

The Monthly Extractor



Volume 36, Issue 9 September 2013

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

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From Our President

American Foulbrood was once the bane of beekeepers existence. It could wipe out entire apiaries and your neighbors as well being so highly infectious. It's a bacterial disease that has a spore stage. Transmission happens at the spore stage in the hive by bees feeding larvae and the cycle starts again. The disease is also transmitted by drifting bees and robbing as honey can harbor the spores from other infected hives. Beekeepers gloves, smoker and attire and previously infected equipment can also transmit. The spores are virtually indestructible. Today it's still considered a terrible disease but only rears its ugly head here and there. Over time with natural selection and breeding a good number of bees have developed resistance to the disease. Weakness, which we cannot see, however, exist and infection happens and spreads. You might never get across it, but you should know what it looks like and if you have a hive that has died, know what to look for before you re-use the equipment or leave it out as a bait hive. I ran across AFB for the first time mentoring a cluster member recently and I'm glad I was able to identify it and we could plan a course of action. Destroying the bees and equipment in this instance was the best choice even though the most difficult. Beekeeping has a lot of responsibility, bees forage far and wide most likely off your property, they intermingle with other bees, visit other hives (especially drones), rob, and it's our responsibility to be vigilant, attentive and educate ourselves about honey bee diseases. Here are a couple of websites I found useful with good pictures about American Foulbrood and European Foulbrood. The second has a great comparison between the two:

<http://www.ent.uga.edu/bees/disorders/bacterial.html>

<http://www.extension.org/pages/23693/european-foulbrood:-a-bacterial-disease-affecting-honey-bee-brood#.Uh4t838QrOs>

The SCBA board is starting to talk about the 2014 Board of Directors and our December Silent Auction to hand off the association in good strong standing. Who is going to hold this wonderful association next year? So much groundwork has happened this year to fill the need of our membership that quadrupled in size in a very short time. It's an exciting time where impact can be great and you'll get to know incredible and interesting people and immerse yourself in the world of bees like never before. If you are interested being on the Board next year please contact us, inquire, ask questions (our e-mails are on our website sonomabees.org under contacts). Perhaps you would like to find the next set of speakers, or love to

Monthly Meeting: Monday, Sept. 9th – Social Hour 6 pm-7 pm: Social hour is hosted by volunteers who provide cookies and tea - be sure to BYOC (bring your own cup).
Meeting 7pm – 9 pm- Rob Keller- Beekeeper, artist, photographer, teacher
September 10 & 11 & - National Heirloom Festival at Santa Rosa Fairgrounds- Have you volunteered?

7. Bee Plants of the Month by Alice Ford-Sala, Swarm List Participants
8. Top-Bar Hives, Beekeeping 101
9. Educational Outreach
10. Regional Clusters Updates, Cockroaches in Hives?
11. Another Bee Tree Loses Its Limb, New Pesticide Labels
12. & 13. & 14. Ads
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organize events, keep the books, take notes, or even just be on a committee. We are a completely volunteer organization. We are what we put into it and the sky is the limit.

We are starting to collect Silent Auction items. If you have something beekeeping related **or not** that you would like to donate please contact me at President@sonomabees.org. Do you have a craft or someone you know have a craft, a service, a gift certificate or item(s) from your business? Would you mind asking your favorite restaurant, hairdresser, masseuse, chiropractor, and acupuncturist.....for a donation? We have a soliciting form and a letter of intend that I can e-mail you. All donations are tax deductible. Our auction is held during our December 9 meeting and close to the holidays and as you know that is a busy time for everyone, so the earlier we can get donations the better we can get organized ourselves. Thank you in advance. Your donations are tax deductible.

President Christine Kurtz

SCBA Board Meeting Minutes August 5, 2013 Held at the home of Kelli Cox

Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm

Present: Christine Kurtz, Deborah Hammerlee, Cheryl Veretto, Sabin Larsen, Ettamarie Peterson, Kelli Cox, Paty Hermosillo-Perkins

Amend July Board meeting minutes to read: Business membership entitles member to be listed on more than one swarm zone. Business membership would also entitle member to advertising benefits.

Members Only website - Sabin thinks that it is ready to go. Perhaps at the next meeting we could introduce members to this part of the site. Ettamarie expresses concern for the folks that are not as computer literate.

All active members will continue to automatically receive the newsletter and meeting reminders as we do now via Mail Chimp. Some of us will need 1 on 1 tutoring! We will try a soft Members Only launch.

Kelli points out that we need to bring in new volunteers! Ettamarie also reminds us that the average Association member beek is retired.

Kelli agrees that the initial volunteer recruitment is key. Then follow-up and filling-in is the easy part. For future discussion - can cluster leaders spearhead volunteer events in their area?

