



CENTRAL COAST BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2017

ISSUE NUMBER 13

NEXT MEETING APRIL 26, 2017

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings Central Coast Beekeepers--

Spring isn't exactly shining down on us this year. Hope you've had some time to get a quick look at your hives and get them ready for the honey flow. My hives are taking pollen patties like crazy--they only get a day or two each week to get out for the real stuff. They've also taking syrup and the strong hives are bursting with capped brood. If the weather ever breaks this year we'll be ready.

Our acacias have flowered and gone. Red alders are just finishing up--still a few catkins visible as the new leaves begin to sprout. Pussy willows are beginning to come out along the lakes and our borage has started to bloom already. The bees should have a good source of pollen but to be on the safe side I've been supplementing with pollen substitute to help them make it into spring. So watch your bees, especially in the early spring and keep an eye on the mites.

I lost a few hives this year and still have a couple of weak ones--April and March are typically the harshest bee months so I'm keeping my fingers crossed. My dead-out autopsies indicate that starvation and parasitic mite syndrome (PMS) are possible causes.

Queens will be available from some local sources in May and it looks like I'll need a few before summer.

Club Nuc Delivery

Saturday, April 8th, was quite the adventure. Stan, Becca and I headed to Colton, OR, at 4:30 am to pick up nucs for the club. Even with a Starbucks break in Woodburn we were the first on site. Thirty seven nucs just about filled up the back of the Ford F150. We were back on the road by 7:30. With stops in Lincoln City, Newport, South Beach, Waldport, Yachats and Florence everything went like clockwork thanks to Stan and Becca. We met a lot of happy beekeepers along the way as they selected their nucs. Thanks again, Stan, for all the work you did to make this happen.

While we were waiting at the True Value parking lot in Florence a couple walked over to see what we were doing. As I explained that we were delivering bees she swatted at one. Her husband laughed and told her not to worry they wouldn't hurt her. Just then a bee buzzed him. He took off running across the parking lot, pulling off his coat and shirt and flailing wildly at the little varmint. His wife nearly died laughing as he continued thrashing the air around his now shirtless body. Note to self, park on the far side of the lot next time.

We did a quick check of mites on Becca's nuc and only found one mite in 24 hours! It's a strong colony with three frames of brood, two frames of honey and chalk full of bees. We put a second nuc on as it was so full and we were not quite ready to put it in a full sized box. Becca anticipates not only using the nuc in our observation hive but also getting some honey.

Oregon Master Beekeeping Classes

We finished up our Oregon Master Beekeeper classes in March. We should have a dozen new apprentices by the end of the year when they get their four worksheets completed and pass their tests. Our youngest apprentice, Adam Greene, just installed three packages on his own! See his picture below as he installs them.



Upcoming Events

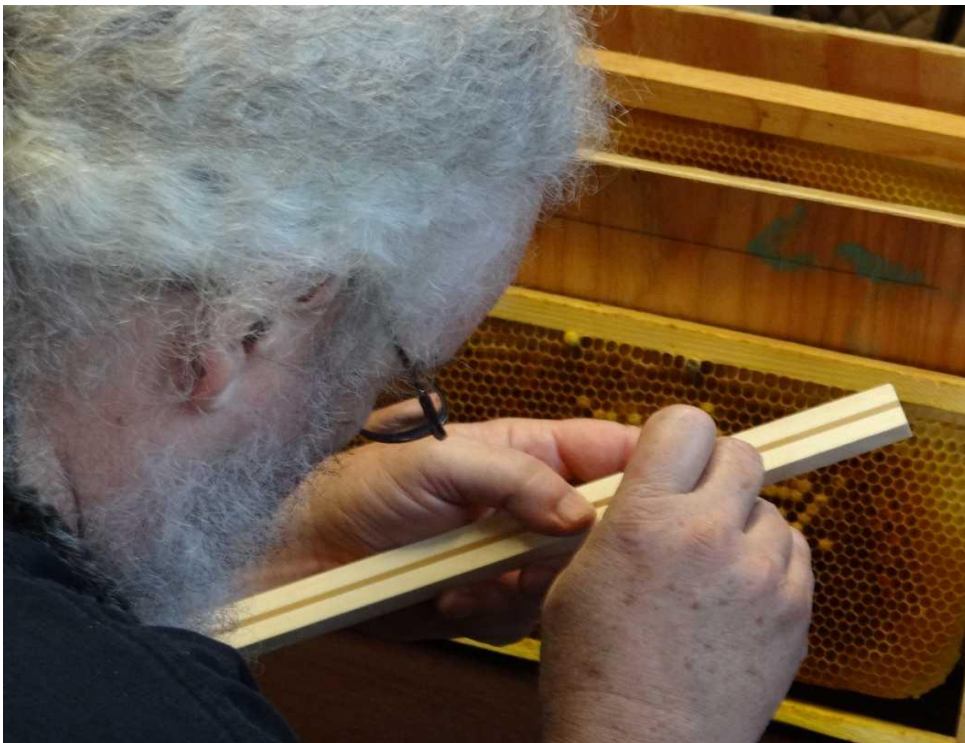
We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting in Newport on April 26th. Dr. Ramesh Sagili will be speaking on nutrition and health of the hive. Ramesh is a professor of apiculture at Oregon State University, specializing in honey bee health, nutrition, pheromone biology and pollination and is a founding member of the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program.

