

# The Monthly Extractor

Volume 41, Issue 2

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

## Greetings From Your President, Fellow Beekeepers and Enthusiast,

What a great start into the New Year! The new Board of Directors has gotten off to a fantastic start; we are planning out the New Year with a strong emphasis on Education and Volunteerism. Members can get educated in more advanced beekeeping skills and build community through our ever developing and improving CLUSTER program - if you haven't yet joined a Cluster you can find



more information on the SCBA website at [http://sonomabees.org/cluster\\_groups/](http://sonomabees.org/cluster_groups/).

Springtime is quickly approaching, are you ready? Springtime is the beginning of Swarm season and bees will soon be taking flight to propagate themselves into new colonies. SCBA provides a list of member beekeepers that collect swarms to the public via our website at <http://sonomabees.org/new-swarm-collection/> - this list is provided as a community service.

By the end of February, we send out an informative postcard to the community, Government and Public Service agencies, Schools, Arborist, Construction and many more. To be on the published swarm list, you must have completed the SWARM orientation and have experience in collecting swarms - questions? Contact Melissa - [swarm@sonomabees.org](mailto:swarm@sonomabees.org).

Let's get excited about our speaker this month - Paul Stamets; he is going to draw a crowd - so be sure to show up early (6p) to socialize and claim your seat.

Bee Well,

*Cheryl Veretta*  
President

## This Month's Calendar:

**Monthly Meeting: Monday, February 8- 6 p.m.**

Rohnert Park 4-H Building

6 pm – Social (bring your own cup please), learn from others, check out books & videos, buy plants.

7 pm – Paul Stamets on fungi in the hive. Could a Mushroom Save the Honeybee? This is exciting new research! See more in this newsletter.

Note: Our meetings are free to members and non-members but we are suggesting a donation of \$5 per person will be requested of all non-member visitors. 100% of these donations will be given to Paul Stamets' non-profit group to help save the endangered old growth forests in Washington. Members can also donate to this cause, of course.



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# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - "Make a difference"

By President Cheryl Veretto

Sonoma County Beekeepers' Association is run entirely by volunteers. Hundreds of hours are put in by many individuals, all for the love of bees. SCBA mission states, "Our goal is to increase interest in and knowledge of bees and beekeeping for the hobby and commercial beekeeper, and to educate the general public in the value of bees." If you are a member, you have agreed to uphold the mission. Are you doing your part? We know not everyone has full bee/beekeeping knowledge; to volunteer you don't have to.

Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator to see where you can help - [volunteer@sonomabees.org](mailto:volunteer@sonomabees.org)

## Opportunities:

*Volunteer Coordinator; North Cluster Leader; Educators (in schools); Mentors within Cluster groups; Public Speakers; Plants & Gardening Committee; Working the Exhibition booth for the many fairs, festivals and public events we attend; setting up for meetings; breaking down and cleaning after meetings; bringing cookies to the meeting; and thinking to the future 2017 Board positions.*

## Plant & Garden Cluster Interest

As many of you know, planting forage for bees and assuring the bees have a diverse diet is IMPORTANT. Within our membership we have several exceptional gardeners and many enthusiasts. I am fielding out the question - "Who is interested in a Garden Cluster group?" What a great opportunity to share plants and gardening expertise with each other, SCBA membership and the public. If you have interest in this group email Cheryl at [president@sonomabees.org](mailto:president@sonomabees.org)



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## Could a Mushroom Save the Honeybee?

February Meeting Will Have Paul Stamets Address This.

SCBA is honored to host Paul Stamets, a dedicated mycologist for over 40 years who believes that mushrooms can save our lives, restore our ecosystems and transform other worlds. Paul sees the ancient Old Growth forests of the Pacific Northwest as a resource of incalculable value, especially in terms of its fungal genome. A dedicated hiker and explorer, his passion is to preserve, protect, and clone as many ancestral strains of mushrooms as possible from these pristine woodlands.

The self-taught mycologist said he noticed a relationship between honeybees and mushrooms when he observed bees sipping on sugar-rich fungal roots growing in his backyard. "I looked down, and they were sucking on my mycelium," Stamets said. Now he thinks he knows why. In recent years, his research has shown that rare fungi found in the old-growth forests of Western Washington can help fight viruses, including tuberculosis, smallpox and bird flu. He wondered if the honeybee would see similar health benefits from wood-rotting mushrooms. "Bees have immune systems, just like we do," he said. "These mushrooms are like miniature pharmaceutical factories." Initial findings suggest that five species of the wood-rotting fungi can reduce the honeybees' viruses and increase their lifespans.

Website: <http://www.fungi.com/>

TED Talk: Six Ways Mushrooms Can Save the World [https://www.ted.com/talks/paul\\_stamets\\_on\\_6\\_ways\\_mushrooms\\_can\\_save\\_the\\_world?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/paul_stamets_on_6_ways_mushrooms_can_save_the_world?language=en)



Red-belted polypore

# My February

## Beekeeping To-Do List by Serge Labesque

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### Let's prepare to divide our hives

Last spring, both of Susan's hives came out of winter in wonderful conditions; good local bees managed without treatments or feedings, only with dedication. Early on, her plan was to install a new colony in her back yard. So, when the time was right for the bees, the colonies were divided. I lost count of how many new colonies were created from these two hives, but Susan presently has four thriving colonies, and, in addition to one swarm that departed while she was away, other beekeepers around her were given splits. Isn't this a terrific example of good stewardship of the bees and generosity?

