



# CENTRAL COAST BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

January 2018

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NEXT MEETING JANUARY 24TH, 2018

# HAPPY NEW "BEE" YEAR!

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Patti Johnson

The beginning of a new bee year is upon us. I hope that 2018 has started off well for each of you and that you haven't had any colony losses. I am sad to say that I did lose one of my colonies, and unfortunately have spoken to several beekeepers that have had high losses. But on a more positive note, on those warm days when we see bees flying, and especially if they are carrying pollen, we know that brood rearing is happening. In another 4-5 weeks, as the winter solstice passes, brood rearing will be increasing daily.

Here are some January and February tips:

- It is important to be hefting your hives to ensure the bees have enough to eat. If the hive is light, it is low on honey stores. In the winter and early spring, bees will starve if they consume all of their honey reserves or they move to the edge of the hive where they can no longer contact honey frames. If the hive is light, and it is too cold for the bees to fly, feed them fondant, which is a solid source of pure carbohydrate. It is easy to apply on one of those 50 degree days, where the hive cover can quickly be lifted and the candy placed directly on the top of the frames or inner cover. The bees love it!
- The Bee Lab at OSU is recommending that beekeepers use No Cook Fondant as opposed to the traditional process of boiling the mixture as if you were making candy. This is due to the fact that heating the sugar mixture and adding some form of acid, such as lemon juice or vinegar (usually recommended in recipes to help convert the sugar to a substance that bees can more easily digest) can create HMF's which are toxic to bees. They suggest instead that you mix 10 lbs. of cane/drivert/invert sugar with 1 and a half cups of water and kneed with your hands until well mixed. This creates a softer fondant which can then be formed into rounds on wax paper and applied, preferably on one of those 50 degree days where you can quickly lift the hive cover. It is best to place the candy directly on top of the frames to provide the best access for the bees, but you ca also place the fondant on the inner cover or vivaldi board.
- February has historically been the time to do your first Varroa treatment of the year. Monitor hives to ascertain Varroa infestation rates and treat as necessary
- Find and remove dead outs. Go through the equipment from these hives and do a vigorous cleaning. This is also a good time to cull frames that are dark brown, have a lot of drone cells or any comb with signs of disease.
- Determine whether or not you want/need to purchase additional bees to replace lost hives or expand your apiary. The club will be placing their bee order at the end of January for delivery in April/May. It will be very difficult/impossible to increase our order after this so you are encouraged to err on the high side when placing your order as we can always find someone to take extra bees or we can pick up fewer bees that ordered. Remember that it is necessary for you to have a paid club membership for 2018 in order to participate in this significantly discounted opportunity.
- Make periodic checks of your apiary to be sure that the wind and rain haven't dislodged a lid or caused any problems with your hives. Winter storms can be devastating if your apiary is not properly prepared and the dampness that comes along with these storms can

destroy a hive very easily. Check your moisture boxes now and change out any damp materials.

- We still need to keep entrance reducers in. This makes it important to check the entrance and keep it clear of dead bees.

Some of you may have seen some articles about new approaches to Varroa control recently. These approaches are very experimental at this point and need further field testing to determine their potential long term effects on the bees and their honey, but it is exciting to see that the research continues and that help with this bane of beekeepers may be on the horizon. For those interested in reading about lithium chloride which is being touted, a bit prematurely, as the answer to the Varroa problem, the following article has been shared by club member Mark Aiassa. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-017-19137-5.pdf>

**Don't forget that the "Oregon Coast Honey Lovers Festival" will be held** February 17<sup>th</sup> from 10am-4pm at the Yachats Commons on Hwy 101. There will be a suggested Donation of \$5.00. We will have a sign-up sheet at the meeting for those who would like to volunteer for the festival.

The event is shaping up to be a fun time with great speakers that include:

Dr. David Gordon "Enhancing Alternative Pollinators for Orchards and Gardens"

Dr. Andony Melathopoulos "The Oregon Bee Project" (OSU)

Carolyn Breece "To Bee or not to Bee" (OSU)

Darren Morgan "Attracting Pollinators to the Garden" (Shonnard's Nursery)

Fred Selby "The Wonders of Honey" (Shonnard's Nursery)

Penny the Puppeteer: A children's program to teach us all about honey bees

### **And of course, a honey tasting.**

There will be various educational displays and vendors. Our club will have both a display table and a vendor's booth. At the vendor's booth, we will sell various items we will be making at our next meeting, as well as provide club members a place to sell their honey and other products.

This is an excellent opportunity for Apprentices to earn educational points and Journeys to earn volunteer points, but more importantly, educate the general public about the importance of our pollinators, and to make them aware that we really can keep bees on the coast.

