

The Monthly Extractor

Volume 41, Issue 3

March 2016



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

This Month's Calendar:

Monthly Meeting: Monday, March 14- 5PM

Rohnert Park 4-H Building

5 p.m. **Last chance this year to take Swarm Orientation Training and sign up to be on the swarm list.**

6 pm- Social (bring your own cup please). Learn from others, check out books & videos, buy plants and meet cluster leaders.

7 pm – Serge Labesque will be teaching us about dividing hives. This is a subject all beekeepers should be interested in especially when the colony is of excellent local bees and is expanding quickly.

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From Our President

Greetings Members,

What interesting changes in the weather. I often sit out in my apiary, watching activities of each colony that I manage, and it feels like spring - lots of activity. I am so eager to peek inside to see what is going on - BUT, I know it is still early and it is a critical time for the queen - laying the season's first brood. I haven't seen any drones out in our small microclimate of Blucher Valley, not yet. So, I wait and follow the signs of the season and of each hive. When do I add a box? When do I make a split? Or even sadly, how can I help a failing hive? The answers are around me, within my cluster group or other members of our group. We are not alone in this - there is a wealth of knowledge and experience within the SCBA organization - you just have to reach out.

As President this year, I made a commitment to get involved in as much as I could... what I have witnessed is a "shift in the paradigm." I see communities building, individuals with bright and creative ideas focusing on an ecological and sustainable future for pollinators. I challenge each one of you to become involved, in what ever way that complements you... plant a pollinator garden, talk to a group of school children about bees and beekeeping, host a "Bee Cafe" movie night, volunteer for one of the many events that SCBA has exhibition booths or bring cookies to the meetings.

A reminder to all that Swarm season is upon us and SCBA sends out a postcard with information of what to do if you see a swarm - and a link to our website swarm page.

To be on the list of beeks that collect swarms:

- Be an active member of SCBA - join or renew if you haven't already
- Attended a Swarm Orientation, and have signed the Swarm agreement
- Provided information for the Published Online Swarm List in the Membership application • See <http://sonomabees.org/new-swarm-collection/>
- Any issues: contact Melissa at swarm@sonomabees.org

I will close with: I just joined the newly formed Plant & Garden Group and am very excited about the ideas and focus of the group, Ellen Sherron is in charge and can be reached at gardening@sonomabees.org. Look for changes and more information at the Plant table during the meetings.

Bee Well,

Cheryl Veretta
President

My March

Beekeeping To-Do List by Serge Labesque

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Dividing hives

Last month, we saw what needs to be done to prepare for the division of our hives. We leave it up to the bees to signal when it is best to carry out our plans. Having found a colony that is getting ready to swarm, we know that it is now time to proceed.

The weather is favorable; countless foragers are flying in and out of the hives. Our equipment is at hand, including hive bottoms and tops, supers, frames, follower boards, nuc boxes; everything and anything that we might need in our apiaries.

The smoker is lit as a precaution, but we probably will not use it, because we want the bees and the queen to remain on their combs. We assess the brood nest and decide how many splits we want or can actually assemble from this hive. In most instances, I like to divide a hive into three splits of approximately equal strength. Doing this gives a good degree of control over swarming and results in strong and potentially productive colonies. Later in the spring, however, with good weather and nice honey flow, strong colonies that have desirable traits may be safely divided into many more splits.

The procedure requires that we pay a little more attention to the contents of the splits when the colony has not yet started building queen cells than when cells are already present. This is because we need to ensure that the young queens will be raised under good conditions. But, if we chose to wait until queen cells are formed, we might miss the swarm and the bees could be lost. Also, we need to remember that frames that carry queen cells must be manipulated with caution in order to avoid damaging them and injuring the queens that are developing inside.

Starting at the center of the brood nest, we look for a comb that contains eggs and very young larvae. Not much open brood is necessary, since its main purpose is to produce a few queen cells. Actually, too many larvae would compete with the developing queens for nutrition, and, if we find large areas of comb with lots of open brood, it is quite likely that the colony is not ready to be divided. This comb is placed in the center of a super or nuc box where we must create a well-organized brood nest around this open brood.

We repeat this process for all the divides.

As we move more combs and bees out of the parent hive to form the splits, we make sure that there is plenty of beebread and uncapped honey right next to the young brood. The nurse bees that will feed the developing queen larvae will need direct access to these nutrients to produce royal jelly. Nutrition is a key element in obtaining good quality queens. Then comes sealed brood, which is distributed equally among the divides. Finally, more stores are added around the embryonic brood nests we just organized. Certainly, we do not neglect to also include some empty comb to provide egg-laying space for an eventual queen and clustering space for the bees that will soon be

born. The balance of the parent hive receives the same attention as the splits, because it is a split in its own right.

When the divides are to be left in the original apiary or within close proximity, we add one or two frames of bees gathered from the brood nest area of the parent hive. These young bees will stay in the splits, whereas the older bees will tend to return to the hive that will be left at the original location. Except for the entrance of the parent hive, the entrances of the splits are reduced to about one square inch or less. If the divides are going to be moved to a distant apiary, they are closed immediately to retain all their bees.

No effort is made to find the queen, but we may see her. When this happens we move her with the comb she is on into a super or nuc box that will house one of the splits that will be relocated. Being queenright, this split will not receive precious brood that will be necessary in the queenless divides. She will be given some mixed stores, two or three frames of bees, and at least a frame with empty drawn comb where she can lay eggs. In essence, the queen will have swarmed and found a nest cavity.

Dividing a hive when queen cells are present is quite simple. All we need to do is to form as many splits as we want, as long as the strength of the colony permits, providing each divide with at least two queen cells, brood, stores, bees and some empty comb.

