

# The Monthly Extractor



Volume 37, Issue 7 July 2014

**Monthly Meeting: July 14th- 6p.m. Social hour-Bring your own cup for tea, talk to beekeepers who can help you with your questions, check out our library, and renew your membership.**  
**7 p.m.- Michael Thiel of Gaia Bees on Demeter certification and "Bien" (Biodynamic beekeeping)**

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

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## **From Our President**

In June I made a decision to help a lady that had a problem with bees in the wall of an old chicken building. She told me she could not afford to have someone remove them professionally. Rather than have her exterminate them I asked a cluster group to help her using this as a teaching opportunity. The lady was pleased enough to donate money afterwards to the Association. The cluster group was delighted to learn skills needed to rescue bees and use rubber bands to secure the comb onto empty frames. In this issue you will see an article about this learning experience by Sierra Gitana Castillo with her photos.

The problem with this solution was someone who does this professionally and had taken the time to look at the job and give a bid saw this as a conflict of interest. He also pointed out if the lady was not happy for some reason there was a chance the Association could be held liable. His point here was that this is a higher-level skill than just swarm catching.

After listening to both sides of this conflict I think the best thing to do in the future is not to suggest our clusters help if it is known a professional has been involved. I will be bringing it up at the next board meeting to make a set policy.

Our beekeepers need to know hive maintenance skills, some of which were learned during this cluster activity. The teamwork and handling of bees under stressful conditions are invaluable skills. It is important for our members to learn this and other transferable skills. One of S.C.B.A.'s goals is to educate our beekeepers in the various aspects of caring for bees. The cluster groups are doing a great job of educating and helping each other. The bees of our region are so much better for this.

From time to time our organization has had some sort of differences of opinions. Some of us believe local bees are the very best and do not want packaged bees nor imported queens around. Some of us teach beekeeping for free and some charge. Some treat and/or feed bees and others believe this to be a poor practice. One thing most of us agree on is that swarm catching is a skill new beekeepers need to learn from an experience mentor. We need to listen to each other and respect the opinions of all.

*Ettamarie Peterson, President*

## Ads in This Newsletter

Check with Treasurer Rita Maloney 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.

## My July Beekeeping To-Do List

By Serge Labesque © 2014

### Reality and a dream

It's true that "bees are suffering". And yet, not much is *really* being done about it! More research here, more treatments there, more bee breeding... In fact, these are only attempts to ease our conscience. Meanwhile the status quo is maintained and pollinator populations keep declining.

But *we know* what's hurting the bees! We just do not want to face reality. It's the misuse of natural resources, the greed-permeated farming and beekeeping practices that are the root cause of this.

For example, take the annual routine of almond pollination, which brings into California more than two-thirds of the country's entire bee population. This is undoubtedly the largest man-managed and -induced migration of live organisms that exists. All those bees are trucked into the state along with pests, pathogens and other undesirable critters for only one reason: To ensure that the almond blossoms will be well pollinated. This has become necessary because the almond growers have annihilated everything that was not an almond tree on their land. Therefore, there are no pollinators left in and around the immense wasteland the growers call orchards. The growers have created this situation to maximize their financial gains. Almonds are a very lucrative crop, which encourages the growers to keep expanding their orchards at a furious pace.

The vast majority of commercial beekeepers are more than happy to provide the pollinating service, and they now derive more than half of their income from pollination contracts. Their colonies are treated for pests and diseases and force-fed to make certain that they will be at the level of strength that the growers demand. Because queens no longer last very long in the chemicals-doused travelling hives, definitely not "like they used to", they are frequently and systematically replaced. This practice fuels the mass production of queens in commercial operations, which subsequently results in the rapid loss of honey bee genetic diversity. Knowing that 95% of the country's bee colonies are in the hands of these "professionals" and that most of the hobbyists try to emulate them, we can say that at this point in time humans have a near total control of the species. Unfortunately, the sad reality is that we are failing miserably at keeping it healthy and strong.

