



# CENTRAL COAST BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

March 2018

ISSUE NUMBER 24

NEXT MEETING MARCH 28TH, 2018

## President's Message By Patti Johnson

As I am writing this article, I have become aware of how focused I have been on the weather. It has barely been a week into the month and the only thing predictable about the weather, is its unpredictability. Welcome to March!

Now imagine how your bees are feeling. The colonies are trying to ramp up brood rearing but with weather and temperatures fluctuations, the colony struggles to maintain the brood nest, and the limited resources this time of year make it very difficult for colonies to thrive.

But it **is** feeling a bit more like spring. On the warmer days, the bees are bringing in lots of pollen, bumble bees are starting to fly and I have already eliminated two yellow jacket queens.

Even though my bees still have decent honey stores, they are loving fondant and eating more protein patties. Because I lost one colony this winter, I have paid very close attention to my remaining hive. I am changing out the blankets in the moisture box more frequently, ensuring it is well strapped down on blustery days and using the inspection board to help protect the clustered bees from wind gusts when storms are predicted.

I am also looking forward to April. I have much to do to ensure the two packages I have ordered will literally, "have their place in the sun". I have a limited area with good morning sun, and when my current apiary grows from one to three, I need to utilize every inch of it. Always much to do, but I love it. I love the challenge of being a beekeeper but mostly, I love my bees.

Our next meeting is Wednesday March 28<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm in the Newport Library. We will begin the meeting with a half hour to socialize and ask questions about our hives followed by a presentation by Carolyn Breece , Senior Faculty Research Assistant at the Honey Bee Lab at OSU.

She will be reviewing how to install packages followed by a discussion of what to do and watch for as we prepare for the spring management process with our new and overwintered hives.

## February Board and club meeting highlights

CCBA Board Meeting 2/27/2018

Results from the Honey Lovers Festival:

- Club sales of fire starters: \$310
- More product is left for future events.
- Potential donation to the OSU Bee Lab
- Over 500 people attended
- 26 people signed up for the newsletter

Door prize raffle changes: free as a drawing or charge a small amount for tickets?

Announce it at this meeting that a \$1 donation will be requested for two tickets except at the Christmas party. There will be 4-6 prizes per evening.

Mark offered to donate \$100 to be used toward a club banner. We need to choose a logo and banner design. We will track down the designs that were developed last year.

Lifetime memberships:

These were originally implemented for start-up costs but are still available on the website. The question was whether we should continue offering it. The board agreed to do so.

Master a Gardener plant sale is May 19th. Volunteers needed.

National Pollinator Week: June 18-24

OSU is encouraging bee clubs to hold an event.

Forest Service presentation: March 17

Return of the Oregon Silver Spot Butterfly at the Cape Perpetua Visitors Center

Treasurer's report:

Stan wants to pass the job to Gaelyn. She has accepted. Current signees on the account are Stan, Rick and Becca. The account is at the Oregon State Credit Union.

Stan Scotton's name will be taken off. Gaelyn Matthew's name will be added. Rick Olson and Rebecca Fain will continue as signees.

Meeting topics:

March: hiving packages and nucs, including feeding, treatment and marking queens  
Patti will find someone to present this.

We need to have Mike Rodi come to talk about Oregon State Residential Best Practices for Beekeeping and nuisance ordinances.

CCBA Member Meeting 2/27/2018

Becca gave a report on the Yachats Honey Lovers Festival. The club made \$310 which is earmarked as a donation to the OSU Bee Lab at the next Oregon State Beekeepers Association annual conference .

Anne discussed the idea of coordinating with OSU's Master Beekeeping Program to provide some support for journey level beekeepers.

Presentation Topic: Why Did My Bees Die?

Max Kuhn:

Primary reasons for hive deaths:

1. Varroa mites: directly or indirectly from viruses and other diseases
2. Moisture in the hive: cold plus moisture (high humidity, rain, fog) can result in a hypothermic hive
3. Beekeeper error: over-medication, queen injury or loss
4. Starvation: bees can starve even when capped honey is available if it is too cold for them to get to it.

A moisture quilt is used at the top of the hive to absorb moisture that condenses from the cover during cold weather. This should be checked during wet weather and, if damp, replaced with dry material.

Pat brought in a frame with several queen cells to have assessed. She thinks the hive was trying to supersede the queen and eventually left, either as a late season swarm or to die away from the hive.