Between four and seven days after we divided the hive, we return to check on the bees. The use of follower boards facilitates remarkably the inspection of the splits, because the frames may be slid apart to avoid damaging queen cells. If eggs are found, we know that this divide contains the queen, and we manage it accordingly by adding the necessary comb space. In the absence of eggs, we should find queen cells. The divides that are particularly strong may be divided again, leaving at least two queen cells in each of these subsequent divides. If we need to make any correction to the configuration of the splits, now is the time to act. Then, we will leave the divides undisturbed for the next three to five weeks, depending on the weather, while the young queens develop, perform their mating flights, and begin to lay eggs. After waiting patiently for the end of this biological process, we will verify that the divides have become fully functional colonies headed by young vigorous queens. It will be a joyful moment!

March in the apiaries

This year again, spring weather arrived very early. The honey flow started after a string of mild days at the end of January, and the colonies built up remarkably well during the early part of February. Soon, space was needed to allow for the expansion of the brood nests and to contain the nectar that the foragers were collecting. This early activity was quite exciting and yet worrisome at the same time:

Where was the El Niño rain we had heard so much about? Those winter months were supposed to be the coldest and wettest time of the year! Nonetheless, the ground around here still begs for water, and the winter creeks are not flowing. If we have received most of the rain that we are going to get this year, it's going to be another long summer dearth for bees. If instead rain finally comes in March and April, the bees may not be able to visit the blossoms, and we will have a mediocre season of colony reproduction. At this point, the best we can reasonably hope for is a long series brief wet spring storms separated by periods of nice weather.

What does this all mean for beekeepers? Probably that we need to be very much aware of the impact this odd weather will have on our bees.

This time of year is normally a season of rapid colony growth, a precursor of colony reproduction, swarming. Since the congestion of the brood chambers drives the hives to swarm more than anything else, we have to anticipate the bees' need for an increased hive volume. Just as important is that we provide it in a timely manner. So, in addition to expanding the brood chambers, we add more nectar storage space, clustering space for the foragers between the hive entrances and the brood nest areas, and we supply frames where the bees can gather and build new combs.

We monitor our hives frequently in early spring, inspecting them at least once a week or every ten days at most, weather permitting. These inspections are brief, mainly focused on the brood nests to discern the onset of preparations for swarming and, as always, possible signs of health problems. Indeed, the threats of European foulbrood and chalkbrood, these so-called spring or stress diseases, are greater at this season. When this happens, the affected brood combs have to be removed from the hives and discarded in such a way that bees can no longer access them.

Since we know that some colonies will be inclined to swarm, especially after periods of inclement weather that keep the bees confined to their hives, we have set up swarm traps, which may be our temporarily unused equipment, and our swarm-catching gear is at the ready.

However, hive divisions are more dependable sources of new colonies and quality queens than swarms. For this reason, we are also prepared to split our colonies at the onset of their preparations for swarming. Soon we will even raise a few more queens from brood collected in our best hives.

If there is any surplus honey in the hives that sent foragers to the mustard bloom in February, it should be harvested without delay if it is to be extracted, or else it will crystallize in the comb. In doing this, we need to maintain enough nectar storage space in the hives though; otherwise, the brood chambers might become honey bound. However, be very cautious when removing honey from the hives, as the summer dearth may once again be very long.

There may be laggard colonies that were unable to build up fast enough at the end of winter to exploit the early flow. They could be at risk of starving when inclement weather prevents foraging. We must figure out why they

are failing. If they are not already superseding their queens and if they are otherwise healthy, requeening becomes an option at this time of year. This may be done by inserting queen cells from hives that we split or from colonies that are preparing to swarm.

Yes, we have entered the busy time of the year. Might as well enjoy it, but let's be prudent and not forget that this summer could be another tough one for bees that depend mostly on natural non-irrigated vegetation for their nutrition.

In summary, this month:

- Inspect hives on nice days, at a time when foragers are out in large numbers.
- Watch for signs of spring diseases and other health problems, and look for signs of preparations for swarming.
- Provide additional egg-laying space in the brood chambers.
- Place supers.
- Maintain forager clustering spaces between the entrances and the brood nests.
- Remove frames with old empty comb that bees vacated before they re-use them.
- Add new empty frames, thus providing the bees with comb-building opportunities.
- Prepare hives that have been selected for multiple divisions or for queen rearing (emphasis is on the development of the brood nests).
- Perform the first hive divisions of the season (but only if and when the hives are ready and when weather permits!)
- Place swarm traps.
- Clean or dispose of the equipment that held colonies that failed, as appropriate.
- Open the entrances of the hives to match the increasing forager activity.
- Ensure that the bees have access to water.
- Ensure that the hives remain adequately ventilated.
- Observe the performance of the queens and colonies.
- Requeen or combine hives that are not performing satisfactorily, and those that have failing queens.
- Harvest surplus honey.
- Give extracted supers and cappings back to the bees for cleaning.
- Keep the hive tops secured.
- Pull weeds from in front of the hives.
- Prepare swarm-catching equipment.
- Render wax from discarded frames.
- Cull old and misshapen combs.
- Routinely clean and scorch tools and equipment.

Serge Labesque
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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 https://srjccce.augusoft.net/index.cfm?method=ClassListing.ClassListingDisplay&int_category_id=1&int_sub_category_id=3&int_catalog_id=

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.



March Meeting

By Rita Maloney, 2nd V.P

Our speaker for this month's meeting on Monday, March 14th will be Serge Labesque speaking on "Hive Division." We are truly blessed here in Sonoma County to have a plethora of renowned bee experts, and Serge is one of the most popular. His presentations are always well attended, so plan accordingly!

Bee Plants of the Month

By Alice Ford-Sala

Beneficial Tree of the Month

Cornelian Cherry *Cornus Mas*
Family **Cornaceae**

This deciduous small tree or large shrub is a late winter/early spring bloomer that will please both your bees and you, as you admire the small yellow flowers that give way to clusters of cherry look-alikes. You can actually use the berries in jams or liqueurs, which apparently are very popular in Eastern Europe.