We do not need more treatments or mass-produced new strains of bees, not to mention GE bees (Yes, scientists are working on this!) to fix this situation. We need to transform ourselves from greedy miners of natural resources into genuine stewards of the environment.

And with the help of good leadership, it could happen! Think about it: If the borders of California were to be closed to the movement of bees and bee germplasm, the attitude and practices of the growers and farmers who depend on insect pollinators to secure their crops would change. Without self-fertile plants, which, by the way are being developed in order to do away with the need for bees, they would have to rely on local pollinators. Deprived of the pollination services of bees from all over the country, the growers would be forced to pay more attention to the habitat and health of the local pollinators. If lawmakers cared about managing responsibly the common wealth and ensuring a sound future for the state instead of caving in front of the powerful lobby of the farming industry, this could happen in no time at all! And the existence of bees could change for the better.

Yes, I know it's a dream... But this is not so farfetched. Actually, similar measures have been implemented in other parts of the world. So, why not here, in California?

### July in the apiaries:

It's hard to imagine tougher conditions than those our bees are experiencing this year in the dry hills. Deprived of a spring honey flow, the colonies have entered summer without any significant amount of stores. Confronted by the disabling combination of poor nutrition, California buckeye, and intense spraying in some of the surrounding vineyards,

the brood nests disintegrated very early. The remaining populations are weak and vulnerable to robbing, which has not abated for months. The bees are struggling to keep their colonies fed from day to day and to keep the hives cool at a time when preparations for winter should be well underway. All around, the vegetation shows signs of stress due to the lack of water. The Toyons produced flowers that did not even attract foragers, and there is not enough California buckwheat left to make a difference. The tarweed has begun to bloom on the parched hillside, but how could it be offering any nectar?

Where bees have access to irrigated vegetation, or where the mitigating influence of the Bay or ocean are felt, the hives are thriving and producing surplus honey. This contrast is striking. It is the reason that leads beekeepers to move their hives. When this practice is not an option, the bees and their keepers need to do the best they can with the conditions that are imposed or presented by the apiary location.

Adjustments may be made to the hives in order to reduce the seasonal stresses on the colonies. This may start by providing afternoon shade to the hives and by making sure that the bees have access to water. Adequate in-hive air circulation that does not dehydrate the brood is an important fine-tuning detail. I learned years ago how damaging removing the monitoring trays from below the screen bottoms can be in summer. The bees need to control the environment of the brood, the temperature and relative humidity, which they do by collecting water and evaporating it inside the hive. When the entire bottom of the hive is open, this becomes a strenuous task for the colony. Screened upper ventilations slots allow hot air to exit the hives and prevent robber bees from entering. Double screens are necessary to prevent the bees from passing honey from the inside of the hive outside, to the beggar bees. Follower boards placed in the hives create air gaps along the sides of the hives. This allows the air that becomes excessively hot in contact with the sides the hives that are exposed to the sun to rise to the ventilation slots without affecting the brood chambers. The hive entrances also deserve a little attention. They may be reduced to make sure that the guard bees can defend their hives against robber bees and yellow jackets.

During the summer months, I most often limit the inspection of my hives to the exteriors, the monitoring trays, and to the upper parts of the hives. Only when clues gathered at the entrance of the hive or on the monitoring tray justify it, do I reach the brood nest. Open-hive inspections are best avoided in the middle of the day, when dearth is at its peak and the risk of robbing is great.

The brood nests have been shrinking for several weeks, and now the populations are slowly decreasing. With no honey flow to keep the diminishing brood nests in the lower parts of the hives, they are being vacated. By the end of the month, the lower supers could very well be empty. They should remain in place though, to provide pollen and nectar storage space.

Even though the situation is particularly calamitous around my apiaries, it is possible to see the differences among queens and colonies. Some, which are not developing satisfactorily, should be combined. Requeening, starting nucs and raising queens are not valid options in these conditions. The bees have to do the best they can.

