# CENTRAL COAST BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NUMBER 1

NEXT MEETING MARCH 23,2016

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Co-Presidents Nancy McDowell and Anne Schatz

Hello All!

Spring is almost upon us and our bee club has made amazing progress! Thanks to Vice President Rick Olson, we have our website up and running. This is Rick's first webpage and he's done an incredible job. It is still a work in progress, but check it out (www.ccbaor.org). Tell us what you think and pass on your suggestions.

While you're online, check out our awesome new Facebook page, courtesy of new board member Neill Crawford (Central Coast Beekeepers Association). The page has already seen lots of traffic and has helped reach a whole new group of people.

Our Secretary, Becca Fain, is also the guiding force and editor of our new as-yet-unnamed newsletter, the premier edition of which you're reading right now! Send your kudos and suggestions in for her, as well. She also welcomes article proposals! And if you haven't paid your dues yet, please do so soon. As of next month, the newsletter will be available only to paid members. We are still taking entries for the Newsletter Naming Contest! Not only do you get the chance to see your creation splashed across the newsletter cover, but you could win an (as-yet-unnamed) prize. Please get those entries in to the club email account (centralcoastbeekeepers@gmail.com) before 20 March.

As of the conclusion of the last meeting, our club boasts 31 paid members, two of whom have taken advantage of the newly offered lifetime membership. Lifetime membership in the amounts of $200 for an individual and $330 for a family are available this year (and perhaps only this year) as a way for us to generate the funds necessary to pursue our 501(c)3 status and operate until we get some fundraising planned. See our Treasurer, Mary-Ellen Townsend, to pay your dues or ask about the lifetime membership.

See you at the next meeting!

## WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA FOR THE MARCH MEETING!!!

Nancy McDowell, club co president, will be providing a presentation and demonstration on how to install your packages and nucs in preparation for the arrival of ordered bees for the spring. Nancy has years of experience in starting hives and her presentation will help our new beekeepers build their confidence and comfort level so that they get a successful start to their beekeeping experience. For our more experienced beekeepers, the presentation will be an excellent refresher and a great way to begin preparations for the spring.

Looking forward to seeing you at our next meeting:

**March 23rd, 2016 at 6:30 PM**

**Newport Library**

**35 NW Nye St.**

**In the downstairs meeting room**

# PNW SURVEY OF BEE HEALTH & BEEKEEPING PRACTICES

## By Dewey M. Caron

Last year, 250 OR/WA backyarder beekeepers were surveyed during April seeking information on overwintering colony losses/survivorship, and management such as colony feeding, sanitation and Varroa control efforts. The results are posted on this website: www.pnwhoneybeesurvey.com/annual-surveys . I got only a few responses from coastal beekeepers and I would like to increase that number this year as coastal Oregon is a quite different beekeeping region than Willamette Valley, Southern and Central Oregon.

Colony loss levels from all respondents last year were 29%

For both 8-and 10-frame Langstroth hive beekeepers, the loss rate was 27%, losses were double that number for 5-frame nucs and top bar hives while Warré hive losses were intermediate between the two groups.

I seek to expand the data base this year and I hope you might be willing to respond to the 2015-2016 survey - www.pnwhoneybeesurvey.com/ . The electronic survey will be open March 17th through April. It should take no more than 5-10 minutes to complete.

Information requested will be very similar so I can compare last year with the current one. If you would like to review the inquiries in preparation for the survey please locate the "2016 PNWals" pdf download available on the websites blog page and by simple Google search.

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 sometimes open up more questions that beg answering. Last year, for example, beekeepers doing several wintering preparations improved survival, but feeding or use of the sanitation alternatives we listed did not result in better survivorship, at least not directly. Those beekeepers using sugar shake or mite drop boards to monitor mite buildup had fewer overwintering losses, but those using other sampling methods did not. Non-chemical treatments did not, directly, improve survivorship, at least for our survey respondents; use of Apivar, essential oil or formic acid significantly improved survivorship