Cornelian Cherry

Native to Europe and Asia, Cornelian Cherry is a member of the dogwood family, blooming even earlier than the well-known flowering dogwoods-C. florida. They are also more tolerant of alkaline soil than other Cornus family members. They do appreciate regular water and full sun or partial shade. You can

train them to grow into a patio-sized tree—15 to 20 feet high and wide, or develop into a more shrubby form.

Native Plant of the Month

Trichostema Woolly Blue Curls
Family **Laminaceae**

Like many of our beloved California natives, Woolly Blue Curls (what an imaginative and provocative name), has pungent leaves that evoke a springtime hike in the foothills, which is where they grow, 3 to 5 feet tall and slightly wider.

This ever-green shrub bears flowers that are blue-purple and covered in woolly fuzz on the underside. They are borne in spikes that cover the shrub in spring and continue right through the summer and fall. Besides honeybees, butterflies and hummingbirds enjoy the sweet nectar. Plant Woolly Blue Curls in a sunny, very well drained location. Once established, they need little to no water. The exception would be in a dry winter; you should give them a good soaking once or twice. An added benefit is that they are generally not attractive to deer.



Trichostema Woolly Blue Curls

BEE WISE: **“BEE HISTORY”** by Emery Dann

Beehives were transported by the Egyptians in boats to pollinate farm crops grown along the Nile River. How did European honey bees get to America? Beehives were brought to America from Europe on some ships by the early settlers of this country. The skeps were attached to the bow of ships with the entrance facing the open sea. The journey across the Atlantic Ocean took over 60 days in difficult weather conditions and storms. This was a dangerous trip. Some of the new settlers and beehives did not survive the journey. The hives that did survive spread vigorously in their New World!

Beehives have been used in human warfare by throwing them from catapults or dropping them from high city walls onto the enemy below. Poison honey has been left for hungry enemy soldiers to find and eat, becoming very sick and even left to die.

Mankind has often exploited bees and every resource, possible to exploit with little regard for our fragile environment or future generations! I was in the Oakland Airport on my way to Phoenix, AZ, from where I am writing this article. There was a pictorial history of the San Francisco Bay. This showed today there is still mining pollution flowing into the Bay Estuary from the 1849 Gold Rush in California--167 years later!

If we could only learn and emulate what our honey bees teach us by their example! They show us cooperation, humility, consensus, unity, defending one another and protecting their young. Yes, bees are industrious!

We know honey bees add tremendous value to the environment around them by their pollination work, gathering nectar, propolis and water. Everything bees produce is non-toxic, health giving, anti-bacterial, anti-microbial, anti-fungal and biodegradable for themselves with gifts to humans and their environment.

It is one of the greatest privileges of my life: for me to assist and learn from working with honey bees. I love my “bee world” along with you, my bee friends, mentors and teachers...we all have the opportunity as Mahatma Gandhi said, “Bee the change you wish to see in the world!”

**AS BEEKEEPERS, WE ARE CHANGING BEE HISTORY
IN THE WORLD—ONE HIVE AT A TIME!**

Swarm Orientation Pre-Membership Meeting: ***LAST CHANCE for 2016***

Are you on the swarm list? Do you want to be?

<http://sonomabees.org/new-swarm-collection/>

To be on SCBA online Swarm List—a list of beekeepers who collect swarms for the public—you must be an active member and have had attended an orientation.

The LAST ORIENTATION for this year is March 14th, at the 4-H Center at 5-5:45PM (pre-meeting/social hour). If you have questions address them to Melissa at swarm@sonomabees.org.

Beekeeping 101 Workshops By Christine Kurtz and Jason Berkman

If you are a very new beekeeper, or if you are a beginner (even with some experience) and would like to practice being more comfortable around bees and hive inspections, then this is a workshop for you.

We will talk about beekeeping gear, smokers and fuels, stings and self-care, as well as basic hive management.

Part of the workshop will be a hive dive, which is going into a hive as a group to learn beekeeping skills. Topics covered include how to look at bee behavior at the entrance, using proper equipment and tools, the sequence and steps to opening a hive, how to interact with the bees, how to remove and hold frames, what to look for, how and when to close things up, how to take notes, and more.

The workshops will be taught by Jason Berkman and assisted by Christine Kurtz. Both are seasoned beekeepers of 9 years and 8 years respectively, and whose goal is to practice sustainable, treatment-free beekeeping.

Three different dates are available. Workshops are 2 hours long and a \$15 donation is recommended. Invitations to these workshops will arrive online, so watch your e-mails.

Workshop Dates:

- Saturday March 12 12pm-2pm Location Christine Kurtz apiary Petaluma
- Wednesday March 16 12pm-2pm Jason Berkman's apiary Sebastopol
- Sunday April 17 12pm-2p TBA

Actual addresses will be sent to enrollees.

Any questions? Please e-mail Christine Kurtz regionalcoordinator2@sonomabees.org

Regional Groups

By Christine Kurtz Co-Regional Coordinator

2016 has been a bustling of events in our regional groups. For new members this is a place for you to meet other beekeepers, do hives dives (going in each other's hives to gain beekeeping skills and experience), do workshops and hold bee cafes to create the communities that will help support what our bees need.

In January several clusters had equipment workshops and/or bee cafes. In February all five clusters had a swarm orientation and swarm trap building workshops. All cluster workshops were full and some had waiting lists (those who missed the swarm orientation -mandatory to be on the swarm list- have a last chance this year at 5 pm at our March 14 meeting before the social hour; after that you must wait till next year). Orientation will be followed by a swarm slide show but the swarm traps building was only available through the regional groups. Below is a reminder



Christine Kurtz showing pictures of swarms.

of the agreements to be on the swarm list and the list of helpful tools to bring along swarm calls.

I would profusely like to thank all cluster leaders for all their efforts to organize their groups. A special thank you to the central cluster leaders who embraced North Cluster while leaderless and included North in a joint Swarm Orientation/workshop managing a group of 50! Wow! And now that Laurie Smith has come to save our North Cluster, Central is extending its help to Laurie to mentor her and show her the ropes. So thankful and humbled by you all, your enthusiasm is contagious!

