

The Monthly Extractor



Volume 43, Issue 12

December 2018

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

President's Message

Fellow Beeks,

December is here and as winter settles in for us and the bees, it is a great time to enjoy the lull and quiet from actively working with our bees and start to prepare for the next bee season much as the bees have been doing all fall.

First, I feel I'd be remiss if I didn't say that November was a particularly difficult month this year. Two weeks dealing with smoke filled skies that affected everyone and our environment. Some of you are still rebuilding from the devastation of last year's fire(s) and many of you have family that have been effected in some way from this year's fires.

As we have given thanks this month for the many blessings we do have, we have also seen people come together in support of one another and others who have less or have lost much.

Holiday times are upon us, and as difficult as it is to not get swept up in the stressful schedule of activities, it is a time to attend and be kind to our neighbors, friends and loved ones. Let's be gentle with ourselves as we reflect on this past year and the new year ahead.

So, many of you may be wondering how this relates to beekeeping?

December is a good time to reflect on your own Beekeeping practices. It's a good time to look at your apiary and make a plan for next year. Are you going to take any classes? Do you need to clean up your equipment? Do you have enough equipment? How many hives do you intend to keep? Is that number sustainable in the area you are keeping bees? Are you going to be on the swarm list? Can you provide space for a bee cafe? Do you have a bee buddy? How can you give to your Cluster group and or the association? Can you be part of any of the association positions in need of help?

Continued on Page 2



This Month's Calendar

Monthly Meeting: Monday, December 10

Come to our annual Holiday Potluck and Auction starting at 6 p.m.

Just this party will be Held in the Holy Ghost Hall in Sebastopol 7960 Mill Station Rd., Sebastopol!

Looking ahead at our future programs:

- Don't forget it's Membership Renewal time! All 2018 memberships will expire on December 31st and need to be renewed by January 1st for the 2019 year. See notice on Page 2!
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Our association is still in need of volunteers to fill the following positions:

- Central Cluster - Cluster Coordinator(s)
- North Cluster - Cluster Coordinator (s)
- Regional Cluster Coordinator
- Events Manager
- Event staff (4 people)
- At Large Board members (2)

These are great opportunities to be involved with our association! You'll get to experience strong teamwork, learning and expanding your knowledge, and having fun. Most importantly, you'll be well supported by other fabulous volunteers. :)

If you are interested (or curious about) in any of these positions, please contact me at:
President@sonomabees.org
LOOKING FORWARD to seeing you at our Annual Holiday Potluck Dinner and Auction Party.....
Warmly,

Kelli Cox
2018 President

IMPORTANT! **The end of the year is very near!**

SCBA Membership 2019 Renewal Reminder

SCBA membership is on a calendar year. **All 2018 memberships will expire on December 31st** and need to be renewed by January 1st for the 2019 year. Please renew now by mail or online as we will be busy at the dinner and auction on the 10th.

Please renew now and don't miss out!



1. The **easiest and fastest way** to renew for general and business memberships:

Online at: <http://sonomabees.org/2019-membership/join-now/>



2. OR, **download** and complete a **membership application** and mail it with your payment to:

SCBA,
P.O. Box 98
Santa Rosa, CA, 95401

NOTE: 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 current.

Thank you!

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

Save the Date! It's Party Time!

Our Annual Holiday Feast and Silent Auction event is just around the corner!

Monday, December 10th, 2018

6:00pm - 9:30pm

At our New LOCATION! (Note: We will be back at the 4-H Center in January. We are just using the Holy Ghost Hall for this special event!)

Holy Ghost Hall, 7960 Mill Station Rd., Sebastopol

Some Changes to be aware of:

We will be offering a "Sneak Peek Preview" of our wonderful auction items along their starting bid amounts. Click [HERE](#) to see preview.

