

The Monthly Extractor



Volume 43, Issue 10

October 2018

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

President's Message

Fellow Beeks,

Fall is in the air, predictably hot days and cold nights, the trees are changing color, shorter days and lots of things to do before closing up for winter.

Keep an eye on your hives and go through your preparedness for winter list... make sure you know the signs for robbing, reduce your entrances and take notes so you know what to do next spring. Make sure you ask for help from your bee buddy or cluster group if you're not sure what to do. Check in with your Clusters to make sure you know the days/times of your Bee Cafe(s) and or hive dives. Also make sure you are a part of your clusters Facebook Page. These are all great ways to get the help you need, or give the help that might be needed from a new bee!

~We are a rapidly growing association with 400+ members, with a large cross section of beekeepers, both young and old, professional and hobbyist, experienced and new, thus realize that our values and mission need to represent all of our beekeeping community. Because of this, the Board has been working on documenting our SCBA values and updating the mission statement that unites our association and its members to make sure we incorporate this diverse membership. These draft values encompass a strong focus on bees, critical evaluation of beekeeping research/practices, protection of environment/ecosystems, education of the community and respect for our beekeeping community. They are going to be shared with you at our October General meeting and will then be voted on at our December meeting.

~ Would you like to help the SCBA by taking a lead role in our Association? We are in need of some key positions to help support the growth of this amazing organization. The potential for this organization is only restricted by its foundation. I am so excited by the direction we are going. As our structure strengthens so does our ability to serve the larger community, but we need your help. Please contact me if you are interested in any of the following positions:

- ~Treasurer
- ~Board Member (s)
- ~Membership Director
- ~Events and Volunteer Manager
- ~Swarm Chair

There will be help and support for the new position holders.

This is an exciting time to become involved in our organization. Please call me (707) 280-4376 and I will review details with you.

Kelli Cox
President

This Month's Calendar

Monthly Meeting: Monday, October 8

Social hour 6 pm to 7 pm

General Meeting from 7 to 9 This month's speaker is **Serge Labesque speaking on "Preparing Your Hives for Winter"**

Looking ahead at our fall programs, we have a good lineup:

- November, Bill Toone, Sex Worth Dying For: Stories of semelparity-sex that ends in death
- And of course, in December, we have the annual Holiday Dinner and Silent Auction.

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My October

Beekeeping To-Do List by Serge Labesque

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Ready for winter?

In early fall beekeepers try to ensure that there is enough honey in the hives to cover the needs of the colonies until spring. But the placement of this source of energy relative to the clusters is as vitally important to the bees as its quantity. This is a point that also applies to the beebread. A seemingly insignificant distance or obstacle separating the clustered bees from their stores during a period of cold weather can in fact be deadly, especially for small overwintering populations.

One approach that helps avoid this risk is to make sure that the combs of the brood chambers become densely filled in early fall. It is actually what the bees do spontaneously, and it is a very good start. Unfortunately, this is not sufficient to guarantee the good nutrition of the bees in the long term, because the clusters are not static on the combs. Their location changes considerably over time, as they gradually consume the contents of their combs. Moreover, the size of the clusters slowly decreases and the colonies' nutritional needs change during the late-fall and winter months. When they begin to raise brood, they need more than just honey. The nurse bees need direct access to the proteins and other nutrients that are found in beebread, especially when the foragers cannot gather fresh pollen. Therefore, ensuring that the bees will be able to continually reach the food they need during the winter requires good planning and careful organization of the brood chambers in early fall. Remarkably, this too, is something the colonies can do very well without any help.

Few hive designs offer as many options in the arrangement of their components as the Langstroth and similar stackable hives outfitted with follower boards. Beekeepers may use this versatility to their bees' advantage. Over the years, I've tried just about all the possible combinations of frames and supers with my Langstroths and a few other hives, from squat and wide assemblies to slender towering stacks and everything in-between. Observing how the various hive set-ups functioned and how the colonies fared in each case has led me to narrow the range of hive configurations I use and to improve the management of the contents of my hives.