East Cluster has had changes; too, as John Sevigne's new business will keep him too busy to continue volunteering. We wish him good luck in his new endeavor. Meanwhile Lizanne Pastore with Thea Vierling's help will keep East going until a new volunteer(s) come forth. Keep in mind that burnout is real and that all of us are volunteers and some of us are carrying more than our weight (for some it's a down right full time job and it should not be). A

volunteer organization, especially of our size cannot be run year after year by recycling the same volunteers. We've lost so many talented beekeepers to burn out and often the remaining carry the load and struggle to find help and end up doing the work of 2 or 3 people and pretty soon they will be gone too. So please get involved and lend a hand to minimize leadership attrition. Many hands do make light work and we really need your help. We're looking for East Cluster leaders; amazing mentors are available.

It has not always been easy as changes in our computer programs tagged along glitches and needed time, knowledge and implementation to set it up in ways that will function for us to manage the 400 +/- of us. The Tec Team (Cheryl Veretto, Chris Dicker, Jim Spencer, Linda Burns) has been working hours on end and no one is really aware of that. I also want to mention our wonderful membership coordinator Ann Jereb who came on the job with less than a perfect system that we all need to get member info to send invitations to events and workshops, swarm lists and cluster lists and maintain the data base of current members. Thank you, Ann! I admire your perseverance and patience.

Last but not least, kudos to our amazing Thea Vierling regional group pioneer, whose efforts created the strong foundation the regional groups sit upon. She is an absolutely brilliant person and amazing steward of bees and beekeepers alike. This year she needed to step back a little. Really trumpets should be sounding and rose petals thrown in the air as a celebration to what she has brought to the SCBA thus far. We would not be who we are without her. I only hope to fill a fraction of the shoes she wore in the regional program with such energy, ideas and implementation. Thea will continue to mentor and assist me as needed as well as support her cluster in the East and be instrumental in the education in the schools program.

Here's what's needed to be on the swarm list:

1. You will respond to swarm calls in a timely manner.
2. If you cannot return a call, you will refer caller to another person on the swarm list.
3. If you receive a message on your phone, you will return the call or refer the call to another beekeeper.
4. You will treat the swarm in a humane fashion.
5. You will make every attempt to retrieve the entire colony, which means leaving the swarm box until night and returning after dark to retrieve the box. This way all the foragers and scouts will return to the box.
6. You will not spray the bees with insecticides.
7. You will use the moment as a teaching opportunity and explain why swarming is so important to the Honeybees and to us!

Helpful things to bring to a swarm call:

1. Name, address and phone number of the person who called in
2. Names and phone numbers of beekeepers who can help you
3. Your bee suit and gloves and an extra for a helper in the public
4. First Aid Kit with your favorite sting remedy
5. Water for hydration
6. Swarm box(es) with frames (some drawn comb is really helpful)
7. Rubber bands and foundationless frames
8. One to one sugar water in a spray bottle
9. Garden clippers, big and small
10. Extra strap and plug for swarm box
11. Smoker to smoke self if stung (it masks alarm pheromone)
12. Bungee cords
13. Long feather to use as a brush
14. Bed sheet/tarp to put under swarm when collecting
15. Ladder if needed (use with extreme caution)
16. Sawhorses to make safe berth in public areas if needed
17. Caution tape
18. Duct tape
19. Flash light
20. Paper and Sharpie to make signs and to leave notes to homeowner
21. Something stiff and flat to scoop bees off flat surfaces (large spatula, magazine, and piece of cardboard.)
22. BeeQuick (only to be used to coax bees out of a cavity where they have just arrived)
23. Nylon screen to cover box during transport for escapees
24. Your business card/contact info handy for future business
25. The transporting direction of your swarm box is very important; the frames should go the direction of the car. Having them parallel will make them swing and bees can get crushed, including the queen.

For swarm and swarm list question please e-mail Melissa at swarm@sonomabees.org. She is our wonderful swarm coordinator and manages the list. Thank you, Melissa, for holding this job another year and dealing with all of us antsy swarm catchers! Please let her know when you are no longer interested in catching swarms this year to have her remove you from the list. Reminder you may or may not get a call. It depends on the season, where and when you are on the rotating list, some luck and good fortune. Some swarms will have left before you get there and some too high to get, which will have you dream of cherry pickers days on end.

For regional group questions e-mail Christine Kurtz at regionalcoordinator2@sonomabees.org

Has your membership expired?

SCBA membership has changed to a calendar year from January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016. This year is our transition to the calendar year for membership.

If you joined or renewed your membership on or after August 1, 2015, you are considered paid through December 31, 2016 and no further action is needed. If you renewed or joined before August 1st, you still need to renew. There are lots of special events, workshops and swarm list orientations going on over the next few weeks, so you will want to renew soon. Members with an expired membership will no longer receive notices for these events or be eligible to be on the 2016 swarm list.

You can renew your membership in any of the following ways:

- Renew online at: <http://sonomabees.org/new-membership-page/>
- Download and complete membership application and mail with payment to: SCBA, P.O. Box 98, Santa Rosa, CA, 95401
- Apply at the next SCBA meeting. Bring the completed application to the meeting, and payment can be made by Cash, Check, or Credit Card.

Everyone (new and renewing) must complete an application with his or her payment. This is the only way we can ensure that the information we have for you is the most current.

If you make a payment with a PayPal account that has a different name than your listed membership name please indicate on the application that the business or other family members name is associated with you. We otherwise may have difficulty knowing that a payment is yours.

If you are mailing a check, please send a completed application with the check.

Thank you,

Ann Jereb
SCBA 1st VP Membership 1stVP@sonomabees.org

South Cluster Equipment Workshop

By Ettamarie Peterson

In February Christine Kurtz was the speaker with help from Ettamarie Peterson to the South Cluster. Various pieces of equipment were reviewed so that new beekeepers would know what will help them with their bees. Thanks to Morgan Campbell for sharing his photos of this event.