We also have several outreach events coming up: The Florence Garden Club Plant Sale, the Lincoln County Master Gardner plant sale and the Lincoln County Fair.

Michael Bush, Hood River on April 22, 2017

Michael Bush gave a class on treatment free beekeeping this past weekend in Hood River put on by the Columbia River Gorge Beekeepers. He began by pointing out that there are over 170 possible mite species that can live in a hive and only three are a problem, mainly Varroa destructor and tracheal mites. Also, living in the hive are over 30 kinds of insects and more than 8,000 microorganisms. Treating changes the delicate balance of this rich ecosystem and can have a detrimental effect on bees altering the ph and equilibrium of the hive. Michael also demonstrated Queen grafting as seen below. For further information check out his web site:

<http://www.bushfarms.com/bees.htm>



Oregon State Beekeepers Association Board Meeting, Canby April 22, 2017

Regional Reps and beekeeper club officers met in Canby at the Sorrel Honey Farm. President Harry Vanderpool went over the agricultural report. He and Mike Rodia have been involved in providing testimony and/or following four proposed bills concerning beekeeping during the current legislative session. Only HB 2533A, initiated by Harry and Mike will likely be adopted into law. It exempts nucleus hives from registration fees.

All others died in committee. HB 3280-1 was proposed to eliminate registration fees for first year hives. SB 785 was to remove honeybees from restricted use of antibiotics for prophylactic use on livestock. SB 929 was to ban use of neonics by anyone other than licensed pesticide applicators.

Volunteers are being sought to design and maintain the OSBA booth at the Oregon State Fair in Salem for the 10 days leading up to and including Memorial Day.

Jason has contacted most of the eleven speakers that have been selected for the conference in Silverton on October 27-29th.

It was unanimously voted to have the 2018 conference at the Salem Convention Center.

Benefits of our membership in OSBA include insurance that provides the club with \$2 million dollars of liability coverage for club sponsored activities. It also gives us a large pool of speakers that will provide talks at our club meetings without charge. We are also kept abreast of the latest developments in bee research and club leadership provides beekeeper influence in the state legislature on issues involving bees and beekeeping, a steal at twice the price!

Rick Olson, Club President

NEXT MEETING – April 26, 2017

6:30 pm at the Newport Library

PROGRAM

Dr. Ramesh Sagili will be speaking on nutrition and health of the hive. Ramesh is a professor of apiculture at Oregon State University, specializing in honey bee health, nutrition, pheromone biology and pollination and is a founding member of the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program.

6:30pm – 8 pm

KEEPING BEES IN APRIL

Kenny Williams

April is one of the busiest months for a beekeeper. The weather begins to settle down, more plants come into bloom, especially trees, and beehive populations continue to increase. Among the concerns for a beekeeper in April are hive inspection and manipulation, monitoring food stores, queen evaluation and possible replacement, swarm control and capture, making increase to establish new colonies, and equalizing hives.

Settled weather and rising temperatures allow us to examine and manipulate a hive in more depth. Use this opportunity to clean or replace the bottom board and to remove any entrance reducers or mouse guards. This is also a good time to replace aging hive bodies, as the colony is still relatively small and the April inspections often involve removing frames for other purposes anyway.

