



# CENTRAL COAST BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

April 2016

ISSUE NUMBER 2

NEXT MEETING APRIL 27, 2016

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Co-Presidents Nancy McDowell and Anne Schatz

Hello All!

Spring is finally here! How are your bees doing? Bring your triumphant rejoices and/or tales of woe to the next meeting when we discuss how overwintering went. It will be a great time to solve perplexing mysteries and share lessons learned. If you're getting your first bees this year, this discussion will give you a better idea of what winter brings and how best to prepare for it. Beekeeping on the coast, in the river valleys, and in the Coast Range is different and those differences are most profound during winter. Let's learn from each other's experiences.

The club will have a booth at the Master Gardener Plant Sale and Garden Fair on May 21<sup>st</sup> at the Fairgrounds in Newport. It will be a great chance to talk to the gardening public about how best to support bees and, of course, get great deals on plants! Outreach events are also a fun way to get to know other club members. Stay tuned for shift sign-ups.

Club packages and nucs have arrived and are hopefully doing well in your apiary! If you have any questions about what they are doing and what you should do next, take advantage of the expertise of club members and take some time before or after the next meeting to consult

There are always new things popping up on the website ([ccbaor.org](http://ccbaor.org)) so stop in often! Swarm season will soon be upon us, so if you'd like to be on the swarm list, send a note to the club email account. If you're new to swarms, tag along with an experienced person and see how it's done.

Have an idea for the newsletter? The deadline to submit an article is one week after the meeting. Contact Becca for more information and guidance. We'll be doing an email vote to choose our newsletter name so keep an eye out for that.

Calling all creative folks! We need a logo! Start kicking ideas around. We need something simple and easy to reproduce. Then we can get shirts, hats, mugs, and all manner of merchandise and you'll never have to worry about what to get next time you need a gift! But that bounty starts with a logo, so please help.

Lastly, the Central Coast Beekeepers Association is now a proud chapter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association! Check out the OSBA website ([orsba.org](http://orsba.org)) to see our name in lights!

See you at the next meeting!

**NEXT MEETING OF THE CENTRAL COAST BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION WILL BE APRIL 27<sup>th</sup>  
from 6:30 pm till 8pm at the NEWPORT LIBRARY at 35 NW NYE STREET**

## First Looks - Excitement and Anticipation

By Rick Olson

Spring is starting to peak through the rain in two or three day windows so I'm beginning detailed hive inspections--the next month or so will be the hardest time for our bees especially here on the Oregon coast with its unpredictable and harsh weather conditions.

I had three of my weaker hives die off last week. This was not unexpected though I tried to nourish them back to health with fondant and protein patties to no avail. Any dead outs should be analyzed for symptoms--starvation, varroa, foulbrood, nozema. Remove these colonies and salvage what you can for future use discarding any diseased infected equipment. Rule of thumb: Get rid of 20% of your frames each year--usually the old, dark, uneven, sagging comb--old wax will absorb medications, insecticides, etc.

Our coastal weather limits when you can open up the hives but a lot can be learned by watching the bees as they become active on warm days. My stronger hives are exhibiting normal behavior--pollen coming in, guard bees on duty, undertaker bees removing the dead, new bees making orientation flights, with good flight strength and temperament.

This is a good time to heft the hives from the back to ascertain food stores. Look for external signs of disease such as nozema stains on the front of the hive. Struggling or dead bees on the ground in front of the hive may be a sign of deformed wing virus (DWV). Other signs of trouble may be hive robbing, yellow jackets or other varmints like mice or raccoons.

It can take up to 24 hours for the bees to recover from a full inspection so I like to wait for at least three days of sunny weather before I go into the hive. Check for moisture on the interior of the cover. This indicates the ventilation situation of the hive. Remember it's not the cold that kills the bees but the moisture.



Note the strength of the hive and the brood pattern. Is there a laying queen with eggs, larva and capped brood? How many frames of capped brood are there? My strong hives had 3-4 frames of capped brood two weeks ago. When I check them again next week I hope to have enough brood frames to replace my dead outs.

