
THE BEE LINE

The Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

Volume 26, Number 5

June 2001

Encouraging Youth to Become Beekeepers

By Deidra Bixby from Riddle, Oregon, the 3rd place winner in the 2001 American Beekeeping Federation 4-H Essay Contest

Knock, knock, knock.

“DD, can I bring my friends in to look at your bees?”

“OK, but be quiet. I’m sleeping.”

Little did I suspect that an observation hive would transform my bedroom into grand central station and make me a tour guide as I introduced the town’s children to the world of bees. I had opportunities to dispel their fears about bees because honey bees behind glass are fascinating, safe and a wonderful window into the apiary business. For almost five months, timid knocking woke me on weekends.

I got into this tour guide business by receiving an observation hive for Christmas. Filled with Italian bees from the nearest apiary supply store, once installed in my bedroom window, the colony started buzzing. All of a sudden the neighbor kids, 4-Hers and anyone who heard about them wanted to see the hive. They were captivating entertainment because so few kids get to peek into the bee industry these days.

These days the bee industry is at a critical point. Few young people are coming into the business. What will happen when all the beekeepers grow old and die if there are no replacements from the next generation? What will happen to the agricultural economy? What will happen to

orchards? The flowers? What will happen to my peanut butter and honey sandwiches?

In 1919, the American Bee Journal stated, “One of the most practical educational enterprises in recent years is a boys’ and girls’ Bee Clubs.” Also in 1919, a vocational rehabilitation series issued by the US government trained disabled soldiers as beekeepers. Since there are no longer programs like these, we need to actively introduce this vocation.

It’s imperative that we recruit new members to this highly important, exciting and lucrative profession. To continue the apiary industry, we need to sell the idea of beekeeping to our youth. Capturing the interest of any age group requires strategic planning, people with a passion for the subject and simple marketing knowledge. How do you sell an idea? How do we present beekeeping in a way that reaches children?

According to educator Marcia Bowden, introducing children to bees is natural. In her book “Nature for the Very Young,” she says, “...early childhood is the perfect time to introduce environmental education. Nature study capitalizes on your children’s characteristics: it wants them to touch, to move actively, to ask questions. In short, learning about nature requires the active use of all the senses, and pre-schoolers just do that naturally...It is a positive experience.”

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June 2001

Oregon State Beekeepers Association

The Bee Line is the official publication of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association and is published ten times a year. Subscriptions are included with OSBA membership.

To join the OSBA, complete the membership application in this issue and send with payment to: Phyllis Shoemake, 1702 Toucan Street NW, Salem, OR 97304

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OSBA Summer Picnic

The Willamette Valley Beekeepers invited OSBA members to a joint picnic on Sunday, July 22 at Silver Creek Falls State Park, east of Salem. The picnic will be at the South Falls Picnic Area at picnic shelter "Area B."

The event is potluck, and the OSBA will provide soft drinks. Bring your own place settings and cutlery. We'll begin eating about 1 pm. There will also be drawings for door prizes.

Silver Creek Falls State Park is about 20 miles east of Salem on Hwy. 214. There is a day use fee of \$3 per vehicle. There are four miles of paved bike paths, and 14 miles of hiking and horse trails. Come early and stay late --- take a hike and see all the Falls. This is a great place to be on a hot summer day. See you there!

President's Notes

by Ray Varner

By now most of you have seen the articles in local newspapers and other publications about large bee die-offs in Southern Oregon (Medford area). The question is, "why is it happening?"

Beekeepers suspect pesticide poisoning. Oregon Dept. of Ag says there is no evidence of pesticides named by beekeepers have been found in their tests. I have spoken with one beekeeper who lost 500 colonies and obtained the following information:

Massive die-offs occurred between September and October 2000. There were no bees in the hives, but there was sealed brood that had the appearance of being chilled. The colonies still had honey. The State Dept. of Ag investigated when they were notified about two months ago (four months after the colonies collapsed).

The beekeeper indicated he had treated the colonies twice for *Varroa* between July and September with his own formulation of miticide sprayed on shop towels. One-fourth of a treated shop towel was then applied to each colony. For tracheal mites, the beekeeper used a formulation of eucalyptus oil and grease.

No post-treatment tests were done on bees other than a visual check by the beekeeper. Dr. Lynn Royce from OSU took mite samples from area bees about two weeks ago. No results on resistance tests at this time.

What do you think killed the bees?

On another note, the Western Apiculture Society is hosting their annual Conference in Corvallis this summer. Dr. Burgett says there will be many great presenters attending this year and Corvallis is close by for OSBA members. Take a look at the agenda in this issue. Perhaps I'll see you there!

(cont. from page 1)

Bees were a positive experience for me as a child even though at times I got the power point introduction! My dad's honey bee hobby was a great source of "playtime" for me – dipping honey straight from the extractor, re-queening hives, smoking'em, and chewing honey comb gum! This experience didn't stop, it kept growing. At the first opportunity I bought my own equipment from a retired beekeeper and now maintain several hives.

Too many kids don't have the opportunity to grow up in beekeeping, but that doesn't mean their interest can't be sparked. In the world today there are many ways to reach great numbers of people: newspapers, magazines, books, radio, TV, internet and word-of-mouth.