Max brought in a nuc that failed for club members to examine.

Questions:

What should he have done differently? He said his first error was probably going into winter with too weak a hive.

Why do bees starve when there is honey in the hive? The cluster will not move off the brood when it is too cold and are actually unable to move if their hive environment is in the 40's or less.

What is your rule of thumb as to how many frames indicate a hive that is strong enough to make it through the winter? 4 1/2 minimum.

Rick Olsen:

Hive deaths:

1. Too weak going into winter.
2. Starvation: blocked entrance which makes it hard for bees to get out and forage.

Fondant used to be recommended but now heating the syrup is discouraged due to HMF (hydroxymethylfurfural). Now they recommend granulated sugar and water (10# sugar to 1 1/2 cup sugar). Others simply put in dry sugar.

Note: HMF >40mg/kg indicates that the honey has been heated.

Protein patties can be used to supplement pollen stores.

Old frames of honey from your own hives can also be utilized.

3. Treatments: these are double-edged...they help with pests and pathogens but can damage the queen and brood.
4. Yellow jackets can decimate a hive.
5. Pesticides and herbicides that might be used in the area.
6. Pests and pathogens

Analyzing the hives:

Watch the entrance.

Check for abnormal odors.

Keep the surrounding area mowed so that a dropped queen can be found.

Knock the uncapped nectar out before storing comb. It can ferment and will then be poisonous to the bees.

Frames to be stored should be frozen for 48 hours to kill any wax moth eggs.

If frames are going to be stored in plastic, let them dry out completely after freezing to prevent moisture getting trapped.

Paramoth crystals (or any chemicals) should not be put into plastic bags that are storing frames. If you do use Paramoth, the boxes and frames should be aired out for at least two weeks before use.

Honey Bee Health Coalition has a good document about treatments which can be found on the club website.

The meeting then broke up so that members had a chance to look at the frames in Max's nuc.

## PNW SURVEY OF BEE HEALTH & BEEKEEPING PRACTICES SURVIVORSHIP SURVEY

by Dr. Dewey M. Caron

Last year, 334 Oregon/Washington backyarder beekeepers returned April surveys on overwintering colony losses/ survivorship, and management such as colony feeding, sanitation and Varroa sampling control. The results are posted on website:

[www.pnwhoneybeesurvey.com/](http://www.pnwhoneybeesurvey.com/). There is a report (see individual club reports by expanding black bar sideways) for Central Coast. I very much appreciate the responses from CCBA Beekeepers last year; however it would be wonderful if all CCBA members would respond this year.

Colony loss levels from all 282 OR respondents were 44% for 8-frame and 48% for 10-frame Langstroth hive beekeepers, 57% for 5-frame nucs. 64% for top bar hives and 55% for Warré hives.

Oregon losses last year were up from the year before and several beekeepers lost all their hives and it appears that we may see the same trend when we look at data from this past winters overwintering survival.

For the most recent overwintering period (2017-2018), the electronic survey is now open and will be until end of April. It should take no more than 5-7 minutes to complete. Information requested this year is very similar to previous years but I have trimmed the survey so it is shorter with fewer questions.

While the main emphasis of the survey revolves around reporting how many colonies you had last fall compared to this spring, which we assess through hive location, hive types and originations (meaning were they overwintered colonies, nucs or packages purchased, swarms or splits), other survey questions relate to some of the basic managements you might do for varroa control. There is no “magic bullet” to achieve a reduced mite number. The report shows some things that worked for some individuals. Feeding dry sugar and some basic sanitation and providing colonies a distinct address helped some individuals keep losses lower. Monitoring for mites and use of some controls also resulted in lower losses.

THANK YOU FOR SHARING THIS PAST SEASON. Please consider completing a survey for the 2017-2018 season.

Click on link below to take survey. Open now until April 30th .