Proxy Bidders: If you are unable to attend the party this year but see something that you just have to have, we have the answer! We have confidential proxy bidders to act for you and you alone. Just send the Lot number along with the highest bid you are willing to pay to Angy Nowicki at fernfeeler397@gmail.com and she will keep this amount confidential, sharing it only with your personal, very discreet, proxy bidder. Cutoff date to request a proxy bidder is Dec. 7th.

Poker Hand: Pick up your Free Poker Run card when you register for your bid numbers and pick your first two playing cards, then pull your remaining three playing cards before the auction closes at 7:45. May the best hand win!

Raffle Prizes: Get one Free raffle ticket to enter your name into our raffle drawing of three baskets and additional prizes. (additional raffle ticket \$5 each, 3 for \$10).

Fast Pass Check Out Line: Based on last year's long wait time when using a credit card, we encourage you to go "Old School" and bring your check books or cash (if you can). It will expedite the check-out process immensely and save all of us a lot of time. While we love technology, sometimes it just doesn't love us! We will be taking credit cards, but it will also require your patience with dropped signals and other technical difficulties.

Party Game Plan

CHEERS! We will be having the "**Wine Pull**" again this year (**\$20 per bottle**) so no need to bring your own Booze to the party. The wine will be a surprise to you but valued up to \$50 per bottle and swappable and sharable! You can't lose on this one!

FOOD!

Please bring your most delicious dish enough to serve 8. All types of food are welcome and SCBA is providing Ham and Turkey.

In case you can't figure out what to bring, this might help **BUT** please don't feel restricted if you want to bring your favorite!

A-F - Appetizers

G - L = Salads

M - R - Sides

S - Z - Desserts

BYO – Place settings for each person (plate, cup/glass, cutlery and napkins). Also make sure you mark your bowls/ plates etc.

6:00 – Party Begins – Sign up for your Bidding Number. Enter your name into our raffle drawing (additional raffle ticket \$5 each, 3 for \$10). Pick up your poker run card and draw your first two cards. If you desire, for \$20, pull your bottle of wine for dinner.

6:00-7:45 – Peruse Auction Tables – Lots of fabulous stuff (cash, check and charge are all accepted) Pull cards 3, 4, and 5 for your poker hand.

6:30 – 8:00 - Eat and Schmooze

7:45 – Auction Closes

7:45 – 8:30 – Live Auction, raffle, poker high hand winner is announced

8:30-9:30 – Schmooze some more while picking up auction items – Check out

9:30 Clean Up

My November

Beekeeping To-Do List by Serge Labesque

© 2018

Keep them off the trucks

Most if not all of the bee health problems stem from the trade and transport of bees, bee germplasm or bee products between different regions. Examples supporting this statement abound. Varroa mites are found nearly everywhere in the world because European honey bees were moved to the parasite's Asian area of origin, and from there to most of the inhabited places. Similar accounts apply to the spread of the tracheal mite, Small Hive Beetle, chalkbrood, Australian sap beetle, wax moth, *Nosema ceranae*, and many other known bee pathogens. The traffic of bees is also the root cause of irreversible genetic alteration of entire bee populations. The most infamous case in point here is the Africanized honey bee, the so-called "killer bees" that have spread through the Americas over the past sixty years. This new breed is the result of transporting a few queen bees from Africa to Brazil. Less dramatic events but just as deeply damaging to the species are the loss of fitness of local bee populations caused by the human-driven introgression of ill-adapted strains and the drop in genetic diversity that are due to the wide distribution of mass-produced bee packages, nucs and queens.

"What about the exposure of colonies to pesticides and the loss of pollinator habitat?" you may ask. Frankly, beekeepers are pretty much asking for that when chasing honey or pollination fees by moving colonies to fields and orchards where the farmers use harmful products and careless farming practices. If those farmers were not supplied with honey bees or other managed pollinators to ensure the pollination of their crops, they might have to be more mindful of the health of local pollinators and of the condition of their environment. But as long as there are beekeepers willing to bring them bees, why would they bother?