Here is the baseline approach I presently follow in the fall: By mid-fall, the hives are comprised of two deeps or three medium supers. Each super holds from four to seven frames between follower boards. The number of frames depends on the anticipated size of the winter cluster, which is determined by the size and contents of the early-fall brood nests. That said, my strong preference goes to sets of five or six double-deep frames, which I have mentioned on several occasions. Their uninterrupted 18.25" (464 mm) vertical dimension seems to be nearly ideal for most colonies. The addition of one or two standard frames with stores and extension boards in the upper parts of these "double-deep brood chambers" is also advantageous, as

it adds a level of safety for the bees and facilitates mid-winter expansion of the hives. The relatively small number of brood chamber frames ensures that the clusters do not drift laterally over time and become separated from stores that remain untouched on the opposite side of the hives. This way, as the bees consume their stores and gradually move up on the combs, they always find more honey. Finally, when they develop their mid-winter brood nests, they reach the bee bread they accumulated during the summer. Shallow horizontal hives unfortunately do not allow much vertical migration of the clusters on their comb.

When it comes to managing the contents of the brood chambers, the bees know how to do it, and nothing works better than respecting their work.

October in the apiaries

Healthy, queenright colonies that have adequate amounts of stores in the fall have a good chance of making it through the winter. These are necessary conditions, but they are not sufficient to give the best odds to the bees. There is in fact a long list of additional points that help improve the survival of the colonies over the winter. Large clusters of winter bees and sound hives that do not trap moisture are two criteria that stand out. Beekeepers can have a considerable influence on these. Whereas flaws in the equipment may be recognized and hopefully corrected in a timely manner, it is somewhat more difficult to determine and ensure that the colonies have enough winter bees by mid-fall.

During the last hive manipulations of the year we verify that the colonies are raising winter bees and that these precious bees will be long-lived. In October, the future winter bees are pupating inside the brood nests. So, the size and the contents of the brood nests presage the strength of the winter clusters and indicate the quantity of stores that must be left in the hives. A simple rule of thumb that works in my apiaries consists of leaving in the hives one-and-a-half times to twice as much honey as there is brood in early fall. The brood nests should be quite compact, holding mostly sealed brood, the future winter bees. This not only ensures their good nutrition, but it also forces the queens to reduce or stop their egg-laying. This is important because, with few or no larvae to feed, the young winter bees won't have to become nurse bees too early in their life. That is something they'll have to do in January and February.

Any surplus honey may be removed. During this late harvest, it is preferable to take the dark honey, which may be honeydew honey, and to leave lighter honey to the bees. The center of the stores that are located above the brood nests should still contain some beebread and comb with worker-size cells, because that is where the bees will be establishing their new brood nests in a few months.

As we reduce the volume of the hives, we may also remove old and misshapen combs. The follower boards are then slid inwards as necessary. The hives therefore become narrower, and the lateral air gaps between the follower boards and the sides of the hives become wider. Along with the placement of fresh dried lavender or other moisture-absorbing materials as insulation in the hive top feeders, and with an open upper hive ventilation slot, this makes for a good hive configuration for overwintering colonies.

It's time to reduce the entrances a little more to help the guard bees fend off robber bees and yellowjackets. The screened upper ventilation slots will help evacuate excess moisture. The mouse guards are in place and the hive tops are secured to prevent strong winds from lifting them. Clean monitoring trays are inserted under the hive bottom screens. These will allow us to track what happens inside the hives during the winter.

It's time to wish the best to our bees. We will pay them a visit once in a while over the next months.