In a normal year, spring honey would have been harvested by now. This is not the case this year in my apiaries. Simply put, there is no surplus honey. In fact, the bees do not even have the stores they need. In other apiaries where honey could be harvested, the wet extracted supers can be returned to the hives that produced them. To avoid triggering robbing, it is best to do this in the evening, when the foragers are returning to their hives.

#### **In summary, this month:**

- Keep an eye on the health of the colonies.
- Manage honey supers (less space is needed as the nectar flow decreases).
- Finish harvesting surplus spring honey, but do not overharvest, particularly from hives kept in the dry hills, where the bees will be *consuming* more honey during the summer than they will be producing.
- Extract and bottle honey.
- Return extracted supers to the bees for cleaning or re-filling.
- Provide adequate air circulation through the hives (upper ventilation slots and follower boards).
- Provide afternoon shade.
- Ensure that water is constantly available to the bees.
- Remove frames of undrawn beeswax foundation.
- Follow up on the development of the colonies (keep notes!)
- Requeen or combine hives that are not performing satisfactorily, and those that have failing queens.
- Observe and evaluate young queens and their offspring. Take notes for later selection, combination or replacement.
- Be aware of and avoid situations and manipulations that can trigger robbing.
- Beware of the fire danger of using the hot smoker in dry grass.
- Discard old and misshapen combs.
- Render wax from discarded frames and from cappings (separately). The solar wax melters work very well at this season.
- Routinely clean and scorch tools and equipment.

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

Note: Continuing with drought tolerant-to-low-water plants that can be part of a lawn replacement project. This month focuses on trees.

Native Plant of the Month

### **Chilopsis linearis, Desert Willow, Family Bignoniaceae**

Desert willow might sound like it needs a lot of water, but this freely blooming attractive small tree (15-30 feet tall) thrives on heat and tolerates little to moderate water. The leaves look like willow leaves, long and slender gray-green or bright dark green. The trunk is rough and shaggy when the tree gets older. The fragrant flowers are large and look like cattleya orchids, attracting hummingbirds and bees. The flower colors range from shell pink to white, lavender or deep pink, with pretty patterns of lines and spots that show pollinators where the good nectar is.

Chilopsis is very adaptable to all types of soil except for heavy, wet, cold soil. You only need to give it a couple of deep drinks in the summer- maybe once a month, after it is established- to keep this pretty tree in flower from May-October. The tree is deciduous, so would let winter sunlight in if planted on a western or southern exposure. The seedpods are either messy or attractive, depending on whom you listen to. Pruning to shape can be done in winter.

Beneficial Plant of the Month

### **Catalpa, Family Bignoniaceae**

Yes, this is in the same family as Desert Willow, and the flowers are very similar, but the leaves and growth pattern is different. The tree can get as large as 30-40 feet tall and wide. The large leaves are quite attractive, heart shaped and provide nice shade in the summer. Wikipedia says that the leaves secrete nectar! If you have one, go out and see if bees are attracted to the leaves. The nectar is borne in "tiny glands in the axils of the primary veins."

The flowers certainly do have lots of nectar, they have pollinator guides of lines and spots that let bees and hummingbirds know a sweet treat is inside. Catalpa blooms May-July or August in Sonoma County, with those pretty white orchid shaped flowers. Afterward there are long bean-like seeds that will fall, so plant it where you don't mind the mess. The large leaves also are deciduous, also. Catalpa needs moderate water, not as much as a lawn, but irrigate it a couple of times per month, especially when getting established. Full sun is appreciated.

Alice Ford-Sala

## **BEE WISE: LIMITS ARE GOOD" by Emery Dann**

I asked my supervisor a number of years ago, "What is the most difficult part of your job?" He said, "Everyone wants a piece of me and they want it NOW!" Setting limits is important because you and I can do some things, but not everything! There are "city limit" signs, our income has a limit, in a drought, water is limited, and we all know there is a mileage limit to how far you can drive on a full tank of gas before you run out!