Check for stored honey. There should be at least two frames of honey, if not more, clear up until the major honey flow in your area. If you find less, then feed with sugar syrup to bridge the gap. With experience, a beekeeper can learn to estimate, by hefting one end of the hive before examining frames, whether or not the colony has enough stored food. Weather can be changeable in the Pacific Northwest and two frames of honey can vanish in less than two weeks if those two weeks were to be cold and wet. It would be a shame to get a colony this far only to lose it to starvation which could be avoided. Stay ahead of feeding and use a feeding method whereby the syrup remains accessible to a cluster in cool weather, such as an inside feeder (also known as a division board feeder), or a hive top feeder placed over the cluster, so that the syrup remains within reach of the cluster on a chilly spring day.

A healthy, vigorous queen is key to the productivity and survival of a hive. With experience and with the help of a mentor or other help offered through local bee clubs, one can learn to evaluate a queen and her brood pattern. While you have the hive open for an April inspection, consider the following queen attributes. Is the queen laying in a solid, regular pattern? Is the queen old and beginning to fail? Is she a drone layer? Is the colony preparing to swarm? If the queen needs to be replaced, April is a good month to do so. The population of an over-wintered hive also reflects the quality of a queen, and ought to be at least ten to twelve frames of bees in mid-April, certainly not less than eight. If larger, the colony may swarm in coming weeks, before the honey flow. If smaller, perhaps a combination or a boost is in order.

In my mind, the two notions of swarm issues and the making of increase are intertwined, so I will address them together here, since making divides can be part of your swarm control and management. Your strategy to obtain a good honey crop as well as to minimize swarming can be attained by reducing congestion in a strong hive with the aim of planning for a peak population at the start of the main honey flow in your area, usually around late May in the Willamette valley, later in cooler areas. To do this, one may remove several frames of brood with adhering bees, perhaps anywhere between two and six frames, depending on the strength of the donor or "parent" colony. Be sure not to remove the existing queen accidentally. One may make up a nuc or a single story hive, utilizing these frames, by adding a purchased queen. Alternatively, frames of bees and brood removed this way may also be used to boost the population of a weaker but queen-right colony. If you observe swarm preparation while taking out frames, you may make up a divide including one or more queen cells, which should result in a mated and laying queen about three weeks later. This so-called equalizing, or balancing, of hives in your apiary is one of the best things you can do in order to reduce swarming, maximize honey production, and assist colony survival. Of the eighteen frames in your parent hive, shoot for a colony with a good older queen or a better replacement queen, ten or more frames well (75% or more) covered with bees, four to six empty frames for the queen to lay in, and at least two frames of honey. Leave the colony with the queen, some brood and some empty frames in the lower box, as the queen tends to move up over time in her egg-laying.

Another plan for increase might be to remove the good, older queen from a strong hive showing swarm preparation (congestion and the presence of swarm cells), along with three or more frames of brood with adhering bees. This is equivalent to removing a swarm before they swarm on their own and can greatly reduce or eliminate the swarm impulse. The larger hive left behind can raise a queen from two or three swarm cells you leave intentionally, or can

be re-queened with a purchased queen after scraping out other swarm cells. Incidentally, removing unwanted swarm cells gives the beekeeper a chance to taste royal jelly, an ancient food unchanged for millennia.

To re-queen or to make up divides, one may need a small number of queens. These may be hard to come by on short notice. Check ads in the bee periodicals placed by producers who state the price and availability of one to ten queens; some producers have a larger minimum order. Learn who in your area may be a larger beekeeper who may be willing to sell a small quantity from the stock many beekeepers keep on hand in a "queen bank." Or perhaps somebody in your club may be putting together a group order. Some of the bee supply outlets stock queens but supply is variable. It is well to plan queen needs ahead. Placing a queen order in January or February is not too early.

Other ways to make increase include installing a package of bees, purchasing a five-frame nuc and capturing a swarm. Since a nuc comes with an already accepted and laying queen, it is, in effect, three-to-five weeks ahead of a package or a captured swarm. Capturing a swarm can provide you with additional bees to boost a weaker hive, or a spare queen, or just another start-up. It helps to have more than enough boxes and frames ready to go.

Before closing up the hive after inspection and manipulation, checking food stores, and making divides, monitor for mite levels with the mite drop method, the sugar shake method or the alcohol wash method and treat with a "soft" treatment if levels are too high, as you will soon be supering.