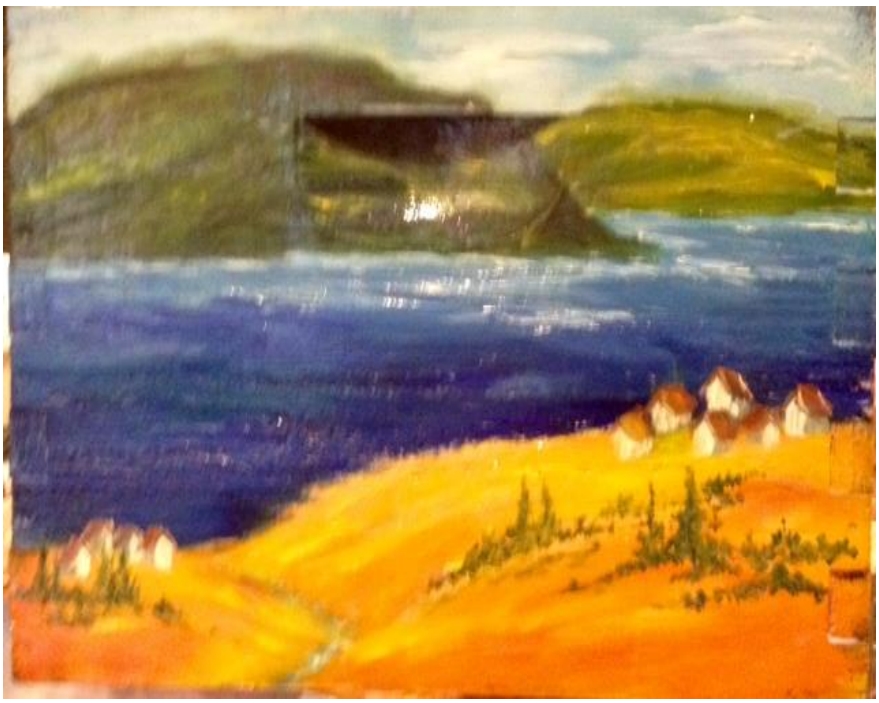
The BeeInformed survey is also conducted in April each year. I ask that you continue to participate in this national survey as well. Although funding is now in the last year of this effort, we are hoping to continue what is now a 9-year record of overwinter loss/survivorship. Our report from last year is posted on the pnwhoneybeesurvey site. I also include comparisons to surveys of losses in Canada and Europe. Access this survey: www.beeinformed.org It is open only in April.

Dewey Caron is an Emeritus Professor, Dept. of Entomology & Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware and an Affiliate Professor in the Horticulture Department at Oregon State University.

## CATHY COPE, CLUB MEMBER, SHARES SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT HER HIVES >>>

Beehives get painted for a number of reasons: to seal the wood, to provide a reflective surface to prevent the hive from overheating, to decorate the hive for the enjoyment of the beekeeper and to help the bees find the right hive.

The first year I kept bees the hive swarmed three times. For a long time I thought this had been due to overcrowding or mites. Now I realize that wasn't it at all. The ladies just wanted some STYLE. So this year they're getting their choice of a Mountain Retreat or By the Sea in Provence. Once I set up the little saunas, sound systems and wide-screen TV's, those gals ain't leavin'!



## APIARY HEDGES

By Anne Schatz, club co-president.

At this time of year, we have just had months of viewing what our bees endure through the winter. High winds, low temperatures, abundant moisture and minimal forage all conspire to increase hive mortality during these perilous time. Well–planned hedges around your apiary are a way to reduce all these stressors at once.

Hedges are stable, inexpensive alternatives to fencing and usually provide even better wind protection. Advantages are that hedges can more easily provide the porosity (50% is ideal) necessary to reduce wind speed without producing damaging turbulence. Also, hedges rarely blow over in high wind events, exposing your hives at the worst possible time. With properly chosen plants, they can last many decades and provide forage, fragrance, visual interest and wildlife support. They can also filter contaminants such as pesticides, car exhaust and road dust. Properly placed, they can ensure your bees' flightpaths don't interfere with your outdoor activities and they can provide visual screening, enhancing the security of your apiary. Drawbacks are that they occupy more space than fences (although this can be controlled by pruning), take time to become established, require a bit of watering the first year until established and may require some maintenance, if you decide to prune.

Choosing the placement of your hedge is the first task. At 50% porosity, a 5ft hedge will reduce wind speed by 50% at a distance of 24 feet away, 25% at a distance of 50 feet, and 10% at a distance of 100 feet. As the coastal winter prevailing winds come from the south (barring the influence of local topographical features), be conscious of the lower angle of the winter sun when planning windbreaks so you don't inadvertently create shade on your hives. Hedges to the north can be taller to provide more shelter from summer's prevailing north winds.

When choosing plants the first consideration is evergreen or deciduous. It is important to choose evergreen shrubs for winter protection in the direction of your prevailing winds. Summer prevailing winds are often from a different direction and this side could use a mix of evergreen or deciduous plants, although I recommend evergreen to provide protection from severe winter winds that can whip in many directions when deflected due to structures, trees and topographical features.

Choose plants that have needs that most closely match what your site offers in terms of soil pH and type, moisture, climate, sun exposure and temperature. The more closely the plants' needs match your apiary conditions, the less work you will have making up for what your site is missing and the happier both you and the plants will be. Other considerations when choosing your plant(s) are plant longevity, eventual height and width, potential invasiveness and your distance from the ocean, which will determine the level of salt tolerance necessary in the plant. If you need to provide a barrier, consider dense, thorny plants. Beekeepers are busy, so plan properly to capture the benefits of hedging without creating more work for you.

