



CENTRAL COAST BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

May 2022

Issue number 70

NEXT MEETING May 25, 2022

This Month: Change in meeting location

The Newport Library is having repair work done, replacing windows and dry rot on the west side of the building effecting the meeting room. We will meet this month at the **Newport Senior Center located at 20 SE 2nd Street**. The Center is located on the east side of 101, across from the Goodwill Store. There is parking in the City lot behind City Hall. The computer/meeting room is downstairs and there is elevator access. **The Board Meeting is at 1 pm and the general meeting is at 2 pm.**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Pat Wackford

After missing the last meeting in March, I am very much looking forward to our upcoming meeting this month. I am finally released by my doctor and physical

therapist. I have been able to do light beekeeping that is feeding sugar syrup and treating for Varroa mites. I was able to rotate supers on my small hive putting the empty medium bottom box to the top position. The next dry day with warm temperatures, I will be out in the bee yard with the other two hives.

Prior to the general club meeting a Board Meeting will be held. We will discuss how things are going with the Club so far and deciding what plans we would like to make for the rest of the year. This meeting will be held at the Senior Center at 1:00PM down stairs in the computer/meeting room.

The general meeting will begin at 2:00 pm. Rick Olson will talk about his experience raising queens and some of the tools he uses. We will also have discussion about Varroa mite testing and treatments available. Also, we would like to hear if members have had any swarms this year and if they were successful in catching them. Look forward to seeing you on May 25th.



“Save the Bees” - What You Can Do

by Dr. Dewey Caron

Dr. Marla Spivek in the October American Bee Journal, discussed some examples of “double-edged swords” beekeepers are facing. One was the conundrum of individuals starting beekeeping to save the bees, but then they don’t properly care for their bees. New beekeepers don’t initially know how to care for their bees, but also some individuals starting a bee hive have the mistaken belief that by not treating or feeding colonies, their bees will be hardy and can build up resistance to mites/diseases. They didn’t really want to keep bees, just save them.

Are honey bees going extinct? The short answer is no. Honey bees are not going extinct. In fact, the total number of bee colonies is growing in the U.S. fueled by the demand for colonies to pollinate almonds. Colonies are not healthy, but the actual number of colonies are increasing. Colony losses each year, however, can be extensive without a proactive mite management plan.

The “Save the Bees” message gets mixed because of simple confusion between the words honey bee and bee and pollinators. The honey bee is one of over approximately 400 bee species in Oregon. It is true that populations of some of our Oregon native bees are disappearing or are in danger of extinction. The suitable habitat for their nesting and the disappearing of flowering plants are major reasons for this. Especially critical are some of the bumble bee species.

Annual colony losses are too high. Honey bees have suffered high annual colony losses now for several years. The majority of losses are caused by high varroa mite numbers. Varroa causes the syndrome we call Parasitic Mite Syndrome (PMS). The mites transmit/enhance viruses which may reach epidemic levels. Additionally, each spring, colony losses might be due to starvation or freezing due to too small a population. Both starvation and small size are often indirectly due to varroa mites.

Full-sized colonies die, but especially vulnerable are new splits or feral hive transfers. We lose more package and nuc established colonies during the winter than we do previously overwintered colonies. Often it's double the losses of previously overwintered colonies. I have documented this in the Annual Oregon Colony Loss Survey conducted each March/April, www.pnwhoneybeesurvey.com/survey.

Winter is also a critical time for unmanaged or feral colonies that inhabit tree hollows, building hollows or other sites. Only one in five will survive their first winter. Although mites might be involved new colonies and unmanaged feral colonies often fail to store enough resources to survive.

How to “Save the Bees” - So if individuals want to “Save the Bees” what is the best thing someone can do to help honey bees? One way is becoming a dedicated beekeeper, properly taking care of the bees. This means feeding, controlling swarming, timely adding of extra brood and honey storage space and then the most important thing, committing to controlling varroa mites so the colony might avoid a viral epidemic. Short of becoming a beekeeper, planting flowers that bloom throughout the season will also help save our native bees and provide honey bees with their critical flower resource. Plant and take care of the new plantings, including watering them, so bloom extends through the season, including during drought conditions. If an individual lacks suitable space, then investigate planting in the community to help the bees and pollinators or supporting such programs. Allowing lawns, slopes, vacant and public areas to grow weeds such as clover and dandelion will also help the bees. In addition to planting flowers, providing suitable habitat for bee nesting will be helpful. The use of less harmful pesticides can be of great assistance in “Saving the Bees”.