Ettamarie suggests a "teaser" in the Mail Chimp so that folks are more inclined to open the link. So many contributors work very hard to produce a great and educational newsletter.

Cafepress SCBA merchandise update - Paty has begun this effort on the Cafepress website and is learning as she goes! Paty will continue work and the Cafepress website will eventually be linked on SCBA's website.

New Education Coordinator - Jen Espinoza is working to develop grade specific curriculum, and other materials to be used for school education efforts.

Motion: Cheryl moves that we approve funds for 2 more sets of Educational materials from Dadant or Brushy Mountain - CA Academy of Science photos. Cheryl moved, Deborah seconds, 5 ayes.

Next year's Board of Directors - The board is starting to discuss next year's board, who would want to stay, and how to recruit new board members.

Silent Auction - no coordinator yet. Connections for donations?

Christine will get the forms prepared. To be announced at the membership meeting.

Award - North Bay Leadership Council has nominated SCBA for Painting the Community Green

Treasurer's Report: September 1, 2013

Our combined bank account totals are \$11,449.46.

It is amazing how many of those honey stix we sell at the various festivals we attend! Almost \$1,000 worth at the Sonoma County Fair and the Gravenstein Festival! And the kids love to pick out their flavors. There are lots of honey stix available with added flavorings and colorings, but we only sell ones that have no additives - just pure honey from the USA.

Our main fundraiser for the year, the Silent Auction, is coming up in December. If you would like to donate something to it, please contact any Board Member by email or speak with us in person at our monthly meetings. We also have a donation letter that you can use to ask people in your community to contribute to the Auction.

Rita Maloney Treasurer treasurer@sonomabees.org

Membership report - 366 members - numbers are holding steady

Events and Speakers - Sonoma Co Fair ends tomorrow.

Gravenstein Apple Fair begins on Friday. We are committed to the So Co Fair until Fri., so we'll have to transition from one event to the other on Friday. Pick up needs to happen before 9 am.

Remaining speakers - Eric Mussen finally declined and offered other speakers. Rob Keller is on for the Sept. meeting.

Children's Museum - Ettamarie and Michael Fisher met with museum folks about bee display. Contact person is now the president of the CM Board. Geared for children under the age of 10.

Ettamarie shared some details of her trip to Greece visiting with beekeepers in Greece.
Swarm report - Laurie will report to the BOD in Sept.
Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm

Membership Meeting Aug. 12, 2013 4-H Building, Rohnert Park

Meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm

New members introduced themselves.

Sabin Larsen explains the upcoming Members Only addition to the SCBA website.

Will Ackley recounted a sweet volunteering story from his shift at the Sonoma County Fair. He encouraged all members to volunteer at least once, as the rewards are great and often unexpected. Members often learn from other volunteers as well.

Christine encourages members to help themselves to popcorn and ice cream cones. Both are free of charge but folks are welcome to leave a donation. SCBA thanks Clover Stornetta for donating the ice cream for our educational movie night.

The film, More Than Honey, was shown to the membership with discussion following.

Synopsis of film:

Over the past 15 years, numerous colonies of bees have been decimated throughout the world, but the causes of this disaster remain unknown. Depending on the world region, 50% to 90% of all local bees have disappeared, and this epidemic is still spreading from beehive to beehive – all over the planet. Everywhere, the same scenario is repeated: billions of bees leave their hives, never to return. No bodies are found in the immediate surroundings, and no visible predators can be located.

In the US, the latest estimates suggest that a total of 1.5 million (out of 2.4 million total beehives) have disappeared across 27 states. In Germany, according to the national beekeepers association, one fourth of all colonies have been destroyed, with losses reaching up to 80% on some farms. The same phenomenon has been observed in Switzerland, France, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Austria, Poland and England, where this syndrome has been nicknamed “the Mary Celeste Phenomenon”, after a ship whose crew vanished in 1872.

Scientists have found a name for the phenomenon that matches its scale, “colony collapse disorder,” and they have good reason to be worried: 80% of plant species require bees to be pollinated. Without bees, there is no pollination, and fruits and vegetables could disappear from the face of the Earth. *Apis mellifera* (the honey bee), which appeared on Earth 60 million years before man and is as indispensable to the economy as it is to man’s survival.

Should we blame pesticides or even medication used to combat them? Maybe look at parasites such as varroa mites? New viruses? Travelling stress? The multiplication of electromagnetic waves disturbing the magnetite nanoparticles found in the bees’ abdomen? So far, it looks like a combination of all these agents has been responsible for the weakening of the bees’ immune defenses.

Fifty years ago, Einstein had already insisted on the symbiotic relationship binding these pollen gatherers to mankind: **“If bees were to disappear from the globe,” he predicted, “mankind would only have four years left to live.”**

(Editor’s note: There is reasonable doubt that Einstein ever said this but it is often attributed to him.)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Paty Hermsillo-Perkins

My September Beekeeping To-Do List

By Serge Labesque © 2013

Such a great bee plant!