Beehives have limits. Beehives need to make a "profit" for the work they do. "Non-profit beehives" fail! The time and energy required to forage must produce a "profit" (bringing back enough nectar, pollen, propolis and water to the hive at the right time). Bees know the sugar content in flower sources. Scouts look for between 30 and 80 percent sugar content. This is bee efficiency. If no flower source in the vicinity of their hive has this percentage of sugar content, only then are they willing to work flowers below 30 percent. Bees do not pollinate every flower source available to them—they are selective. Bees prioritize their limits both inside and outside the hive various ways or they do not survive! There are also limits to how far they will go from the hive to forage. There is a "break-even point" where the effort they expend ("energy expense") equals what they bring back to the hive (for "income savings"). This means they need to create more "profit" which is well above what it "costs" them to bring stores to the hive. I am seeing in some hives I am responsible for not having enough stores because of the drought we are experiencing. Keep in mind every hive may be different—even those sitting next to each other. One may have stores while the next one may not. We also need to check if there is evidence of a healthy queen in the hive. Hives are in danger when they lose their queen! Bees pace themselves and work with high efficiency while focusing on the goal they are achieving. Financial advisor, Dave Ramsey, wanted to know the most important investing strategy in a billionaire's life, so he asked the billionaire. Guess what he told Dave? He said, "The most important wealth building strategy I use is in the children's story of—"The Hare and the Tortoise"! He said, "The tortoise wins, because there are too many "investment hares" going too fast, today, and they may lose their wealth!" Being frantic and desperate, for whatever reason, can be a

financial disaster in our lives! Bees pace themselves. Bees save for a rainy day they know is coming! They have an emergency honey and pollen fund. While Individual bees only contribute 1/12th of a teaspoon of honey to the hive, it is consistent and steady, like the tortoise that wins the race!

We, like our bees, all have limits! We have TIME LIMITS, RESOURCE LIMITS, SPACE LIMITS, LIMITS TO THE NUMBER OF HIVES an area can support or that we can manage. We all know the feeling when we “spread ourselves too thin”. We cannot do it all. Some of our priorities need to increase, some decrease or even stop altogether so we do not “run out of gas” or experience burnout! There are strong beehives that are good at setting limits. I have seen weak hives that do not set certain limits exhaust and overextend themselves. These hives cannot survive. As Serge Labesque and Doug Vincent have told us, “Weak, unhealthy bees hurt our local bee genetics!” Sometimes we can make two hives stronger by combining or replacing a failing queen. Our job as beekeepers is to keep strong colonies.

So the question for us is “What limits do we need in our lives”, as well as to best assist our bees?” We cannot do everything, but we can choose to do some things well! There are limits we can exceed when “TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING” dilutes our most important priorities! It is a balancing act that we need to take periodic inventory of in our lives and hives, checking where we or our bees may be struggling. Are we, personally, close to “running out of gas”?

We do not have to do this alone—we can seek help and support from many sources in our lives with teamwork like our bees do. Look online, call with bee questions, join one of the Cluster Groups and participate in our Sonoma County Beekeepers Association meetings and activities. “Limits are good” for us to avoid burn out and be effective! Don’t give too many “pieces” of yourself away! I still hear my supervisor telling me this was the most difficult part of his job!



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

### July Speaker – Michael Joshin Thiele

Our speaker Michael Joshin Thiele is leading an innovative approach within the biodynamic apiculture movement and teaches in the United States and abroad. He founded Gaia Bees ([www.gaiabees.com](http://www.gaiabees.com)) to create an educational platform and resource for a new approach to living with bees. Michael was involved with the creation of the annual Sonoma County “Bee Symposium” in 2007. He co-founded “The Melissa Garden” ([www.themelissagarden.com](http://www.themelissagarden.com)) in the same year. His work is documented in various (inter-) national magazines, books and film documentaries (“Queen of the Sun”). In 2013, he began working as a consultant for the USDA in the Dominican Republic. He lives with his family in Sebastopol.



This is the worst time of the year for fire danger. This smoker was not used properly and is now ruined. Be very careful with your smoker and keep water near by in case of fire! Years ago a member suggested keeping a can of soda in your kit. If a fire started you could shake the can, open it a little bit and the soda would squirt out like a fire extinguisher. Wouldn’t hurt to follow that advice.