It does not have to be this way. For over fifty years the Honey Bee Act kept the borders of the U.S. closed to the importation of bees. This safeguard, which was initially put in place to prevent the introduction of tracheal mites, was quite effective. It was only after the weakening effects of its 1976 amendment that waves of new pests and pathogens entered the country. Their dissemination was subsequently accelerated by migratory beekeeping.

I think all borders, from county lines to national boundaries, should be closed to the movement of bees. The farmers who depend on insects for the pollination of their crops would be forced to change their ways. Since they would have to help preserve healthy populations of local pollinators, they would reduce their use of pesticides and retain or create areas that are safe habitats for pollinators near their fields and orchards. As side benefits, the local beekeeping industry would gain a boost and we would all enjoy a healthier environment.

That's a dream all right. Still, some progress is nonetheless being made and a reduction in the movement of bees is beginning to become reality: Bee sharing programs are growing and making a positive difference by decreasing the influx of mass-produced bee packages and queens and by fostering local bee populations; a California law that will come into effect on January 1st could help reduce the movement of hives into the State and between counties, if it is enforced. The annual almond pollination that is already staged to unfold only a few weeks later will test it. There are places in Europe where local bee populations are protected and where the importation of foreign bees is not allowed. There are gardeners, farmers and growers who provide safe bee forage by maintaining diversified hedgerows, adding intercrops that produce nectar and pollen or by avoiding the use of pesticides. Also, European Union has finally taken steps to reduce or altogether ban the use of neonicotinoid pesticides.

We need to applaud these efforts and encourage their proliferation. As beekeepers, we can actually participate in this change for the better: Next spring is only a few months away. Let's grab that opportunity to nurture our local bee populations by sharing our splits and their truly local queens with our neighbor beekeepers.

December in the apiaries

Although bees may be seen flying for a few hours on nice sunny days, they spend most of the short days of the year inside the hives. The temperatures are often too cold and the weather too unstable to permit significant foraging activity, if any. The bulk of the colonies remain clustered within the confines of the hives. For most of the bees, this is a period of reduced activity, as long as they are not disturbed or kept agitated. There is no brood to feed, heat and nurture. Therefore, the consumption of stores is minimal at this time of year. Another significant advantage from this period of broodlessness is that the bees can regain control over the mite population, thanks to good grooming behavior. Yet, in a few weeks the queens will start laying eggs and the demands placed on the winter bees to take care of the burgeoning brood nest will increase significantly.

On mild late-fall days, occasional visits and walks through the apiaries can be quite pleasurable. We can check on the condition of the hives, making sure that they are still secured against the weather and that no wind or rain damage has occurred. No open-hive inspections are performed though. That would break propolis seals and stir the bees up. If only for this reason, the monitoring trays are valuable devices that allow us to figure out how the bees are doing inside the hives. At a glance, the debris indicates the size and location of the clusters, whether there is brood being reared or not, how the bees are handling the mites, and many other details.

Our apiary notes can be a good source of informa-

tion and education. As we review them, we can figure out what we did well and where we may have made mistakes. We can gauge the quality of individual queens and select the most desirable ones. This exercise helps us make plans for the next beekeeping year and anticipate the number of new colonies we will want to manage and the tools and equipment that will be necessary. Beekeeping being a brainteaser activity, we certainly have ideas we'll want to try, too.

Some time may have to be spent repairing or maintaining our equipment. It will be clean and made serviceable for next spring along with the new frames, supers and other hive elements we have to procure or fabricate. Not to be forgotten: This is a good time to plant some good bee forage.

In summary, this month:

Inspect the exterior condition of the hives:
The hive tops should be properly set and secured.
Observe the hive entrances and the ground in front of the hives.
Verify that the hive entrances remain unobstructed.
On nice days, observe the flight paths and the bee activity.
Examine the debris on the monitoring trays.
Verify that mice have not entered hives (telltale clues of their presence are visible on the monitoring trays, as coarse pieces of comb, mouse feces, etc.).
Ensure that the hives are adequately ventilated.
Clean and scorch tools and equipment.
Pour the ashes out of the smoker and scrub the tar build-up.
Repair and build beekeeping equipment.
Review notes from the year.
Plan next season (evaluate the need for equipment and bees).
Read and learn more about bees and beekeeping.
Plant bee forage.
Enjoy some honey.