In conclusion, I would emphasize that much of what I have described here to do in April is dependent upon planning and actions taken in previous months, such as ordering queens or packages and having hive bodies and frames ready to go. In addition, I would encourage beekeepers to avail themselves of the many benefits to be gained by attending local bee club meetings, field days, bee schools and mentoring programs. Those who wish to take their beekeeping skills to the next level might want to look into the Oregon Master Beekeeping Program offered by the OSBA in collaboration with Oregon State University.

AFB Scare

by Rick Olson

There was an American Foul Brood scare at the Coos County Bee Club last month. One of the members brought in a couple of frames from a dead out for evaluation. The comb was dark and there were still capped cells on the frame. One of the beekeepers took a whiff and detected a foul odor. He pointed to the frame and said, "You've got American foulbrood!" We all ran out of the room screaming. This is the worst disease you can have--it's very contagious and the only sure cure is to burn all equipment including all the bees.

I had just had the AFB class at OSU and except for the odor there were no other symptoms--no dark concave cappings, they were not greasy looking and did not have small holes in them, the ropey test failed, and there was no black scale in the bottom of the cells. The black scale in the bottom of each cell can contain as much as 100 million spores and they remain viable for up to 60 years. That's why you have to burn your hives including the bees.

I put the frames in a plastic garbage bag that I salvaged from the kitchen and left the meeting. When I got home to my horror I found that the frames had slid out of the bags. If they were infected I was going to have to burn my car.

Testing the brood with the new AFB kit I'd just purchased gave a negative test. Whew! I felt better but wanted confirmation. I took the frames to the OSU bee labs and Carolyn Breece did a thorough check and ran another test--no AFB. As a final confirmation I sent a sample to the Bee Research Lab in Beltsville, MD. It was an easy procedure--cut out a two inch square of comb, wrap it in a paper towel and ship it in a cardboard box available at the post office. They culture the sample and thoroughly test it. Within ten days I got the report back--no AFB but Varroa destructor was detected.

I hastily called the owner of the frames back and told him the good news. He didn't sound as excited as I was though. He said he'd been reading up on AFB and the stories he found were as he said, "horrifying". The day before he'd burned both of his hives!

Lesson learned: if you suspect AFB has killed your hive, seal it up so other bees can't get into it and send a sample to the Bee Research Lab and wait patiently.

Have you seen a Swarm Yet? **by Dewey M. Caron**

Before the end of April we begin to hear of local bee swarms. There will be more in May and June.

Swarming means different things to different individuals. Some beekeepers see swarms as a management failure, especially when the swarm issues from their colony. However many more view swarms as an opportunity to start a new colony. Swarm removal for some is a public service. Non-beekeepers may fear a swarm or view it as nuisance. Beekeepers, and non-beekeepers alike, see swarms as a curiosity.

Swarms are a great way to start a new colony. They are "free" when not counting your time. Swarms are available in spring when it is a good time to start a new colony. They are "easy" to capture, most of the time. Swarms are great wax producers when hived on foundation.

Swarms are useful to beekeepers as they expand rapidly once the queen returns to her egg laying when drawn comb cells become available, but, like packages, one-half of the adult population will be dead before new adults are produced. Unfortunately the queen may be quickly replaced with the ramp up of brood rearing when hived. The colony from which the swarm has emerged is set back on its spring build up.

What is swarming? Swarming is bee family reproduction. When successful, one colony becomes two or more colonies. It is the passing of genetic material on with creation of a new family. What

we see as the swarm is the adult cluster, 10,000 or so bees that have exited an established nest/hive to cluster at a temporary bivouac site. Swarming is the process of a colony dividing. Swarming takes about two weeks to complete. Our European-bees swarm when conditions are favorable and colonies have expanded but some bee races, such as Carniolan or Africanized bees, swarm earlier and more frequently in their developmental cycle.

Swarming is due to several interrelated factors. At the core, it is initiated by a lack of/failure in distribution of sufficient queen pheromone to the adult population in a colony. It may relate to total size of adult population and/or rearing of drones (or these may be coincidental relationships). Environmental conditions, including abundant nectar/pollen resources, may shut it down. Beekeeper intervention that removes brood and/or adult bees &/or expands the area for brood rearing in the hive or removal of the original queen/developing replacement queen (cells) may halt the behavior.