Many people have come to beekeeping in recent years. Their demand for bees has resulted in a massive flood of packages and nucs that are displacing our local bees. The commercial bee producers and their distributors are the only ones rubbing their hands over this sad situation.

If we really want to help the bees, we must stop this invasion; and we can. All it will take is for us to help in the reproduction of our own colonies. After all, it's what really makes us beekeepers, and it is easy to do by dividing our successfully overwintered hives, regardless of the size of our apiaries. Not only will we be able to replenish, expand and rejuvenate our apiaries, but we may also have excess splits and nucs that we can make available to other beekeepers, as Susan did. If we do not, more bees will be brought in from outside our areas, and the condition of the bees will only get worse.

Besides, there are other advantages in this simple and safe method of colony propagation, and this is what hive division really is. This is especially true when the timing and execution of hive division align with the innate drive of the bees to swarm. Here, I am referring to "reproductive swarming", not absconding. A success rate of 90% can be surpassed. Knowing that fewer than 25 % of swarms survive to the next spring if they are not hived by beekeepers, we can see that the first to benefit are the bees. Beekeepers also gain when we divide our hives: Young queens and new colonies are produced from local stocks; substantial levels of control over bee pests and disease are afforded by the periods of broodlessness that are created. Altogether, hive division is without a doubt a key procedure in the management of bee colonies and in the care of the species.

With spring on our doorstep, we need to prepare ourselves and our colonies for this course of action. To overcome the fear of dividing nice thriving colonies, we need to keep in mind that by not doing this we would be forcing the bees to do it themselves with no assurance of surviving the process; and we would lose bees.

Having decided to divide our colonies, we gather the equipment that will be necessary: hive components, nuc boxes, and whatever makes sense in our apiaries.

Let's not procrastinate over this, because we may need it sooner than we think.

The bees do their share by preparing for the season of colony reproduction. They enlarge their brood nests, they increase their populations, and, finally, they'll raise young queens. Hive space may quickly become cramped in these conditions. When this happens, the brood nest becomes congested, and the colony is forced to swarm, sometimes prematurely.

As beekeepers, we avoid this problem by supplying adequate comb space for the queens to lay eggs and ample hive volume for the storage of nectar. We regularly monitor the colonies; weekly, if possible, until we see that preparations for swarming have started. Our inspections are brief, focusing our attention on the brood nests, because this is where we find signs that tell us when the time is right to divide a colony; at times, several days before swarm cells appear. Indeed, when a colony is initiating its preparations for swarming, the brood pattern and the proportion of open brood offer the most obvious clues: A sudden transition from areas of solid brood of consistent age to scattered brood with a very low proportion of eggs and young larvae is the signal; queen cells will be formed a few days later. When we find swarm cells, swarming is imminent, if it has not already happened. It's good to note that colonies seldom progress at the same pace. Some are ready much earlier than others. Some do not prepare to swarm for a variety of reasons, which include the young age of their queens, colony weakness, and genetics. In these cases, as well as in the cases of queen supercedure, I do not divide the colonies. Instead, I may decide to raise a few queens from their brood, but we are not at that point yet.

Right now, let's make sure that our colonies can grow and let's keep a watchful eye on their nests in anticipation of their propagation. Next month, we will talk about the hive division procedure per se.

### February in the apiaries

Performed early in the month, a series of cursory inspections of the upper parts of the hives allow us to place supers or additional frames to provide nectar storage space. These are brief manipulations, which are done to preempt the risk of early congestion of the brood nests. Overwintered nucs and colonies headed by young queens in particular need this attention, because they can build up remarkably fast. The size of the clusters and the debris on the monitoring trays provide enough information about the colonies. We must avoid exposing the brood to the cold air.

Sadly, some colonies may be found dead. They simply could not make it to spring for a variety of reasons, which may include queen failure, diseases, populations that were too small, or separation of the clusters from their stores. The contents of these failed hives are examined

to try to determine the cause of their failure and to decide what needs to be done with the equipment and the honey that may remain, either cleaning it for reuse or safely disposing of it altogether. Then, they are promptly closed and removed from the apiaries. It hurts, but we must not dwell on this: Not much could have been done about it at this time of year. Instead, I focus my attention on the surviving colonies. They are good stock that will help to rebuild the apiaries, and maybe even to help friends start new hives.

Just like all beekeepers, I'm eager to see a good spring with a generous honey flow roll in and to start working with the bees. But I must contain my impatience: This is not yet the season to open the brood chambers and to take them apart. No matter how tempting an occasional sunny day might be, it's not warm enough to permit such intrusions, and the colonies are simply too fragile right now.

It's a real struggle for the scantily populated clusters to keep the growing nests adequately fed and heated. This takes food and energy: pollen and honey. The stores can be rapidly depleted when inclement weather prevents the foragers from flying to the mustard, manzanitas, eucalyptus trees and other plants that are in bloom. In fact, we are entering the period of the year when the colonies are the most at risk of starving.

