



# CENTRAL COAST BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

## August 2016

ISSUE NUMBER 6

NEXT MEETING AUGUST 24, 2016

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Co-Presidents Nancy McDowell and Anne Schatz

Hello Bee Enthusiasts! Summer is flying by and forage is getting slim. How are your bees doing? If you find yourself with enough honey to harvest (many in Oregon are finding this a lean year), don't forget about the club extractor available to check out. Everyone at the last meeting should be comfortable with the idea of extracting and the methods involved. If not, consider checking out one of the books available in our growing library. At our August meeting, we'll dive further into the topic with our speaker, Kenny Williams, who will go into the specifics of harvesting and perhaps touch a bit on extracting, if there are still questions.

In September we'll have another great speaker, Morris Ostrofsky, giving a presentation of diagnosing bee diseases, which should be fascinating. In October, we're lucky to have Dr. Dewey Caron to talk about the results of the Bee Informed and Pacific Northwest surveys (with special emphasis on result of our club members!) and cover some seasonal topics. Not a meeting to miss! November will bring our honey tasting, so plan ahead to have a sample or two for tasting. November will also be when we elect the Board of Directors for 2017, so think about if that's something you might be interested in. Don't forget, **the November meeting is on 30 November** to avoid conflict with the Thanksgiving holiday.

Before November, we'll be seeking input on the type of topics and speakers that you would like to see next year. Start thinking about that, what you liked (and might not have liked) this year, and how you'd like **YOUR** club to function next year!

The Oregon State Beekeepers Association annual conference is coming up fast! See the earlier email Becca sent out for all the details. If you plan to attend, don't wait too long to make your lodging reservations. As mentioned at the last meeting, the club gets one complimentary registration each year. Be sure and attend the August meeting to see how we'll choose the winner! See you on the 24<sup>th</sup>!

*Nancy and Anne*

**NEXT MEETING – August 24, 2016**

**6:30 pm at the Newport Library**

**PROGRAM**

The August meeting will feature speaker, Kenny Williams, who will present on "**From the Hive to the Jar: Harvesting and Extracting Honey**". Kenny has years of experience as a commercial beekeeper and will have lots to share with us as well as being available to answer any of your questions about harvesting and extracting honey.

**6:30pm – 8 pm**

## Article from Honey Bee Suite by Rusty Burlew

### August is a critical time for mite management

In the temperate regions of the northern hemisphere, August is a critical time for mite management. Every year I find it hard to think about mites during spring and summer since they are nearly invisible. At that time of year, nearly 90% of all mites hide within the capped brood cells, out of sight and out of mind. So unless you are in the habit of plucking pupae from their cells, you hardly ever see a mite. Your sticky board counts are low and your colonies are booming. Mites, it seems, are not the problem everyone talks about.

But it all changes in the eighth month. Sort of. It actually began to change at the summer solstice, back in June. That's when your colony growth rate began to level off. Although hardly

noticeable at first, the queen lays fewer and fewer eggs per day and the colony gradually shrinks as the weather warms into July and August.

### **Mite populations rise as bee population's fall**

But while the bee population declines, the mite population continues to rise. More gravid female mites roam the hive looking for soon-to-be-capped brood cells where they can lay their eggs. If there are not enough brood cells, the mites will even double up and share the ones available. And by August, the colony is tired of drones and is actively expelling them. The queen isn't laying many drones either, so all the female mites opt for what remains: worker brood.

Left untreated, an average-sized colony that may have had 6 mites per 100 bees at the end of June, may find itself hosting 35 mites per 100 bees by September 1, a nearly seven-fold increase. Assuming you started the season with zero mites, the rate of increase is dependent on the number of mites that joined your colony during the spring and summer.

Mites can [arrive in many ways](#) but drifting bees, especially drones, probably bring in the most. A colony with ten introductions could end up with five times as many mites as a colony with two introductions, depending on when they occurred.

### **More mites carry disease to more bees**

A six- or seven-fold increase in the number of mites per bee means a similar increase in the number of bees infected with the viral diseases that mites spread. Worse, by fall the mites are not divided among the drones and workers but reside on the workers alone.

While the number of mites per bee gradually rises in June and July, by August it literally explodes. Unfortunately—and here is the real kicker—the worker bees that are reared in September and October are the bees that will see the colony through until next spring.

### **Winter bees can't afford to be sick**

While a spring or summer forager may live a mere four to six weeks, a so-called winter bee (or diutinus bee) may live up to ten months. Since these long-lived bees care for the colony during the cold and confined winter months, they cannot be sick at the beginning or the colony will not survive.