And finally, as mentioned above, it is that time again to renew or establish a club membership. The cost of a membership is \$15 for an individual or \$25 for a family. Taking a membership allows us to pay for the expenses of meeting presentations, membership in the Oregon State Beekeepers Association - which provides us with liability insurance, bee research and an annual conference with nationally known researchers and beekeepers – as well as scholarships to participate in the Master Beekeeper program and attend conferences.

Because a few of us have lost colonies, I am including a link that gives a good overview of possible reasons for “Dead Outs”. We hope to talk about this in our February meeting, so if you have lost a colony, try to jot down pertinent information, or better yet, if you have frames that we can look at, or bees we can examine, freeze them to save for discussion.

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/mb/blog/why-did-my-bees-die>

Our next meeting is Wednesday January 24<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm in the Newport Library. We will begin the meetings a half hour earlier in 2018 as the result of our club survey where members stated an interest in starting the meeting a half hour earlier to have more time to socialize.

We will be making pinecone fire starters to sell at the Yachats Coastal Honey Lover’s Festival as well as several other products and comparing notes about how our bees are doing, providing a chance for new beekeepers to ask questions of more experienced bee keepers and some time to think a bit about the year ahead. We look forward to seeing you then!!

## Another Big Federal Grant Initiative on Bee Health

By Dr. Dewey M. Caron

Publicity about the ‘plight’ of honey bees has been a “key” to the opening of federal grant monies for beekeeping research and extension. Coining of the term CCD (Colony Collapse Disorder) in 2006 and Time Magazine’s cover “Plight of the Honeybees,” in 2013 [Time labeled the situation Bee Apocalypse] helped “others” to see the seriousness of our colony loss situation. Funding, such as the CAP grant to 17 Universities, the BIP grant, the Michigan State Integrated Crop Pollination Initiative, the Obama White House Federal Pollination Bee Health Task Force, the Oregon State University Bee Health initiative, among others, have drawn significant “new” funding from diverse sources.

A new Federal grant follows these earlier efforts. Penn State in late 2017 received an Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) grant of \$1 million over 3 years. This grant conducts a stakeholder-driven, integrated systems based project to rigorously simultaneously test the effect of organic, chemical-free and conventional honey bee management practices as

they impact honey bee health. The grant title is "Working Toward Best Management Practices for Organic

Beekeeping: A Side-By-Side Comparison of Management Systems". My former University of Delaware honors student Robyn Underwood, formerly at Kutztown (PA) University, is helping coordinate the project for Penn State Extension specialist Margarita Lopez-Urbe and project co-director Brenna Traver, assistant professor of Biology at Penn State Schuylkill.

Of particular interest, in an initial stakeholder's workshop in mid-November, three participatory groups were established to collect basic information. The first group includes beekeepers that are willing to use any product on the market to maintain healthy parasite-free colonies. This group was initially called conventional, but was re-named to **'Adaptive Beekeeping'** because they are flexible in their decision making. The second group comprised of beekeepers that do not use synthetic pesticides or antibiotics in their hives. They are only using naturally-occurring chemicals, such as formic or oxalic acid to treat pests and mechanical/management methods, and identified themselves as the **'Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Non-Synthetic Management Beekeeping'** group. The third beekeeper group, comprised of beekeepers who are unwilling to apply 'non-bee' derived products to the colony, relying on the bees' natural mechanisms and their genetic stock, only intervening with mechanical techniques when emergencies arise, identified themselves as the **'Holistic Chemical Free Beekeeping'** group. Additional objectives of the study include quantifying pesticide residues in beeswax from colonies in the three management systems, developing a cost-benefit economic assessment of these systems, and establishing a long-term extension program to assist stakeholders who seek to incorporate alternative beekeeping management systems.



## **BEEvent Pollinator Conference**

**Saturday, March 3, 2018**

**Linn County Fair & Expo Center, Albany**

**Cost: \$30**

### **Presentations:**

**Meeting All the Needs of Pollinators—not just flowers.**

How do we help all of them? What research is telling us?

**Mason Bees- The Super Pollinators!**

How to care for them, what they do for us, their life cycle, and the challenges they face.

## Is Your Yard a “Green Desert” to our Native Bees?

Create a sustainable plant community in your yard for our native pollinators that emphasize native plants.