After the workshop all the participants shared a delicious potluck meal. South Cluster members are like a family. They share their knowledge and their love of food.



This follower board has a rough side to encourage the bees to make propolis on it.



Christine explained the use of screened bottom boards.

Christine gathered a large assortment of equipment to discuss. In the foreground on the table you can see a frame with bamboo skewers in place of wires for support of the comb.



Behind Christine you can see two of the swarm trap boxes built by John McGuiness.



Christine's solar wax melter, interior view. She sometimes stuffs old comb into nylon hose to keep the wax separate from the old comb left behind.

On Pondering About Bees

By Christine Kurtz

I was going to write about how Fall losses had been so minimal for me but how February made up for it, and how I have honey that was left behind coming out of my ears, the good stuff too, no sugar water honey, not treated honey. As I extract each hive separately. I have honey of every hue from lemon light to licorice black and all from Petaluma foraged in 2015 during a severe drought. There is now honey in every cupboard, every counter, in the freezer, even in my car. I haven't had the time to deal with the necessary paperwork to sell it officially, I haven't had time to make a label and I certainly don't have time to sit at a Farmer's Market to sell it. My life is fuller than full. A dilemma I will eventually have to deal with. Meanwhile the honey museum grows.

My hives upon the first peak were either super strong and needed space or too small and I took space away. The symptoms of the fallen were similar than last year at this time; either nobody home bee less completely or a small cluster around the queen frozen in time. A couple absconded in front of me. They were re-hived in nuc boxes; one is trying to stick around the other absconded again finishing it's suicide mission.

By now I am used to losses. I have a binder, one of those really thick ones, with all the notes from hives past. It ranges in the 50's; yes, the lost hives in my short 8 years of beekeeping. Lots of them with DOA and a date written on the front. They all had names of where I had found them like the Falcon hive from Falcon Drive, or from a special trait they had like "Pissy Girls." I reminisce about some of them sometimes as I had forged special relationships with them; especially the long-lived ones as we went through so much together.

I was interviewed last year by a young student from UC Berkeley working on her senior project in the environmental department. She interviewed several beekeepers from Sonoma, Marin and Napa counties and she was astounded of how positive we were remaining. After coming to grips with all the different issues that challenge the bees and the heavy losses we had, she wondered how come we did not give up? I told her that, yes indeed, what is afflicting bees is the size and force of a tsunami and you can either roll up your sleeves put your fists up and say: "Bring it on!" put your head in the sand and ignore it, or crawl under a rock and die. I just choose just to roll up my sleeves and tighten my fists.

This eagerness to put up the great fight was really put to the test while driving to Pomona in Los Angeles County. This is really what I want to write about. Driving

through the vast monoculture of almonds in bloom and seeing the bee migration first hand really left me gasping for air. As we drove by at 70 miles an hour, I tried to take pictures. Needless to say most were streaky but the opportunities went on for hours. Click, click, delete, delete. We saw a lot of variance between farms, some who left grass growing in between rows and most not a blade allowed, probably soaked in herbicides. We saw the vast amount of beehives that had recently migrated from all over the country often stacked double high with a pallet separating them left in sets of 8, sometimes more at regular intervals. We wondered whether the bug splatters on the windshield were bees crossing the freeway, probably, we had a hard time with that. We even saw farmers spraying in the middle of the day while bees were flying! That is still going on—*really?* Often I found my eyes needing a rest, my brain needing a rest and so looking past and over the almond farms to the beautiful hills in the background became a moment of solace. Greener than they have been in a long

time, and where the hills and meadows were not over grazed, mustard made splashes of yellow like an artist had a brush of light bright yellow and wisps were painted with careful strokes. I found myself thinking: "Go there, bees!"

How does one mitigate that? The monoculture of bees, the domestication of



bees and how it affects all our bees. From the diseases, pests and pathogens brought into California from all over the country to the genetic traits chosen by most queen breeder that aren't of the hygienic kind, of the survival kind. Not uncommon for a commercial beekeeper to re-queen his hives twice a year, part of the cost of business. He does not need the surviving ones as he can continue to bring youth to the hive at \$20 a pop, and continue pushing this specie to the brink. From parking their hives in our mating areas, waiting for the next pollination contract (there goes some of the local survival stock)—to some making nucs and packages for sale right after almond season is done. What is the public getting, especially the novice beekeepers who don't know and don't understand that not everything should be bought by the click of a button. Forgetting that there are actually really important questions to ask. Where do these bees come from? Have they been medicated? Fed sugar water? Been on farms that use pesticides? What are the traits used in rearing the queen that comes in this package? Where did the bees come from that compose the 3lbs of bees in this package that surround the queen? Have they been to monoculture farms, treated and medicated and fed fake foods? Does anyone ask these questions?

In the car, I sat there, with my sleeves rolled up and my fists held tight and high. Bring it on tsunami because I choose to fight even though you look so darn big. I choose to realize that saving the bees is bigger than sticking a few beehives in my backyard. That I need to keep educating myself and others, to keep changing my practices to minimize the impact I have on this planet, to let go of the easy comforts of buying everything by the click of a button or ordering without understanding where things came from, who was exploited, to choosing carefully where I get my food by supporting organic and all natural small farms, to growing as much of my own food as I can, to propagating my own bees and not supporting monoculture, to working with my neighborhood and town to stop poisoning us, to work with my neighbors for alternatives to pesticides and planting clean forage for our honey bees, our natives bees, our butterflies and birds and all creatures for that matter and yes for ourselves too. I want to make everyone an environmentalist because there is no longer any other way. Everything loops back to us; the bees tell us so. Are you listening?