It was winter when I started placing hives at Oak Hill Farm. At first, I did not pay much attention to two large bushes that were growing near the trail to the apiary. But in June, when the purple vetch had disappeared from the hillside leaving only dry grass undulating in the warm breeze, I could no longer ignore them. Even though the surrounding vegetation had given in to an early summer, both shrubs were producing flowers, *masses* of flowers!

The abundant bloom seemed to float above the foliage, giving a wispy appearance to the shrubs. Upon closer examination, I could tell that the chest-high bushes were actually a mixture of two types of plants. One was a sage. The other, particularly generous with its flowers, was unknown to me. Its slender branches were lined with narrow leaves that were reminiscent of rosemary. Smooth bare stalks extended the slim limbs and terminated with graceful pompons of tiny soft-white flowers that were discretely adorned by minuscule red veins. As if to further my amazement, these plants, which were almost constantly visited by bees, kept on blooming through the entire summer and fall. It was the early winter frosts that finally ended the long-lasting flower show.

After I learned from Anne Teller, the owner of Oak Hill Farm, that these remarkable plants were California buckwheat, it was easy to find more information about this “wild buckwheat”, as it is also sometimes called. The scientific “last name” is *Eriogonum*. Over seventy species adapted to various areas of our state belong to this genus. Although the common name may lead to confusion with the cultivated buckwheat of pancake fame, these are only distantly related plants.

The characteristics of the species I had encountered (*E. fasciculatum*, if I am correct) have turned it into one of my favorite bee plants. It is a native, non-invasive and long-lived perennial that thrives in full sun and on poor soils. Once established, it is highly resistant to drought, deer and mice. It blooms without interruption from May through November and, best of all, bees forage intensely on it, gathering both nectar and pollen. From my beekeeper’s perspective, it is absolutely beautiful! If I were a poet, I’d write an ode to wild buckwheat.

Anne gave me a couple of starts that now grow near our house. I also found it easy to propagate California buckwheat either by cuttings started in summer or from seeds collected in December (To obtain seeds, simply pluck flower clusters that have turned to a reddish brown color.) Most of the seedlings produce some flowers during their first summer.

While Sonoma County is being scraped and reshaped for ever more grapevines, I’ll be planting more California buckwheat around our house. And for good measure and year-round bee nutrition I’ll add rosemary, lavender, thyme, sage, oaks, manzanitas, madrone, Toyons, coyote brush, and strawberry trees among other plants while I am at it.

September in and around the apiaries:

To say that there is a honey flow around my apiaries at this time of year would be a huge exaggeration, but somehow the bees seem to find a variety of food sources. For example, foragers can be seen or heard collecting honeydew in trees, juice from overripe pears or grapes that have been punctured by birds or yellow jackets, and nectar and pollen from cultivated flowers such as cosmos and sunflowers or from California buckwheat, coyote brush, turkey mullein, tarweed as well as several other plants.

Whether there is a flow or not, this period of rapidly diminishing days is a critical time in the life cycle of bee colonies. Indeed, the bees are in the midst of preparing for winter. Around the end of summer, there is a brief increase in brood production in the hives. Then, the brood nests gradually shrink as bees consolidate stores around the brood. Since the bees that are born in late September and in early October will become nurse bees for the winter bees, the quality and abundance of their nutrition can make a significant difference in the ability of the colonies to survive winter. If drones are still present, they will soon be eliminated.

In early September, beekeepers assess their colonies to find out which ones are on track in their preparations for winter, and they have to decide what to do with the others. To have a chance to overwinter successfully, a colony needs a healthy and productive queen, a sufficiently large population of well-fed winter bees, enough stores that are organized correctly, good health and a sound nest cavity. The beekeeper is entirely responsible for the quality of the nest cavity, the hive. The rest depends mainly on the bees themselves and on the environment around the apiaries, although the management of the colonies matters.

To find out which of my colonies are on track, I perform a series of hive inspections around the end of August or in early September. At this time, the brood nests should be stable or growing slightly (A fair amount of eggs and open brood should be easily found.) The brood patterns should be compact, with no sign of disease. The telltale clues of hygienic behavior, uncapped pupae for example, are welcome and noteworthy sights. Stores, including pollen, should be located right next to the brood, with evidence that the bees are placing nectar or uncapped honey next to the areas of brood. When I see all of this, I limit my work to the removal of a few empty frames. I may harvest some honey, but only when it is obvious that it is surplus honey. Young hives that hold a balanced amount of stores and brood have a very good chance to overwinter successfully.