Thanks to Thea Vierling for sending this photo.

**Want to volunteer this summer? Thea Vierling is looking for volunteers to help her at the Sonoma County Fair and Ettamarie wants more volunteers for the Gravenstein Apple Fair. Contact** Cathy Kopshever SCBA Volunteer Coordinator [volunteer@sonomabees.org](mailto:volunteer@sonomabees.org)"



**Don't throw away those old bee boxes. Fill them with good soil and use them for planters. Line them with gopher wire if those are a problem. I am growing spaghetti squash in three of mine. Ettamarie**

**Board of Directors Meeting June 2, 2014**

Met at the home of Denise Wright at 6:00 pm

<u>Board members Present:</u>	<u>Board members Absent:</u>	<u>Committee Chairs Present:</u>
Hasna Wood—2 <sup>nd</sup> VP	Ettamarie--President	Christine Kurtz—Past Pres.
Denise Wright--2 <sup>nd</sup> At-Large		Cathy Kopshever—Volunteers
Rita Maloney--Treasurer		Thea Vierling—Regional Coordinator
Becky Jackson—Secretary		
Laura Baker—1 <sup>st</sup> VP		
Cheryl Veretto--1 <sup>st</sup> At-Large		

The minutes of the May 5<sup>th</sup> meeting were reviewed. Hasna moved to accept the minutes as presented, Rita seconded and all approved (6 ayes).

1<sup>st</sup> VP Laura Baker opened the meeting at 7:01 pm in Ettamarie's absence. Ettamarie has the paperwork for the Apple Fair on August 9-10<sup>th</sup> done and half the needed volunteers are signed up thanks to Cathy Kopshever! Cheryl advises that the County Fair ends on August 10<sup>th</sup>, and the booth supplies will be brought directly to the Apple Fair. They will leave the County Fair early in order to get stuff to the Apple Fair.

1<sup>st</sup> VP of Membership, Laura reports 27 additional memberships, for a total of 381 members now. She has talked with Sabin about a CvCRM snafu with new memberships not meshing between WordPress and CvCRM. Sabin will write some code to hopefully help. Jim Spencer and Cheryl are also involved with the process. Laura stresses that Cluster Leaders and others with Admin access, should please check with her about membership complaints, rather than trying to 'fix' things. Rita will order another CvCRM instructional book.

2<sup>nd</sup> VP of Meetings, Hasna reports June's speaker is Doug Vincent on Queen Bees plus more. July's speaker will be Michael Thiel. Hasna will be absent in July, so Cheryl will introduce Michael as the speaker. Hasna will call Michael to find out what he will need for setting up. Thea asked Hasna to follow up with Sam Comfort in August to find out his needs, and possible workshops. Cheryl volunteered to host a workshop with him and house him too. Cheryl moved to approve to remainder of the monthly programs as presented on this agenda for the remainder of the year. Denise seconded and all approved (6 ayes).

June: Doug Vincent on Queen Bees plus more

July: Michael Thiel of Gaia Bees on Demeter certification and "Bien" (Biodynamic beekeeping).

August: Sam Comfort on Top Bar and Warre hives.

September: Amina Harris from UC Davis on honey tasting.

October: Kate Frey, a Master Gardener from Melissa Gardens.

November: Gadget Night + Syrian beekeeper colleague of Hasna's?

December: Potluck and Silent Auction

Kelli Maciel asked for the picnic to be confirmed.

Treasurer, Rita presented the May financial report showing expenses of \$955.30 and income of \$946.01. She bought 4 more banners for events and education that will show on next month's report. Cheryl asked for a "marketing expense" on the budget for next year. There was discussion on a "donation" vs. "services rendered." Educational events at the schools ask a "suggested donation" of \$1 per child. That may change to \$1 per PERSON.

### **Group Reports**

Regional Cluster leader, Thea reports all is great, in general. Chris Dicker in West County is exceptional and North County's new coordinator is getting going with Thea's help. Thea reviewed the Bee Café and Hive Dive protocol.