The Linn County Master Gardeners will have cocoons, nest boxes and supplies for Mason Bees and books on related subjects. There will also be door prizes and a raffle with wonderful things to win. For more information and registration:

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/linn/beeevent>

## Residential Beekeeping-A New Law and Recommended Best Practices

Ralph M. Rodia, PhD

OSBA Agricultural Liaison October 26, 2017

In many instances, when a number of individuals have engaged in an activity that might affect others, there will be efforts to regulate or standardize that activity. Those efforts are, sometimes, based on the premise that others need to be protected. An activity, such as beekeeping, which a person may engage in, simply for their own enjoyment and benefit, will become subject to oversight by others. That oversight might simply include volunteer support organizations such as the Oregon State Beekeepers Association and its regional associations. However, there will also be those in government that will want to require specific training, licensing, codes, rules and regulations to ensure the activity does not pose a problem to others in the community.

As beekeeping has progressed, particularly over the last 20 years, to include many residential beekeepers with a few hives, regional beekeeping associations have grown from having fewer than 50 members, to having memberships of 100 to 200 or more, with more residential beekeepers, there are now more interactions between beekeepers, their bees and neighbors. In many cases, not because of anything the beekeeper has or has not done, the beekeeper has faced scrutiny by their neighbors and local governmental officials. Most often, driven by concerns and complaints from fearful or concerned citizens, local governmental agencies have responded with efforts to “protect” others in the community. Such efforts have included a range of actions throughout Oregon as well as the country, as there is no recognized set of guidelines, rules or processes that, if required, can be equably applied to residential beekeeping. Nonetheless, in responding to their constituents, some local governments:

- Through the use of ordinances, have banned beekeeping all together. Interestingly, many of these ordinances; surely not by intent but rather from a lack of



understanding; have also banned the keeping of all other “bees”, including Mason bees. The cities of St. Helens and Junction City have bans.

- Allow residential beekeeping, but only with many restrictions, that might include limits on the number of hives, their locations, the type of hive construction that may be used, hive placement in the apiary, notifications to neighbors and in some cases neighbor approvals, along with a number of other requirements. Cities with restrictions include Gresham and Hubbard, both of which recently adopted new rules to replace those rules that previously banned beekeeping.
- Permit beekeeping but limit only the number of hives to a few. For instance, Salem allows up to 5 hives, and by rule classifies an apiary with more than 5 hives as commercial beekeeping operation which is not allowed in residential areas. Otherwise it applies nuisance rules if there is a problem.
- Some local governments do not specifically address residential beekeeping in their codes but instead will use “nuisance” rules or ordinances to order a correction if a problem with beekeeping arises. The cities of Albany and McMinnville and Molalla now use this approach after their city councils rejected citizen requests to adopt residential beekeeping bans.

It should be noted that some local governments also have requirements that residential beekeepers register each year and pay a licensing fee that is based, in part, on the number of hives. And most recently, the Oregon Department of Agriculture, through legislative directive, now collects a yearly registration fee of 10 dollars plus another 50 cents per hive, if **any** beekeeper has 5 or more hives during the previous “beekeeping” year.

In most cases, when asked by new beekeepers about what local rules and regulations might apply to them, they were advised **not** to ask their local officials. A beekeeper might not like the answer they would receive. Moreover, by asking the question the beekeeper might, stir up a “hornet’s nest” that could result in local officials deciding to adopt specific codes, rules and ordinances which, more likely than not, would set limits on their beekeeping.

So the question is how did we in Oregon and even the country itself, come up with this mishmash of regulations? Why for instance does the following happen? A beekeeper who is allowed to keep bees in one location moves to another location, still within the same postal code, but unfortunately, the new location is also within boundaries of another city which bans beekeeping, and so the beekeeper is then prohibited from keeping bees. Nothing changed as far as the beekeeping practices.

Without scientifically based and widely recognized or established rules or guidelines that have been agreed to, many local governmental agencies came up with their own rules; even if none were (are) necessary. With little or no knowledge of beekeeping and without consultation with beekeepers, some local officials relied on information from other states,

articles and news reports, citizen input (often not in favor of beekeeping) to propose and adopt a wide range of codes, rules and ordinances. Others responded by banning beekeeping all together, over fears about Africanized bees. Still other city officials adopted limitations, because a council member wanted to protect his nephew, who is allergic to bee stings. Previously, that same city had a ban on beekeeping because the city had adopted a rule prohibiting *exotic* species within the city limits and bees were included in that list. Over the last 30 years or so, as towns have grown into cities, city officials in keeping with their urbanization, decided to restrict farming activities within city limits. Since honeybees are often classified as livestock for agricultural purposes, some cities, intentionally or otherwise, also banned beekeeping when they banned livestock.

