

# The Monthly Extractor

Volume 40, Issue 8

August 2015



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

## From Our President

Happy August to You~

Some quick updates on SCBA's happenings:

- Website and Membership: You may have noticed that the SCBA website is under construction. Additionally, we are changing the membership database. Both of these areas are still works in progress, but if you have any questions or need any assistance, feel free to email me ([president@sonomabees.org](mailto:president@sonomabees.org)) or, for membership-related questions, Kelli Cox ([1stVP@sonomabees.org](mailto:1stVP@sonomabees.org)).
- A big thank you to all of the hardworking bees who have/are/will work on this change.
- Sam Comfort Workshops/Meeting Speaker: We are so excited to have Sam Comfort joining us again this year. Amazing Thea Vierling has scheduled 4 days of workshops! As well, Sam will be speaking (entertaining!) at our August General meeting. Don't miss it!
- Sonoma County Fair/Hall of Flowers: Don't miss the bee-related exhibit in the Hall of Flowers at the Sonoma County Fair (July 24-Aug 9). I can't wait to see it! Thank you to the committee who is spotlighting our favorite insect in all its glory there.

Wishing you a beautiful month,

*Laura Baker, President*

## Contents

From Our President.....	1
This Month's Calendar: .....	1
August 10th Meeting .....	2
Beekeeping To-Do List by Serge Labesque.....	2
Fall Beekeeping Classes .....	4
Bee Plants of the Month .....	4
BEE WISE: "INTERRUPTIONS" .....	5
Sam Comfort is Coming To Town! .....	5
Napa Valley Bee Company.....	6
South Cluster July Workshop .....	7
December Silent Auction .....	8
On pondering about the bees.....	9
Board of Directors Meeting .....	10
Treasurer's Report.....	11
Contact Information .....	11
2015 Board Members .....	11
Ads in This Newsletter .....	12

## This Month's Calendar:

### **Monthly Meeting: Aug. 10th**

**Sam Comfort will be back to speak. Read more in this issue. Workshops with Sam Comfort will be held as announced. You need to check with Thea Vierling to see if there is room in the one you want to attend. E-mail [regionalcoordinator@sonomabees.org](mailto:regionalcoordinator@sonomabees.org).**

## August 10th Meeting by Thea Vierling

Sam Comfort will be our general meeting speaker in August. Sam is a world-renowned beekeeper! He is the Johnny Appleseed of the bee world. Although he is well known for his top bar hive experience, he is just an all around great beekeeper with experience in every area of beekeeping. His real skill is listening to the bees. As he says it: "They can tell you so much by the sounds they make." Sam seems to know how to interpret the bees!

Sam will be singing some of his songs at the general meeting and I hope selling some of his CD's. Here are a few websites to check out his style, knowledge and entertaining personality. You can also go to You Tube and see him in action.



Sam Comfort

Links:

- <http://cheguebeeapiary.blogspot.com/2012/10/bee-wisdom-by-sam-comfort.html>
- <http://anarchyapiaries.org/>
- <http://www.meetup.com/meetthebeekeepermondays/events/139947672/>
- <http://www.beverlybees.com/top-bar-hive-honey-harvest/>

If you have any specific questions you want him to address, please send them to the [regionalcoordinator@sonomabees.org](mailto:regionalcoordinator@sonomabees.org)

---

## My August Beekeeping To-Do List by Serge Labesque © 2015

Just like many beekeepers, I frequently tinker with my beekeeping equipment and hive management practices. Starting from the commonly available Langstroth hive many years ago, I have gradually arrived at a hive configuration that works rather well in my apiaries. Along the way, numerous ideas were tried and modifications were made to the basic hive design. A lot were more or less quickly abandoned, while others were adopted as they proved to be beneficial. All these experiments were instructive in one way or another.

For many years, I focused on making my hives more bee-friendly. Then I began to try to make my equipment easier to work with without sacrificing the features that were favorable to the colonies. A first step in that direction was the decision to manage some of my hives solely with medium supers and frames. Although this very simple decision helped, there was still too much heavy lifting for my injured back. So, I fabricated several vertical hives that permitted accessing the bees and their comb by opening sidewall panels. Inspecting these beehives does not require lifting anything heavier than individual frames. And talk about working comfortably: These hives can be inspected while sitting down! Unfortunately, they are somewhat complex and expensive contraptions to build.