In summary, this month:

- Assess the colonies, their health, queens, brood nests and stores. Verify that they are queenright.
- Examine how the bees have organized their brood chambers and how the stores are packed. Ensure that there is some comb with worker-size cells, uncapped honey and pollen centered above the brood nests, surrounded by honey.
- Combine or requeen hives that are not performing satisfactorily (no later than early in the month). Better yet, reduce their volume to strengthen them.
- Adjust the volume of the hives to match individual colony strength and needs.
- Remove old and misshapen combs (follower boards greatly facilitate this).
- Early in the month, configure hives for the consolidation of honey stores (Breaking the cappings of patches of poorly located sealed honey helps.)
- Harvest, extract and bottle only surplus honey.
- Render wax from discarded frames and from cappings.
- Return wet frames and cappings to the bees for cleaning (by placing them above hive top feeders or inner covers).
- Watch out for yellow jackets and any instances of robbing. Reduce the entrances of the hives that are threatened. Close any secondary hive openings.
- Ensure that the hives are adequately ventilated.
- Install mouse guards and reduce hive entrances.
- Routinely clean and scorch tools and equipment.
- Store unused equipment to protect it from wax moth or mouse damage and from the weather.
- Secure the hive tops against high winds.

Serge Labesque
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Mid-Fall Checklist

Colony:

- Queenright
- Queen reducing production of eggs

Population size:

- Sufficient to cover all brood plus three additional frames (minimum recommended)

Colony health:

- No sign of disease
- Parasites under control by bees

Brood nest:

- Minimum 2 frames of brood, preferably 4 (these will be the "winter bees".)
- Low open-to-sealed brood ratio (i.e. mostly sealed brood; brood nest shrinking as the queen is reducing her egg production.)

Stores:

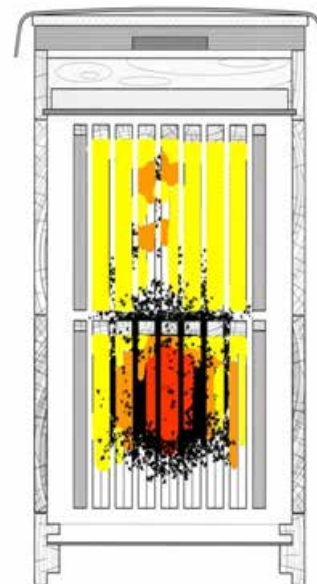
- Adequate for colony size (from 10 lb. of honey minimum for a very small nuc to 35 lb. for a mature colony with good population)
- Bee bread in and around nest
- Areas with bee bread in center of upper store chamber (one to two frames with areas of empty cells or uncapped honey in the center of the stores is desirable)

Hive organization:

- Compact nest and stores
- Brood nest centered in lower part of brood chamber
- Brood nest surrounded by stores
- Stores above brood nest
- "Chimney" in the center of stores, with worker-size cells
- Empty comb below brood nest is okay.
- Empty or partly empty comb above stores is okay (not shown).
- Reduced number of frames between follower boards

Hive:

- Upper ventilation slot
- Reduced entrance
- Mouse guard in place
- Top secured against wind
- Hive top feeder in place, filled with insulating material
- Hive configuration to be tall and narrow rather than short and squat
- Protected from cold gusty winds
- Should receive at least two hours of sunlight on sunny winter days



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Time to one again get ready for Our Silent Auction!

By Darlene McGinnis

Dear SCBA Member,

We're off and running! Our fun filled Silent Auction and Holiday Party is just ten weeks away on December 10th, and all we need now are auction items. Just think, with over 450 members, if everyone is able to contribute one auction item, we will be bursting with selections! We can do it!!

Below is a list of possible suggested items. Put your creative mind to work to make this the best auction ever. Items don't need to be related to bees, just something that will appeal to a bidder. We even had a bicycle last year that was a great hit! Cash donations are also welcome!

Would you be willing to ask for a gift certificate or donation from your favorite:

- Artist or Craftsperson
- Winery or Brewery
- Restaurant
- Business
- Nursery
- Massage Therapist
- Hair stylist
- Gym, Yoga, Pilates etc.

