations for our annual fundraiser, Flower to Table Pollinator Brunch, Sunday May 19 at the Sebastopol Grange. There will be a silent auction of items collected from each Cluster Region. Know a business, tourist attraction, restaurant you could ask for a donation of a gift certificate or product for the silent auction? Or do you have some honey, or hive product you are willing to donate? Which cluster will get the most donations?

Sacha Lepley
regionalcoordinator@sonomabees.org

Robust Gathering of the East Cluster Clan

By Nancy Bundschu

Regional Coordinator, Sacha Lepley enthusiastically welcomed the East Cluster February 3 meeting held at the Sonoma Ecology conference room at the SDC. There was standing room only as 25 members were eager to be informed of the upcoming messages from presenter Mato Herceg, Gardening liaison Ellen Schwarz, Bee Share Maralee Joseph, and Swarm Rescuers, Thea Vierling and Nadya Clark.

Sacha reiterated the meetings are held the first Saturday of every month except for August -- when volunteers are needed at the local fairs.

East Cluster will meet at Sonoma Valley Library for the Saturday March 2, 2024, café. Also, many East Cluster members offered their places for April, May, June, July, and September. Yeah! The East Cluster still needs more reliable places to meet for workshops, hive dives, and general meetings. It needs hosts for the October, November, and December Cafés. Anyone who can volunteer a space for the cafes or a workshop or a hive dive, please contact Tripp Hunter at eastcluster@sonomabees.org

Mato welcomed our group and we introduced ourselves giving our name, location, number of years bee keeping and health of our hives. Some of us sadly lost our hives in October, but happily many of our fellow bee people were reporting on healthy hives.

Mato then introduced Ellen Schwartz, our gardening liaison, to make a presentation on Vegetative Propagation. Simply put, it means plants that grow without seed. There are four methods of plant propagation. Ellen presented two of the easier methods of propagation: Division and Layering.

Division is a method of using a spade, a shovel, or a digging fork to uproot and lift the plant, while not damaging the young roots. The separated plants can then be replanted in containers or returned to the ground. Early spring is best for this method.

Layering was the second meth-

od Ellen presented. Using cat mint as the example, place a low-lying stem on the ground, anchor with a rock and leave until there are roots growing from underneath. When the stem is adequately full of roots, you can replant.

If you are interested in viewing the YouTube presentation of the [Four Methods of Plant Propagation, go to How to Propagate Plants: 4 Methods to Master](#) from the Epic Gardening station.

Ellen recommended *Natures Best Hope*, by Douglas W. Tallamy, a New York Times best-selling book.

Ellen also suggested all should visit Ellen Sherron's Garden in Sebastopol and as a special treat, she brought along plants for us to take home and plant in our own gardens: English aster, hummingbird sage, and scabiosa were our choices.

Next, Mato used a PowerPoint presentation, "Coming out of Winter" by Serge Labesque. He discussed what we should be doing and looking for in our hives during February and March. Every season appears to present its unique challenges. This year it is the cold and the rain. To peek or not to peek is the question. Mato suggests *not to peek* unless it is a mild day because temperature in the hive is so important to the health of the colony. The important things to look for when the time is right are excessive moisture, adequate food supply, and a healthy queen.

Coming out of winter brought up another question: to feed or not to feed your colony? Thea Vierling says that she does feed her bees using a recipe offered by Mike Tanner.

Our next speaker was Maralee Joseph who spoke on the topic of the Bee Sharing Program, Swarms and Splits. Most importantly, if wanting a swarm, all SCBA members must complete the 2024 Annual Survey sent to them before you qualify. For either program, accepting a swarm, or bee sharing (splits), Maralee emphasized that all your equipment must be ready. As many of you know when a swarm needs to be moved it is now! Also, you might need to brush up on what to expect after the bees

Mike Tanner's Pollen Paddy

1 cup Mann Lake ultra-feed
1 cup cane sugar
1 teaspoon Honey B Healthy.
1 teaspoon canola oil

Mix with water to get a paste (about 1/2 cup water, add water as needed) but should not be runny. Put the mixture on a piece of wax paper and press thin to about 1/4 inch. Place inside the hive.

East Cluster, from prior page

arrive. This may be a good time to have the aid of a bee buddy.

Her advice for new beekeepers is to make sure your location has the proper light, shade for summer, and protection from the wind. The entryway is also important. Do not have it situated in a pathway and be sure that the stand is sturdy and level. If you are requesting a swarm and not sure your location is adequate, you can either email a photo of your set up and location to Maralee or she would be happy to visit your site. Contact her at eastbeesshare@sonomabees.org

Thea Vierling discussed the protocol when accepting swarms. Remember that the swarms and splits are arranged between two people. Make sure that you are ready to accept your bees. You may have many questions after the delivery. A great resource is the SCBA web site. Thea informed our cluster that a suggested donation of \$60 could be given to the swarm collector for each swarm to cover expenses like delivery time, gas, frames, and other expenses swarm collectors have.