In recent years, two distinct ideas were combined into a system that facilitates my work in the apiaries in addition to being good for the bees. These consist of using extra-large frames and specially designed inspection shelves. The frames, which are used as the core of the brood chambers, are as large as two deep or three medium Langstroth frames stacked vertically. Frame extension boards allow the use of regular frames and follower boards of any size alongside the double-deep frames when this is necessary or convenient. All the supers can still be stan-



Serge Labesque

dard pieces of equipment, be they mediums or deeps.

During a hive inspection, the shelves lock onto the handles of the uppermost super that holds the double-deep frames, and they receive the tilted up supers that are above the brood chamber. With this set-up, it is possible to access the very bottoms of fairly tall hives without lifting any supers. Adding

micro-harvesting and appropriate brood chamber management to the use of these simple devices allows the beekeeper to manage and manipulate strong colonies without breaking his back or the bank.

The colonies benefit from the large height of the frames because there are no bottom or top bars to interrupt the combs of the brood chambers. The bees arrange their brood and food supplies as they see fit, exactly as they do in the best tree hollows. This is particularly important in winter, when bee clusters may die of starvation if they become separated from their stores by the discontinuity created in the combs by top and bottom bars. I have seen enough of these hive-induced colony losses to appreciate the value of the large vertical dimensions of these new frames.

I could go on listing the benefits I see in this system, but I'll only highlight one at this point: My lower back does not ache as it used to after my trips to the apiaries.

## August in the apiaries

The bees are actively preparing for fall and winter. At least, they should be, and we want to find out which of our colonies are responding adequately to the seasonal cues, and which ones are not.

It's actually quite interesting to observe how the bees proceed through this vitally important task. To begin with, we know that the colonies need to accumulate as much stores as they can. But, at this time of year and particularly in regions that offer scant resources, gathering nectar may prove quite challenging. In the absence of nectar, honeydew may be collected, for example from oak trees. Unfortunately, honeydew is a dangerous source of winter stores for the bees, because they cannot digest honey derived from it. Winter cases of dysentery in the hives are often due to its consumption.

During summer dearth and meager flows, the brood nests shrink and inch their way up into the hives. At times, the lower supers become empty. It would be a mistake to remove these mostly empty supers from the hives, because that is where some of the pollen foragers will soon unload their pollen pellets, between the brood nests and the hive entrances. This strategic placement of pollen will ensure good nutrition of the fall brood, the future winter bees. Indeed, when the bees consolidate their honey and nectar stores during the early fall, the brood nests will be driven downward into these lower combs. As the brood nests move closer to the hive entrances, the bees will frequently leave unconsumed bee bread behind. Before the end of fall, this source of protein will be covered with a glaze of honey. It will be consumed later in the winter at a time when fresh pollen may not be available, and when the brood nests rebound. So, the successful overwintering of our colonies depends at least to some extent on our respecting the organization of the summer brood chambers.

In view of the scarcity of available nectar, which is typical of this time of year, we need to make sure that the stores are not spent needlessly. This would be the case, for example, when the bees have to collect large quantities of water to cool hives that become excessively hot. So, providing shade and water is an effective means of achieving substantial conservation of nectar and honey. Ensuring that the colonies benefit from adequate air circulation through their hives is also helpful. Yet, we need to be careful here, as it is easy to overdo this by removing the monitoring trays from beneath the hive bottom screens, for example, or by leaving the entrances wide open. The dangers presented by excesses in these details are the dehydration of the brood and attacks by robber bees and yellow jackets.

Summer open-hive inspections are usually infrequent and kept brief enough to avoid triggering robbing. Our visits to the apiaries are most often limited to the examination of the exterior of the hives and monitoring trays, to the observation of the flight paths, entrances and fronts of the hives, and to cursory inspections of the honey supers. But toward the end of the month, we will perform a round of more detailed inspections that will focus our attention on the condition of the colonies and on their progress in the

preparations for the fall and winter. Their health status, the quality of the brood and queens, as well as the amount of stores they contain will be noted. As we do this, we need to be careful with our smoker near dry vegetation, because the danger of fire is high. Should we be so lucky as to find surplus summer honey in our hives, we could harvest it, preferably by taking honeydew honey out of the hives first, leaving lighter honey for the bees.

The populations of varroa mites are growing rapidly at this time of year. The typical signs of varroa mite infestation, which are collectively known as "parasitic mite syndrome" or P.M.S., become evident in the hives that do not possess adequate resistance to the pest.