In a few weeks, in two months maybe, when the colonies have regained vigor and when the weather conditions are favorable, they'll face a crucial part of their life: colony reproduction to ensure the perpetuation of their species. Between now and then, our goal is to make sure that we provide the hive and comb spaces that are necessary for their development.

In anticipation of the future needs of the bees we can add plants that will be sources of nectar and pollen in our gardens and around our houses. Maybe it won't be much by comparison to what the bees need, but every flower helps.

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

- Inspect the exterior of the hives:
  - Verify that hive tops are still properly set and secured.
  - Verify that the hive entrances remain unobstructed.
  - Observe the landing boards and the ground in front of the hives.
  - On nice days, observe the flight paths and the bee activity. Adjust the entrance reducers, if necessary.
- Examine the debris on the monitoring trays.
- Slightly lift the back of the hives to feel if the colonies are running low on stores.
- Take care of or dispose of the equipment that held colonies that failed, as appropriate.
- Perform cursory inspections of only the upper part of the hives on a sunny windless day.
- Place supers with a few frames of empty drawn comb and follower boards, where needed.
- Keep the upper ventilation slots open.
- Build and repair beekeeping equipment.
- Plan for spring.
- Plant bee forage.

*Serge Labesque*  
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## **Join the Education Committee! It's Fun!**

**By Ettamarie Peterson**

I enjoy the education committee because we get to promote beekeeping to various age groups. Sometimes it is a Rotary group that meets early in the morning or in the evening. Sometimes it is a group of little wiggly pre-schoolers and everything in between. They all ask interesting questions and keep you on your toes. When I speak to adult groups I tend to see how many times I can make them laugh, as I am a closet stand-up comedian. When I speak to the little folks they sometimes make me laugh. One child asked me why there was only one queen. I replied that is was because she didn't like to share her job. At that a little guy came out with, "My daddy has a girl friend!" Choking back my laughter I moved right along to the job the queen has.

The delightful thing I find about teaching children about bees besides their wide-eyed interest in the subject is the wonderful letters the teachers send me afterwards. They tell me what they learned and how great I am. The best praise I have gotten so far was from a second grader who declared I was "epic"! That was an adjective never used to describe me before!

If you would like to join this committee, it would be awesome. We get a lot of invitations to speak, especially in

the spring when teachers like to do plants and insects. The educational coordinator will match you up with a partner if you feel you are not ready to do it on your own. She will also give you a school in your area of the county so you will not have far to drive. Each area has a box of large bee photos done by the California Academy of Science and other props to make your talk more interesting. There are also handouts to give to the classes. All most speakers provide are taking along their bee veil, smoker and hive tool. Volunteer by going to [educationcoordinator@sonomabees.org](mailto:educationcoordinator@sonomabees.org).



# Beekeeping Classes

at Santa Rosa Junior College by Serge Labesque

NOTE: This spring there will be a series of three classes because the JC asked Serge to present an Introduction to Beekeeping class in Sonoma. So, below is how it comes out of the JC class confirmation. Additional information should be available very soon at [www.srjccce.augusoft.net](http://www.srjccce.augusoft.net).

Class: **Introduction to Beekeeping**  
Weekly - Wed 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM;  
4 sessions starting 2/3/2016, ending 2/24/2016  
Lark Hall, 2004, Santa Rosa Campus

Class: **Introduction to Beekeeping**  
Weekly - Tues 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM;  
4 sessions starting 3/1/2016, ending 3/22/2016  
Hanna Boys Center, Admissions Building,  
Conference Room

**Introduction to Beekeeping Description:** This short course will introduce students to beekeeping with a strong emphasis on beehive management techniques as practiced in Sonoma County without reliance on any treatment whatsoever for pests or diseases. Topics include: overview of the honey bee colony; beekeeping tools and equipment; how to start with honey bees; swarming; honey flow and harvesting of hive products; diseases, pests and enemies; hive and queen management; and beekeeping throughout the year.



Class: **Intermediate Beekeeping**  
Weekly - Wed 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM;  
2 sessions starting 3/2/2016, ending 3/9/2016  
Lark Hall, 2004, Santa Rosa Campus

**Intermediate Beekeeping Description:** This class will expand on the beehive management techniques that were explored during the Introduction to Beekeeping course. The focus of the class will be spring and summer management of beehives in Sonoma County. Detailed explanations of techniques that are used in apiary expansion, swarm prevention and capture, queen management, and hive division will be given.

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## Bee Plants of the Month

By Alice Ford-Sala

### Beneficial Tree of the Month

Note: Throughout 2016, I would like to talk about beneficial trees for honeybees. Some are native, and some are not, but chosen for overall benefit to the environment. A tree is a lasting legacy for generations to come, planted in a location that makes sense for the terrain it will provide some of the following: flowers for our insect and bird companions, fruit/berries for human or critter consumption, shade for all, leaves for insects and compost piles. You might want to get involved in your city street tree program to encourage planting of beneficial trees.