Education—Jen Espinoza was absent but will have a report at the next meeting. Ettamarie will be asked to consider appointing both Jen and Cathy Kopshever as Board members, if desired.

Technology—Cheryl Veretto reports there's a new blue button on the front page of the website for the Educational community (a public page). Teachers, etc. can request presentations through it.

Per-Meetings—Christine thanks everyone for bringing in items to make show and tell interesting. Cheryl will bring plants again and encourages everyone to bring plants to share or sell with all proceeds going to SCBA.

Swarms—the board was made aware of bad feelings brought on by someone not following SCBA's guidelines during a swarm list call. Thea will follow-up further.

Volunteers—Cathy asked about recognition for volunteers (gifts) given in December. She was given ideas of what has been done. The Board and others can help her for this year.

Cathy asked for folding chairs and tables for events, and a shade structure. Cathy will buy a few chairs, Ettamarie has 3 SCBA tables. Cheryl moved that we buy a pop-up shade canopy at a maximum cost of \$200 (Costco has). Hasna seconded and all approved (5 ayes).

Cathy asked about observation hives or live bee tents. Last year, the Board decided not to have the live bee tent. Those who own observation hives are: Ettamarie, Laurie Bonsall, Emery Dann, April Lance and Cheryl Veretto. She can contact one of them to ask if they are willing to bring theirs to a specific event as it comes up.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Sonoma County Children's Museum—no update.

Changes to website as per Educational page is done!

### **NEW BUSINESS**

All thank yous for all volunteers will be done at the December meeting.

Next July Board meeting is undecided. Thea will ask Jen to host. Rita will do it if not Jen. August's board meeting will be hosted by Hasna.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:00 pm Respectfully submitted, Becky Jackson, Secretary

### **Treasurer's Report July 1, 2014 By Treasurer Rita Maloney**

The combined bank account totals are \$16,107.22. Since the Education outreach is so busy, we ordered more materials for their presentations: roll-up banners, laminated bee posters, and bee pencils. This was an expenditure of close to \$2500. Now we can handle more simultaneous events and presentations without taxing the volunteers to not have the materials that they need.

My two-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.

## **General Meeting Minutes for June 9, 2014**

About 135 present. President Ettamarie Peterson welcomed visitors, new members.

Volunteers still needed for the Sonoma County Fair July 25-August 10, and then the Gravenstein Apple Fair on August 8-10. Contact Cathy Kopshever, [volunteers@sonomabees.org](mailto:volunteers@sonomabees.org) to help.

The Summer SCBA Bee picnic has changed to Sunday, August 24, 3-7 pm at Janet Leisen's farm. She asks people to carpool! Or shuttle from the Luther Burbank Center

Mark Dolan was introduced; he's the president of the Sonoma County Children's Museum. He's kept bees since 2009 and is asking for help and volunteers to get an observation hive established on their grounds. It's next to the Schulz museum at 1835 W. Steele Lane. It has a 1-acre garden, and an indoor area under construction. Volunteers needed to 1) build the exhibit, 2) maintain the hive and give docent tours, and 3) Funding through personal donations or corporate sponsorships. He hopes to open the bee exhibit in spring of 2015.

Doug Vincent, the owner of Beekind in Sebastopol was introduced as our speaker tonight. Doug has kept bees for 15 years and has had the store for 10 years. His talk is on Hive Reproduction.

"Bees are not great at reproduction" he reports that the percentages are low for successful survival for unmanaged hives or swarms. Only 30% of swarms find a cavity and survive the following winter. The parent colony gets a new



queen, of which 20% of the queens fail to return from their mating flights, and another 20% won't survive the winter (diseases, etc.).

There are 3 ways to get more hives: 1) buy a package/nuc/colony in the spring (average 30% loss). 2) Catch swarms (up to 30% loss and you get no honey that year). 3) Divide or split your colony (and get no honey that year).