Hive space management at the end of summer and in the fall is the opposite of spring hive management. Whereas in the spring we need to accommodate the expansion of the hives, in the fall, it’s the gradual contraction and the arrangement of the hive contents that have to be facilitated. The bees do the work and I only try to assist without disrupting the process.

I make note of hives that are weak but otherwise healthy, and work out plans to requeen or combine them within the month. The bees of hives with failed or failing queens are combined without delay with queenright colonies. Again, this is done only after making sure that they are healthy.

Health problems cannot be ignored. As the varroa mite populations are approaching their annual peak, their damaging impact on the colonies that cannot tolerate them becomes obvious (Parasitic Mite Syndrome). Hives that are heavily infested by mites stand little chance of overwintering successfully, and beekeeper-applied treatments against the pest only perpetuate and exacerbate the problem. However, there is still time to requeen or combine these bees with stock that shows good resistance to the pest. This is one of the reasons why we produced young colonies and queens from our best stocks in the spring. As in the cases of hives affected with brood diseases, it’s judicious to discard the sealed brood of these heavily infested colonies before their combination with the recipient colonies, because it contains large numbers of mites.

I attempt to strengthen ailing colonies by providing them with only as much comb of stores and brood as their bees can cover. All the other frames are removed. Because the results can be mixed, these colonies will have to be monitored and reassessed over the following weeks.

At the end of summer and in early fall, our hives are not only facing varroa mites, hot dry days and nutritional stresses, but also robber bees and yellow jackets. Yellow jackets turn to the hives for food. They collect dead or dying bees on the ground in front of the hives. This is a good thing, but they also try to enter the hives. Because the bees should be able to keep them at bay, I reduce the size of the entrances until the bees can defend them effectively. Robbing situations develop most often from beekeeper mistakes or inattention. Here are but a few of the possible causes of beekeeper-induced robbing: Entrances are left too wide open, especially for young or weak hives; frames of honey are left exposed; spilled syrup; feeding in the middle of the day; open feeding; lengthy open-hive inspections during periods of dearth; equipment that is not bee-tight.

Toward the end of the month or in early October, I will follow up with another round of hive inspections of the colonies, and I'll implement whatever decisions I may have made about them. More unused frames will be removed from the hives then. The largest and most active colonies will have to be watched carefully. If they do not begin to shrink their brood nests before October, they may not produce winter bees, or they may exhaust them prematurely by forcing them to rear brood in late fall.

Late summer swarms are frequently very small. They were sometimes produced by stressed colonies, and they may even be absconding swarms that carry parasitic mites and other pathogens. Left on their own, they stand almost no chance of surviving winter. They are not worth gathering, but how can we refuse them a nuc box and a few frames? Regardless, I never combine these unknown bees with any of my hives.

I consider the timely and effective preparation for winter by bee colonies to be a key sign of their adaptation to their local conditions. It is an important selection criterion that nature applies without pity. Over the years, I have gradually adjusted the management of my hives so that the colonies may freely organize their nests and prepare for winter during the summer and fall seasons. This is in fact very simple. All that is necessary is to provide adequate space early in the season, to harvest with moderation and, generally, not to mess up their work. I want the bees to run their own lives, and I am not interested in providing them with crutches. No feeding, no treatments, but no neglect either.

We have to accept that some of our colonies are not fit to survive until next spring and that diseased ones may become sources of contamination for surrounding hives. Requeening or combining them may still be valid hive management options in September.

In summary, this month:

- Assess colonies, their health, queens, brood nests and stores.
- Monitor the progress of the colonies in their preparations for fall and winter.
- Requeen or combine hives that are not performing satisfactorily and those that have failed or failing queens.
- Reduce the unused volume of the hives (Follower boards greatly facilitate this.)
- Consolidate honey in honey supers (reduce the volume of the honey supers with follower boards).
- Manage frames in preparation for fall culling of the old and misshapen ones.
- Harvest surplus honey, if there is any, and with moderation.
- Beware of yellow jackets and of risks of robbing. If necessary, reduce the entrances of developing colonies and of those that are under attack.
- Avoid hive manipulations that can trigger robbing.
- Provide and maintain sources of water.
- Provide some afternoon shade, if possible.
- Ensure that hives are adequately ventilated.
- Extract and bottle honey.
- Return wet frames and cappings to the bees for cleaning (by placing them above hive top feeders or inner covers during the evening).
- Beware of the fire danger when using the smoker in dry-grass areas.
- Render wax from discarded frames and from cappings
- Routinely clean and scorch tools and equipment.

Serge Labesque © 2013

Beekeeping Classes at the Junior College Taught by Serge Labesque

The classes are presented through SRJC Community Education.