To raise healthy bees in September and October, your colony needs to be virtually mite-free by the end of August, the very month that the mites-per-bee ratio explodes. So if you are going to treat your hives, August is the month to do it.

### **Timing is everything**

For many years, I read that any treatments should be completed by August 31. But lately I've noticed that many groups are recommending an August 15 completion date for the best shot at healthy winter colonies. That means if you are doing a three-week course of something like ApiLife VAR, you should have already started.

Many beekeepers like to treat the mites in August and then again in the dead of winter when little capped brood is present. A second treatment in winter may be especially important in very strong colonies that robbed other colonies in the fall. Robbers often attack a weak colony that is dying. In addition to bringing home the honey, they bring home the mites as well.

But however you decide to proceed, remember that timing is everything. The ultimate goal is to raise a crop of disease-free bees that can take care of themselves from fall until spring.



## OBSERVATIONS FROM THE APIARY .....

### Adventures in Beekeeping: The Belgians Are Coming

When my wife was in high school, in The Dalles, she and her family hosted an exchange student from Belgium. Lieve, the exchange student, and her husband are about the age of my wife and I and we were happy to host their oldest son and his family for multiple days at the end of July. Their son is Henri, his wife is Goedle, Henri's son is Maxim and daughter is Eloise. During the pre trip planning everyone wanted to know about the bees but when it came right to it only Maxim, age 15, suited up and went for the full experience. Below is the story of that experience.

Whether by luck or happenstance when we meet them in Newport for dinner before bringing them back to our house in Lincoln City for the first night, I got a call and voicemail message from my friend David Downs with the Tillamook Bee Club. David was asking for help collecting a swarm. David had just had surgery and was unable to collect the swarm himself. So the next morning Maxim and I headed for Pacific City to collect David's swarm. It was a good size swarm (two eight frame deeps worth), close to the ground, actually partially on the ground, and well behaved. As always the tricky part of collecting a swarm is getting the queen in the hive body. After several attempts it appeared to me we had the queen in the first eight frame deep, so Maxim jumped in and literally did the rest of the collection. For a fifteen year old on his first experience, he did very well. He was fearless in spite of me reminding him that the bee suit was not bee proof. About an hour later we were done and successful. Somewhere in the process he managed to get a bee up his pant leg. After careful investigation I was successful in killing her before she stung him. I have two hives in David's apiary so after the swarm collection Maxim and I went through those hives. All in all it was a very successful first experience for Maxim.



Several days later I was able to get Eloise and Maxim suited up with the idea of going through my rescue hive (they were doing so well we needed to add a honey super) and a colony I recently caught in a bait hive out on Bear Creek (also doing very well so we had to add a second deep). Eloise lasted about ten minutes until Maxim got his first bee sting (that he can remember) in the ankle and she was done. Maxim however calmly told me he got stung and continued on. She got him through his sock so that hardly slowed him down. We finished the day checking a honey super on another hive where I suspected I had frames of capped honey. Sure enough it is time to pull some capped honey frames.

Stan Scotton

August 3, 2016

## Pollinator Plant Profile

Escallonia spp.



Honey bee accessing nectary on *Escallonia rubra* in my yard.

Oh Escallonia! (Belted out with enthusiasm to the tune of Oklahoma!). Show tunes too much? Perhaps, but that is how enthusiastic I am about this plant. There is really no better hedge for our windy coastal climate than this. And hedges are important because bees don't like wind.

Escallonia braves our salt wind, handles our acidic soil, doesn't mind sand or clay, and is maintenance free, once established. The best part is that the most common form, *Escallonia rubra*, blooms from May into November most years!

Escallonia is a genus of more than 40 flowering plants originating in the Mediterranean climate areas of South America. It can be anything from a two foot dwarf variety up to forms resembling small trees. It is an evergreen that flourishes in USDA zones 7-9, making it work well in our inland valleys, too. There are many cultivars available, but if you want this plant, just look around your neighborhood and find one you like. You can start a hedge by pushing cuttings into the ground during times of adequate rainfall, and most of them will root. Established plants will likely have some new plants around the edges where layering has taken place, for another option. Escallonia has no real pest problems, so rarely sees chemical use (in the yards of others – of course, never in your yard). Deer can be a nuisance, but the plant grows vigorously enough that they don't usually cause much harm. In our climate, it can take full shade, but will bloom better in full sun.