Tulip Poplar

### Tree of the Month:

**Tulip Poplar *Liriodendron tulipifera***  
Family Magnoliaceae

This is not the related deciduous Magnolia with the big, colorful and striking saucer-shaped blossoms that is often also called Tulip Tree. Rather, Liriodendron is often used as a street or park tree, as it grows straight and tall up to 80 feet, with width up to 40 feet. The leaves look like small sycamore or cut off maple leaves. They turn a

pretty yellow in fall, and then the trees are bare until spring. The flowers are pretty, but usually up so high that they are barely noticeable. They can be yellow-greenish, or green with stripes of orange. They are cup (or tulip) shaped and produce up to a teaspoon of nectar a day, so they are a treat in early spring for bees. The first time I even noticed that there were flowers on Liriodendron was when I was in a second story apartment and heard buzzing, then discovered that bees were visiting every flower. Once established, Liriodendron gets by with seasonal water, though they can take irrigation from a lawn or in a park setting.

### Native Plant of the Month

**Gum Plant *Grindelia hirsutula*, *g. stricta***  
Family Asteraceae

A woody perennial, Gum Plant grows in a wide range of soils and all over the state. It can be covered with small yellow flowers that provide pollen and nectar to honeybees and native bees. Both types of Gum Plant have a sticky sap that covers the flower buds. Gum plant blooms over a long period in spring and summer. It can take infrequent to moderate water. Summer trimming will keep it blooming as well as neatening up the plant.

## **BEE WISE:** **“BEE FOCUS IN 2016”** by Emery Dann

The beekeepers I know love their bees and focus on their honey bees and the surrounding environment. We are “bee environmentalists”!

We know the focus of bee scouts is looking for the best quantity of nectar available to them with the highest quality sugar content and then communicating this information in the hive to their sister foragers. Bees ignore what is not profitable to them! Bees are fastidious!

The results are amazing when every bee does its job. I have had honey supers filled with only Meyer Lemon Honey, only Lavender Honey, only Eucalyptus, Chinese Privet (Ligustrum) Tree honey—a yellow/golden honey. Privet flowers bloom in July all over Santa Rosa, Sebastopol and some parts of California. Honey bees finish what they start, focus on one thing at a time, taking time to clean up and are a remarkable example to us all!

My premise is: Bees are successful because they focus on one flower source or one bee job at a time. My question is: Can I be more successful by limiting my focus to one thing at a time? My bees are successful because they focus on one thing at a time! Bees do not “multi-task”! Limits are good to be effective and not just “crazy busy”, going too fast—in too many directions, or just raising a cloud of dust by being un-focused and scattered. Are there aspects of new technology robbing us of our time, energy and productivity?

What am I saying YES to? Is it specific and written down? Then I will know what I need to say NO to! Do I

have clarity on what is my top priority? I cannot say NO until I know what I am saying YES to. My mind wants to do far more than I am capable of doing. My energies get diffused when I am too rushed, over committed or unorganized. I need to evaluate my life with when to say YES and when to say NO.

I have never seen a bee swarm pulling a U-Haul Trailer! Bees travel light! I have tried to chase a swarm that left a swarm box or branch when I arrived there. Sometimes I have followed them; sometimes I wish them well. Bee swarms do not carry “baggage” with them. It is easy for bees to move when they decide to go. Yet as humans, many of us collect and keep our garages and homes full of stuff, bee equipment we might use someday, etc. but never or rarely do! When we run out of room where we are, we stuff it into storage facilities full of our “leftovers”. American’s pay 22 Billion (with a B) dollars to store what we are unwilling to part with—and much of it becomes “out of sight—out of mind” never again to see the light of day! Is there a better way, like following the focus of our bee friends?

I am learning from a web site called: [www.theminimalists.com](http://www.theminimalists.com) for anyone interested in streamlining his or her lives, homes and possessions. There are additional web sites about mineralization. For us to live effective, uncluttered and FOCUSED lives, our bees can show us how to be healthy! Bee focus is a living example we can use to improve our lives. Bees to do a few things well, clean up, finish what they start and travel light, then moving on! This may help us BEE WISE and be more effective!

“BEE FOCUS” can make your life more productive in 2016 and you will BEE HAPPY with the results!

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## **Testing Bees For Virus**

By Mark Hohmann, Beekeepers of Napa Valley

Dave Wick is in Montana running a virus-identifying machine that the army developed for germ warfare. Originally he worked in conjunction with Jerry Bromenschenk. He’s looking for samples of 100-150 live foragers in a zip-lock baggie and then frozen. They need to be labeled with site location and beekeeper’s name and club. Do not squeeze air out of bag and ship same day unless not possible. The cost effective shipping is US Postal service flat rate small box. The address is BVS, Inc, 795 Porter Hill Rd., Stevensville, MT, 59870 and his phone is 406-369-4214. This is part of a research project on viral loads in sidliner bees and is for free and he’s hoping for twenty people from each club to contribute.

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## **Small Hive Beetle Alert**

By Ettamarie Peterson

In the latest issue of the Nevada County Beekeeper newsletter I spotted this in Randy Oliver’s column: “The feeding of protein patties may get more complicated in Nevada County this year. For the first time, this summer we found Small Hive Beetle (SHB) larvae growing in the protein patties in our lowest elevation yards. It appears that SHB may be moving up the hill, to my great dismay. We sure don’t need another headache!”