I've seen several drones in each of my hives--a good indication of health in preparation for possible swarming later in the year. Anticipate hive build up and prepare accordingly.

Make sure there is a single egg centered at the bottom of each open brood cell. Non-centered or multiple eggs in a single cell can indicate a laying worker. If there is spotty drone comb only it indicates a drone laying queen. A weaker colony, worth saving, can be united with a stronger one. If too weak (drone layer or laying worker or disease) then discard.

Look closely for any signs of disease. Are there any odors? Are there non-centered holes in the brood cappings or frass on the sides of cells? This is an indication of Varroa. Treat accordingly.

Are there dead bees on the bottom board or head first in cells? These are symptoms of starvation.



Even though there are ample honey stores on this frame this hive starved--a weak queen, disease, or possibly spring dwindling where older bees die faster than they are replaced.

My hives are a little low on honey stores so I've begun feeding syrup in addition to the fondant. Some hives are taking it, some aren't. They need 15-20 pounds of honey (3-4 deep frames or 5 western frames of honey) to make it to the honey flow. You can help them along with a 1:1 syrup mixture if the temperatures are consistently above 50 degrees. If not continue feeding fondant. A protein supplement may be used as well. Feeding will stimulate brood rearing and help them through the winter. As the hive builds up watch them closely as they will need even more stores especially if the weather doesn't cooperate.

A couple of my hives had empty bottom brood boxes so I reversed them with the upper brood boxes. Other activities may include centering brood frames, combine weak colonies, re-queening, split strong hives, balance brood frames between hives, switch position of a weak hive with a strong hive to balance the field force in each. Add grease patties to control tracheal mites.

I'm cleaning all my screened bottom boards to get the best results using sticky boards--this may not be the most accurate method but it is non-intrusive and gives an indication of mite trends and treatment results. I had extreme mite counts last year so I've been using them every week or two and graphing the results in Excel.

Inspections and management during the next few critical weeks will insure a successful year of beekeeping. Good luck and may the field force be with you.

*Rick is a 6 year Beekeeper working on Journey Level Master Beekeeper and club Vice President*

## **This Beekeeper's Journey: Lesson #1**

By Mary Ellen Townsend



Let me introduce myself. I am a first year beekeeper. I am also stubborn.

Mites. Oh yes, I know, I hear it over and over again. PAY ATTENTION, Do Your Counts! TREAT ASSERTIVELY.

"Not my hive", I thought. I believe in Mother Nature, the Balance of Things, and the Natural Order. I did the minimum. Maybe 5 sticky board counts, maybe 5 sugar/oregano/thyme shakes.

And now it is March. It died. And I saw other sick or dead hives at OSU apiary. All but one of the "Dead-outs" had mite related Nosema, European Foulbrood, Sacbrood, Deformed Wing. I saw such heavy mite infestation that the heads were chewed off the larvae.

Coming home I pondered all of this. WE are responsible for this gross imbalance...

BUT. I believe in humans. We are curious and we do care about our planet. And we will find a way to correct our mistake. It is just part of our learning. About Stewardship--Stewardship of the Planet!

SO. I start again. 2 hives this time, and regular, accurate mite testing. And treatment. Let's get this sucker figured out!

*Mary Ellen is the club Treasurer, a Master Gardener and a second year beekeeper working on her Journey level with Master Beekeepers.*

## Pollinator Plant Profile-*Borago officinalis*

By Anne Schatz

Borage is an annual Mediterranean-originating herb that flowers continually until late fall/early winter from a single planting. So plant now! Borage grows to 3 feet tall and 2 feet wide, likes full sun and some summer water. Good soil is nice, but not necessary. It has an indeterminate growth habit and can sprawl a bit, so it probably isn't the best for showy border plantings. Multiple plantings can keep it more upright.