Doug's recommendation is to split your strong survivor hives in mid-summer (June to early July). The resulting split will have a better-mated queen (more drones, better flying weather for mating flights). These summer nucs must be FED due to the dearth most areas experience in summer. He cautions that nucs being fed are easily robbed by other colonies!! He finds that adding a second story box for a brood chamber doesn't necessarily increase their chances for winter survival, small colonies do well for him. He has 90% survival.

Make next-year's bees in mid-summer this year. You can make divides/nucs and let the bees raise their own queen, or raise queens from your BEST hives. Break up your worst hives to provide the brood and stores for those nucs. Make sure each nuc gets a frame with a queen cell from your best hive(s). Three weeks later, check for a laying queen. Any found queenless get broken up and added into the other successful hives. Don't try to 'fix' them; the failure rate is 60%, no matter what you do to try to save them.

To make your own queens, you can lay a piece of comb with eggs on top of the frames, with spacers holding it up, then harvest the ripe cells. Or you could learn to graft 3.5-day-old larvae into artificial cups.

Doug reminds us, don't forget the drones! One way to get lots of drone brood is to put a medium frame into a deep brood box. The bees will add comb to the bottom with drone-sized combs in the natural cells.

Some questions were asked and these tidbits were gleaned:

- Dragonflies eat queens, and other bees.
- Laying-worker hives aren't usually successfully turned queen-right. He says you can 1) let them die. 2) Shake them out to join other colonies. 3) Give them open frames of brood for 3 weeks in a row. 4) Take the hive and put it on top of a queen-right hive. Once it has brood within it, split it off again to raise a queen from that brood.
- Fanning bees don't necessarily mean a queen is present. It simply means that they're fanning!
- When in doubt, DON'T.

Visit [www.beekind.com](http://www.beekind.com) for more information on making summer splits.

Respectfully submitted,  
Becky Jackson, Secretary



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### **SCBA Education Wraps Up First Year Under New Coordinator Position By Jen Espinoza**

Until last August, SCBA did not have an official 'coordinator' for education efforts. There were dedicated beekeepers making presentations because they saw the benefit to our community and schools. Often they were retired teachers/principals who took naturally to the school setting and who gathered or created materials to enhance their teaching.

Since last August, under guidance from these educators, a coordinator and new group of educators have come together to reach out to over 2300 students at 35 different schools. A new process of suggesting a donation be made to SCBA generated nearly \$1,000. New materials were purchased and developed resulting in three teaching "kits", located in east, central and west county.

Bravo to the dedicated SCBA educators who have completed this effort over the last 10 months!

Thank you Thea, Ettamarie, Connie, Jim, Marcus, Randi Sue, Norma, Chris D, Christine, Cheryl, Mike, Linda, Angela, George, Patsy, Janet, Doreen, and our coordinator, Jen.

If you are interested in more information or joining the education team, please contact Jen Espinoza at [education@sonomabees.org](mailto:education@sonomabees.org). We'd love to train a few more beekeepers to help next year and are gathering before the July General Meeting at 6:00 – feel free to come by and join in!

Below are photos from a presentation in Windsor where children participated as "foragers" in gathering pollen and taking it back to the hive.





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**Article and News from Cluster Members  
Getting experience the Hands On Way!**

These past several months my wife and I attended a few regional bee cluster meetings in Sonoma County and they truly transformed us from "keepers of bees" to "beekeepers"!

The information we received was informative and interesting but more important the assistance we received from fellow beekeepers really made the difference. Through attending some meetings we may have intellectually learned a lot, but more important, the hands on experience really did it for us... Fellow beekeepers with more experience than us, jumped in to our rescue and through "hands on" hive diving we quickly got to know our hive and it's intricacies....

We have successfully split our hive (more than once), really know what uncapped brood looks like, queen cells vs. drone cells and a whole host of other interesting bits they make up the joy of beekeeping...

At times we feel a bit overwhelmed at the meetings - so much to learn, so much information... But each time we go in the hive we have another "Aha" moment from the class we attended earlier.