Through the observation of the preparation of our colonies for winter and of their fight against the ubiquitous varroa mites, we can see which colonies perform best in our apiaries. Thanks to our notes, we will be in a better position to propagate our best bees next spring. There is still time to requeen colonies that are failing or that have become queenless. Again, this is best done from our best stocks. Combining declining colonies is also a better option than letting them slowly and irremediably fail, as long as none of the colonies involved are diseased.

We have entered the time of year when hive management is the opposite of what is done in the spring: Instead of adding space and growing the colonies, we let them become more compact and we begin to remove unnecessary combs, especially the old ones.

In summary, this month:

- Beware of yellow jackets and of the risk of robbing. Reduce the entrances of the hives that are threatened.
- Avoid hive manipulations that can trigger robbing.
- Ensure that the bees have access to water at all times.
- Ensure that the hives are adequately ventilated. Providing afternoon shade is helpful.
- Observe the performance of the queens and colonies. Take notes for later selection, combination or replacement.
- Requeen or combine hives that are not performing satisfactorily, and those that have failing queens.
- Begin to reduce the unused volume of hives.
- Harvest surplus summer honey.
- Give extracted supers and cappings back to the bees for cleaning. To avoid triggering robbing, this should be done in the evening, when foragers are returning to their hives.
- Beware of the fire danger when using the smoker in areas of dry vegetation.
- As always, keep an eye on the health of the colonies.
- Cull old and misshapen combs.
- Render wax from discarded frames and from cappings. The solar wax melter boxes work very well at this time of year.
- Routinely clean and scorch tools and equipment.

Serge Labesque © 2015

## Fall Beekeeping Classes at Santa Rosa Junior College

For additional information and registration:

Class Name: **Introduction to Beekeeping**  
Weekly - Wed 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM  
4 sessions starting 8/26/2015, ending 9/16/2015  
Lark Hall, 2004

Santa Rosa Junior College  
Community Education  
1501 Mendocino Ave Santa Rosa CA, 95401  
707-527-4372  
[communityed@santarosa.edu](mailto:communityed@santarosa.edu)

Class Name: **Intermediate Beekeeping for Fall, Winter, & Early Spring**  
Weekly - Wed 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM;  
2 sessions starting 9/30/2015, ending 10/7/2015  
Lark Hall, 2004

**Note:** Students can register for classes on SRJC's new registration portal at [srjce.augusoft.net](http://srjce.augusoft.net)

Even though the link hasn't been announced to general public yet, it is live and it will work. All students need to create a user profile (both new and returning to Community Ed).

---

### Bee Plants of the Month By Alice Ford-Sala

#### Native Plant of the Month:

**California Sagebrush** *Artemisia californica*  
Asteraceae family

The silver-gray foliage of this native plant is aromatic, like our native salvias, but is not a true sage, contrary to the common name. Sagebrush can cover entire hillsides, looking almost white, which makes a pretty contrast to other plants such as sages or manzanitas. 'Canyon Gray' makes a great groundcover, as it only grows 1 to 2 feet tall, and 6 feet wide. 'Montara' is a little taller- 2 feet- and narrower- 3 feet. Like many California natives, Sagebrush is brighter in the winter when other plants have gone



California Sagebrush

dormant. The flowers are small, little yellow buttons, and inconspicuous, but very attractive to bees. You can prune it lightly in the spring after it flowers to encourage a denser growth pattern.

Needing no summer water after it is established, Sagebrush is also deer resistant. Plant it in full sun with good drainage.

#### Beneficial Plant of the Month:

**Veronica Speedwell**  
Plantaginaceae family

Veronica is such a beautiful plant; I'd grow it even if bees didn't absolutely adore her charming flower spikes. But how can they resist? Each tiny floret has sweet nectar that draws them in day after day. Butterflies and hummingbirds enjoy the sweet treat, too. You could have an entire garden bed made up of veronica, as there are many species. Most of the flowers, but not all, are some shade of blue. *V. alpina* is a creeper 4-8 inches high and 1 ft. wide with white or blue flowers. *V. umbrosa* 'Georgia Blue' makes a nice mat-like groundcover, 6-8 inches high and several feet wide. Deep blue flowers with white splotches make a pretty sight between steppingstones or along a walkway. *V. spicata* has many varieties that are useful and pretty. They usually grow 2 feet high and wide. 'Royal Candles' or 'Glory' has midnight-blue flower spikes; 'Red Fox' is a nice contrast with deep pink-red flowers.