Introduction to Beekeeping

4-session class. Wed. September 4 – 25, 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Santa Rosa Campus
Section 9606
Fee: \$88

Intermediate Beekeeping for fall, winter and Early Spring

2-session class. Wed. October 2 – 9, 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Santa Rosa Campus
Section 9605
Fee: \$56

Registration online, by phone (707) 527-4372, by mail, fax or in person at Community Education office, Santa Rosa Campus.

Come Visit the SCBA Educational Booth and Beek Demonstrations at the National Heirloom Exposition.

This year we are representing BEEs in a BIG way, Bee-a-palooza! This year we are having the SCBA Educational Booth with our Beek demonstration tent and observation hives; Napa County Beeks - Rob Keller's Streamline Observation Vehicle; Marin Beekeepers Booth and other SCBA member vendors all in one area behind Finely Hall. One BIG HAPPY HIVE! Come and join us and be a part of the fun! This is the one event you want to be a part of this year!

Dates: September 10th, 11th, and 12th, 2013

Location: Sonoma County Fairgrounds

Admission: Adults: \$10.00 – one day, \$25.00 – all 3 days, Kids 17 and under FREE

Hours: 11am to 8pm Daily

Speaker/Meeting Information:

September's Membership Meeting - Monday, Sep 9th at 7pm; Come in early at 6:30 pm for a cup of tea and talk bees/beek with experienced beekeepers.

This month's speaker is **Rob Keller, topic - Bee Observation - 'A different perspective'**

Rob Keller's Napa Valley Bee Company is a sustainable honeybee organization that recognizes the importance of strong genetics in our local indigenous bee. Breeding from survivor stock in our area is a way to solve some of the problems with European Honey Bees. <http://www.napavalleybeecompany.com/>

More About Our September Speaker Rob Keller

Rob is one of the most interesting beekeepers you will ever meet. He teaches beekeeping and photography over in Napa County. He obtained a sizeable grant a few years ago to convert an old Airstream motorhome into a travelling bee lab with a great observation hive. He takes this to various places. In September it will be at the Heirloom Festival for all three days. The bees will be flying out the backside as they did last year. Wherever Rob goes he is a hit. You will not want to miss the opportunity to hear him speak!

Bee Wise "CHANGE FOR THE BETTER" by Emery Dann

Upon examining the inside and outside environment surrounding our beehive, we can observe many changing conditions.

Weather and temperature changes are daily. Then there are times of dearth, drought, or too much rain, Foraging begins, increases and ends for every available flower source. Foragers then move on to other flowers. Bee "receivers" know when to receive and when to stop taking in water, nectar and helping remove propolis from foragers. Hive temperature is maintained at 93 to 95 degrees in the brood area. Both the queen's laying eggs quantity and pattern changes. The queen may stop laying eggs at times making it look like she is not there. Checking back is important to verify her presence. A swarm faces major changes by finding a new home. The number of varroa mites increase monthly. There are spring and summer bees replaced by the winter bees. How much food is able to be stored vs. the amount consumed by the bees also changes throughout the year. There are times bees can build wax comb based on both needing more storage and available nectar flow...there are other periods bees will not build wax comb. Change happens!

Change creates different stress levels. Too much stress can easily become distress! So hive adaptation and response to change determines both the strength and the ability of the hive to survive. Local bees are best because they have adapted to changes in their local environment.

The point I am trying to make is if we keep doing the same thing we always have done, we may misread new conditions. We need to consider different possibilities to changing circumstances. Abraham Maslow said, "I suppose it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail." As beekeepers, we are open to new tools and

ideas to make things work better for our bees. The Sonoma County Beekeepers Association helps us to do this.

Change is relentless! Our response needs to be focused both on the short and long term. What works during one time of the year, may not have best results at a different time. An example is when we need to move or combine a hive for winter survival. Cold winter weather, lack of sunshine, available forage in the area, the amount of stores, number of bees inside the hive or pesticide spraying in the area may necessitate that we making changes *before* it is too late! How can we improve and protect the current hive location or not? Evaluate the pros and the cons to help our bees deal with changing seasons and conditions by determining the best placement and care! We cannot afford to think that only one way *always* works best in all situations.

Consider a quote from Willie Nelson: "The early bird gets the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese!"

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

Native Plant of the Month: Trifolium Clover Family Fabacae

When I took a native plants class at Santa Rosa Junior College a few years ago, Phil Van Soelen, co-owner of Cal Flora nursery, described pre-European native clovers. They were so abundant and succulent that grizzly bears grazed on them like cows and the native peoples gathered the greens as an important part of their diet. The clovers were an important component in the wildflower-native grasses-prairie that thrived here. Since they are legumes, clovers take nitrogen from the air and fix it in the soil in symbiosis with beneficial bacteria.