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

Artist Asking For Help

Dear Beeks,

I am looking for help in my efforts to bring attention to the myriad deathly threats our bee friends are facing here and across the world. I hope to do this through the creation of an ossuary-like sculpture utilizing the remains of thousands of dead bees, all collected and preserved in resin to stop decomposition before being placed in a swarm formation along a tall column. It would be shocking and beautiful, and serve as a strong visual reminder that bees are under threat from CCD, mites, die-offs, legal pesticides, stress, and changing landscapes. If you could help me by mailing me your winter die-offs I would be extremely grateful. I would pay for any collection effort you bear, plus, of course, shipping costs. I live in Cincinnati so I would receive any help through the mail. I could mail you a check covering shipping before you visit the post office with bags of the bees, to be placed in boxes or, if easier, i could mail you a box with my address. I would promise to cover any remaining cost after you determine the cost. I would also love to sell your bee goods at the gallery I own to thank you for any effort or consideration. Please feel free to call me at: 513.460.3489, or email me at benjaminbedel3000@gmail.com.

I look forward to hopefully hearing from you!

Benjamin Bedel



Special Event

A day with Michael Bush

Michael Bush is one of the leading proponents of treatment-free beekeeping. He has been keeping bees since the mid 70s, usually from two to seven hives up until the year 2000. Varroa forced more experimentation which required more hives and the number has grown steadily over the years from then. By 2008 it was about 200 hives. He is active on many of the beekeeping forums with last count at more than 50,000 posts between all of them. He has had an eclectic set of careers from printing and graphic arts, to construction to computer programming and a few more in between. Currently he is working in computers. He has a web site on beekeeping at www.bushfarms.com/bees.htm

March 20, 2016

Two Lecture series \$35 each (\$45 each at the door)

Register for either morning session or afternoon session, or both.

Bennett Valley Grange 4145 Grange Rd, Santa Rosa, CA 95404 (remote area - limited access - carpool!)

Morning Session 9:30 - 12:30

Simple steps to healthier bees, practical advice on how to keep bees sustainably and treatment-free; touching on the importance of breeding local survivor stock and management tips to achieve these goals.

Q&A

15 min break

Common beekeeping issues like broodlessness, laying workers, robbing, messy combs and much more.

Lunch 12:30-1:30

If you are staying for both sessions bring a bagged lunch. If all goes well we might have a couple observation hives to investigate.

Afternoon Session 1:30 - 4:30

Let's talk queens, the queen rearing concept and why we should raise them and simple queen rearing techniques.

Q&A

15 min break

Whole Bee Concept on how to pick genetics

P.S. These are 3 hour lectures; if you need your own special comfy chair or pillows feel free to bring them. Coffee/Tea and simple snacks will be provided. Note: The grange is in a remote area, not easy or timely to leave for lunch and come back.

The SCBA thanks the Alameda County Beekeepers' Association for sharing this out-of-town speaker with us. We hope to continue collaborative efforts like these in the future. Any questions please e-mail Christine Kurtz at regionalcoordinator@sonomabees.org.

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, at our monthly meetings or by mail. Please see our Website 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 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 She lives in Glen Ellen.

2016 Board Members and Other Helpful People

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1st Vice President - Ann Jereb 1stVP@sonomabees.org
2nd Vice President - Rita Maloney 2ndVP@sonomabees.org
Secretary - Becky Jackson secretary@sonomabees.org
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Regional Coordinator (shared)- Thea Vierling – regionalcoordinator@sonomabees.org
Regional Coordinator (shared)- Christine Kurtz – regionalcoordinator2@sonomabees.org

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

Swarm - Melissa Bates swarm@sonomabees.org
Webmaster - Chris Dicker webmaster@sonomabees.org

Links to Association Reports:

February Treasury Report - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8GmlQNqza5bdzdhsWdubWgtb0E/view?usp=sharing>

February Meeting Minutes - <http://sonomabees.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/SCBA-Feb.-2016-General-Meeting-Minutes.pdf>

February Board Minutes - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8GmlQNqza5bcmJOd0JUeGNjc3M/view?usp=sharing>

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 web site so many people besides the 400 or so members view the ads.

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3-Bars for \$30
Free Shipping
These 4-1/4-oz bars of Monte-Bellaria handmade spa soap, are made in Sonoma County with estate-grown organic lavender, olive oil and our own beeswax.
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chris conrad
cell (415) 350-5700
chrisconrad@comcast.net
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Free Colony given to beekeeper that refers
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**We buy local honey in 5 gallon buckets
Premium price paid**

**921 Gravenstein Hwy. South 116 South in Sebastopol
(Next to Fosters Freeze)
(707) 824-2905 beekind.com**

Visit our other shop at the Ferry Building in SF

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

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

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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

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

Plant Sales

Dates and Locations For 2016

This extensive list was compiled by the Sonoma County Master Gardeners. (Thanks to Master Gardener April Lance for passing this on.) You might want to save this information to refer to the rest of the year.

Santa Rosa Junior College

Wednesday, March 16, Wednesday, April 13 10 AM to 2 PM, Sunday, May 1 Day Under the Oaks

Lark Hall greenhouse—same building as the Planetarium! Plants sales are student and volunteer run with all proceeds going towards Horticulture Student Scholarships. Parking is available for a small fee in the Bech Parking Lot off Elliott Ave. Free parking up to one hour in the surrounding neighborhood. Cash, Check and Credit Cards are accepted.

Willowside School

Saturdays, 9 AM to 2 PM March 12, April 2, April 23, May 14, June 4, June 25

5299 Hall Rd, Santa Rosa (corner of Willowside and Hall Rd)

Entrance is on Willowside Road

Our Middle School Nursery is a working nursery with student involvement and is self-sustaining through plant sales. We have thousands of plants: a variety of low water and drought tolerant perennials, California natives, a multitude of succulents, grasses, salvias, and many beautiful plants to invite beneficial insects, butterflies and hummingbirds into your garden.

PRICE: \$4 for 1-gallon container. We have over 15 varieties of SPECIALTY JAPANESE MAPLES, 3-6 FEET TALL at \$25 to \$35 per tree!!!