Happy Holidays to all of you from the Labesques!.

Serge Labesque
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Have you voted? 2019 Board of Directors

If not, read on...

You should have received an email with subject '2019 SCBA Elections Ballot' on November 17, 2018, which contains a link for you to cast your vote. If you cannot find this email, or did not receive it, you can vote here: [VOTE](#).

SCBA

Monthly Meeting Minutes

November 12, 2018

Location: 4H Building, Rohnert Park

Meeting started: 7:02 PM

Approx. attendance: ~ 89

Items covered

- Holiday party details discussed
Dec 10, 2018 6 PM at Holy Ghost Hall, Sebastopol (Hwy 116 and Mill Station Road)
Sneak peak auction items will be via email 11/17 and 12/4
Will also be a live auction portion
Still looking for helpers for auction setup and teardown
contact Darlene McGinnis auction@sonomabees.org
- Call for help for SCBA volunteers. Today we have about 60 people (15%) of members in lead positions. We need to expand this.
- Call for a new Treasurer position for 2019
- Ballot nominations for 2019 Executive Board positions
President- Kelli Cox, nominated by John McGinnis, seconded by Bill Genthe
1st VP- Ann Jereb, nominated by Peter Jones, seconded by Sue Owens
2nd VP- Susan Kegley, nominated by Ettamarie Peterson, seconded by Roger Fortain
Treasurer- Julie Gugel, nominated by Maggie Weaver, seconded by Candice Koseba
Secretary- Peter Jones, nominated by Susan Kegley, seconded by Ettamarie Peterson
- Speaker info
Bill Toone - Sex Worth Dying For: Stories of semelparity-sex that ends in death

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Jones,
Secretary



An Afternoon of Beeswax Alchemy in East Cluster

By Lizanne Pastore

I'm writing this having just returned home from one of the most delightful afternoons I've had in a long time. What better way to spend an afternoon cooped up inside and out of the smoke than with like-minded, generous, crafty beekeepers! At the time of this writing, (Nov. 18) we are still in the midst of the terrible Camp Fire, a disaster that is hard to believe, and just a year after our own. It's been difficult to find joy.

And for so many of us who rely on our weekends to be outdoors, well...there is no option of outdoor activity in this dangerous smoke. What to do cooped up!? How incredibly fortuitous that our East Cluster coordinators, Susan Simmons and Lauri Dorman, along with Thea Vierling and our most generous host, Kristina Torres, planned an afternoon of beeswax alchemy for us. (Lauri ended up out of town welcoming her 5th grandchild into the world! Congratulations to all!)

I arrived to Kristina's home with a bottle of mead, a frittata and a bag of clean wax to share, to find a large and well-organized room full of tables with stations for making candles, lotion bars, and waxed fabric for food storage. The other participants came loaded too! There were hot plates with double boilers going, pots with wax and molds for candles and bars; you name it, they had it. It felt like a witches den! And given the smoke in the air, what a relief to smell nothing but fresh melted beeswax for a glorious 3 hours...ahhhh. The handful of rogue honeybees flying about were a welcome addition, but we made sure they all found their way back outdoors without incident.

Thea, our teacher extraordinaire, began at the beginning, with a nice lesson in how to render wax from comb using solar wax melters, describing how to melt, re-melt and re-re-melt that wax from new and old comb...using milk cartons, old t-shirts, cheesecloth, pantyhose, what-have-you, to filter out debris. Then we convened inside to get crafty. Kristina and Susan led us in making solid "lotion bars" with beeswax, coconut oil, and shea butter and also in fabricating fabric food wraps using beeswax, pine resin, jojoba oil along with a hot iron. So simple. Thea's years of experience in candle making was fabulous as she gave a primer on this, and goodness knows how many candles were made. Make sure you get that wick in straight!