I don’t feed my bees but some of you may be so inclined. Remember those SHB’s are in our county so be on the look out for this.



# Regional Groups, On The Move In January!

By Christine Kurtz and Thea Vierling

During January there has already been lots of activity in the regional groups. Just like the bees are waking up after the winter slumber, the beekeepers are getting ready for the Spring buildup. Beginners are getting ready to buy their equipment and others are getting ready for hive expansion. What a busy month. Cleaning old equipment, melting down old wax and maybe even cleaning out honey from a deadout hive so we can save it from all those ants and mice that get into the hive at this time of year! There have even been a few forensic hive dives by none other than Christine Kurtz, The bee Coroner!

If you want to be part of these Bee Cafes, email your cluster leaders and ask if there is anything going on! Also tell them you can help by providing a garage or barn space where your cluster could meet. You might even have a dead out hive which of course is very depressing but it is also a learning opportunity for your cluster. There is so much to learn about hives that die: lost queens, starvation, Varroa Mite Overload!

There are a few new cluster leaders but we are still looking for a cluster leader for North Cluster. Christine and I will do our best to invite north cluster folks when and if there is space available to other cluster events but we really need someone to step up. In the other clusters, there have been assistants stepping up. This way all the work does not fall on one person's shoulders!

Here are the emails. Get in touch!

Christines new email is:

[regionalcoordinator2@sonomabees.org](mailto:regionalcoordinator2@sonomabees.org)

[centeralcluster@sonomabees.org](mailto:centeralcluster@sonomabees.org)

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

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

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

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

Lizanne is running the equipment workshop for South cluster. We had 22 beekeepers show up for this great workshop.



This is Jen Espinoza showing the Cluster Workshop the inside of a bait hive. A piece of old comb and lemon grass oil dabs give the bees the inviting scents.



Chris Conrad is running an equipment workshop for Central Cluster. 23 people showed up and everyone was pleased with the information!



SCBA Member Don Jereb volunteered to teach the Liberty 4-H Beekeeper's Project how to assemble the planter pot bait hives.

# On Pondering About Bees

By Christine Kurtz

Nope don't bother taking me out to dinner or give me a bouquet of flowers because all I really want for my birthday is a nail gun. When did I start becoming so picky? There is something that happens when you start beekeeping that changes your focus especially when you start growing your apiary. From two to seven to ten to a whopping twenty-one hive set-ups in 8 years. They are not all inhabited at the moment. I went into winter with 19 hives (2 were lost early in the Fall) and I lost 2 in January both failing to regenerate fizzling to a pitiful handful of bees.

What comes with hive failures is the daunting task of cleaning the equipment and getting it ready for the upcoming season. I've learned very fast that there is nothing more nerve wrecking than not being ready. Going in a hive and not having a super cleaned up or some frames put together when a hive is bursting at the seams and needing space, having to close it up scorch the equipment, glue and wire some frames and go in again. Let me tell you the bees don't appreciate being disturbed twice!

Last year all I wanted for my birthday was a mega torch to help me sterilize all that equipment. Nope no dinner, no flowers. Sometimes a hive that died had 5 or 6 supers and it adds up quickly. The little hand held torch is just too time consuming. Inviting a bee buddy with his/her equipment needing sterilizing makes it much more fun too

Dismantling the two recent casualties made me realize that it is time to cycle out some of the old frames and build new ones, ergo the wish for an air gun. I have diligently dated my frames, and re-dated them when I reused them coming up with a code system to know whether I reused them fully drawn or whether I removed the wax, torched the frame and re-wired it for another go around. When I first started beekeeping in 2009 word was to cycle out frames after 5 years of use and now we are talking 3 years, a sad state of our environment. No one though mentions life span if you take the wax out, sterilize and re-use just the woodenware. But I suspect even in the wood bad things can accumulate over time. Fortunately my son is a metal smith and he welcomes those old frames for kindling to start his forge. I have to mention though that re-using frames is one of those debatable things, there are some beekeepers who start fresh every time and see it as a necessary cost, taking no chances. There are some who re-use everything and some like me that just re-use newer comb. I do not re-use the brood nest of a failed hive but will re-use the honey frames of lighter comb. I also always rule out American Foul Brood first.

Again what would I do without a bee buddy? A bee buddy with tools! I was kindly invited up to John McGinnis workshop to use his frame jig and the infamous air nail gun. OMG I put together 100 frames in a pretty short time! There is no going back! That is how "all I want for my birthday is a nail gun" came to be.

A hundred frames later! Thank you John McGinnis.



Sterilizing Equipment with Butane Torch

Cleaning up old equipment is a winter's chore.



John McGuinness shared his jig for assembling new frames and his nail gun.



Look what he and Christine accomplished!