Now is a good time to prepare the ground for Fall planting of wildflowers, so you might want to consider sowing some native clovers. Not only are they attractive, they improve the soil due to their sturdy roots and nitrogen fixing characteristics.

Foothill clover, *T. ciliolatum* is an annual clover that has large oval leaves with a reddish stripe down the middle and pretty deep pink globe shaped flowers.

Showy Indian Clover, *T. amoenum*, was thought to be extinct according to information from Larner Seeds (www.larnerseeds.com) until a single plant was discovered in Occidental in 1993. It has fuzzy leaves and an interesting two toned deep purple/light pink round flower.

Native clovers like dry clay- how convenient, right? They are also low growing so you can use them as a ground cover.

I bought an assortment of four native clovers from Larner Seeds and can't wait to get them up and growing.

Beneficial Plant of the Month Trifolium Clover Family Fabacae

Did I mention bees love clover? Of course you knew that, clover honey is the most commonly sold honey nationwide. A few years ago I planted a pollinator seed mix that included sweet white clover, *Melilotus albus*. Well, this isn't the Dutch clover we had in our dichondra lawn when I was a child (and was the source of many stings as we ran barefoot over the lawn). This is a four-foot-tall plant that comes back every year, much to the delight of our bees, who work it from dawn to dusk through the whole summer. It smells absolutely heavenly, sweet and green. It would be great in a vineyard or pasture but is a bit rangy for a small suburban yard. A better choice would be *T. repens*, or White Dutch Clover. It mixes well with grass seed, and then you don't have to put chemicals on your lawn (just don't step on the bees). *T. fragiferum*, Strawberry Clover is taller and would be a great orchard or vineyard ground cover where it will attract pollinators and choke out weeds. It is about 10 to 14 inches high. Some varieties need irrigation, others are drought tolerant.

Swarm List Participants

Just a friendly reminder to all swarm list participants. If you no longer wish to rescue swarms for the season, please email me to be removed. Include your full name and the zones you are in and email to swarm@sonomabees.org

If you are keeping yourself on the swarm list, please remember that as a SCBA member you agree to go on swarm calls if you are able and please don't pick & choose or decline swarm calls based on the size of the swarm. The public depends on us - especially when they are scared of honeybees and it is our responsibility as swarm list members to maintain a good reputation in the 5 county area that we canvas.

Please also remember to be courteous and return phone ALL phone calls EVEN if you are unable to go on a swarm call. Thanks and as always please don't hesitate to email me if you have questions.

Laurie Bounsall Swarm Chair 2013

[~swarm@sonomabees.org](mailto:swarm@sonomabees.org)

Top Bar Hive Members



Folks who have Top Bar Hives have called us for support and questions... like screened bottoms or solids bottoms? Experienced beekeepers tend to recommend going with the standard hives first and this means the Langstroff hives. There are two reasons for going with the Langstroff Hive: 1. You can learn the tried and true beekeeping methods that have been around for over 100 years: and 2. There may not be any experts around who can answer your questions about other hive designs.

As always, some daring folks would like to branch out and try new designs. Jim Spencer, East County Cluster Leader, would like to start a Top Bar hive group to become a resource for folks with questions about this design. We just completed a Top Bar Hive Dive in the East County. If you are a Top Bar hive person and want to belong to this group, email Jim Spencer: eastcluster@sonomabees.org
This beautiful hive was built by John Krafft, East County Cluster member

Beekeeping 101 Class: Free For SCBA Members

The Beekeeping 101 class was offered again at Darling Farms in Cotati. This class is for only members and is free. Thea covered lots of topics ranging from basic equipment to opening a hive and deciding how to reconfigure the boxes. She uses no real bees and yet the situations in the boxes are real enough that beginners have to think what is going on inside the hive and what they have to do to manipulate the space for their bees. Make sure you ask your cluster leaders about the next workshop for your regional area and join SCBA to get the full benefit of your association.

Thea Vierling Teaching Beekeeping 101 Class

Educational Outreach....A New Committee You Can Join!

By Thea Vierling

I had the pleasure to volunteer a few hours at the Sonoma County Fair. This year our booth looked exceptionally professional with our new printed tablecloths and informational pull-ups and all other props carefully orchestrated under the keen artistic eye of our events Coordinator Cheryl Veretto. A big applause to Cheryl and her partner in crime Kelli Cox who amidst her incredibly busy life covered all the volunteer shifts. Although we are not manning the booth every day this year, our permanent booth will be up throughout the fair. Now the most amazing people at the fair are always those curious children with their inquisitive questions. This particular little girl Madison was all over the exhibit.



I would guess she was a third grader. Touching and exploring being a very tactile child, taking the display hive apart on her own as I arrived. She pulled out a frame of built out wax pointing at the cells and our conversation went like this:

What is that?

Those are cells that the bees built.