Veronica Speedwell

Veronica likes full or almost full sun and moderate water.

## **BEE WISE: “INTERRUPTIONS”** by Emery Dann

You may have heard the joke, “This committee will meet until we find out why no work is getting done!” Is this just funny or is there a painful truth we are avoiding? Sometimes we allow things to happen to us or think we have to do the things the way we have always done them. This could be fine, if what we are doing is working and meeting our goals! My question is: “How is it working for you and me?” “How could it work better for us?” “What do we need to do differently to improve our lives, work and relationships?”

Thinking we can only do things a certain way can limit our effectiveness. What is the “wisest thing” to do with the circumstances we find in our lives? We all have limited time resources, right?

When I think about my effectiveness in getting things done, I think about beehives I inspect. It is true that some beehives are more effective than others. My question is always, “Why?” When I inspect two beehives next to each other, I often discover one is stronger than the other. “What is happening or not happening in the different hives?”

The answer I usually find is: There has been some kind of INTERRUPTION of something good or what was needed, because it is unavailable for some reason. Does this ring true for you? It makes sense for me to take a close look at how interruptions are affecting my life as well as my beehives.

For example, is there enough forage available? This is all about “location, location, location!” Do my bees need to be moved to a better location? How are the capped brood, larvae, and brood pattern of the queen? The bees may try to supersede the queen, if they can at the right time of the year. Is the hive queenless? Is there too much space or not enough space for the number of bees in the hive? Are the stores of both honey and pollen adequate in the hive? What are the bees telling me about their colony, health and the effectiveness of their work? What interruptions are they experiencing? Then the question is, “Can positive changes be made soon enough?” Or is there a declining “domino effect” in both the strength and health of the colony? WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

As a beekeeper, my job is to stop or reduce the interruptions that are preventing hive growth and well-being. My job is also to stop or reduce unnecessary interruptions in my life that are preventing my well-being and effectiveness! I am not talking about emergencies or unexpected higher priorities that do occur occasionally. It is the low to moderate interruptions I choose to let distract me when I need to focus on my top priorities!

Are interruptions causing me frustration because I miss achieving my most important responsibilities? What, where or who are my interruptions coming from most often? Is it technology based? Recently our computer was in the shop for a tune-up for a few days. I worked 9 hours one day continuously and then 3 more solid hours the next day on a big project. My family and I were amazed at how much work I accomplished! Not having the computer,

checking e-mails, answering cell phone calls, researching, etc. enabled me to do an enormous amount of work without my normal technology distractions! Avoiding these interruptions for solid periods of time can change our lives and effectiveness! We can accomplish more than we ever thought! Remember, we can learn from our bees, which don't have computers, cell phones, or COMMITTEES to find out why no work is getting done! Nor are they constantly checking their “bee-mail”! That's why their work is so effective! MAYBEE WE CAN “BEE WISER”—BY LIMITING TECHNOLOGY INTERRUPTIONS WE CAN DO SO MUCH MORE!

---

### **Sam Comfort is Coming To Town!**

Sam Comfort is a nationally known beekeeper primarily for top bar hives but he is well versed in all kinds of hives and the need for treatment free beekeeping practices. The interest by SCBA members has been wonderful. The workshops for August 7th through the 10th are almost all full. Those who are not lucky enough to see him in action in these “Hive Dives” will still be able to hear his presentation on Monday night for the regular SCBA general meeting, August 10th at 7PM. Come early because parking may be a problem! Remember this meeting is open to the public. It will be at the 4H building in Rohnert Park, 6445 Commerce Blvd.



Sam Comfort  
photo taken by Russell Hyde



Alternative Hives at Jim Spencer's Apiary  
photo by Russell Hyde

## Napa Valley Bee Company

One of this year's workshops will take place in Napa at the Napa Valley Beekeeping Apiary. This is Rob Keller's special project and it is very exciting. In the year since he started this place, it has blossomed! There has been one set back: the earthquake! But that did not hold back Rob from making this a very exciting Apiary. He has about 20 hives there now, some in barrels but mostly Langs. There are now lots of "bee friendly" plants but even better, the location is right next to the Boca Farm, an organic vegetable and fruit farm. Eventually he will have an inside observation hive there and it will be open for field trips!