There was a brief discussion of swarm traps and

their placement. If you are using a swarm trap it was recommended that you place the trap where you can visit it often. If you are out of town, that's a good time to ask your bee buddy to check on it for you. You may be surprised at what you find if left unattended!

If in need of new equipment, Maralee noted that John McGinnis at Buzz Off Honey in Petaluma is a hive builder. You can reach him at goawayranch@gmail.com



Sacha Lepley brought our East Cluster map for the attending members to identify the locations of their apiary locations. This will be a valuable tool for studying bee behavior and for locating bee/garden buddies and more.

After three great informative presentations the meeting was adjourned, and the members rapidly ran to the door collecting the plants that Ellen potted and brought for our gardens.

This is my first newsletter representing the East Cluster, please bear with me.
Nancy Bundschu

Central Cluster Notes

By Susan Kegley

The group met at Bees N Blooms and started by sharing how their bees were doing this winter. We discussed methods and timing for checking on a colony at this vulnerable time of year and heard from more experienced beekeepers about their practices. Angy Nowicki from the garden group showed us how to transplant seedlings and plant bee-friendly flower seeds. Sacha Lepley gave a presentation on swarming, including signs the beekeeper should be aware of that indicate swarming potential. There was discussion about splitting to prevent swarming and the hazards of swarms in neighborhood areas. Frank Gibbons talked about the Bee Share program and what is necessary if a member wants to receive a swarm or a split through this program. Next month, we'll look at splitting in more detail.

West Cluster Notes

By Cheryl Koeller

I'm happy to say that we had 14 members at our West Cluster Bee Café on February 17. I would like to thank everyone who was able to attend. It is always nice to see familiar faces and try to get the names right and to meet new members, always hoping to see everyone again at the next event!

We discussed the Swarm Biology Presentation, shared information about our hives that have survived and hives we've lost this year, our experiences with catching and receiving swarms and how important it is to 'Bee Ready' if you want to receive a swarm this year. Sasha Lepley is the Regional Cluster Coordinator this year and she came to check out how we are doing and mentioned how important

Continued, next page

West Cluster, from prior page

it is to complete the survey that everyone should have received on February 2, 2024. Especially the part about “to be placed on the Needs Bees List you need to complete the survey”! The survey is also very useful to Cluster Coordinators to see who wants to volunteer, what we can improve on and your responses about what you need and want to know. We also talked about how important it is to have year-round blooming plants in your garden to feed the bees and pollinators. Sasha showed a great video about different ways to propagate plants!

The Spring Bee Ready Swap Meet is coming up on March 9. An email was sent out and you can register in that email for the different things that are going on during the Swap Meet.

1. Save a Spot to Swap, Buy or Sell products.
 2. Attend the Frame Making Workshop, purchase unassembled frames and learn to use the frame jig.
 3. Attend the Equipment Demonstration
- We highly encourage you to register for these events as it will help us plan for participants, materials and needed space.

And don't forget about the BBQ'd hot dogs, chips, and drink available for donation!

Our next Bee Café is March 16 and will be in Santa Rosa. Gülten Eicher, our Gardening Liaison, will teach us how to propagate plants from seeds and we will plant some of our own and take home our bounty from the lesson! We will also talk about other propagation techniques and cleaning and maintaining our garden tools. Bring your tools if you have specific questions to ask about them.

Save the date, March 30, for the Build a Pulp Pot Swarm Trap Workshop in Sebastopol. An email with more details will be sent the 1st week of March.

If you have any suggestions or questions about West Cluster, please email us at westcluster@sonoma-bees.org.

Spotlight on Swarms at South Cluster Café

By Gayle Slade & Rachel Parker

For February's South Cluster Café, John McGinnis gave us a presentation on swarms and how to prepare for them. It was a treat to meet in his cozy workshop on a rainy day and be surrounded by towers of his newly built supers waiting for their future residents! Go visit John if you need to spruce up your equipment for Spring.

We were also fortunate to have one of our Queen Bees, Christine Kurtz, give a presentation on splits, and she provided an excellent hand-out on hive division.

Our meeting was topped off by our new Garden Liaisons, Maryle Brauer and Kris Wiskes, leading a propagation of scabiosa so that we all left with knowledge and new pollinator plants. In March we'll join for a potluck and discuss bee math and queen mating and queen cells.



Gardening Liaison Kris Wiskes setting up the seed work table in John McGinnis' workshop.

Wax Building Time

By Ettamarie Peterson

Look around and you will see lots of yellow mustard, fruit trees, and other spring flowers blooming. Besides providing our growing colonies lots of pollen, many of these flowers are providing nectar to our honey bees. We all know they turn that nectar into honey. Besides providing food for the bees, that honey can be turned into wax. Those bees with active wax glands are just oozing with wax flakes. Don't leave any open spaces in your bee hives because the little rascals will fill them with honey comb.