<http://pnwhoneybeesurvey.com/survey/>

## SPRING Hive Management Tips

1. March is the month to treat your bees if you haven't already. Be sure and check for mites. Count your mites and see if you need to do a treatment. Pick a time that is relatively warm (about 55 degrees) and quickly apply your medications.
2. Bees will be increasing their buildup during this month. Make sure that adequate stores are in place. Don't count on any early spring honey flow since the bees often cannot fly due to poor weather. A hive should never have less than 15 pounds of honey or stores. This is about five western frames or three deep frames of solid honey.
3. You can feed your bees at this time since it is beginning to warm enough that they can handle nectar or syrup. A mixture of one part sugar to two parts water fed to the bees at this time will stimulate increased brood rearing and help your hives survive the winter and build up in the months to come. Be careful of swarming when you stimulate your hives this way. Also, remember that feeding stimulating syrup will increase brood rearing and subsequent need for stores. Watch such hives carefully.
4. Entrance reducers can probably be removed at this time. You might want to clean the bottom board of any debris or dead bees and make sure that it is dry.

5. If weather permits, it is advisable to even up or balance your hives. This means that those hives that are overflowing with bees and brood should have some brood removed. These removed bees and brood should be given to hives that are weak to boost their strength. **MAKE SURE THAT YOU DO NOT TAKE THE QUEEN FROM THE STRONG HIVE ALONG WITH THE TRANSFERRED FRAMES.** Don't take more than 20 % of the bees and brood from the strong hive. \*Note: This is not recommended for 1st year beekeepers.
6. Also, if your hives are bursting at the seams, you can reverse your brood boxes. Usually, the lower box will be empty of brood. Take this empty box and place it on top of the second box. The second box, with all its brood, bees and queen will become the bottom or first box as a result. The queen will then move up into the new, and now empty, second box
7. Watch out for swarm cells as the month progresses and moves into early April. Swarm cells look like peanuts that have not been shelled and are placed at the edges of the frames (usually). Various swarm control techniques can be used, including splitting your hives. Splitting simply involves dividing the brood and boxes in the strong hive and starting a new hive. In the queenless half of these two hives, you may let the bees raise a new queen. Make sure that queenless half has eggs from which to raise this queen. This process will take about four weeks. You can also order a queen for the queenless half from a queen breeder.
8. If a hive is very weak, queenless and not worth saving, unite it with another hive that needs a boost. Place a newspaper between the two hives and let the bees chew the obstruction away. They will unite peacefully.
9. Think about re-queening any hives that are chronically weak or unproductive. A new and healthy queen will help the buildup and now is the time to order that queen. Look for disease resistance and hygienic queens
10. Watch out for yellow jacket queens and use pheromone traps for them. Any queens you capture in the spring will greatly reduce the problems with yellow jackets in the late summer and fall.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### **April 7<sup>th</sup> - 2018 Southern Oregon Beekeepers Association Bee School**

Guest speakers include Morris Ostrofsky and Jim Smith. Topics to be covered include: Beginning beekeeping equipment, feeding your bees, installing package/nucs, hands-on hive inspections, "Mite Keeping 101", and "reading" your hives throughout the year..

**Date:** Saturday, April 7th...9:00 - 4:30 pm.

**Location:** Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center, 569 Hanley Road, Central Point, OR

**Fee:** \$45.00

After lunch we will be doing hive inspections. If you wish to participate, please bring protective gear. During the lunch hour we also plan to do a "smoker contest". If you have any questions, feel free to contact anyone on the SOBA website for more info...

Shastina Millworks will be on hand to take orders for beekeeping equipment.

<https://www.google.com/search?q=shastina+beekeeping&oq=shastina+beekeeping&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i64l2.12833j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

## **April 20 to 21st - 2018 Glory Bee Weekend**

Two day community event with beekeeping education, distribution of preordered packages of live bees, live demonstrations, honey sampling, onsite food vendors and other activities. <https://glorybee.com/content/bee-weekend-2018>

## **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.

## **June 16<sup>th</sup> - Seal Rock Garden Club flower show and plant sale**

**Sept 15th - Tom Seeley Event Location: TBD somewhere in the Portland area Cost: Early Bird by Aug. 15th \$40, after the 15th \$50 Sponsored by: Portland Urban Beekeepers Assoc. For more information: <https://portlandurbanbeekeepers.org/seeley2018/>**

**APIMONDIA 2019 congress which will take place in Montréal from September 8 to 12, 2019 [www.apimondia2019.com](http://www.apimondia2019.com).**

## **October 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> Oregon State Beekeepers Association annual conference at the Salem convention center.**

Mark your calendar now and more information will be coming once the agenda for the conference is finalized. Several club members have attended over the past few years and have found the presentations and networking to be very valuable.

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