Rob has a staff of several people including some volunteers. Jon Sevigny is one of those volunteers and is also a liaison to our SCBA Board and cluster leaders. Jon is a terrific beekeeper and so are all the other folks who work there. Emily Bondor works at the Apiary several days a week and will be our main contact for the Sam Comfort workshop.

Hopefully next year we can have Rob Keller as a guest speaker to tell us more details about the Apiary, some of the projects he is implementing, and how we can "bee involved"! Most of you have seen Rob in action as one of our best speakers so you know how charismatic he is. Meanwhile this year we are lucky to have one of our workshops there with Sam Comfort sharing his knowledge about bees and beekeeping.

It is going to be quite a workshop.



Napa Beekeeping place showing Rob Keller and Sam Comfort discussing a barrel hive photo by Chere Secret



Rob Keller's note taking in Napa Apiary photo by Thea Vierling



Here is a picture of Rob Keller, Emily Bondor, Jon Sevigny and two of our members: Nadya Clark and Cynthia Perry.

**South Cluster July Workshop  
By Ettamarie Peterson**

Jean James was kind enough to invite members of the South Cluster to her home to learn how to use the Association's honey extractor that is stored in Ettamarie Peterson's barn. There were 6 frames to extract so it was perfect as this extractor holds just six frames. Ettamarie showed how to assemble the stand and the extractor. Next she demonstrated how to cut the cappings off carefully balancing the frames on a screw she had put on to a stick of wood from her scraps. The stick was placed over a pan to catch the cappings and drippings of honey. She instructed the group to wipe the hot knife clean with a thick, damp towel after every frame so the honey did not burn on the blade. This is an old trick she learned from an old time beekeeper many years ago at a demonstration night. It saves

the knife from getting all black and the honey from burning and making a burn taste on the extracted honey.

After the honey was extracted and drained through the sieve the association provides, Ettamarie showed the group how to clean the extractor out with Jean's garden hose. Then they packed everything back properly so the next user will have everything ready.

Jean was nice enough to allow everyone to taste her honey. All agreed it was very good.

The photo below shows what the extractor set-up looks like just before you turn it on. The two-piece sieve and the hot knife come with the machine. You supply your own bucket. Note the honey gate is open on the extractor. The bucket one should be closed! Having the extractor gate open allows for the honey to start flowing and not bog down the motor while building up inside. The wooden stand comes apart from the metal legs by flipping back the red handles you see. The chains unscrew and are adjustable.

Thanks to Tiffany Renee for taking the photo.



Extractor Techs- Call Ettamarie 707-479-1613 or Janet Leisen 707- 528-2085 or Denny Pederson e-mail denny1@sonic.net to rent the electric extractor for \$5 a day. Rental fee is \$5 per day. Denny is located in Forestville. Janet is North of Santa Rosa. Ettamarie is in Petaluma. There is a hand extractor at Deborah Rogers' home and her e-mail is deborah@olivequeen.net She lives in Glen Ellen.

## December Silent Auction

At our annual pot luck in December, the SCBA also runs a fantastic silent auction. Just ask anyone who has been there last year what marvelous items we had from private mentoring from our top beekeepers, to bee equipment, massages and other services, wines and meads and beers, theme baskets, bee themed bags and T's, plants and swarm catchers, books and on and on. We had over 100 items. The contributions from our members was amazing. So again this year it's time to put the bug in your ear. We start early gathering the lovely items because as we get closer to the event all the holidays happen and there is tremendous work that happens behind the scenes from cataloguing, to figuring out displays and storage, making the bid sheets and organizing the event itself, and we do want to spend some time with our families.

# Silent Auction Donation Request

We are then looking for donations, not necessarily bee related although we do like those too. Are you a crafter, a hobbyist, have a service or talent to share? Do you make your own beer, mead or wine? Or perhaps own a winery? Sometimes we have a connection, know someone who could donate, would you mind asking? It could be your hairdresser or your neighbor crafting in the garage or a family member who makes something awesome or another. Even smaller items are welcome as we put together themed baskets and they come in handy. If you are not sure drop me a line.

We are again going to try to minimize driving and coordinate drop off and pick-ups with cluster leaders. Of course you can also bring the donations to the general monthly meetings.

Since we are an educational foundation we can offer a tax deduction. I can e-mail you the form or you can pick one up at the general meetings. I want to thank you ahead of time and I'm excited to see what you all come up with!