Blooming hedges provide a large area of forage, so ones that bloom during a dearth might be most beneficial. Planting hedges with winter forage combines two valuable assets into one feature that benefits both bees and beekeepers. Bees will have less wind in the immediate hive area, making it easier to moderate conditions inside the hive and to enter and leave the hive during our frequent windy weather. Forage close to the hive reduces time spent flying in cooler temperatures and allow bees to nimbly react to sporadic fits of precipitation. Beekeepers with hedges that also provide winter forage can worry less about damage during high winds, have less need to feed and will be able to easily observe their bees foraging (which is always fun).

Many plants are good hedging options on the coast. Escalonia is the oft seen coastal hedge and provides over six months of blooms attractive to bees. But there are two standouts that also provide excellent winter forage.

The first, *Viburnum tinus*, provides very attractive nectar and light gray pollen from December (November some years) through March. *Viburnum tinus,* also known as laurustinus, is native to the Mediterranean region. Despite this, it likes more moisture than most Mediterranean plants, making it perfect for the Oregon coast. It is an evergreen, winter flowering shrub that grows 7-20 feet tall and up to 10 feet wide, although a common named cultivar, "Spring Bouquet," is a dwarf version that grows 4-6 feet. Regardless, it tolerates pruning well so it is easy to keep at a desired size. *Viburnum tinus* isn't picky about soil as long as it's well-drained, and tolerates wind and some salt, making it a great candidate for hedges, windbreaks and visual screens. It can handle some shade but will bloom better, and will be better pollinator forage, in a sunny location. Its claim to fame is the long bloom period when there is so little else. The blooms turn into dark purple berries in summer, extending the visual interest and wildlife value.

Just as Viburnum tinus is winding down in March, *Berberis darwinii* comes into bloom. *Berberis darwinii* or Darwin's Barberry, is an upright evergreen shrub to 10 feet tall and wide, but is easily controlled with pruning after flowering. It generally is in full bloom by the beginning of March, but can bloom as early as January in some years. Darwin's Barberry is best planted in full sun for optimum pollinator support and for the ¼ inch blue-black fruit that supports wildlife in summer. Although it will tolerate some shade, full sun will help keep the form dense and more compact. It is hardy in zones 7-9, tolerates sandy and clay soils, (in fact, it seems to grow in any well drained soil), grows at a medium to fast rate of up to one foot a year, is drought tolerant once established, is bothered little by pests and is deer resistant. The salt wind seems to have little effect and it provides a dense visual screen. If placement is well planned, its spiny branches can help keep unwanted animals and people from your apiary. All of these traits make it particularly well suited for our coastal environment.

You can plant anytime, but to reduce the need to water, plant in the fall just as the rains begin or in the late winter/early spring. Start planning your location now and you will have all summer to prepare the planting site and source your plants. When planting, avoid adding fertilizer to the planting hole. This can cause more harm than good because the roots will be

encouraged to stay in the fertilized space. It is far better to add organic fertilizer to the soil surface, and lightly incorporate into the top inch or two, which provides a slow release of fertilizer over a wider area and will encourage roots to spread out properly. Keep an eye on water the first year and if you see signs of water stress give each plant a thorough, deep watering as infrequently as possible. Frequent, shallow watering results in shallow rooted plants that are easily drought stressed.

Coastal winter temperatures are often mild enough and the breaks in poor weather frequent enough, to allow bees to forage. But without nectar and pollen sources, this is a futile activity that uses valuable stores without replacing them. For this reason, winter forage can play a significant role in winter survival for coastal bees. Consider hedges, particularly hedges that provide winter forage, for your apiary.

Anne has been a Master Gardener since 2008, is enrolled at the Journey level in the Master Beekeeper Program, and is an avid enthusiast of pollinators and their forage sources.

## Exciting offer from the American Beekeeping Federation!

Complimentary ABF Membership

For New Members Only

### We want you to see all the ABF has to offer you as a beekeeper!

The ABF Board and Membership/Marketing Committee would like for you to understand what the entire buzz is about. All first time members in 2016 can receive a complimentary membership! We want you to see all the ABF has to offer you as a beekeeper! This is at no cost to you until **December 31, 2016**.

ABF is here to serve you and your needs as a beekeeper through:

- Live and on demand educational webinars
- Online beginner beekeeping courses
- Nationwide conferences
- Legislative actions and beyond

Our 2016 Complimentary Membership is free to anyone who has never been a member of ABF. You will receive electronic access to our educational webinars, discounted conference pricing, the monthly ABF E-Buzz, and much more! **All memberships will expire December**

**31, 2016**. We are excited to have you join the largest national beekeeping organization in America. Visit *https://abfnet.site-ym.com/general/register_membership.asp* to sign up today.