Thanks so much for the class gatherings - we look forward to learning so much more... !!! written by Barry & Cheryl



"Looking for eggs"

**Another cluster meeting:  
Getting honey from your frames**

Believe it or not it is much better to extract honey from your frames by using the extractor. Why? Because after the frames are empty, you can put them back into your hive and the bees will not have to waste any time making new comb but can get right back to storing honey! Ask your cluster leaders where the honey

extractors are. It only costs \$5/ day to rent the extractor. Here are some pictures from East Cluster Bee Café



and the honey extraction!  
12 pounds of honey from Susan's hive

#### **Another cluster Hive dive:**

In the picture below, East Cluster member, Abby, gets some help from Chere in looking for brood and queen cells in her top bar hive. Top Bar hives are difficult to go through especially on a warm day when the heavy wax and honey make them very delicate to manipulate! You need to be so careful that the entire paddle of



comb does not break off.

#### **Hive tool Safety**

Believe it or not , two different people in East Cluster have had GASHES with their hive tools. One in the palm of the hand which happened while trying to clean frames and boxes with the hive tool. OUCH! The other in the thigh while the tool was in their jacket pocket. That is is, the tool cut through the jacket and a thick pair of jeans. So BEE Careful.... Look at this great tool pouch!





### Central Cluster Colony Extraction

With experienced Beekeeper, Becky Jackson and her husband David taking the lead, six willing members from the Central Cluster were able to assist with a barn wall extraction. The hive may have been there for a year or so and the bees occupied two sheets of comb approximately 3' wide by 4' long, extending to their entrance near ground level. Becky and her husband cut the boards and the comb from the wall, while each of the volunteers took this opportunity to learn

how to handle and safely band the comb into deep frames. In all, there was enough comb filled with brood, honey and pollen to fill one and a half deep boxes. This was a wonderful, hands-on opportunity to see the inner workings of a hive, while working together to save the bees.



Cutting comb to frame size pieces



We left the hive overnight to attract the stragglers out of the empty cavity

Kelly helping Sierra with a frame of solid brood



The bees taking possession of their new hive!

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*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.*

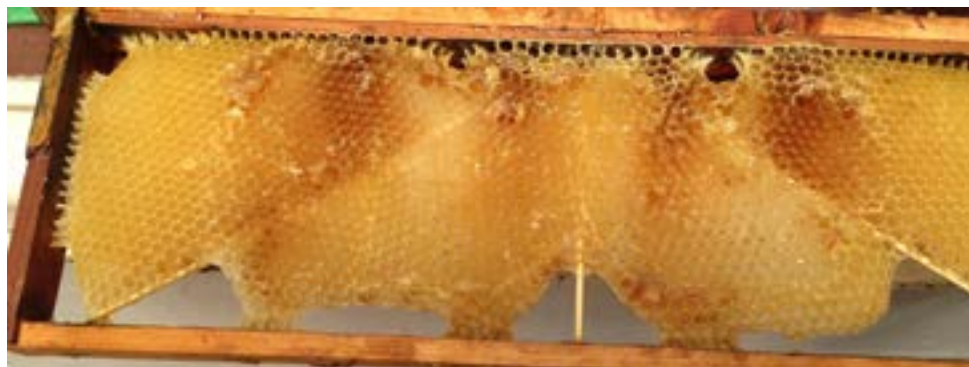
*Our mailing address is*  
Sonoma County Beekeepers' Assoc.  
P.O. Box 98  
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**Need to use the SCBA Honey Extractor? Call one of these people to rent it.**

Extractor Techs- Call Ettamarie 707-765-4582 or Janet Leisen 707- 528-2085 or Denny Pederson (cell) 707-328-4692, or Deborah Rogers 707 953-1002. Rental fee is \$5 per day. Deborah keeps the hand-crank one in Sonoma Valley. Denny is located in Forestville. Janet is North of Santa Rosa. Ettamarie is in Petaluma.



You can use bamboo barbecue skewers wedged into the top and bottom grooves to support comb. This frame has been through the honey extractor holding up perfectly well. It had been full of honey.