About 16 years or so ago, as officers of the Willamette Valley Beekeepers Association (WVBA) we were asked to assist a local beekeeper who had been cited and threatened with a fine for having 2 colonies of honeybees in their backyard. Upon reading the City of Salem ordinance it was obvious that it was being misinterpreted and misapplied. We presented our arguments to the enforcement agency and they responded that we would have to appeal to the city council for a variance to the ordinance, in order to keep the hives. This would have been a costly process that the beekeeper did not want to pursue. So they decided to remove the hives. It should be noted, this same issue came up again, a few years later, and combined with a little politics, we pressed the issue and the city council agreed with our arguments and residential beekeeping is now allowed. This was the start of a number of interventions; more than ten; by Harry Vanderpool, myself and others, in the years since. City by city we disputed interpretations, presented counter arguments, offered alternatives and assistance and appeared before many city councils. In nearly every case we convinced the city officials not to adopt specific codes, rules or ordinances, and to withdraw or soften the enforcement of those, already in encoded, that placed unneeded and unnecessary restrictions on residential beekeeping. It soon became evident that responding city by city was time consuming and did not change or reduce the limitations in other cities. It also became evident, that as we researched the literature and other sources, that there was no consensus and **no** scientific basis for most of the rules, codes and recommendations that might relate to ensuring residential beekeeping would not be or become a “nuisance” in the community. Rather, for the most part, the existing codes, rules and guidelines were based on guidelines that beekeepers had developed for themselves and were intended to help beekeepers be more productive and better stewards of their bees. Initially, it was thought, that beekeepers should seek legislative assistance, to set into code, a set of minimum rules for Oregon residential beekeeping that would *supersede* all those of the local governments. At least then, there would be consistency, no bans and everyone, beekeepers and local officials would know what was required.

It became obvious that a set of rules, no matter how carefully crafted, would be restrictive in one way or another and force residential beekeepers into a one-size fits all practice. That would run counter to beekeeping being as much art as it is science and the need to



be able to be flexible and alter practices, as needed, cannot be proscribed. It was also felt, that if this issue was raised with the Oregon legislature, at that time, the legislators might end up adopting statewide laws that would set restrictions that would be worse than those that required us to respond to issues, city by city. We advised the officers of the regional Beekeeping Associations to notify us, at the Oregon State Beekeepers Association (OSBA), if a problem with residential beekeeping arose. The OSBA Agricultural Liaison would then respond and take the lead. This would help ensure a coordinated response. So we sat back and waited for the next request(s) for assistance. A few of them came in and we responded, while some were responded to by others. Unfortunately, not all of the responses, by others, were successful in assisting the beekeepers.

This all began to change, in early 2015, when Oregon Representative Chris Gorsek convened an advisory committee to address residential beekeeping. The committee consisted of representatives from the OSBA, Oregon cities and counties, Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Department of Agriculture and legislative aides. One other participant was Raine Ritalto who, after facing a ban on beekeeping in Gresham, had requested legislative assistance to eliminate the confusion, unneeded restrictions and conflicts that surround residential beekeeping. As a participant, the OSBA initially offered a proposal that the cities and counties are banned from adopting specific rules, codes or ordinances to cover residential beekeeping and that only **nuisance ordinances** are used to regulate and address problems should they arise. The city and county representatives objected to this proposal as they “did not want to be told” what they could or could not do at the local level. However they would appreciate some guidance. After several meetings, the basis for House Bill (HB) 2653 was proposed and after some changes and near unanimous support, it was adopted and became effective January 1, 2016 as Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 602.035 and 602.045. By January 1, 2019 the new statutes required:

- The Oregon State University Extension Service in consultation with the Oregon Department of Agriculture and beekeeping organizations (i.e. the OSBA) shall establish written Best Practices for Residential Beekeeping,
- The Best Practices are to include recommendations that nuisance ordinances be used to manage conflicts that arise from residential beekeeping,
- Local governments will have oversight of residential beekeeping activities,
- The Oregon State University Extension Service with help from the League of Oregon Cities and the Association of Oregon Counties shall disseminate the Best Practices to local governments and make beekeeping information available to them and the general public,
- Local governments shall review local ordinances and determine whether to adopt new ordinances consistent with the Best Practices,
- Local governments may charge a reasonable fee for registering residential bee hives. Note: A new statute in 2017 limits the fee to no more than that charged by the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

In late 2016, a committee consisting of OSBA officers and representatives from several regional OSBA associations, along with Raine Ritalto and a member of the Oregon Department of Agriculture met with Andony Melathopoulos, PhD, from Oregon State University to work on the Best Practices. After an initial draft, considerable additions and reviews over the spring and summer of 2017, the Best Practices are now in the final stages of review and acceptance for issuance as an Oregon State University Extension Service peer reviewed document. The Best Practices focus on those practices that residential beekeepers can use to reduce and eliminate problems that might arise from their beekeeping activities. Many of the recommended best practices will minimize nuisance issues before they arise and they are also good beekeeping practices, that will help establish and maintain productive hives in the residential environment.