Rain does not cancel. Questions? 707-569-4724

We gladly accept donations of healthy plants, garden tools, working wagons, ceramic pots, recycled 1 and 5 gallon nursery containers, etc.

Sonoma County Orchid Society Show and Sale

Saturday, April 2, 10 AM to 5 PM; Sunday, April 3, 10 AM to 4 PM

Santa Rosa Vets Building, 1351 Maple Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA

A large and beautiful display of orchids by the society and our numerous vendors; we offer free skill sessions on growing orchids, and we offer free docent tours of the display. You'll find a large selection of different kinds of orchids to buy - so much more than available in the stores. Funds raised benefit the education of our members and the public regarding the collection, culture and appreciation of orchids, as well as donations to orchid preservation organizations. www.SonomaOrchids.com

Green Thumb Garden Club, Cloverdale

Saturday, April 9, 9 AM to 2 PM

Ace Hardware parking lot, 750 S. Cloverdale Blvd.

Members offer plants that they have grown or transplanted from their own gardens, including tomato plants and other vegetable starts, succulents, drought-tolerant transplants and an interesting variety of outdoor and house plants. Check out the white elephant table for interesting gardening finds.

This fundraising event goes toward scholarships for Cloverdale students plus the civic projects our club sponsors in our city.

Sonoma County Jail Plant Nursery & Teaching Garden

Saturday, April 9, September 10, October 1, 9 a.m. to Noon

Sonoma County Jail Plant Nursery 2254 Ordinance Rd., Santa Rosa, 95403

Checks or Cash only, No Credit or Debit Cards

The public is invited to purchase California Native and drought tolerant shrubs, perennials, succulents, ground-covers along with Fruit and ornamental trees and lots of vegetable starts. 10 Sonoma County Master Gardeners will be on site to help you select appropriate plants for your garden and answer questions.

Plants are grown by inmates using compost, no fertilizers or pesticides.

All sales income is used to provide project-based education to inmates.

Get more information and a plant list at our website: www.scoe.org/jailindustries or call Rick Stern (707) 525-8310 or email jailind@mcn.org

Event is free but please bring a cart or wagon to carry your plants.

Men's Garden Club

Friday, April 15, 9 AM to 9 PM and Saturday, April 16, 9 AM to 3 PM

Coddington Mall - Guerneville Rd. & Cleveland Ave., Santa Rosa, CA (This is INSIDE the mall, NOT in the parking lot.)

Specializing in Heirloom & Hybrid tomatoes, Geraniums & Succulents and other plants grown by our members.

Unique succulent container gardens as well as plants from our members that are hard to find in nurseries.

All profits from our plant sales and participation in The Sonoma County Fair are used for scholarships to Sonoma County students who are pursuing careers in the many aspects of plant and animal sciences. We awarded \$13,000.00 in scholarships last year.

Windsor Garden Club

Sunday, April 17, 10 AM to 2 PM

Enchanted Gardens Spring Plant Sale

Windsor Town Green at McClellan and Market St

Enchanted Gardens Spring Plant Sale at the Health and Wellness Earth Day Festival on the Green.

Color and succulent pots, veggie

Windsor Garden Club, con't.

Sunday, October 23, 10 AM to 2 PM

Fall Succulent Pumpkin Sale

Fall Succulent Pumpkin Sale starts, water wise butterfly and bee plants, crafts, and gardeners' fine rummage. Takes place in the midst of music, activities, Earth Day Information, and an Old Time Farmer's Market. Fall Succulent Pumpkin Sale at the Fall Jamboree on the Town Green. Fall color pots and long lasting succulent topped pumpkins. Fall Family Activities, music, and a full farmer's market on the green as well.

Graton Community Club

**Friday, April 22, and Saturday, April 23, 9 AM to 4 PM
free admission**

Corner of Graton Road and Edison Street (greater downtown Graton) The Graton Community Club Flower Shows benefit a scholarship program for SRJC graduates continuing on to a four-year college.

This spring the Flower Show is 'For the Birds.' It will celebrate our feathered friends in the displays and decorations throughout the clubhouse. In addition to the floral displays, the club will be having a huge plant sale. There will be hundreds of tomato starts of different varieties, various other vegetables and many wonderful plants including drought tolerant species, potted plants and flower bulbs. The garden area also has a large selection of garden art. The show also includes lovely handcrafted items for sale, a raffle, collectibles and live music. Lunch is served both days from 11 to 2 at a cost of \$10, with homemade desserts (\$4) served all day. 8996 Graton Rd, Graton 707-829-5314

Santa Rosa Garden Club

Saturday, April 23, 9 AM to 2 PM RAIN OR SHINE!

Luther Burbank Art & Garden Center 2050 Yulupa, Santa Rosa

Plants propagated by Santa Rosa Garden Club members—with emphasis on drought tolerant plants including an outstanding selection of succulents and perennials. Special this year, fairy gardens and color spot pots. We also offer deer resistant plants.

An additional feature this year will be a Monarch butterfly educational exhibit. Sale also includes an indoor "garage sale" with garden related items and other fun finds.

Funds raised benefit horticultural scholarships at SRJC. For more info contact 537-6885.

Harvest for the Hungry Garden

Saturday, April 23, 9 AM to 2 PM

1717 Yulupa Avenue, Santa Rosa (behind Christ Church United Methodist)

Harvest for the Hungry Garden is an all-volunteer garden that grows and donates well over 20,000 pounds of food annually to several local food programs. This yearly plant sale is widely anticipated by gardeners throughout Sonoma County and is our only fundraiser of the year. We offer thousands of organic vegetable starts, habitat plants, herbs and locally grown flowering plants at this one-of-a-kind plant sale. We have over 100 varieties of unique and delicious heirloom tomatoes, including several bred right here

in Sonoma County for local conditions, 50 varieties of hot and sweet peppers, and many unusual and tasty varieties of eggplant, squash and cucumbers as well as annual and perennial flowering plants suited for Sonoma County gardens. We will also have special pointers about how to use water wisely during a dry growing season.