## WE HAVE BEEN INVITED TO JOIN THE TILLAMOOK BEEKEEPERS CLUB'S ANNUAL BEE DAY

Dr. Dewey Caron, OSU Professor of Apiculture will be leading the workshop that will cover information for beginning beekeepers and for those wanting to increase their beekeeping knowledge. The cost is $15/person including lunch. Topics will include: basic beekeeping, bee biology, how to set up and manage a hive, protective gear, how and where to purchase equipment and disease and pest control. Both Anne Schatz and Stan Scotton have tickets that you can purchase from them. Anne will have hers at the March meeting or you can pre-register by calling the OSU Extension Office at (503) 842-3433 by March 31st.

**TILLAMOOK BEE DAY – Saturday April 2, 2016**

**8:30 am to 3 pm**

**5520 E. 3rd St**

**Fairview Grange in Tillamook**

## MICHAEL BUSH WORKSHOP IN OREGON!!!

There are still a few places left for Michael Bush's one day class on treatment free beekeeping that is being held in Hood River, OR on April 23rd. The workshop is all day and costs $45. Participation is limited so if you are interested, sign up now by going to http://groworganics.org/content/michael-bush-treatment-free-beekeeper-coming-hood-river.

## SPRING MANAGEMENT TIPS

Spring for beekeepers means checking for brood and queen, checking for foulbrood, and doing mite checks. Also, it is time to check on the hive's honey stores to avoid late winter and early spring starvation. Medications should be placed in the hives sometime in March depending on the weather. In order to do all this begin by picking a warm afternoon when the temperature exceeds 55 degrees F and there is no wind or rain.

If you haven't already been treating for Tracheal mites by using grease patties, begin now and always keep patties in the hive year round. These should be placed just above the brood cluster. The formula for this medication is: 1/3 Crisco, 2/3

granulated sugar (this applies whether you make grease paddies for one or one thousand hives). Mix these ingredients together thoroughly. An ice cream scoop is about the correct quantity to make a grease patty for a single hive. Excess patties may be frozen.

You should be actively checking for Varroa mite population levels as this is absolutely essential for the survival of your hive. There are a number of medications that may be used if you decide that your mite level requires medication. There are too many medications to list the proper dosage and use in this column but three recommendations may be made. First, always follow the directions for use carefully particularly in regard to safe handling and disposal. Second, talk to other beekeepers who have used the mite control measures you plan to use. Finally, you may want to alternate mite medications from one year to the next, or even from spring to fall, in order to avoid mite resistance to the measures you have decided to use. You should be aware whether mites will develop resistance to the particular measure you have adopted.

If you haven't already, begin checking hives for honey stores. Hives that are strong can be lost in March due to dwindling honey stores and the increased need for honey due to increased brood rearing. Lift the hive gently from the back in order to estimate how heavy the hive is. As an alternative, open the hive on a warm spring day and check for adequate honey stores. The hive should have no less than 15lbs of honey (about three-four deep frames of honey or about five western frames) as a minimum. More honey is much safer. If the hive is light, feeding is essential for survival. A good early spring feed for bees is fondant or candy canes

When checking for stores, or on any warm spring day when the temperature is over 55 degrees F and it is not windy or raining, check your hives for queens. At this time the queen should be laying eggs in large numbers in order to build up the population. Check the brood nest carefully for the presence of these eggs. Do not expose the frames of brood too long to the sun or cool air. If the queen has a good pattern and the hive is building up, go home and have a small glass of mead and celebrate the successful wintering of your hive. If there are no eggs, the hive is weak, or is not building up well, or you see disease**…. Skip the mead, medicate, and think about re-queening or combining weak hives.**

## YELLOW JACKET SEASON IS UPON US

### By Becca Fain, CCBA member

Yellow Jackets are a major predator of bees in our area and now is the time to begin taking some preventative action. Unlike bees, with yellow jackets the queen hibernates over the winter and none of the workers survive from season to season. Once the queen comes out of hibernation, she has to do all the work for the first four to five weeks. This means that she has to build all the comb, lay eggs, and feed the larva until there are enough workers to take on these duties. Once there are enough workers, she will just stay in the nest and lay eggs. This leaves a narrow window for you to control these predators before they establish their nest and breed.

You may even have begun to see them flying around flowers that have already begun to bloom. These queens are much larger than a queen bee and are relatively easy to see when observing blooms. Now is the time to put out yellow jacket traps which you can purchase at any hardware, Bi Mart or most grocery stores. It is important to get the traps that specifically indicate that they have queen attractant. Later in the summer, once the workers have hatched, you can use a more general attractant. Right now you want to catch as many queens as possible to keep nests from being established in or near your apiary.

Board members of the organization, identified below, cam 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