It is difficult for beekeepers to detect when the bees have started swarming preparations. Our best signal is rearing of queen cells by spring expanding colonies. Swarm queen cells are usually attached to the lower comb margin of the brood sphere; in hives, cells are built between brood boxes. By the time we detect queen rearing we are at a disadvantage as the bees are often well into their swarming preparations. And since it is basic reproductive biology of bees (basic to all living organisms), it is difficult to halt the behavior once it is in progress. We must perform extensive hive manipulations but success in halting swarming is not high.

Swarm capture can be a most pleasant experience or result in one heck of a story. The secret to swarm capture is getting the swarm queen into a collection container so the bees follow her. Second or third swarms from the same colony will often have multiple queens, making them difficult to capture. If the swarm cluster remains for a while at the swarm site they can be uncharacteristically defensive (a dry swarm).

There is some risk associated with swarm capture. The bees in a captured swarm might be carrying “baggage” from their home colony such as mites or possibly disease. For that reason it is best to seek to keep swarm captures away from your established colonies, as much as possible, to evaluate their behavior/brood and to sample them for mite infestation level. With all mites phoretic on the swarm adults, treatment with acids can reduce the mite load of a swarm upon hiving.

While waiting for the first swarms, now is a good time to prepare a checklist of questions to ask when you hear of a swarm. Also assemble your ‘swarm capture kit’ (a good list of what to include in your ‘kit’ is on the SOBA website www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org click on “How to capture a swarm”). If a member, sign up for the swarm capture list at a club meeting.

Let the swarming begin!!

Baiting for Feral Bees

by Rick Olson

For those of you who did not get packages or nucs this spring there are still opportunities to get a hive going. Capturing a feral swarm is fun and the bees are free. We are just starting in to the swarm season so now is the time to prepare your equipment and sharpen your swarm-catching talents.

Often a hive will swarm on the first sunny day after three or more days of rain. Try to set your bait hive out three weeks before swarm season--typically April through the middle of July. A new swarm creates a brood break which is good for Varroa prevention--about 5/6th of the mites are left in the old colony, mostly under capped cells.

You can buy swarm catching boxes, make your own or use available equipment such as a deep or nuc box (cardboard or wood). I use a deep and some attractant that smells like lemon grass--I had great success last year with Swarm Commander but it's expensive, \$29.95/2 oz from Amazon. Place a frame or two of drawn comb in hive and fill the rest with frames with starter strips. Swarm bees have gorged on honey and are ready, willing and able to draw out fresh comb. To prevent wax moths from invading your drawn comb use XenTari BT. This is an organic product composed of *Bacillus thuringiensis* and is approved for organic use by the Organic Materials Review Institute. Spray both sides of your drawn comb with a mixture of 1 tsp XenTari/quart of water.

If you make your own bait box the entrance should be about two square inches and placed near the bottom of the box. Otherwise, the hive entrance should be about 5-6" wide and facing south

Use a solid bottom board and make sure everything is secured with straps, duct tape or wood and screws so that it can all be moved as a unit--you don't want everything sliding apart while you're transporting it to your apiary. . Tom Seeley, of Cornell, has found that the best height for attracting a swarm is about 15 feet. Place in visible but shaded area--avoid direct sun.

To catch feral hives place your bait hive at least three miles from any known beekeepers. Scout bees like a dry location. Make sure to place in a secure location to prevent vandalism--unattended nucs and hive bodies make perfect targets for slingshots and rabbit guns.

Check every three days or so. After a swarm enters the bait hive treat for Varroa mites after three days and leave in place for two weeks so that the virgin queen will mate with a feral drone. This will promote genetic diversity. Spring queens tend to be higher quality--there should be lots of forage and lots of healthy drones at this time.

Move to your apiary in the early morning or evening when all bees are in the hive. You'll need to close the entrance with a screen to keep some ventilation for the bees during the move. I use a battery powered drill and 3/4" screws for buttoning everything up securely.

Inspect for laying pattern. A mated queen will begin laying eggs in about 3 days, a virgin queen in 2-3 weeks. Eggs and capped brood will indicate a mated queen.

Nucs and Packages

Hopefully everyone that ordered nucs and packages got them. I have not heard otherwise. This year we again combined our orders with the Tillamook Beekeepers. Together we ordered 87 nucs, 50 packages, and one queen (for me). The one thing I hate about the process is the early leave time on the morning of pickup. We were to be at both suppliers by 7am in the morning. Why that early? Normally to get back to the coast before the bees overheated. Not a problem this year.