Educating neighbors and consumers about the importance of pollination and the positive ecosystem service honey bees, native bees and pollinators provide is also helpful. Planting flowers, preserving habitat and reducing pesticide usage will directly help honey bees. “Saving the Bees” is in all of our interests. It is never too late to start.



Assessing Repeated Oxalic Acid Vaporization in Honey Bee (Hymenoptera: Apidae) Colonies for Control of the Ectoparasitic Mite *Varroa destructor*

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Abstract

The American beekeeping industry continually experiences colony mortality with annual losses as high as 43%. A leading cause of this is the exotic, ectoparasitic mite, *Varroa destructor* Anderson & Trueman (Mesostigmata: Varroidae). Integrated Pest Management (IPM) options are used to keep mite populations from reaching lethal levels, however, due to resistance and/or the lack of suitable treatment options, novel controls for reducing mites are warranted. Oxalic acid for controlling *V. destructor* has become a popular treatment regimen among commercial and backyard beekeepers. Applying vaporized oxalic acid inside a honey bee hive is a legal application method in the U.S., and results in the death of exposed mites. However, if mites are in the reproductive stage and therefore under the protective wax capping, oxalic acid is ineffective. One popular method of applying oxalic is vaporizing multiple times over several weeks to try and circumvent the problem of mites hiding in brood cells. By comparing against control colonies, we tested oxalic acid vaporization in colonies treated with seven applications separated by 5 d (35 d total). We tested in apiaries in Georgia and Alabama during 2019 and 2020, totaling 99 colonies. We found that adult honey bees Linnaeus (Hymenoptera: Apidae), and developing brood experienced no adverse impacts from the oxalic vaporization regime. However, we did not find evidence that frequent periodic application of oxalic during brood-rearing periods is capable of bringing *V. destructor* populations below treatment thresholds.

Maybe We Should Try This Here

Morgan Morrison PhD researcher, pollinator ecology, conservation and disease ecology, Royal Holloway University of London
Hannah Wolmuth-Gordon PhD researcher in the epidemiology of bumblebee disease, Royal Holloway University of London

Hundreds of miles of bee highways are being created across the UK to halt the drastic decline in the insects' population.

The public is currently being encouraged to leave their lawns untouched for a month, to help provide more habitats for insects as part of No Mow May.

In the UK, there are hundreds of species of bee, as well as thousands of other pollinating insects, such as butterflies, moths, bats and birds. However, 40% of them are at risk of becoming extinct.

Crucially these species help provide the food we eat, the flowers we see and the vast biodiversity on the planet. Bees transfer pollen between plants, which is needed for crops to grow and produce food. Therefore, a decline in the number of bees is alarming. This rapid drop in bee numbers is due to several factors including the loss and fragmentation of habitats, particularly wildflower patches. Large areas of wild meadows have been turned over to crops, reducing the availability of the wildflowers and plants that bees need for food. In addition, large areas of open land have been used to build houses as towns and cities expand.

The B-Lines project plans to help tackle this by connecting existing wildflower areas together. This makes it easier for bees and other pollinators to travel through our cities, towns and countryside. Bees can become being isolated and unable to fly if there are no plants they can get food from.

To create this large network, the project used maps to identify wildflower-rich areas, such as grasslands and heathland. A combination of computer modelling and local conservationists, landowners, stakeholders and local authorities were used to identify places with and without bee-friendly areas.

The highways are about 3km wide and connect wildflower areas together by creating and restoring wildflower-rich patches. Wildflower seeds are planted and growth is encouraged by restricting mowing. The highways are needed because bees have a limited flight capacity to find food, so patches need to be close together for the bees to reach them. Think of these patches as stepping stones, shortening the distance between the richest wildflower areas, so pollinators do not have to travel as far to find food. Councils are encouraging the public to get involved, by providing free wildflower seeds, and campaigning to stop the public mowing their lawns. Wildflower meadows are also being planted in parks and alongside roads.

The project has already restored and created 1,500 hectares of wildflower habitat around the UK. The long-term goal of the project is to create 150,000 hectares of new wildflower areas out of habitats less suited to bees. When a group or individual creates or restores a new wildflower patch, they are encouraged to add the patch to the B-Lines map to help track the progress of the project. The network map is publicly available and the public can look at where their nearest wildflower patch is.



Club Info

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