

The Monthly Extractor



Volume 47, Issue 4

April 2022

This is our newsletter that reflects the various techniques, theories and art of sustainable beekeeping. Articles are contributed by SCBA members.

SCBA General Meeting

April 11, 2022, 6pm to 8:30pm

Our April meeting will be back on Zoom as our speaker will be joining via Zoom from Texas. We are happy to have Les Crowder, natural beekeeper and author of [Top Bar Beekeeping: Organic Practices for Honey Bee Health](#).

Les Crowder has devoted his life to the study and care of honeybees. He is dedicated to finding organic and natural solutions for problems commonly treated with chemicals and will be joining us to talk about natural beekeeping and how natural beekeeping is not creating mite bombs or bee neglecting.

Join Zoom meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86514254718?pwd=cHZqcERVdG5HZIR1eXF5MDNaQkRGUT09>

ID: 865 1425 4718

Password: 768368

This Zoom link is a recurring link and will be used for ALL general meetings for 2022.

President's Message

Hello Fellow SCBA Members,



It was great to meet many of you in person for the first time at our first SCBA hybrid (in-person/Zoom) General Meeting which took place in Druids Hall in March. Such a great crossover turnout who were at the meeting and on Zoom. Some of our business members attended and introduced some of their gadgets. We also had four guests

who attended the general meeting, seeking a new community to join and had a passion for pollinators and their habitat. I would like to take the chance here and remind you that our monthly general meetings are open to the public. I encourage you to invite your family members, friends, neighbors who care for local pollinators and like to learn more about our organization and what we do. I also encourage you to take some time to check out our sonomabees.org website, especially SCBA Members-only Info pages. There you will find lots of good information and resources.

Continued on next page

SCBA Member Events April

April 11 – [General Meeting](#)

April 18 – [New Beekeepers Forum](#)

April 25 – [Seasoned Beekeepers Forum](#)

May 14 – [Spring Fling](#) See page 2 for more information and volunteer opportunities.

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From previous page

Our swarm catchers are starting to get swarms calls. They are doing a great job responding while BeeShare Cluster Coordinators are getting the Needs Bees program and members on the list for the current season ready. There were 50 swarms reported in March when writing this message, more to come. We are still reaching out to the public through our communication channels to promote the importance of the Honey Bee swarm season and encourage the locals to reach out to SCBA to help the bees by carefully collecting and relocating them to a happy new hive home in the county. Do not forget to hang up your swarm traps if you haven't done that already.

SCBA 2022 Member Survey returned great feedback, comments, and statistics that will help the board, our cluster coordinators, and cluster leaders with their events planning, education, and continuing SCBA mission. We continue to grow; SCBA currently has 376 active members; three new committees are being formed (Fundraising, Education, and Apple Fair Committees). The committees' members are in action, and they held their first meetings to start planning and discuss some ideas. Regional Cluster and East Cluster Coordinator positions are still open. If you are interested in being a part of these committees or positions, please reach out to

our program director Shannon Carr.

As COVID-19 infection rates drop in our county the rules are relaxing gathering restrictions. The board is evaluating the case of shifting our upcoming general meetings to hybrid mode (in-person/Zoom) starting in June after we kick off our Spring Fling in May this year. The board has also updated all past and current SCBA financial data. Those are posted on our website in the " FINANCIAL STATEMENTS " section under SCBA Members-only Info. Cluster Coordinators started bringing back one of my favorite SCBA activities, "Hive Dive." North Cluster kicked off its first hive dive of the year this month. Cluster Café and Garden Digs are also occurring.

SCBA has many new beekeepers who have many questions and challenges managing their colonies for the season. Some might need mentorship or a "Bee-Buddy." I encourage you to attend your monthly meetings and cluster events and be active in your cluster private Facebook group if possible to support each other and share knowledge and expertise to keep our amazing SCBA community thriving. We are like a bee colony; we need each other to thrive!
Sincerely,

*Mohammed Ibrahim
1st Vice President/Acting President*

From the Desk of the Program Director

The Bees are a Buzzing and so is SCBA! SAVE THE DATE – SATURDAY MAY 14

Our first [Spring Fling!](#) It will be held at [Bees N Blooms](#). Part social, part educational, and a wee bit of fundraising, this will be a great opportunity for our members to meet one another and learn more about bee-keeping and bee-tending. We will be hosting educational workshops, hive dives, and garden tours on the Bees N Blooms campus. The first block of workshops will be at 10:30 am and the second block at 1:00 pm.