Or, consider:

- Donation of a vacation rental for a few days (if you or someone you know has one)
- Dinner for a few people with a bee themed meal (fun to do with other members!)
- Teach a class on how to do or make something (share your talents)

Gift baskets for children or adults: (we will be assembling the baskets and would appreciate contributions of any of the following items to fill the baskets or you can assemble your own basket!)

- Home prepared: jams, jellies, preserves or a cookbook
- Garden items: seeds, tools, books or garden art
- Bee themed: towels, pictures, socks, mugs, matt or other items
- Wine themed basket with your favorite beers or wines
- Beekeeping themed basket: your honey, beekeeping equipment or tool, books
- Art themed basket: art or craft supplies
- Exercise themed basket: mat, video, or equipment
- Food items: meal themed items (pasta, pizza, grilling etc.)

If you have any big baskets we can fill, please contact Darlene. Filling them is a big job and best done well in advance.

We also need wine for the "Wine Pull". With your donations of wine, members are able to purchase great wines for \$20

and enjoy them with their dinner.

I can email you the Auction Request Form and Letter of Intent to give to your donors to fill out and keep for their tax purposes. These forms will also be available at the general meetings. Remember to ask your donors for gift certificates, signage, business cards and other promotion materials before you go to pick up their donation gift.

Your cluster leaders will be happy to gather your donations at cluster meetings, or you can bring items to the general meetings.

PLEASE HELP US AND BRING IN YOUR DONATIONS EARLY! AVOID THE HOLIDAY RUSH! Having your items turned in by December 1st will help us tremendously. Remember businesses are asked all the time for donations and often have to stop saying yes so ask NOW!

Let's make this the best silent auction and holiday party ever!

Thank you in advance for your help!

Cheers,

Darlene McGinnis
2018 SCBA Auction Chairman
auction@sonomabees.org
707 529-8053.

We need your help!

Sonoma County Beekeepers Association

Monthly Meeting

September 10, 2018

Location: 4H Building, Rohnert Park

Meeting started: 7:01 PM

Approx. attendance: ~ 75

Items covered

- Introduction of New Members
- Holiday Party: New, larger location (Holy Ghost Hall, Sebastopol)
- Soliciting donations of items for the silent auction. Darlene McGinnis to chair the auction.
- Butter and Eggs Day Parade Committee to be formed
- Introduction of guest speaker Stacey Combes from the Department of Neurobiology, Physiology and Behavior at U.C. Davis. She discussed their study of the biomechanics of Bumble Bee wings: Damage from living too close, using more energy in turbulence (wind) etc.
- Followed by Q & A

Meeting Adjourned at 9:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Jones,
Secretary

Santa Rosa Jr. College Bee Courses

by Serge Labesque

"Introduction to Beekeeping" series of classes will begin next Wednesday, October 3rd at SRJC Petaluma campus. For additional information, please see the SRJC Community Education website. Here is the link to the class information:

https://srjce.augusoft.net/index.cfm?method=ClassInfo.ClassInformation&int_class_id=7359&int_category_id=1&int_sub_category_id=3&int_catalog_id=0

Class Name: Introduction to Beekeeping Class

Date(s): 10/03/2018 to 10/24/2018
Weekly - Thu 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM;
4 sessions starting 10/03/2018, ending 10/24/2018
Petaluma Campus; Call Building, PC 697
Number of Sessions: 4 Number of Weeks: 4

Class Web 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.

Max Class Size: 57

Class Fee: \$78.00
Materials Fee: \$16.00
Registration Fee: \$2.00

Some Flowers Still Blooming in October



Bottle Brush



Rosemary



Dahlia



Scented Geranium

A Great Presentation at Mattie Washburn School By Thea Vierling

The North Education Group gave their first presentation and it was well received. We had 35 kids ages 5-6 learning about the Honey bees as well as parents and teachers and Classroom Assistants. Our presenters included: Mark Menne, Amelia Coombs, and Carolyn Watson. We even had a surprise visit from the Queen bee, which really got the kids excited. They wondered who it was and kept looking for their teacher to tell him about the queen bee. He was nowhere to be found. Hummm I wonder why!? If you want to participate, email Thea tvaloha@comcast.net



Bee Plants of the Month

By Alice Ford-Sala

Cone Flower
Echinacea
Family: Asteraceae

Here we are back in the bee-loved Aster family. This hard working, delightfully beautiful family of asters, sunflowers, goldenrod etc., is well known and appreciated for pollen and nectar for pollinators. Imagine a prairie meadow full of those flowers buzzing with insects, and ringing with the trill of songbirds.