It's almost perfect, but not quite. Anyone with an Escallonia hedge probably cringed when I wrote maintenance free. Depending on the cultivar, pruning may be quite necessary. But if you stay on top of it, the soft new growth comes off easily with a power trimmer and will produce a fine hedge. Pruning makes the hedge denser and can result in a formal, sculpted hedge so something more free form, but still dense enough to block the strongest wind gusts. Be careful not to trim too often as you'll be trimming off the blooms, which will deprive your bees of this wonderful nectar source. One way to manage it is to do your trimming well ahead of your dearths, allowing plenty of time for blooms to set. If you have a cultivar with a shorter, and often more concentrated bloom, work around that.

Watch your bees on Escallonia and you'll often see that the flowers are too deep for them to forage directly. They hunt at the base of the flower for holes made by bumble bees and use those to access the nectaries (see photo above). It's a bit harder to forage, so your bees will generally go after something a more attractive if it's available. There will be slight to moderate honey bee foraging throughout the bloom season, (and ongoing visits by hummingbirds and bumble bees) but during a dearth is when Escallonia really shines as a pollinator plant. And because it can be a large plant, it will keep your bees busy during any late summer dearth. Share it with your neighbors to have even more available for your bees.

This is a top notch plant for anyone interested in supporting honey bees, native bees or hummingbirds!

**By Anne Schatz, Master Gardener and Central Coast Beekeepers Co-President**

# Marking your Queens

By Max Kuhn

First, if you are one of those experienced beekeepers who catches your queens with your bare fingers. Using one hand to catch them, and then transferring them to the other hand to mark them with the appropriate colored paint, before releasing them back into the colony all in less than one minute.....then this article is **not** for you. This article is for the beekeeper that lacks the skill and/or confidence to catch, handle, & mark his/her queens in that manner. Yet we all can benefit from marking our queens. Marking, makes them easier to locate, and locating them is important for many reasons, too many to discuss here.

Generally, “marking” involves placing a small dot of paint on top of the Thorax of the subject queen, thereafter making her easier to spot. If you want to mark your own queen you will need some equipment. Most of the items you will need are available through common bee supply outlets. So go shopping! Fortunately, most of these items are inexpensive.

- **Paint** – Marking pens sold by bee supply outlets ensure you don’t use toxic paint. Usually sold as individual pens or packs of all five different colors. A different color represents certain years making it possible to monitor the age of your queens. **Jingle:** “What!? You Raise Green Bees?!” = **W**hat (white) **Y**ou (yellow) **R**aise (red) **G**reen (green) **B**ees (blue). This year (2016) is “white” making white correspond to years ending in “1” and “6”, now you can figure out which years the other colors represent. *(Credit for this Jingle is freely given to Master Beekeeper “Morris Ostrofsky” who denies creating it, but is the first I remember using it. I also suspect he spends a great deal of his time pondering jingles to help we beekeepers remember things. Thanks Morris!) ☒*
- **Queen Catchers**- Most common type is the “Butterfly” design. These are available in clear plastic or metal. The clear plastic is said to allow a better view of the queen during the catch, resulting in less risk to the queen. Both types are inexpensive so I recommend having several. Keeping some near your hives and others in strategic places. Making it easy to find one when you spot that unmarked queen unexpectedly.
- **Queen Marking Tube**- Allows a beekeeper to hold the queen still to facilitate easy marking of the queen. The danger here is pressing too hard on the foam plunger of the marking tube, thereby pressing the queen hard against the ridged grid possibly injuring her. BEE Careful.
- **Queen Muff**- This clever device is designed to allow certain maneuvers to take place “inside” a net about the size of a shoe box. This to prevent the accidental release of your queen. Without the Muff, it is necessary to transfer the queen from the catcher to the marking tube while inside a small confined space like a car, closet or restroom. The muff greatly reduces the chances the queen can fly away. Prior to my purchase of the queen



muff, I accidentally released two valuable queens during attempts to move each from the catcher to the marking tube. (Luckily both were later recaptured)

- **Combination Catcher/Markers-** These are fairly new to the market and the jury is still out on their effectiveness. I have used both of the models pictured and found them to be somewhat cumbersome but I was able to make them work. Maybe, with practice, these might work smoothly.
- **Combo marker #1-** is designed to be pressed into the wax comb trapping the queen on the frame wherever she is observed. The risk here is pressing too hard and injuring the queen. The queen is actually squeezed (gently I hope) between hard plastic and the beeswax brood comb. There is a fine line between too much pressure and too little.
- **Combo marker #2-** Is said to be a “one handed” catcher. Maybe it is, but I needed two hands to make it work. But it did work.. and with it the queen is squeezed between hard plastic and soft foam. I feel the soft foam gives the queen a safer experience. But this and all the aforementioned methods do result in some risk of injury to the queen.