We are providing some light snacks and sandwiches for lunch and will be selling raffle tickets for some fun raffle prizes which include gifts certificates to local stores, tastings at local wineries, gifts baskets, and a beautiful hand-crafted Nuc built by John McGinnis.

We still need your help!

- * Donations – We are looking for more donations for the raffle and bottles of wine for our wine pull. Please contact me if you can contribute to the raffle.
- * Volunteers – In order for successful event, we will need help throughout the day – setup, raffle, clean up.
- * Workshops – we have a number of great workshops planned, but if you have a great idea or would like to be a presenter, please let me know.

Reach out to me, Shannon Carr, at programdirector@sonomabees.org, if you are able to help or have something special to donate.

General Meeting Report

March Madness over Pesticides

By Rachel Parker

At March's General Meeting, Susan Kegley, founder of Bees N Blooms and a trained chemist, discussed the many ways that pesticides can enter our gardens – kind of Trojan Horses for chemicals that nurseries use to control critters. Beyond the obvious direct spray on a plant, pesticides can threaten your bees through seeds that were treated prior to planting, and through nectar and pollen that are coursing through the plant's system. The citrus story is particularly horrifying: Reacting to a Florida citrus die-off caused by citrus plants imported from Asia, California regulators now require all citrus for sale to be tested for Asian Citrus Psyllid and Huanglongbing disease. Eradication is so onerous – nurseries have to destroy inventories of citrus that test positive – that many just treat with systemic pesticides.

The citrus industry is huge – nearly \$4 billion in sales annually, as of 2016 – and these diseases seem to spread easily. So, perhaps this broad-spectrum solution is appropriate. But, golly, another risk to our yellow and black striped pollinators. And, this information gave me chills when I considered the handful of citrus trees I planted in 2018 and the vulnerable bees that sometimes dance on their blossoms.

Susan also described the double-whammy that are insecticides plus fungicides. These are one-thousand times more toxic than just insecticides alone, as they reduce the bee's ability to clear the toxin from their systems. Avoid products such as Rosecare, she suggests.

Finally, and on a happier note, Susan reminded those of us putting in pollinator gardens that vertical space is very useful. Trees – such as the eucalyptus tree that was planted years ago on a property adjacent ours – provide vertical forage. Susan suggests the Vitex Chaste Tree.

Plant Resource Chart from Susan Kegley's March Presentation

Resources

- **Organic/untreated seed sources**
 - Johnny's Seeds
 - Eden Brothers
 - Lake Valley Organics
 - Peaceful Valley Farm Supply
 - West Coast Seeds
 - Territorial Seed
 - Renee's Garden
 - Wild Garden Seed
 - Uprising Seed
 - Adaptive Seed
 - Larner Seeds
 - Sierra Seed Supply (natives)
- **Ornamentals (organic or low input)**
 - SCBA Garden Group
 - Bees N Blooms
 - American Meadows
 - Annie's Annuals & Perennials
 - Emerisa Gardens
 - Imwallee Gardens
 - Harmony Farm Supplies

Be careful! Most plant suppliers are not organic and many treatments are required for quarantine purposes. Ask about pesticide use.
- **Dearth plant list**
<https://www.sonomabees.org/Gardening>
- **Trees**
 - Bees N Blooms
 - Urban Tree Farm

John McGinnis Business Member

By Ettamarie Peterson

John McGinnis is a lot more than just a business member. He has been a hard-working volunteer for SCBA for many years. He and his wife Darlene have shared their beautiful home and ranch many times for hive dives, workshops on things such as how to make a split and storage of various items. They call the ranch "Goahway Ranch" and their honey "Buzz Off Honey" but those are just jokes that are typical of John's great sense of humor. The ranch sits high up on Sonoma Mountain so it has a fantastic view of the Petaluma Valley. His bees fly out of his beautifully hand-crafted hives around Darlene's terrific collection of bee friendly plants. She also has started a nursery business specializing in plants we need for our bees.

John took many classes from Serge Labesque and learned how to build unique hives that best suit the needs of honey bees. He is a great promoter of the double-deep hives and can explain in great detail why they are so suitable. His workshop is so well organized that every time I visit him I am envious. He pays strict attention to every detail when he builds equipment.