Everyone had an exceptional time and left loaded with a head start on holiday gifts. The food and wine were lovely and Kristina was a marvelous host. During such troubling times, it is a gift to have a community of friends to cluster with and I am humbled to be part of such a wonderful group.

Thank you East Cluster.



Photo by Thea Vierling



Chief Candle Maker and Host Kristina Torres
Photo by Thea Vierling



Photo by Susan Simmons

Education Group Uses Interesting Props

Sometimes all you need is an apple flower branch and some apples!

By Jackie, Mari, Jaime, Denise and Thea,
Your Education Liaisons

It's true if you want to go out to the schools or to any community event and talk about the honeybees, sometimes an apple flower branch and some apples are all you need. The importance of the honeybees to pollination of most fruits is easy to get across to your audience this way and you don't have to cart in the kitchen sink. You could ask your audience about all the other fruits honey bees are responsible for like watermelon, strawberries, pears, peaches, almonds and green peppers. Wait, did you say peppers? Are peppers fruits? YES THEY ARE! A fruit is anything that has seeds in it!

And you can plant those seeds and get more fruits!!!

The education group has divided itself into 5 different groups: North, South, East, West and central. I know it sounds like the cluster groups which it is because "why reinvent the wheel!" When we have a great model to work with, just repeat it! Each area has a coordinator called an education liaison! They are responsible for finding folks who would like to give presentations and also for housing the materials for you to use! Your coordinators are: North, Denise Feldman; South Mari Barrell; West, Jackie Mendoza; East, Thea Vierling; and Central Jaime Gonzalez. So far it is working great but we have not had that many requests. In the spring we expect an avalanche of requests so hopefully we will have plenty of folks to help us out. By working with your area Liaison, you will only be asked to give a presentation in your area so you will not have to travel so far!

We do have other educational supplies that you can borrow. A jar of honey and some beeswax candles make for a fun presentation! Also the painted hive is an eye catcher and inside are 12 frames with incredible pictures illustrating honey bee information. In the photo below, you can see a frame showing the larval stages of the honeybee and the other frame shows the hexagonal beeswax comb. The sides are painted with a swarm on one side, flowers on one side, and hex comb on the front. When you use props like these, it makes giving a talk a lot of fun for all students because they get to see what you are talking about!

Join us in helping to educate the public about the honey bees. If you are interested or if you want to borrow the props, please send an email to education@sonomabees.org. We will get your name to the right Liaison.



Presenting to a Pre-School

By Ettamarie Peterson

My granddaughter Alison Hill owns and operates Happy Hearts Pre-School in Petaluma. Her mother, my daughter Karen Nau, teaches the 4-year olds there and two of my great grandsons are students there. For the month of November they wanted to teach the students about people who work in the community. I was invited to tell them about being a beekeeper. Since their attention span is rather short I was asked to make my presentation just about 15 minutes.

I took one of my bee suits, my favorite hive tool, a smoker and the brood box that has educational photos in the frames and a frame of comb, a little gadget that has a eye piece with multiple lenses to show what a bee's vision is like and an extra beekeeper's hat. I started by putting on my beekeeper's jacket and asking them why I would wear it. Then I showed them the smoker and explained how I listen to the bees to see if they are happy or upset. I explained that I puffed smoke on the bees only if they sounded mad at me. The next thing I showed them the hive tool and how it helped me. I pulled a few frames up and explained what was in the pictures.

After they got to do the waggle dance with me I let some try on the bee hat. This was a short, sweet lesson that I hope inspired some little ones to become beekeepers someday.



Happy Heart Student trying on bee hat & veil.