Make sure you have all your frames in with no extra space between them! Don't leave out a frame thinking you will add it later when the colony grows! Good, industrious bees will beat you to the job and you will find a comb hanging from your inner cover! If you put a medium frame in a deep box, before you know it, they will have drawn comb hanging below that frame. Usually that is drone comb, and some beekeepers want that. Why would they? Well, that drone larvae can be full of mites and the beekeeper will cut it off to verify that. It does make good chicken feed. The other place the bees love to build comb is in empty top feeders. You can prevent that by filling the feeder with dried lavender or other moisture absorbing material. When you see burr comb being put on the top of your frames, add another box with all the new frames.

SCBA BOOK NOOK

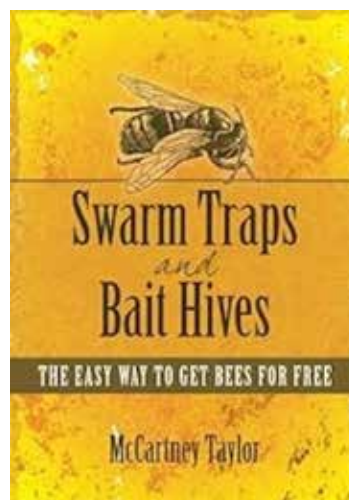
Swarm Traps and Bait Hives: The easy way to get bees for free



By McCartney M. Taylor

Swarm Traps and Bait Hives, The easy way to get bees for free, by McCartney Taylor, is a comprehensive how-to book for beekeepers. Because bees will occupy a cavity of about 40 liters, a swarm trap is made to create the ideal space for a wild swarm to occupy. Thereby the bees come to the beekeeper so that the beekeeper doesn't have to go hunt swarms. Capturing swarms of bees can be achieved by following the recommendations in this classic, easy-to-read book. The authors researched and tested different sizes and locations and the results are given along with methods for taking down and transporting the hive. This book is a fantastic read with everything you need to know about trapping feral honey bees with pheromone lures and bait hives. It is explained with pictures. The step-by-step process is fully explained, including some things that didn't work for the author. Easy-to-read and down-to-earth, This is an excellent book for the beekeeper with more than one year of experience who would like to expand with "free bees" and swarms.

SCBA has more than 250 books, DVDs, and equipment in our Library. *Swarm Traps and Bait Hives* is just one of many books about bees, gardening for bees, and products from the hive in our collection. You can view all our books and DVDs available to you at SCBA-Library.



SCBA Library is available to members at in-person general meetings and during the week by appointment. If you are interested in checking out a book, email our librarian at Librarian@sonomabees.org, to plan to pick up one or two of the books, DVDs, or equipment available to SCBA members.

Fruit and Nut Bars for Active Days

By Rachel Parker

Honey, nuts, and dried fruits go together like snow and skies. Which is why this fruit and nut bar appealed to me as a snack food for a week of cross-country skiing. I made the recipe with dried apricots and cranberries, but then I saw that Costco had dried cherries, and I wanted to make them again with this tangy fruit. The original recipe called for maple syrup, but I far prefer honey as a sweetener.

The bars made it to Oregon, they but didn't last the week!

ENERGY BARS

By Genevieve Ko, as in *NYTimes Cooking*

2 large eggs
¼ cup honey
½ teaspoon kosher or sea salt, plus more for sprinkling on top
¼ cup whole wheat flour
½ teaspoon cinnamon
1 ½ cups chopped walnuts, pecans, pistachios, or a combination.
1 ½ cups coarsely chopped dates, dried apricots, dried cranberries, or a combination.

Heat your oven to 350 degrees. Grease an 8-inch square metal baking pan, line it with parchment or foil, then grease the lining.

In a large bowl, whisk the eggs, honey, and salt until smooth. Add the flour and cinnamon and whisk until smooth. Add the nuts and dried fruit and mix until evenly coated. Dump the mixture into your prepared pan and smooth it evenly.



Bake until set – about 30 minutes. The top should feel firm when pressed. Sprinkle with the additional salt.

Cool completely in the pan on a rack. Lift the liner and slab out to a cutting board and cut in half, then cut each half into five slices. (I cut them again into close to square shaped bars.)

The original author says they can be kept in an airtight container for up to a week at room temperature, or a month in the freezer. But mine didn't last that long on the counter!

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Liz is a beekeeper and potter motivated by the intersection of art and conservation. Along with pottery, she offers live bee removal and backyard beekeeping services.

Sonoma County Bee Company

Candice Koseba

info@sonomacountybeecompany.com

<https://www.sonomacountybeecompany.com>

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