*In using all the above equipment please remember to be careful. Queens can be injured, lost or killed in attempts to mark them.*



Butterfly type Queen Catcher



“Push-in” type Combo Catcher/Marker #1



Combo #2 Catcher/Marking Tube



Marking Tube

## North Coast Representative Report

Like OSBA, the new Central Coast Beekeepers Association has decided not to have a booth at the Lincoln County Fair this year. Not enough volunteers with time to pull it off. Tillamook Beekeepers are still planning on a booth at the Tillamook County Fair, but as of the due date for my report the fair has not taken place.

At the last Central Coast meeting we had a presentation and discussion on the basics of harvesting and extracting honey. Max Kuhn and Rick Olson moderated and presented with other club members also doing presentations. I am always impressed with how much bee club members know and are willing to share.

I just had someone in the Tillamook Chapter ask about getting hot water to clean and sterilize an extractor and for general clean up afterwards. While I am lucky enough to have threads on a laundry basin, what do folks do who don't have treads or even a laundry basin? The answer: the hot water heater drain valve.

The last Tillamook Meeting was a moderated discussion on Bee and Hive Management. President Bob Allen was the moderator. As part of that discussion we got into yellow jacket issues and how to support our colonies in fighting them off. I found the August Beeline article very helpful in managing for yellow jackets and shared that with the members. We also got an update on the person who used to collect yellow jackets on the North Coast and sell them to labs for their venom. Those of us on the North Coast were lucky enough to have a person in Tillamook who until recently collected yellow jackets and other stinging bees. Without him we no longer have anyone to refer folks when they have yellow jackets, wasps, and hornets. Alan Leach, who used to do that work, said he knows of no one who is planning to take over the business.

What a great time of year to be a beekeeper on the North and Central Oregon Coast. There are bees in the air and the hives are humming. Tillamook and Central Coast Bee Clubs have been active and it is time to prepare for County Fairs.

Central Coast Beekeepers had a June presentation from Rita Ostrofsky and Rick Olson on the Master Beekeeper Program. I was lucky enough to have participated in the original group of apprentices and am amazed at how quickly the program has grown and adopted to the numbers of participants in this its fifth year. Thanks to you Rita and Rick for the presentation. The rest of the meeting was sharing and question and answer. Central Coast has great mixture of

experienced, returning and new beekeepers so there are few questions not being asked and no lack of answers.

The Tillamook Beekeepers had several new people attend their last meeting. We had updates on how the flow hives were working, swarm collections, bait hives, queens and much more. The Tillamook County Fair is August 10 – 13 and vice President Rick Stelzig has taken the lead in organizing the Tillamook Beekeepers booth.

The one thing I am always reminded of when I attend both bee club meetings is how different it is beekeeping on the coast as opposed to the valley and even up some of our river valleys. One person may have already pulled and extracted while other of us have two or maybe even three honey supers of wet nectar waiting for it to dry out and be capped.

Both Tillamook and Central Coast Bee Club meetings are open to all beekeepers. If you are in either area and would like to visit a meeting please do. My contact information is in the Bee Line and the OSBA directory. We always enjoy visitors.

**Stan Scotton, OSBA North Coast Representative**  
**August, 2016**

## **UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

September 20<sup>th</sup> – Lane County Beekeepers -

September 21<sup>st</sup> – Linn/Benton Beekeepers – Corvallis Waldorf School

Harry Vanderpool – Winter Prep

October 19<sup>th</sup> – Linn/Benton Beekeepers – Corvallis Waldorf School

Ramesh Sagili, Ph.D. – *Nosema cernnae* phenology

October 22<sup>nd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> -Linn County Extension Office – 33630 McFarland Rd, Tangent

Mason Bee Harvest and Clean Workshop – 10am-noon on the 22th, 9 to 11 and a second workshop from noon to 2 pm on the 26th

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 and sign up ASAP!

November 16<sup>th</sup> – Linn/Benton Beekeepers – Corvallis Waldorf School

Mike Rodia – Rose Hives – Beekeeping in one size box

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