# Getting on the Swarm List

## Swarm Bee Cafe/Workshops

By Christine Kurtz, Thea Vierling and Melissa Bates

Every year we are trying to find new solutions for how to authorize members to the swarm list. Doing it at the general meetings has been pretty frustrating as the noise level rises as folks come in and the difficulty is keeping the attention on task and this year with Paul Stamets, it won't be possible at the February meeting and swarm can start by the end of February. We are then setting up in each cluster a swarm bee cafe/workshop to sign up beekeepers who want to be on the list after they go through a swarm orientation. Experienced beekeepers that have been through the orientation in the past can be approved via E-Mail, send Melissa Bates our swarm chair a request at [swarm@sonomabees.org](mailto:swarm@sonomabees.org). For the swarm bee cafe/workshop see dates below.

Folks need to get on the list but also need the orientation. This year we would like to do the bulk of sign ups at a bee cafe/workshop in each regional cluster group. Melissa Bates our Swarm Chairperson is willing to come and give a short presentation and approve members and put them on the list. We can then talk about all the different kinds of swarms, tips and tricks and swarm buddy systems. First Year Beekeepers need mentoring the first year, as they don't know enough about bees. The buddy system is so important for new beekeepers who want to learn about catching swarms. Who knows maybe they could get a swarm by the end of the season. So please ask new beekeepers to join you in swarm catching. The Second part of the swarm cafe/workshop is optional. Ann and Don Jereb came to Ettamarie's 4H group and taught the kids how to build these very simple swarm traps (the same bait hive that they donated to the auction). Chris Dicker and I were there too learning how to build them. We thought that this would be a nice addition to this event and encourage the enthusiasm of our members who come to us with ideas. They work well because they have the right size cavity as bees like to measure and mimic the hollow of a tree which is very attractive to bees along with a piece of old comb and a drop or two of Lemongrass oil. Ann and Don collected 3 swarms last year in this kind of bait hive. They are made so that you can suspend them high in trees and they do need to be monitored. All materials will be provided and a fee to just cover the materials of approximately \$10 will be charged. Again this is optional but I will need a correct head count.



Invitation and sign ups will arrive to your e-mail:  
West Cluster Wednesday February 17 evening time & venue to be announced  
South Cluster Saturday February 20 10am at Ettamarie's Barn  
East Cluster Saturday February 27 10 am Lizanne Pastore's Barn  
North & Central Combined February 28 10 am Janet Leisen's Barn

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## Helping to Save Honey Bees and Other Pollinators

by Tiffany Renée

In 2013 nearly 13,000 pounds of glyphosate were applied just in Sonoma County public right of ways. Even more was applied for agricultural use. (Latest public data from <http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/>)

The Petaluma Grange is leading a countywide effort to adopt better policies around the use of herbicides. Last year the Petaluma Grange proposed a statewide ban on glyphosate (Roundup) which was adopted by the California Grange (CSG) membership as part of its 2015 legislative agenda. Members from Petaluma Grange, the CSG and our lobbyist met with Senator Mike McGuire about legislation banning glyphosate, however this was before the World Health Organization had declared glyphosate a carcinogen. Since that time, the CSG has championed adding glyphosate to the Prop 65 list of known carcinogens. The California EPA intends to include glyphosate on that list.

For those of us that work with bees, it's distressing to see bee die off every time the landscapers come through our neighborhoods. It would be wonderful to have a voice for our bees, and an endorsement of the proposed ordinance from the SCBA. Members of the Petaluma Music, Parks and Recreation Commission also want to hear from non-profits that will step up to help do the public education component of the proposed ordinance. This may be something to ask of other cities in the future.

I'm available to work with constituents in every city in Sonoma County to find a champion on their City Council to bring forward a moratorium. As former Petaluma Vice Mayor, I'm available to meet with you and your councilmember to assist your efforts. I know many of the elected in the County. Let's work toward better IPM management and lessen and remove glyphosate use in our public right of ways.

### **Ways to Get Involved:**

1. Join our Facebook group to get updates on organizing meetings here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/savebeesbutterflies/>
2. Please sign this petition that is being sent to all city councils and the board of supervisors. We need them to hear from the public! <http://bit.ly/ban-glyphosate>
3. Educate yourself. You can review the USGS information about quantities of glyphosate in groundwater tests they performed along with a few other high-level reports and articles here (including Richmond and Portland IPM policy): <http://bit.ly/glyphosate-re-sources>
4. Read the Proposed ordinance here: <http://www.petalumagrangecommunity.com/proposed-pesticide-ban-for-city-of-petaluma/>
5. Volunteer to attend a city council meeting in your area: please email Tiffany Renée at [tiff@8thnbee.com](mailto:tiff@8thnbee.com) or call 707-235-8762.

# SCBA General Meeting Jan 11, 2016

About 120 present. Held at the 4-H building, Rohnert Park.

Cheryl announced the Business tables around the perimeter of the room: April Lance selling package bees; Christine Kurtz mentoring; Bill Cervenka with wax for sale; Bee-themed fingernail art; Karen with the Non-GMO initiative to sign; Cluster Leaders at a table; Alternative hives by Jim Spencer; 50/50 Raffle; Plants for Sale; Ask Me volunteers.

Meeting started at 6:56 pm with Volunteer Recognition. Cheryl Veretto introduced the new Board of Directors. Laura Baker thanked the outgoing Board, Christine's amazing Auction; and the MVB (Most Valuable Beekeeper) for 2015—Chris Dicker!