John is currently working with his neighbor and fellow member Nick Freedman to manage our swarm and bee share program. He has done this for several years so knows how to make it run as smoothly as possible. This is no easy task as he can testify! The two members make a good team. Over the years many members have benefitted from John's swarm catching skills that he has readily shared. He has also shared calls so others can have the fun of catching swarms.

SCBA is extremely fortunate to have such a dedicated member. You can see his contact information in all our monthly newsletters on the business members' page. Don't forget to thank John for all his work when you contact him.

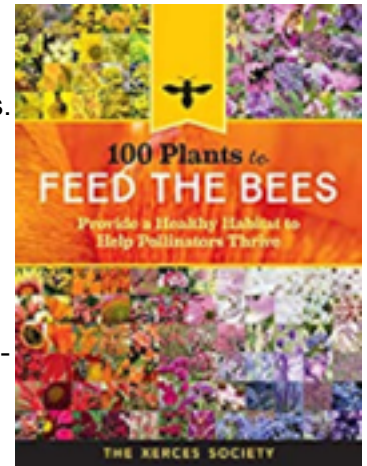


Book Nook

[100 Plants to Feed the Bees: Provide a Healthy Habitat to Help Pollinators Thrive](#)

By: The Xerces Society

The international bee crisis is threatening our global food supply, but this user-friendly field guide shows what you can do to help protect our pollinators. The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation offers browsable profiles of 100 common flowers, herbs, shrubs, and trees that support bees, butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds.



We have more than 250 books and DVDs in the SCBA Library. *100 Plants to Feed the Bees* is just one of many books about bees, and gardening for bees, in our collection. You can view all our books available to you at [SCBA-Library](#). If you are interested in checking out a book, email our librarian at Librarian@sonoma-bees.org to make arrangements to pick up one or two of the books or DVDs available to SCBA members.

Heartfelt Thank You to our Long-Serving Librarian

Nadya Clark has made the SCBA Library program what it is today. Growing the library to more than 250 books and DVDs, cataloging each one, tracking them as they get checked out and returned, and before Covid, hauling every book back and forth from her home to the general meetings each and every month and then driving around Sonoma County to deliver books and pick up checked out books during Covid. After 10 years, she is retiring as SCBA's librarian, and we are so grateful for all she has done over the years to get books into the hands of our members. While we are going to miss her as our librarian, she will still be around enjoying the perks of being a general member. Nadya, thank you for all you have done for SCBA and the SCBA Library.

Gardening for Bees

“April Showers Bring May Flowers,” even with the lack of showers this spring, Sonoma County Beekeepers Association and our Gardening for Bees program know how important those flowers and forage are for the bees, and other pollinators, in our community.

Gardening for Bees (G4Bs) strives to improve honeybee habit and does that through creating forage for bees and educating gardeners on the value of quality forage and tactics to improve habitats for all pollinators. Core members of G4Bs work together to plan events, educational opportunities, and bee-friendly, pesticide-free plant sales for members.

Ellen Sherron is one of the founding members of G4Bs. She got into beekeeping years ago when a swarm moved into a wall of a building on her property. Since then, she has found her passion as being more of a “bee-tender” rather than a “bee-keeper” with tending to the habitat they live in. She has created an oasis for them in her yard in which all pollinators love and thrive. Ellen enjoys sharing her plants with members through “Garden Digs” and she has hosted quite a few over the last few months. She will soon be hosting educational garden tours so members can see and learn about pollinator habitats that honey bees and native bees both enjoy and thrive in.

Maryle Brauer took the role of Gardening Coordinator in 2020 and 2021. Her leadership helped the program continue to grow and blossom through tough covid years. Her dedication to the group, keeping the team together, encouraging home nurseries and creating pop-up plant sales (since we couldn’t meet in person) to get bee-friendly plants into the homes of our members helped make what the G4Bs program is today.

Angelo Sacerdote stepped up to the plate in 2022 to take on the role of Gardening Coordinator. He is continuing to encourage Home Nurseries so G4Bs can continue to get more bee-friendly plants into pollinator gardens. The year is still young and he is working with the core group to develop more educational opportunities for our members through Garden Digs, workshops, and garden tours.