Ettamarie pointing out the queen.
Photo by Allison Hill

Bee Plants of the Month

By Alice Ford-Sala

Berberis aka Mahonia

Family: Barberry

We end the year with a native plant that is also used medicinally. It is interesting that so many healing plants for humans are also highly attractive to bees and other pollinators. I hope you have enjoyed the year's exploration of medicinal bee plants.

Berberis is an attractive holly-leaved plant that provides bright yellow fragrant flowers in spring for bees, blue, purple or dark red berries that birds enjoy in fall, and glossy green and red leaves for winter holiday décor. Evergreen, it is attractive year-round. It does have prickles like holly, so plant it where it won't scratch passers-by.

Berberis makes an excellent hedgerow, and due to the prickles, a good barrier, screen, or living fence. They can grow in many habitats, such as woodland gardens, hot hillsides or a mixed native plant garden.

B. aquifolium, aka Oregon Grape is well suited to most gardens. It does well in partial shade, especially in hot interior valleys. It can take some water, and appreciates irrigation in long dry summers.

Usually growing from 3 to 6 feet tall, you can control its shape or size with pruning if needed. You can also cut it all the way back to the ground and it will re-sprout from the roots.

B. aquifolium compacta tends to grow in clumps 1-3 feet tall. It is said to not flower as much as the upright variety.

B. aquifolium var. repens is low-growing (1 to 2 feet tall) and makes a nice ground cover.

The berries are edible and were an important food source for native Californians. They can be used to make jellies. I leave them for the birds to enjoy. The roots are used medicinally for intestinal health. They can also be used as a dye plant.

B. nevinii aka Nevin Barberry is another beauty that can be completely covered in delightfully fragrant brilliant yellow flowers in Spring. The berries are red or orange and are also a favorite bird food.

It can reach 6 to 10 feet in height, so makes a nice background plant, perhaps with some native sages or manzanitas in the foreground. A little summer water is ok, and like other barberries, it is adaptable to a wide variety of California climates and soil conditions.

It is said to have the same medicinal qualities as B. aquifolium.

I wish you and your loved ones a happy and healthy holiday season!

Alice Ford-Sala



Barberry





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- ~ Wooden Swarm Traps ~ Solar Wax Melters ~

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

John McGinnis

(707) 478-9787

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By appointment only

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Santa Rosa

Free Bee Colony For Successful Referral.

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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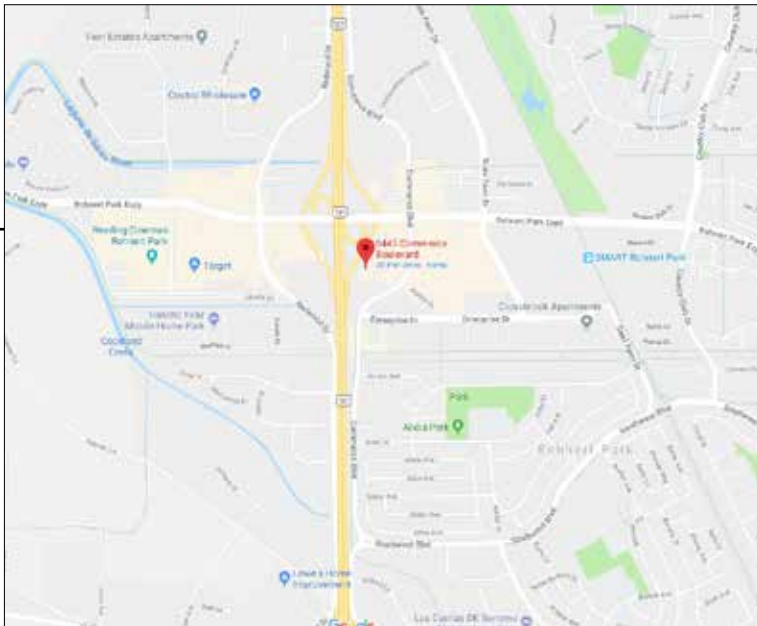
2018 Board Members

and Other Helpful People

Click Here
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

Click Google Map for Driving
Directions