Christine Kurtz  
Silent Auction Chair  
[Petalumabeelady@yahoo.com](mailto:Petalumabeelady@yahoo.com)





**On pondering about the bees  
Understanding Nectar Flows-  
How the blackberries saved my colonies  
By Christine Kurtz**

One of the complexities of understanding beekeeping is being aware of the nectar flows. For us humans it's often a thing of retrospect. The bees on the other hand are keenly aware of it because they rely on them for building and/or expanding their colony, to explode in population by raising a huge amount of brood to take advantage of it, to reproduce by swarming, to sustain themselves, to put away reserve for times of dearth and for winter reserves. We, on the other hand, struggle to see it. Easily duped by the show of flowers. We think "there are a lot of flowers so there must be a nectar flow, the bees have enough food". We often forget that we are in a severe drought even though we are constantly reminded by the media to reduce our water consumption. The show of flowers can be amazing in spring. The fact that the ground moisture especially for the deep rooted plants and trees has not been replenished for the last 4 years is hard to see when they flower anyway in an feeble attempt to make seed or fruit with the minutest fractional offering of the typical nectar usually offered. The bees have to work harder these days.

When the nectar flow is there in full force the opportunity to expand their nest by building new comb is not wasted by the bees and new frames can be drawn out with new wax almost overnight. When it's not, in dire need the bees will chew off wax in certain areas, not to build comb, but merely to cap the larvae ready to pupate. Of course these are the two extreme of abundance and scraping to make ends meet.

So when are the nectar flows? I wish I could tell you ahead of time. As with everything in beekeeping there doesn't seem to be a neat manual to follow and it varies on your geographical location too, sometimes to the microclimate level. One thing is for sure though; it used to be a lot more predictable than it is now. With the -weather we are experiencing, all formulas and predictability went out the window. But here again we are brought back to the bees! The bees know and they will tell you, they will teach you. It is their job to know. After all, their survival depends on it. Building comb is directly related to nectar flows, there must be one to build comb (if you feed sugar water it is giving the bees an artificial nectar flow, or supplementing one, here I am talking about bees that are not fed).

This year I have been meticulously dating the new

frames I added into my colonies. Since I use foundation less frames I can strategically put the frames in different areas of the hive. I am able to add foraging space, brood space and honey stores space when necessary to manage the growth of my colonies and to prevent swarming as best I can. In my situation the new frames are not always on top so dating them helps me see when, where, how fast, or if at all the bees fill those empty frames with wax. My hives are in three apiaries in Petaluma, it is important to keep this in mind because beekeepers in Glenn Ellen did not experience the nectar flow the same way for example, experiencing a much harsher early dearth, not experiencing a second flow and their colonies are struggling greatly with little stores this year.

Erroneously I was expecting the same nectar curve than last year thinking a drought is a drought right? Wrong! Going back to 2014, the nectar flow had begun early, by the end of February bees were already starting to building comb, March and April there was a steady flow and adding

frames was almost a given at each inspection, then beginning June the nectar faucet was completely shut off, not the smallest comb wafer was being built and by the end of June I was taking those last inserted undrawn frames out again.

Now come 2015 where the bees pretty much were able to forage throughout the winter, by the end of February colonies were already exploding in my apiary in Petaluma and all surviving colonies had added supers. Beginning March I was splitting colonies to propagate my 2-year surviving colonies and to prevent swarming. Those early splits did remarkably well and were able to build up on their own and so did the earlier swarms. Then suddenly mid April a lot of drones were being ejected, more of a typical fall phenomenal. Any other time a colony dispatches it's drones means a colony is either under



Blackberries in blossom

nutritional stress or is doing some

intense hygienic control and they can't or choose not to sustain the adult drones nor feed those big hungry drone larvae. Upon a close inspection I noticed that the bees had completely stopped building new comb, the nectar flow was off. I had a feeling of impending doom. Oh no! I thought, is this it? I started calling other beekeepers that were experiencing the same thing and we commiserating how much trouble we were in with our bees. What they had is what they had for the next few months which was pretty much, much of nothing, colonies full of brood and no honey and feeding colonies came up way too often.

Severe drought did mean SEVERE! The colonies that came through winter strong were actually ok, but the later splits, swarms, packages and nucs had very little natural food. Supercedure became rampant which

set some colonies back even more, especially population wise, just as they needed to grow. Bees under nutritional stress have smaller retinues touching the queen to disperse her pheromones, weak pheromone distribution leads to supercedure.