It must be emphasized that the Best Practices are **guidelines** only, and are not intended nor should they be considered as hard and fast codes, rules or ordinances that must be followed and enforced. Rather the Best Practices are to be used to foster nuisance free residential beekeeping and also serve as a guide for addressing problems when considering and applying nuisance codes, rules and ordinances by local governmental enforcement agencies. The Best Practices document is very comprehensive and includes sections on:

1. Why residential beekeeping is important,
2. What the Best Practices are and what they are not,
3. What does nuisance free mean?
4. Directing the honeybee's flight path,
5. The need for and the provision of water,
6. Swarm reduction practices,
7. Minimizing defensive behaviors,
8. Stings and allergies,
9. Robbing elimination,
10. Beekeeper education,
11. Hive location considerations,
12. Number of colonies per apiary,
13. Honeybees and skunks,
14. Interactions with neighbors,
15. Registration of hives,
16. Responses to citations,
17. Sources for information and assistance.

When the Best Practices have been printed and distributed, later this year and early next year, we as beekeepers along with the Oregon Master Beekeepers have the expertise to assist other beekeepers and the cities and counties in complying with the new laws. We may be asked to, and in any case, volunteer to aid governmental agencies with their reviews of the Best Practices, their existing codes and rules and any adoptions they

might consider that would relate to residential beekeeping. We will also need to ensure, as much as possible, that every residential beekeeper, both old and new, are provided a copy of and encouraged to follow the Best Practices. It is to our benefit as beekeepers that this is done, so as to avoid the adoption of restrictive and/or punitive codes and rules instead of the preferred use, of the more flexible and reasonable nuisance ordinances, that are applied only when and if a problem arises because a residential beekeeper failed to practice nuisance free beekeeping. To help carry out the outreach activity, as consultants to beekeepers and local governments, the OSBA would like each OSBA regional association to have at least one member who would be designated as the Residential Beekeeping Consultant and who is able to respond to and assist those in their regions. The consultant may be called on and spent a bit of time in this capacity during the initial compliance with the statutes. It is then expected that after the local governments conduct their reviews, and make any code revisions, that the consultants will then be available to help ensure that new beekeepers are aware of the Best Practices and then as requested assist and advise beekeepers and enforcement agencies, if residential beekeeping issues arise. To facilitate this interaction the OSBA will make available and distribute the consultant contact information. In addition the OSBA Agricultural Liaison will continue to coordinate and provide assistance to the regional consultants and to take the lead when and if needed.

The Best Practices and the new Oregon Statutes are, for the most part, unique in this country and it is hoped and we believe that they will stabilize and eliminate the confusion, restrictive rules and bans that some residential beekeepers must contend with. The Best Practices are not only for the OSBA but for all Oregon beekeepers and it is hoped that anyone, who may teach and/or mentor other beekeepers or who may interface with local governments, will also promote the Best Practices.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Oregon Coast Honey Lovers Festival Saturday, February 17, 2018, 10am-4pm Yachats Commons Hwy 101, Yachats**

#### **Speakers:**

***"Attracting Pollinators to your Garden"***,

Darren Morgan, Nursery Manager at Shonnard's

***"The Wonders of Honey"***

Fred Selby, Beekeeping Specialist at Shonnard's.

***"Enhancing Alternative Pollinators for Orchards and Gardens"*** by Dr. David Gordon, Associate Professor of Entomology, emeritus, Pittsburg State University.

***"The Oregon Bee Project"*** by Andony Melathopolus, OSU,

*Oregonians working together to keep our state bee friendly.*

**"To Bee or Not To Bee"**, by Carolyn Breece, OSU

*Is beekeeping for you?*

**'Products of the Hive'** by Becca Fain, Beekeeper and Board member from the Central Coast Beekeepers Association.

Demos and discussion.

There will a children's activity area and puppeteer and also honey tasting. Suggested \$5.00 donation (Fee for honey tasting not yet determined).

**May 20th—Trifecta Beekeeping Event**, Sponsored by Brushy Mountain Bee Farm & BG Bees

**Location:** Hood River, Oregon

**Speakers:** Thomas Seeley, Andony Melathopoulos, Alison McAfee

For more information and registration:

<http://bg-bees.com/seeley-melathopoulos-mcafee>

Register by March 31st for early bird registration discount.

This event may fill up quickly so register early if you plan on attending.

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](mailto:www.centralcoastbeekeepers@gmail.com)

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