What do they build it with?

They build it with wax.

Do you mean from their ears?

I had to withhold my laughter not wanting to embarrass her but it is the funniest thing I have heard from a child in a long time. I did manage to explain where the wax actually came from when her adult readily disrupted this wonderful educational moment with: "C'mon I thought you wanted to see the pigs" and off Madison skipped. I wanted to spend more time with Madison, she was absorbing the world and with the right information her future would hold such important and positive possibilities. When I shared this story with Katia Vincent, who was also there volunteering and who so generously brought a lot of beekeeping props from her store Beekind for our booth including an extractor the kids oh so loved to spin as fast as they could, said: "Now that is a future beekeeper!". I'd like to hold on to that thought...Madison the future beekeeper.

Since we are on the subject of children and education I am thrilled and so proud that a new group is forming in our association and that Jen Espinoza is taking leadership. Thank you so so much Jen. We receive so many requests from schools especially in the springtime that we have a hard time fulfilling them and moreover we did not have an organized central way to field these requests and often scrambled by recruiting the usual suspects and sometimes sadly had to turn schools down. Many of you do volunteer behind the scenes going to schools year after year and educate children, which is the most valuable for the future of beekeeping, thank you all for your dedication. Some of you have special relationships with particular schools so by all means keep doing it. Now we will be able to better organize the other

requests and have grade specific curriculum available and more trained volunteers. Lets start planting those seeds. Madison's was planted at the 2013 Sonoma County fair, mine was planted in Junior High and even though it only sprouted when I was 43 it sprouted with great vigor, almost so much I can barely keep up with myself! If you are interested in educating kids about bees contact Jen Espinoza at education@sonomabees.org.

As usual bring all your questions and stories to our next meeting social time. My notes on all my colonies have been really boring for the last month and half: "Status quo". It seems that they build out to a certain point some more than others, then wherever they were just started maintaining. I did loose one hive from queen failure. It was a particularly large swarm that needed two supers to begin with but alas had a drone layer from the get go. I added eggs from another colony and they readily made queen cells. It was so exciting to see. Some emerged and some were destroyed in the typical fashion with a whole chewed on the side and stung by the first emerged queen. Mating was due during that incredibly windy week and I don't think the queen made it back. No eggs, no larvae, no pollen coming in, lethargic bees. At the time I was fortunate, by talking to a cluster member I found out that one of her hive was full of queen cells and I was offered some to try to quick start this colony. This would give a couple of weeks head start from trying introducing more eggs again. Thank you Deborah Hammerlee for supporting me and so generously sharing your queen cells. I went over her house and together we went into her hive and found the perfect set of cells we could cut out and graft. There were two sealed queen cells and one open. What a team we made, one held the frame, one gently cut around. I held the queen cells gently nestled in a cup cushioned by tissues and Deborah drove us back to my house. We cringed together at every pothole or bump we encountered, my arms trying to play the role of shock absorber. Together we grafted the queen cells into my hive finding the perfect spot. Crossed our fingers and closed it up. In a perfect world this should have worked and I would have this very happy bustling colony. But alas it failed yet again. I don't know why, it just did. I had to let it go. I did consider combining it with another small colony that could have used a boost in workers but my sense was that there was something wrong and the bees knew it and I decided not to take the chance. It was just time to say goodbye.

That is one of my stories, what is yours? What questions are burning in your minds? Bring your own cup for tea and come to social time before the general meeting. As always I need some ask me volunteers. If you are a seasoned beekeeper and would like to answer all those burning questions, seek me out and I'll adorn you with an ask me tag. After we'll all cozy up and watch the latest incredible bee documentary, a must see.

Regional Cluster Updates:

Petaluma: There will be a work party at Serendipity, our teaching apiary that resides on First Light Farm, followed by another bee cafe/picnic and talk more about bees and our apiary Saturday September 7. There might even be some filming about bees going on. Beverages will be provided; if you can bring some food to share that would be great. We will be building a storage structure with lumber was donated by Ken Howe. You should have received an invite from your cluster leader via e-mail. If not, please e-mail Christine at: southcluster@sonomabees.org

North Cluster: We had hive dives in August. Julie Dille led the group in opening her split, which she made from hives in Kristine's apiary last March. The split included two supers of 5 frames each, with follower boards and a top feeder. We found an active and healthy hive, lots of brood, but no real honey stores. Most of the activity was in the bottom super with few bees in the top super. Julie will probably leave the split in Kristine's yard for the winter and see how it does.