Fall seeded (or self-seeded) overwintered plants start producing multiple blue flowers (there are white forms, too) on the coast in late March to early April, giving a long season of bloom, including the important early and late periods. The flowers are shallow and accessible to diverse pollinator species. Adding to this, borage replenishes its nectar every 45 minutes, so each flower is worth about five other nectar providers. To pollinators, one bed of borage is worth a much larger bed of



succession blooms! Because of its popularity with pollinators and long bloom season, it's a great way to observe the succession of solitary bees through the summer. It also attracts large numbers of bumble bees, honey bees, and other pollinators. Watch for bees carrying borage's unusual blue-gray pollen.

Gardeners also love borage. It's a dynamic accumulator (a deep rooted plant that accumulates large amounts of nutrients effectively) that concentrates potassium and silicon. This could be why it's considered a good companion plant, because those deep roots help break up compacted soil and silicon improves the stress tolerance of many plants, to include drought and pest stress, and increases resistance to fungal attack. Gardeners also love that borage attracts beneficial insects, including braconid wasps and tachinid flies that predate flea beetles in the larval stage and are both pollinators as adults. It is also considered a good green manure plant because it produces large amounts of biomass, both above and below the soil. Consider it for planting in fallow areas or anywhere your soil could use a boost.

Many people enjoy the cucumber-flavored leaves in soups, salads, beverages and cocktails. The beautiful edible flowers really dress up a salad or ice cubes for festive summer drinks.

The leaves have a high levels of Vitamin C and Vitamin A with good amounts of potassium, iron, and magnesium. Although people have eaten borage for centuries, there are concerns that borage plant parts, particularly concentrated parts such as borage oil, contain a substance toxic to the liver. Please do your own research.

Of all the pollinator plants I put in last year this was, hands down, the best. The pollinators consistently chose it over other pollinator favorites and I loved the long bloom and way the bees worked it from morning to evening. Each evening I would find bumble bees sleeping peacefully among the blooms. Beautiful. What a wonderful way to end a long summer day!

*Anne is a Master Gardener, a second year beekeeper working on her Journey Level in the Master Beekeeper program, and Club Co-President*

---

## PLEASE DO YOUR SURVEYS!!!

### REMINDER: PNW Survey of Bee Health and Beekeeping Practices

[www.pnwhoneybeesurvey.com/annual-surveys](http://www.pnwhoneybeesurvey.com/annual-surveys)

### BeeInformed National Colony Loss and Management Survey (2015-2016)

[www.beeinformed.org](http://www.beeinformed.org)

In last month's Newsletter we published an article by Dewey Caron related to these important studies. These studies produce important data that we can utilize to help improve the survivability of our bee colonies so it is essential that everyone, who had bee's at the end of summer last year, needs to take 5-10 minutes between now and the end of the month to complete the surveys. Just click on the link and get it done today! The results of these studies will be posted on the following web site:

[www.pnwhoneybeesurvey.com/annual-surveys](http://www.pnwhoneybeesurvey.com/annual-surveys)

## Panther Creek Colony Rescue

by Stan Scotton



So it is a sunny day in north Lincoln County. The day I had arranged to meet a gentleman who has called me numerous times about bees. I got him to buy "The Beekeepers Handbook" but that brought on even more questions and telephone conversations. He says he gets a lot of swarms and wants to know if I want them. Absolutely, I say, just call me and I will come and pick them up. His next call is about an existing colony the property owners don't want. From the conversation I gather the wooden ware is pretty rotted with holes in the supers patched with mud and grass. I am confident from the conversation they are honey bees but not much more.

We meet at about eleven o'clock in the morning at the site. Attending was the gentleman who calls me, the guy cleaning up the yard, Anna Russo (CCBA Member and OMB participant), and myself. I was totally unprepared for what we found. I have never seen nor did I ever think bees would have a colony in such a rotted, wet, slug infested, pile of wooden ware and frames sitting on the very wet ground. The bees were flying and bringing in pollen so we went to work. The bees were actually going and coming through a rotted hole between the two supers. It didn't appear to be that many bees (may be a frame or two at most) so Anna and I opted for putting them in a five frame nuc box.