For nuc pickup it was Rick Olson, Becca Fain, and I for Central Coast and for package pickup it was Bob Allen (Tillamook Beekeepers) and I. For the nucs we had three vehicles, two from Tillamook and Becca & Rick for Central Coast.

This year it was wilder at the nuc pickup. We were first in line, but by the time we got loaded the cars and pickups were backed up behind us. It was cold and rainy but that didn't stop the bees from flying. We had bees everywhere. At pickup the boxes didn't appear very bee proof. Plugs were falling out or being pushed out of the entrance. I didn't get stung but know Rick did. Becca was busy counting nucs and I think avoided getting stung. Package pickup was much more civilized than last year. I think it helped that it was a cold morning and they weren't shaking bees into packages just before we arrived. I am overwhelmed by both of the commercial beekeeping operations. It is not at all like the hobby beekeeping I practice. The scale, logistics, and complexity are staggering. Can you imagine two (2) five hundred gallon tanks of sugar syrup?

Please return packages to me and I will get them back to Bob Allen. One of the reasons we get the great package price is because the supplier uses our packages. Don't let your bees starve. Feed them until you are sure they have enough forage (blackberry?). Check both nucs and packages after about two weeks and make sure everything is going well in the colony.

Share your stories and experiences through the newsletter. Anna Russo had a queen cage come loose on one of her packages, probably during transport, and had to dig into the box of bees to find the queen.

Stan Scotton



A Big Thank You to Stan for Planning and Coordinating this Year's Bee Purchases! Where would we be without you?!

FDA alerts consumers of nationwide voluntary recall of EpiPen and EipPen Jr

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is alerting consumers to Meridian Medical Technologies' [voluntary recall](#) of 13 lots of Mylan's EpiPen and EpiPen Jr (epinephrine injection) Auto-Injector products used for emergency treatment of severe allergic reactions. This recall is due to the potential that these devices may contain a defective part that may result in the devices' failure to activate.

If you have purchased an EpiPen after Dec. 16, 2015 click on link below for more information. <https://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm550170.htm>

UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Saturday, April 29th, Lane County Master Gardener Plant Sale – 9 – 4:30 pm – Lane County Fairgrounds, Eugene.

Saturday, May 13th, Florence Garden Club Plant Sale, 9 am-1 pm, Florence Senior Center. The club will be manning a booth to support beekeeping and pollinators.

Saturday, May 20th, Lincoln County Master gardener plant sale, 9 to 2 pm, Newport Fair Grounds. The club will be manning a booth to support beekeeping and pollinators.

Saturday, May 20th – Randy Oliver and Morris Ostrofsky – 10 am to 4 pm at 4565 Riordan Hill Drive, Hood River. Cost is \$60 and registration at bg-bees.com/event/randy-oliver.

May 21st - Beekeeper's Workshop, Ruhl Bee Supply. **Guest Speakers:** Randy Oliver and Carolyn Breece of the OSU Honey Lab. **Cost:** \$60, includes lunch. Call Ruhl or go to their webpage to register.

Wednesday, May 24 - Central Coast Beekeepers at Newport Library from 6:30 pm to 8pm. Carolyn Breece, faculty research assistant at OSU and Program Director of the Oregon Master Beekeepers Association, will present on “Integrated Pest Management”

Wednesday, June 28 - Central Coast Beekeepers at Newport Library from 6:30 pm to 8pm. Ken Ograin, long time beekeeper and Board member of the Oregon Master Beekeepers will join us to discuss “Reading Frames”.

Ohio State University Bee Lab Webinars

The 2017 webinars will be available in March. The 2016 Webinars are posted on their website.

<https://u.osu.edu/beelab/courses/>

Kelly's Beekeeping Website: “Lane County Hiveways”

Follow Kelly as she does her inspections, observations, and other beekeeping activities.

<http://lanecountyhiveways.com/>

This is the official publication of the Central Coast Beekeepers Association (CCBA) for the purposes of informing and educating its membership. Any use of the materials included in this newsletter for other reasons must be approved by the board of CCBA. The information and opinions expressed by the authors in this newsletter are for informational purposes only and are not necessarily endorsed by the Central Coast Beekeepers Association.

To arrange for publication or distribution of this material, please contact the organization through their e-mail account at: www.centralcoastbeekeepers@gmail.com

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