The other hive dive was in a hive about 6 years old and seems to requeen itself as needed. We saw lots of bees, lots of brood both sealed and unsealed. Some drone brood, but no real honey stores. However, this hive is about 5 supers tall and we only looked at the top two supers, figuring the less we bothered the bees the better it was. We did not check the other 3 hives in her apiary. We will meet again in the fall at one of our member's hives to discuss inter preparation. For Information: northcluster@sonomabees.org

Rohnert Park: We're having a meeting September 28th between 9-11 at Darling Farms – for more information e-mail your cluster leader at: rohnertpark@sonomabees.org

East Cluster will have a Bee Cafe meeting on Sunday September 29 from 10:00-12:00 at Old Hill Ranch located in Glen Ellen hosted by Lizanne Pastore. Topic for discussion will be "preparation for winter". Thea Vierling will present one of her Beekeeping 101 classes on preparing for winter followed by a hands on hive inspection on one or two of Lizanne's hives. Two upcoming Bee Cafe meetings will be: 1. A workshop on assembling hive frames and boxes and 2. Another meeting with discussion of Horizontal Top Bar hives and Warre hives.

The east cluster coordinator (Jim Spencer) has created a sub cluster for those who have or are interested in Horizontal Top Bar or Warre hives. This subcluster had a hive dive on Sunday August 25th. For details go to the discussion board found at the East Cluster page. . For more information, E-mail Jim at: eastcluster@sonomabees.org

Central Cluster: They will have a Bee Café on Saturday September 28th from 10 AM to 12 AM at Darling Farms. For more information email your cluster leader and also go to the members only web page for your centralcluster@sonomabees.org

A Cockroach in Our Hives?

Several of our East County cluster members have seen this little insect in our hives and were wondering what it was. Thankfully Brandon, an East Cluster member, took it seriously and wrote to Dr. Eric Mussen for the answer. Here is what he had to tell us about it:

The photo that you sent is a cockroach. Since it is not one of the species that we consider a house pest, it was hard to find information on it. Also, since it does not appear to invade homes, it goes into the group that we call "wood roaches."

I think that the species name is *Phyllodromica trivittata* (previously called *Luridiblatella trivittata*). If that is correct, it originated in dry habitats around the Mediterranean. It should not bother your bees. Eric Mussen



New Pesticide Labels Will Better Protect Bees and Other Pollinators- From U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Thanks to Shelley Arrowsmith for passing this on.

WASHINGTON – In an ongoing effort to protect bees and other pollinators, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed new pesticide labels that prohibit use of some neonicotinoid pesticide products where bees are present.

"Multiple factors play a role in bee colony declines, including pesticides. The Environmental Protection Agency is taking action to protect bees from pesticide exposure and these label changes will further our efforts," said Jim Jones, assistant administrator for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention.

The new labels will have a bee advisory box and icon with information on routes of exposure and spray drift precautions. Today's announcement affects products containing the neonicotinoids imidacloprid, dinotefuran, clothianidin and thiamethoxam. The EPA will work with pesticide manufacturers to change labels so that they will meet the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) safety standard.

In May, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and EPA released a comprehensive scientific report on honey bee health, showing scientific consensus that there are a complex set of stressors associated with honey bee declines, including loss of habitat, parasites and disease, genetics, poor nutrition and pesticide exposure.

The agency continues to work with beekeepers, growers, pesticide applicators, pesticide and seed companies, and federal and state agencies to reduce pesticide drift dust and advance best management practices. The EPA recently released new enforcement guidance to federal, state and tribal enforcement officials to enhance investigations of beekill incidents.

More on the EPA's label changes and pollinator protection efforts:

<http://www.epa.gov/opp00001/ecosystem/pollinator/index.html>

View the infographic on EPA's new bee advisory box: <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/ecosystem/pollinator/bee-label-info-graphic.pdf>

EPA distributes its Pesticide Program Updates to external stakeholders and citizens who have expressed an interest in the agency's pesticide program activities and decisions. This update service is part of EPA's continuing effort to improve public access to federal pesticide information.

For general questions on pesticides and pesticide poisoning prevention, contact the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC), toll-free, at: 1-800-858-7378, by E-mail at npic@ace.orst.edu, or, by visiting their website at: <http://npic.orst.edu>

To report an environmental violation, visit EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/complaints/index.html>

For information about ongoing activities in the Office of Pesticide Programs, visit our homepage at:

<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides>

Telephone 703-305-5017 or write us directly at Communication Services Branch, Office of Pesticide Programs (7506 P), US Environmental Protection Agency, Ariel Rios Building, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004-2403.

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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. Please contact the treasurer to pay dues.

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Honey bee on Autumn Joy Sedum Photo by Ettamarie Peterson

**Sonoma County Beekeepers' Assoc.
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**Monthly Meeting Sept. 9, 2013.
4-H Foundation Building in
Rohnert Park – 6 p.m. Social/information
hour
7 p.m. – Speaker – Rob Keller-, *topic -
Bee Observation - 'A different
perspective'***