Our Harvest for the Hungry Garden sale also features several unique vendors who offer herbs, bee products and a plethora of wonderful gardening supplies and native plants. Come early for the best selection! Check out our website at www.harvestgarden.org.

Healdsburg Garden Club

Saturday, April 30, 9 AM to 1 PM

Healdsburg Senior Living Community, 725 Grove Street
707-433-4877

Garden club members will be digging generous size plants from their own gardens, assuring proven winners for your garden. Perennials, herbs, cacti, succulents and tomato plants with basil (all you need is mozzarella) as well as already made up containers, will be sure to tempt fellow gardeners. And if you have questions, do not be shy; Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer your questions! If your clippers need sharpening, bring them along. For a small fee, we will sharpen them while you shop "Good Garden Goods" (formally known as the jumble sale) where you may find just the right useful or decorative object for your garden needs.

Now if you need a break, stop and have continental breakfast, 9 AM to 11 AM (\$2 donation) or lunch for only \$5.00, served 11:30 to 2 PM provided by the Senior Living Community staff. Remember all profits from the Healdsburg Garden Club Plant Sale will benefit the scholarships to local students studying horticulture related studies.

Santa Rosa Iris Society

Saturday, May 7, 1 to 5 PM and Sunday, May 8, 10 AM to 5 PM

Luther Burbank Art & Garden Center, 2050 Yulupa Avenue, Santa Rosa.

Potted iris sale in conjunction with iris show.

Additionally, the SRIS will be at the Heirloom Expo, Sonoma Co. Fairgrounds,

Tuesday thru Thursday, September 6 - 8, 11 A.M. - 8PM
with Iris Rhizomes for sale.

Watch for our annual bare root iris rhizome sale, to be held in September at the Santa Rosa Community Farmers Market at the Vet's Building, Santa Rosa. Revenues help support the educational iris display garden at Luther Burbank Art & Garden Center, and the American Iris Society Classroom Iris Project in Sonoma, Mendocino, and Lake Counties.

Valley of the Moon Garden Club

Saturday May 7, 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon

Sonoma Community Center, 276 East Napa Street, Sonoma

We offer vegetable starts for your spring garden as well as succulents and Mediterranean plants for a water-wise garden. We will also have potted plants and flowering plants that will make nice Mother's Day gifts. Many of the plants at our sale are propagated by our Club Members. They may be considered Sonoma Heirloom plants that have successfully thrived in Sonoma for years. The plant sale allows the VOM Garden Club to fund its community projects, which include the Sonoma Hospital garden, school garden projects, and community park projects.

Redwood Empire Rose Society

Saturday, May 21, 1 PM to 4 PM

Rose Plant Sale and Rose Show Luther Burbank Art & Garden Center 2050 Yulupa, Santa Rosa

Join Redwood Empire Rose Society for their 50th Annual Rose Show. Roses for sale grown by members of the Rose Society plus we offer companion plants for your rose garden. Sale benefits the display Rose Garden upkeep at Luther Burbank Art & Garden Center and the presentation of the annual Rose Show.

Sonoma County Master Gardeners

Sunday, September 18, 9:30 AM to 4 PM

Bloomin' Backyards Garden Tour & Market

This plant sale includes an outstanding collection of water-wise plants including a large selection of succulents, all carefully selected for low water use and adaptation to Sonoma County's Mediterranean climate. Tour six special gardens in the Sebastopol area and visit our wonderful Craft Market and "gently used" garden Book Sale.

Milo Baker Chapter—California Native Plant Society

Saturday, October 8, 9 AM to 1 PM

Santa Rosa Vet's Memorial Building 1351 Maple Avenue, Santa Rosa

Featuring California Native Shrubs, Perennials, Bulbs and Seeds

Expert gardeners for cultural information

Sale funds scholarships at the SRJC and SSU; public education about CA native plants www.milobaker.cnps.org

Occidental Arts and Ecology Center Organic Nursery

15290 Coleman Valley Road, Occidental 95465 874-1557

SPRING PLANT SALE (Two weekends)

Saturday, April 2 & Sunday, April 3, 9 AM to 5 PM

Saturday, April 9 & Sunday, April 10, 9 AM to 5 PM

SUMMER GARDEN PLANT SALE (Two Weekends)

Saturday, April 23 & Sunday, April 24, 9 AM to 5 PM

Saturday, April 30 & Sunday, May 1, 9 AM to 5 PM

OPEN NURSERY WEEKENDS (Perennials Only)

Every Saturday & Sunday 10 AM to 5 PM May 14 — June 19 and September 10 — October 30

FALL & WINTER GARDEN PLANT SALE (Two Weekends)

Saturday, August 20 & Sunday, August 21, 9 AM to 5 PM

Saturday, August 27 & Sunday, August 28, 9 AM to 5 PM

Our Nursery is 100% CCOF Organic and propagates heirloom and often rare varieties from seed and "mother plants" onsite. At our Seasonal Plant Sales, we specialize in annual vegetables, flowers and herbs. At our Perennials Weekends, we offer a wide selection of perennial food crops, culinary and medicinal herbs and habitat plants.

These events are celebrations of biodiversity, organic gardening and community, and feature live music, a petting zoo and educational opportunities such as tours of Oaec (where you can see plants from our Nursery grown to maturity in our Mother Garden).

The funds raised benefit the Oaec Biodiversity Nursery Program, which seeks to introduce to our community a wide array of crops and varieties appropriate for the Bay Area, ultimately contributing to regional food security. The Program also educates the public about plant biodiversity and the necessity of its preservation. Oaec is an 80-acre research, demonstration, education, advocacy and community-organizing center in West Sonoma County, California that develops strategies for regional-scale community resilience and the restoration of biological and cultural diversity.