Echinacea has an attractive cone-shaped head made of many tiny flowers that bees and butterflies visit frequently. The outer rays are usually quite colorful. As the flower matures, seeds develop which are a delight to finches and other seed eating birds.

Plant them in full sun with good soil and adequate water. They will grow to about 3 feet tall and 2 feet wide. Very sturdy plants, they usually don't need staking.

E. purpurea is often pink or lavender, but there are also some white varieties that blend well with other colors. Many are fragrant, an added bonus!

E. angustifolia usually has paler flowers and has narrower leaves.

They bloom from Spring through Fall giving color to the garden for a long time.

Both plants are generally hardy, look for the ones that say they are bee or butterfly friendly.

Echinacea has become quite popular as an easy to grow, colorful plant for borders, and flower beds. This popularity has led to breeding a rainbow of new varieties in pink, salmon, yellow as well as the traditional purple and white flowered plants. Unfortunately, with excessive breeding, many of the plants have lost vigor and don't live as long in the garden, or re-seed as easily. They are more often treated as an annual or very short-lived perennial.

You can grow Echinacea from seed as it germinates easily, but does need a cold wet winter to get it going, so planting with the fall rains is a perfect way to start your meadow garden. Planting a potted plant now will give it a head start by developing roots over winter, so it will likely bloom in Spring.

They also take well to container gardening; just divide them every few years.

Echinacea is also well known as a medicinal plant, and is quite popular for treatment and prevention of colds, sore throats. Generally the roots are dried and used in tinctures or teas. The leaves and flowers can also be used. There are recipes for liniments using Echinacea to relieve muscle pain, also.



Echinacea

Alice Ford-Sala

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Sam Comfort Returned

By Thea Vierling and Jim Spencer

September 3rd Sam Comfort called us indicating he would love to visit Sonoma County again on his way from New Mexico (meeting with Les Crowder) to a conference in Portland. Taking full advantage of his good nature, Jim set up six hive inspections on Sunday, Monday & Tuesday (September 16, 17 & 18) with Sam Comfort. Within hours the workshops were almost filled. Since these workshops would be hands-on inspections, we decided to limit them to 10 folks each workshop, 60 participants total. Jim found 6 hosts many of whom had both Top Bar hives, Langstroths and even some with Warre. Initially Jim sent the invite out to only alternative hive members but to fill in some of the slots, he sent it out to the SCBA membership.

The timing of Sam's visit could not have been more perfect. Many folks are now attending their winterizing cluster workshops and beginning to assess their colonies. At this time of the year everyone needs to look for the health of the hive: queens, brood nests, stores both honey and pollen, check out monitoring boards, robbing situations and of course varroa. Sam addressed all of these as well as marking lots and lots of queens! It was a jam-packed weekend for Thea and Jim but we survived. We want to give extra kudos to Mato Herzog, Susan Kegley, Brian Martinelli, Kelly Corbett, Lauri Dorman, Susan Simmons and Deborah Rogers. They hosted the hive dives and just gave everyone an opportunity to learn a lot. Here are some photos for all to enjoy!



Sam's Hat



Sam Comfort With Jim Spencer and Top Bar Hive



Sam Comfort taught how to mark queens...

More News From North Custer

By Candice Koseba

Some North Cluster Beeks followed around Rob Keller and Sam Comfort for a day of beekeeping and songs in Napa! What fun!