But here is the caveat; at least it was in Petaluma this year. We had 2 late rains, not enough for the parched deep-rooted trees but what that did to the blackberries was phenominal. Those seemingly insignificant rains plus a really cool month of May gave the blackberry the most exquisite show of flower and consequently nectar and pollen. This saved most of my small colonies and gave surplus honey to my big ones. New wax was being drawn like crazy throughout June and I scrambled to put more frames and supers together to keep up. Took me by surprise.

It was a double edge sword though. Mating in May was catastrophic in my apiaries. I have never dealt with so many queenless or poorly mated colonies in my beekeeping career! Thankfully I was on top of it, some splits were inserted in queenless colonies, frames of eggs and young brood in others and most ended up with viable queens. A couple repeatedly failed and I had to let them go, never easy.

It's really important to inspect your colonies regularly even if you think nothing is happening. The picture below shows one of my colonies that was just struggling along and status quo was in my notes for the last three inspections so I left it alone a little longer,

and it bounced back while I wasn't looking! I think the blackberries helped this one along. The bees are keenly aware of what you aren't and with careful observation and attention you will be part of that awareness and be able to manage your colonies accordingly. Always have extra equipment ready including rubber bands because you never know. A nectar flow can come or shut off unexpectedly or a colony can bounce back even when you have written it off.



Colony bounce back (when I wasn't looking)



The rubber bands hold the comb in the frame where it should have been!

Christine Kurtz  
Honey Bee Consultant  
[Petalumabeelady@yahoo.com](mailto:Petalumabeelady@yahoo.com)

---

## Board of Directors Meeting

July 2015

No General Meeting was held this month. The members and family that went to the picnic had a great time! Hope more can come next year.

*Becky Jackson, Secretary*

## Treasurer's Report

August 1, 2015

The combined bank account totals are \$27,809.86. July's expenses includes the re-building of our website and management (currently under construction). The Website committee did a great job working out the details so our association didn't have to dip into our savings to complete the job. A big thank you goes out to Cheryl Veretto for being our Webmaster these past years and we cheer her on as she moves on to other projects. Please welcome our new Webmaster Chris Dicker.

We purchased a few supplies and some new books for the Library. If you have suggestions for books or videos for the library, please contact our librarian, Nadya Clark. She is also considering ordering multiple copies of some of the more popular books; so let her know if you have been waiting for a particular book.

My one-year term as Treasurer will be up at the end of this year. If anyone is interested in being the Treasurer for the Association, please come talk to me at the meeting or email me at [treasurer@sonomabees.org](mailto:treasurer@sonomabees.org).

*Denise Wright, Treasurer*

---

### Contact Information

Regular monthly meetings of the Sonoma County Beekeepers' Association are held on the second Monday of each month, at 7 pm. The meetings cover a wide range of topics of interest to beekeepers. Everyone wanting to learn about honeybees is cordially invited to attend. You do not need to be a member nor a beekeeper to attend these meetings. Dues can be paid online at our website [sonomabees.org](http://sonomabees.org), at our monthly meeting or by mail. Please see our web site for the application and various kinds of memberships available.

Our mailing address is:

Sonoma County Beekeepers' Assoc.

P.O. Box 98

Santa Rosa, CA 95402-0098

---

### 2015 Board Members and Other Helpful People

Pres. Laura Baker [President@sonomabees.org](mailto:President@sonomabees.org)

Past Pres. Ettamarie Peterson [pastpresident@sonomabees.org](mailto:pastpresident@sonomabees.org)

1st Vice Pres. Membership Kelli Cox— [1stVP@sonomabees.org](mailto:1stVP@sonomabees.org)

2nd Vice President Ettamarie Peterson – [2ndVP@sonomabees.org](mailto:2ndVP@sonomabees.org) - 707 479-1613

Secretary – Becky Jackson - [Secretary@sonomabees.org](mailto:Secretary@sonomabees.org)

Treasurer Denise Wright [Treasurer@sonomabees.org](mailto:Treasurer@sonomabees.org)

Librarian –Nadya Clark [Librarian@sonomabees.org](mailto:Librarian@sonomabees.org) 707-938-4762