As we were taking the hive apart we went through five frames before we had one that didn't come apart as we tried to lift them out. After about five frames we found some capped brood and some uncapped larvae. Signs of a laying queen, at least three days ago anyway. Next frame we found the queen crawling around a relatively dry frame with some open cells and some capped brood. I didn't bring a queen catcher and I am still not confident enough to just reach out and grab her so we opted for shaking her into the nuc. We then shook the remaining bees from the comb into the box and set the nuc box so the opening was just above where the colony was used to coming and going. We watched the activity and left thinking we might be successful. My wife and I went back and picked them up just before dark. We moved them to their new home in Lincoln City. The next morning I removed the screen from the entrance and started feeding sugar syrup. They were reorienting and I hope glad to be dry when I last checked.

*Stan is a club Board member, an experienced beekeeper and is in the Master Beekeeper Program working on his Journey Level*

## UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

April 19<sup>th</sup> – Lane County Beekeepers – Trinity United Methodist Church, 440 Maxwell Rd., Eugene

6:15pm-7pm - Early Session on Swarms by Pat Waters; 7pm – 8:30pm - main presentation on Know Nucs/Queen Introduction by Morris Ostrofsky

April 20<sup>th</sup> – Linn/Benton Beekeepers – Corvallis Waldorf School at intersection of Conifer Blvd & Hwy 20

6:30pm – 8:30pm - Yellow Jackets and Roundtable by Dan Scollard

May 21<sup>st</sup> – Lincoln County Master Gardener Plant Sale – Fairgrounds in Newport

This will be a great place to get some plant starts for your bees and we will have a booth here so you can sign up to promote the club and beekeeping while working in the booth and get some great plants at the same time!

August 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> – Lincoln County Fair – Fairgrounds in Newport

We will have a booth at the fair to promote beekeeping and hope several of you will be willing to assist us in manning the booth.

August 20<sup>th</sup> – Oregon Honey Festival – Ashland, Oregon

There will be all types of honey delights as well as a major honey judging

October 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> – Oregon State Beekeepers Association Fall Conference

## The Oregon Gardens, Silverton, Oregon

This is a wonderful event where there are exhibitors from around the state, great speakers and a chance to connect with some of the leading names in beekeeping. This year some of the speakers include: Ramesh Sagili from OSU; Tom Seeley from Cornell; Elina Nino from UC Davis; Judy Wu-Smart from the University of Minnesota and David Miska from Miska Honey Farms.

Rooms fill up fast at the Oregon Gardens for this event so if you want to stay at the conference rate watch for the announcement of the opening of registration for this conference in the newsletter this summer and sign up asap!



**Special Thanks to Stan Scotton and the folks at the Tillamook Beekeepers Association for inviting the Central Coast Club to their Bee Day and for assisting us in getting great access to packages and nucs.**

Those club members who attended the Bee Day in Tillamook found it very informative and a great way to jump start their experience as beekeepers. Getting the opportunity to hear Dewey Caron speak and having some hands on stations provided the perfect day ( They also raved about the excellent lunch that was provided). Additionally, through a partnership that Stan developed through his relationships at the Tillamook club we were able to get access to both nucs and packages this year at the perfect time to take advantage of some unusually excellent weather . Not only do some of our new beekeepers now have some hives to enjoy, but some of our more experienced members were able quickly overcome winter losses and get new hives ready for the honey flow!

**THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU !!!**



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)

Rebecca Fain – Newsletter Editor

Board members of the organization, identified below, can also be reached at this address CCBA BOARD –

2016 Co-President – Nancy McDowell

Co- President – Anne Schatz

Vice President – Rick Olson

Past President – Dan Speers

Treasurer – Mary Ellen Townsend

Secretary – Rebecca Fain

At Large – Max Kuhn

At Large – Neill Crawford

At Large – Stan Scotton