Thea Vierling thanked the Cluster Leaders. Jen Espinoza thanked the Educators. Christine thanked the Ask Me people. Cathy Kopshever and Kelli Cox thanked everyone who helped at events. Cheryl Veretto thanked Laura, the outgoing President!

The 50/50 Raffle gave \$116 to a lucky ticket holder.

Visitors were asked to stand and introduce themselves; there were about 8 of them.

A big THANKS was also given to the cookie bakers who supply us with treats for meetings.

Rob Keller was the first speaker. The topic was Alternative Hives. Rob's mother was a vet, but he was interested in the arts and went to UC Davis.

Rob showed some of his art projects involving putting objects in a viewable hive or box to see how the bees treat the object or cover it over. Example, a dollhouse!

He won a grant for an Airstream trailer from Levi Strauss to remodel with an observation hive inside. Through many trials and new plans, he succeeded, and still travels around with a live hive inside to show at fairs and events. He said he learned more from watching that hive, than he has from anything else. He notices they start prepping for winter in August and moving honey down around the brood. He says, leave them alone—don't move their frames around! Let them do what they want. They know what they need.

Rob believes bees want a vertical configuration, not horizontal.

Moisture is the critical element to control, not heat or cold. He's experimenting with inner quilts or hops/other herbs in upper feed trays to collect moisture.

He's got hive beetles, but not big infestations. He uses the Beetle Blasters and staples them down.

Michael Thiele spoke next. He brought some of the alternative hives on the side table. He is very interested in natural nest cavities, mostly tree logs. He showed a short video of a swarm moving into one of his horizontal log hives. He can remove both ends (round boards) and videotaped them building comb from the backside of where the entrance was. You can view that and more at [www.gaiabees.com](http://www.gaiabees.com)

A question was asked if some trees should be avoided for log hives—yes. He doesn't recommend cedar or redwood as they have too many volatiles within the wood.

The meeting closed with Jim Spencer describing the alternative hives on the table and inviting all to become members of the "Top Bar Cluster".

Adjourned at 8:36 pm



Rob Keller



Michael Thiele



Jim Spencer

Submitted:

*Becky Jackson*  
Secretary

**[Link to Board Minutes:](http://sonomabees.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/12-2015-SCBA-Board-meeting-minutes.pdf)**

<http://sonomabees.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/12-2015-SCBA-Board-meeting-minutes.pdf>

# SCBA Bee Education

by Jen Espinoza

There is a dedicated group of beekeepers who volunteer their time giving classroom presentations. We cover topics such as anatomy, life cycle, CCD, swarms, native bees, beekeeping, and what can be done to support the bees (plant, provide water, no poisons, watch for swarms, buy local honey, keep some earth 'unmulched' for native bees, build bee hotels, etc). Each of us has our own style and level of expertise, and we encourage anyone interested in joining us to come watch a presentation. It is very gratifying to see children learn to appreciate bees, especially when they all started out telling their 'sting stories'. Swarm reports have come to SCBA members through these young 'bee stewards' and a new 4H group formed after a presentation last year. We are making a difference!

This group has grown from a couple of SCBA members 3 years ago responding to personal requests, to a group of 18 enthusiastic and dedicated educators using official bee education materials housed in four regions of our county. As the first coordinator of this program, I've thoroughly enjoyed the past three years working with the team, creating curriculum and organizing materials, giving presentations, and making community and school contacts that often request repeat presentations year after year. Patsy Young, has generously offered to take over the coordination for SCBA education as I make my way back into full time teaching fourth grade. Thank you all who have supported my journey and who have stepped up with your ideas, passion and time to educate our community about bees.

Here we are enjoying a meal together after brainstorming and sharing education ideas.



From Left: Rick Marques, Lynn Marques, Doreen Schmid, Patsy Young, Thea Vlerling, Laurie Smith, Jen Espinoza, Christine Kurtz, Chris Conrad, Connie Neuhouser (hiding behind) Cheryl Veretto, Abby Peterson, Ettamarie Peterson, Mike Turner, Denise Feldman. Not pictured: Darlene Bradley from Cardinal Newman, Ann Jereb, Ana Toso, Jim Spencer, Renee Poderbarac and Ed Grager.

## 2016 Board Members and Other Helpful People

President - Cheryl Veretto [president@sonomabees.org](mailto:president@sonomabees.org)  
1st Vice President - Ann Jereb [1stVP@sonomabees.org](mailto:1stVP@sonomabees.org)  
2nd Vice President - Rita Maloney [2ndVP@sonomabees.org](mailto:2ndVP@sonomabees.org)  
Secretary - Becky Jackson [secretary@sonomabees.org](mailto:secretary@sonomabees.org)  
Treasurer - Lew Spengler [treasurer@sonomabees.org](mailto:treasurer@sonomabees.org)  
Volunteer Coordinator - Open [volunteer@sonomabees.org](mailto:volunteer@sonomabees.org)  
Representatives at Large  
Ettamarie Peterson [atLarge1@sonomabees.org](mailto:atLarge1@sonomabees.org)  
Chris Conrad [atLarge2@sonomabees.org](mailto:atLarge2@sonomabees.org)  
Open [atLarge3@sonomabees.org](mailto:atLarge3@sonomabees.org)  
Assistant - Linda Burns [assistant@sonomabees.org](mailto:assistant@sonomabees.org)