Last year **Elizabeth Holdmann** started G4Bs’ Seed Library. She created an informative label, has

acquired seed donations from various nurseries, and distributed seeds to members at various events.

And a big thank you to **Bruce Harris** who is always working hard behind the scenes of all of SCBA’s programs including making sure G4Bs has all the support they need with website and technical aspects that the program needs.

Our G4Bs program runs strong with a team of hard working and dedicated “core” members (too many to list) putting together Garden Digs, workshops, and plant sales for SCBA members to enjoy. If you would like to be more involved with G4Bs, contact Angelo, our gardening coordinator, at gardening@sonoma-bees.org.

April Bee Plant of the Month: *Ceanothus*

By Elizabeth Newton

Decades ago, I was traveling through the Santa Monica mountains and was overwhelmed by the scent of honey. Looking out at the landscape, I could see clouds of dark blue flower clusters. It was springtime, peak bloom time for *ceanothus* and the bees were rejoicing.

Ceanothus is sometimes referred to as “California lilac” although it’s unrelated. This highly diverse shrub encompasses dozens of species plus many hybrids and its range extends from Canada to Guatemala, which attests to its adaptability.

There is even a specimen in the Chelsea Physic Garden in London.

Ceanothus is a welcome addition to any garden that has well-drained soil and full sun. In addition to its gorgeous clusters of fragrant blooms that attract



From previous page: *Ceanothus*

honeybees, native bees and hummingbirds, it also produces short, brittle twigs that are snapped off by birds for building nests, and its seeds are enjoyed by California quail. Though most varieties have an upright habit that can be shaped into a tree shape or left as a shrub, there are also creeping varieties that make wonderful ground covers.

An added benefit to planting ceanothus is that it fixes nitrogen in the soil, which benefits neighboring plants. As with other native California species, it needs very little to no summer water, depending on the variety. As some varieties prefer a more coastal climate, it would be a good idea to check with your local nursery before purchasing to make sure you choose ones best suited to your area. An additional word of caution: mule deer like to browse on ceanothus. Though no varieties are deer proof, some tolerate their nibbling better than others. However, the bad news about deer is balanced out by the fact that they seem to repel gophers!

The Monthly Extractor Team

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SCBA Member Photo Gallery



The Monthly Extractor is dedicating space to members' photos from their apiary or garden, with captions. Please note, because *The Monthly Extractor* is publicly published, if members send photos featuring human individuals (whether adults, children, or teens) in those photos, we need to have their consent. Email written consent should do the job. Send photos to editor@sonomabees.org.

Drone pupae eyes change color as the pupae mature. This is the early pink eye stage.
Photo by Ettamarie Peterson.

More Photos!



Greater wax moth larva (*Galleria mellonella*) on an observation tray of a beehive. 0.5mm/ X500 microscopic magnification – Photo by Mohammed Ibrahim



Varroa destructor (Varroa mite) on an observation tray of a beehive. 0.5mm/ X500 microscopic magnification – Photo by Mohammed Ibrahim

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Habitat Sponsors

Pollinator Garden – \$500

Pollinator gardens are designed and created with specific nectar and pollen producing plants to attract pollinators – honey bees, native bees, and other diverse pollinators. Our Pollinator Garden community partners help create the nutrients for the garden that is SCBA

* Samtec Inc.
www.Samtec.com

Hedgerow – \$1,000

Hedgerows are vital nectar and pollen sources amidst barren landscapes such as vineyards and other monocrops, and our Hedgerow Level Community Partners embodies this support.

Meadow - \$2,500

Meadows are beautiful sights for us and oceans of forage for honey bees and pollinators. Help us transform Sonoma County into one sweet bee-garden with our Meadow Level Community Partnership.

Canopy – \$5,000

Above the meadows and hedgerows is the canopy. These mighty trees sink carbon and water, provide home for wild bees and countless pollinators, shade the ground during our hot, dry summers, and often bloom as well. Our Canopy Level Community Partnership shows the deepest commitment to our work and ongoing mission.

2022 Board Members

and Other Helpful People

Click Here
for the Up-to-Date
Roster of SCBA Resources

Support SCBA by signing up for [eScrip](#) and [Amazon Smile](#). A small percentage of each sale will be donated back to SCBA, at no extra cost to the customer.