Two members cashed in on an auction items won at last years Christmas party. A hive dive with Serge in Forestville was enjoyed as well as homemade snack and refreshing tea!



The second item won was a dinner at Ettamarie's Farm. It was a delicious honey themed dinner. Everything was delicious and the company was even better.



Thank you for all you do Ettamarie and thank you again for the lovely evening at your home. North cluster is also hosting a Salve workshop if any other clusters are interested in hosting a similar event they can contact Candice at candicekoseba@gmail.com.

Questions to Answer When Doing Hive Inspections

By Ettamarie Peterson

I put this together for my 4-H beekeepers and thought maybe it would be useful for others. You can make it on cards or whatever your system is for record keeping. Don't forget to date and identify what colony it is.

Before doing a hive inspection determine why you are inspecting and bring tools and supplies such as more boxes with frames. Once you open the hive you do not want to stop to go get what you need. Plan ahead!

Hive Inspection Questions

- Has the colony sufficient room? (too little or too much)
- Is the queen present & laying the right number of eggs for time of year?
- Are there any Queen cells? Where are they & are they being used?
- Are there any signs of disease or abnormality?
- Are there sufficient stores to last until next inspection? If the colony is very strong it will need 30 pounds of honey to get through the winter.
- Temper on a scale of 0 (bad) – 5 (good)
- What does this colony needs in the future?



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*Designed and endorsed by Serge Labesque
Recommended by Christine Kurtz*

John McGinnis

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Santa Rosa

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Honey Extractor Rental

Members have use of the association's honey extracting equipment, as available. Rental fee is \$5 per day. Extractors must be returned clean.

Email or call to reserve:

South

Kelli Cox
707 280-4376

president@sonomabees.org

Central

Paul Quistgard
425-877-5123

PaulQuistgard@aol.com

West

Gina Brown
415-828-8359

Boragelane@comcast.net

East

Susan Simmons
925-408-4529

Susanjsimmons@gmail.com

The Alternative Hives (formerly Top Bar Hive) group has a fruit press available for use in honeycomb crushing.

Contact Jim Spencer at:

alternativehives@sonomabees.org



Bee Hive Management & Local Honey Sales

Michael Turner
Owner/Beekeeper
415/871-4662

info@marincoastalbee.com



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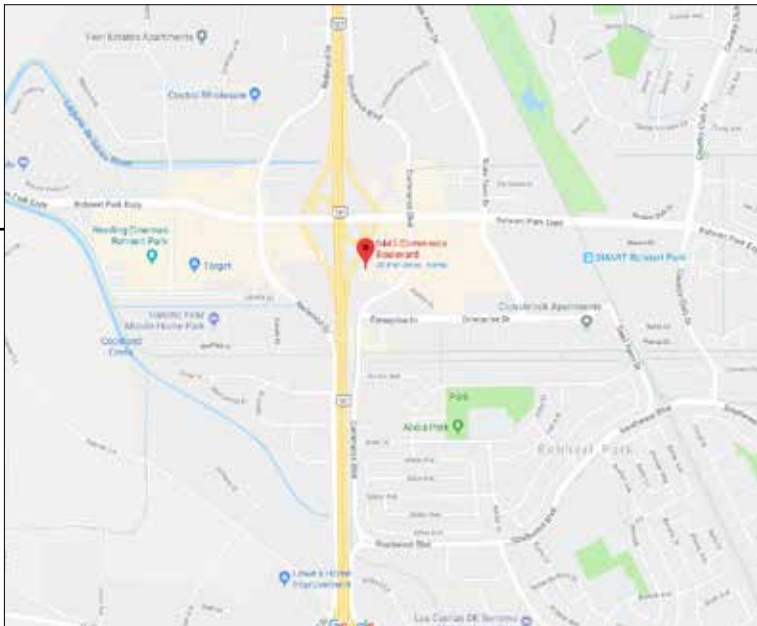
2018 Board Members

and Other Helpful People

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for the Up-to-Date
Roster of SCBA Resources

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

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Directions