Reps. at Large –Cheryl Veretto [atLarge1@sonomabees.org](mailto:atLarge1@sonomabees.org), Chris Conrad [atLarge2@sonomabees.org](mailto:atLarge2@sonomabees.org), John McGinnis [atLarge3@sonomabees.org](mailto:atLarge3@sonomabees.org)

Volunteer Coordinator – Cathy Kopshever [volunteer@sonomabees.org](mailto:volunteer@sonomabees.org)

Editor Ettamarie Peterson – [Editor@sonomabees.org](mailto:Editor@sonomabees.org) 765-4582

Swarm Chairperson- John Krafft [swarms@sonomabees.org](mailto:swarms@sonomabees.org)

Webmaster- Chris Dicker [Webmaster@sonomabees.org](mailto:Webmaster@sonomabees.org)

Education- Jen Espinoza – [education@sonomabees.org](mailto:education@sonomabees.org)

Historian – Kirstie Stramler [historian@sonomabees.org](mailto:historian@sonomabees.org)

Regional Coordinator- Thea Vierling – [regionalcoordinator@sonomabees.org](mailto:regionalcoordinator@sonomabees.org)

Regional Group Leaders:

[southcluster@sonomabees.org](mailto:southcluster@sonomabees.org) Sally McGough

[northcluster@sonomabees.org](mailto:northcluster@sonomabees.org) Lynne Black

[eastcluster@sonomabees.org](mailto:eastcluster@sonomabees.org) Lizanne Pastore

[westcluster@sonomabees.org](mailto:westcluster@sonomabees.org) Chris Dicker

[centralcluster@sonomabees.org](mailto:centralcluster@sonomabees.org) Chris Conrad

## Ads in This Newsletter

Check with Treasurer Denise Wright for annual costs of running ads. It is cheaper than the monthly costs for ads, which are \$10 for a business card size, \$20 for ¼ page, and \$40 for a half page. The editor needs to know you have paid her and needs a jpg copy of the ad. The current and back issues of the newsletter are on the [www.sonomabees.org](http://www.sonomabees.org) web site so many people besides the 400 or so members view the ads. Contact information is on the last page of this edition.



Christine Kurtz  
Honey Bee Consultant  
707-849-3220  
petalumabeelady@yahoo.com



Honeybees  
FOR SALE

Gentle, local bees and hives  
No chemicals ever used  
Beekeeping equipment & tools

Aprillance@aol.com  
(707) 431-1569  
Healdsburg, CA  
www.Aprillancebees.com



Kit Lotroos, LMT<sub>NM</sub> | CMT<sub>CA</sub>  
Transformation Through Touch

(707) 793.2195  
voicemail  
www.lofroos.org

sustain your body  
restore your spirit

State of NM LMT License #2061 - State of CA CMT License #14321 - by appointment.

Solar Oven, \$45 Let the sun separate and clean your wax & honey in one day. 10"x12"x20"  
Call 707/525-8424. Leonard Riepenhoff



Bee Conscious- Bee Removal  
Bee Removal/ Wall Extractions  
480 Uniland Drive  
Santa Rosa, ca. 95401

chris conrad  
cell (415) 350-5700  
chrisconrad@comcast.net

www.beeconsciousremoval.com

Free Colony given to beekeeper that refers  
Chris Conrad & he gets a job from that.

Where you can BEE yourself



**beekind**®

OPEN EVERY DAY



**BEES**



**Packages & Nucs  
BEEKEEPING SUPPLIES  
HONEY - CANDLES - GIFTS**

**We buy local honey in 5 gallon buckets  
Premium price paid**

921 Gravenstein Hwy. South 116 South in Sebastopol  
(Next to Fosters Freeze)  
(707) 824-2905      [beekind.com](http://beekind.com)

**Visit our other shop at the Ferry Building in SF**

ENTER TO WIN a FREE STARTER HIVE! Includes a basic screen bottom board, commercial grade deep or medium hive body, 8 frames with rite-cell foundation, 2 follower boards, basic inner hive cover, telescoping hive cover, entrance reducer and entrance feeder. RULES: Come into the Sebastopol beekind store anytime during any month and fill out an entry form (ask clerk). Drop it in the drawing box and wait, patiently or not. Must be present to enter but not to win. One entry per month per person. Any upgrades must be paid for. Limit: two wins per year. Drawing to be held the first week of every month for the previous month's entries. If not able to pick up win at store, winner must pay.