Auction - Chirstine Kurtz [auction@sonomabees.org](mailto:auction@sonomabees.org)  
Education Coordinator - Jen Espinoza/Patsy [education@sonomabees.org](mailto:education@sonomabees.org)  
Extractor Editor - Ettamarie Peterson [editor@sonomabees.org](mailto:editor@sonomabees.org)  
Historian - Kirstie Stramler [historian@sonomabees.org](mailto:historian@sonomabees.org)  
Librarian - Nadya Clark [librarian@sonomabees.org](mailto:librarian@sonomabees.org)  
Regional Coordinator (shared)- Thea Vierling – [regionalcoordinator@sonomabees.org](mailto:regionalcoordinator@sonomabees.org)  
Regional Coordinator (shared)- Christine Kurtz – [regionalcoordinator2@sonomabees.org](mailto:regionalcoordinator2@sonomabees.org)

Cluster Leaders:  
Central - Molly Kuhl [centralcluster@sonomabees.org](mailto:centercluster@sonomabees.org)  
East - Jon Sevigny [eastcluster@sonomabees.org](mailto:eastcluster@sonomabees.org)  
Mentor - Emery Dann [mentorcluster@sonomabees.org](mailto:mentorcluster@sonomabees.org)  
Napa - Jon Sevigny [napacluster@sonomabees.org](mailto:napacluster@sonomabees.org)  
North - Open [northcluster@sonomabees.org](mailto:northcluster@sonomabees.org)  
South - Sally McGough [southcluster@sonomabees.org](mailto:southcluster@sonomabees.org)  
Topbar - Jim Spencer [topbarcluster@sonomabees.org](mailto:topbarcluster@sonomabees.org)  
West - Chris Dicker [westcluster@sonomabees.org](mailto:westcluster@sonomabees.org)

Swarm - Melissa Bates [swarm@sonomabees.org](mailto:swarm@sonomabees.org)  
Webmaster - Chris Dicker [webmaster@sonomabees.org](mailto:webmaster@sonomabees.org)

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## Contact Information

Regular monthly meetings of the Sonoma County Beekeepers' Association are held on the second Monday of each month, at 7 pm at the Rohnert Park 4-H Building. 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

**Extractor Techs-** Call Ettamarie 707-479-1613 or Janet Leisen 707- 528-2085 or Denny Pederson e-mail [denny1@sonic.net](mailto:denny1@sonic.net) to rent the electric extractor for \$5 a 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](mailto:deborah@olivequeen.net) She lives in Glen Ellen.

## Ads in This Newsletter

Check with Treasurer Lew Spengler 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.



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## beekind class schedule

Register at <http://www.beekind.com>

### **Introduction to Beekeeping - 3 Hours.**

Taught by Doug Vincent, Owner and Beekeeper of beekind.

Basic beekeeping information on how to get started with bees, use of equipment and what to expect in your first year. Get answers to your questions. A must have class if you are interested in keeping bees.

Introduction to Beekeeping - \$10; Saturday, February 20th, 2016; 10AM to 1PM; Sebastopol Grange Hall; 6000 Sebastopol Avenue (Same as Hwy. 12) Sebastopol, CA 95472

### **Introduction to Beekeeping - 3 Hours.**

Taught by Doug Vincent, Owner and Beekeeper of beekind.

Basic beekeeping information on how to get started with bees, use of equipment and what to expect in your first year. Get answers to your questions. A must have class if you are interested in keeping bees.

Introduction to Beekeeping - \$10; Saturday March 12th, 2016; 10AM to 1PM; Sebastopol Grange Hall; 6000 Sebastopol Avenue (Same as Hwy. 12) Sebastopol, CA 95472

### **Package Bee Installation -1 Hour.**

Taught by Doug Vincent, Owner and Beekeeper of beekind.

Instruction on the Beekind method of installing a package of honeybees in your hive. Please see the YouTube video at <http://beekind.com/packagebeeinstallation.html>

Package Bee Installation - Free with RSVP Saturday March 19th, 2016; 11AM to Noon; beekind Store; 921 Gravenstein Hwy S. Sebastopol, CA 95472

### **Live Hive Inspection -3 Hours.**

Taught by Doug Vincent, Owner and Beekeeper of beekind.

Hands On. Bee Prepared/ Bring Your Own Protective Gear. Learn to identify eggs, larvae, capped brood, workers, drones, queens, pollen, nectar, honey, wax, propolis and varroa mites. Many tips and tidbits on handling bees.

Saturday March 19th, 2016; 1PM to 4PM; beekind Store; 921 Gravenstein Hwy S. Sebastopol, CA 95472

### **Package Bee Installation 1 Hour.**

Taught by Doug Vincent, Owner and Beekeeper of beekind.

Instruction on the beekind method of installing a package of honeybees in your hive. YouTube video at [www.beekind.com](http://www.beekind.com)

Package Bee Installation - Free with RSVP Saturday March 26th, 2016; 11AM to Noon; beekind Store; 921 Gravenstein Hwy S. Sebastopol, CA 95472