Today's kids are weaned on television, and there are great educational videos available. Disney's Ranger of Brownstone, a cartoon/live action nature video, takes Huey, Dewey and Luey on a field trip, which includes a honey-bee segment! The lovable ranger teaches without kids realizing someone slipped in information.

Reading Rainbow, a popular kids' TV series, recorded a show based on the book "Life Cycle of a Honey Bee," by Paula Z. Hogan. It toured a working beeyard. Viewers looked inside a hive, and watched extracting. Reading Rainbow encourages reading, teaches painlessly, and refers kids on to books of similar topics like: "The Magic School Bus – Inside a Beehive," by Joanna Cole.

School children love the antics of the zany red-haired teacher who takes her class on fantastic field trips in a bus that does everything. On this trip, the class is transformed into worker bees in a colony. The reader experiences hive life! Search the library, you'll be surprised how many bee books exist. Even Shakespeare's "King Henry V" compares England's citizenry to bees in a colony.

However, modern kids are connected to the information super highway – the Internet. Several bee sites include fun "kids only" pages with games and activities, another way of painlessly educating. Unfortunately, most children won't find these sites unless specifically looking. We need to give them more reasons to search, for instance, by putting these addresses in boxes of honey-flavored cereal!

While it's great to reach vast numbers of kids through electronic media, educators agree personal one-on-one contact is more effective and has longer

lasting impact. Betty Bailey is living proof. She and her husband conduct public relations tours for school-age children at their Bar-Non Sheep Ranch. A small part of the tour includes the family's beeyard, where they explain how bees pollinate the clover, which in turn makes for healthier lambs. Though the children spend hours looking at sheep, in their thank you notes to the Baileys it's the bees they mention most. Betty explains it's vital for kids to understand how nature works together, and tiny bees play a major role.

Because bees are so important, perpetuating our craft is essential. Recruiting and training young people should be the goal and responsibility of each beekeeper. We can do it! Using the tools at our disposal to promote the business, we can sell kids on bees. We can do this by feeding media intriguing information about colony life, by maintaining attractive websites and posting them where kids will notice. We can each become ambassadors to the public, introducing people to this rewarding hobby.

And there's always the option of installing an observation hive in your bedroom window, and inviting in a flood of traffic. The downside is you have to keep your room clean.

Editor's note: Here's Deidre's biographical sketch: Born May 27, 1983, I was probably stung a few months later crawling around the beehives with my dog Hubert. I live on a small farm outside Riddle, Oregon with my parents and younger brother and sister.

Involved in 4-H since 4th grade, I've done rabbit, sheep, dairy goats and honey bee projects. Now that I'm in high school I'm also in FFA, serve as Student Body Preident, play oboe and flute in the concert band, and hold major roles in school theatrical productions.

In 9th grade I bought my own bee equipment and within a week my advisor sent me out to catch a swarm. I now tend three hives along with other livestock projects and a greenhouse. Next year I will attend Oregon State University to pursue a Master's Degree in Agriculture Education and hope the dorm lets me bring my observation hive.

Northwest Beekeeping

June - Crops in bloom producing nectar and/or pollen: berries, vetch, spearmint, radish, mustard, clover. Others: honey locust, poison oak, pyracantha

- Provide water continuously.
- Examine colonies every ten days and treat as in May, except: toward month's end, reduce the number of empty frames in each super to about ten. Lift off the supers, tilt up the second story and look for queen cells along the bottom of the brood comb. **IF you find** only eggs and larvae in the queen cells and the hive is crowded with bees, remove all cells --- top and bottom. Put the hive body containing mostly worker eggs or larvae on the bottom board, and the other containing mostly sealed brood on top. Add supers to provide 10-18 empty full-depth combs, or their equivalent. **IF you find** sealed or ripe queen cells, or possibly hatched ones, divide the colony. **NOTE:** queen mating is always dependent on decent mating weather and the supply of drones this time of year. **IF you find** eggs and no attempt to rear queens, and the hive is full of bees, examine the supers and add more to provide 10 to 18 empty combs or their equivalent.
- Order queens for July delivery.
- Continue to be on the lookout for American Foulbrood.
- Start moving sealed frames of honey to top supers, or collect to extract.

Tucson Bee Lab Staying Open for Now

As a result of fast action by the beekeeping industry and other interested persons, the Tucson Bee Lab will remain open indefinitely. USDA's Agricultural Research Service had announced the closing of the Tucson facility and consolidation of its honey bee programs into the USDA-ARS bee lab in Weslaco, Texas.

After a resolution opposing the closure was adopted at the ABF convention in January, the ABF named a task force to keep the Tucson lab open while strengthening the bee research programs both

there and in Weslaco. Chaired by former ABF Research Chairman Gene Brandi of Los Banos, CA, the task force included beekeeping industry members as well as people associated with California agriculture.

A delay in the closing to "allow more time for the transition of the research program and staffing, as well as to allow for additional ARS discussions with stakeholders" was announced on Feb. 23.

In late March, Mr. Brandi and task force member and ABF past President David Hackenberg met with ARS Dep. Administrator Ed Knipling in Washington. During that meeting, they learned that the consolidation of the Tucson and Weslaco labs has been put on hold indefinitely. Mr. Brandi cited the actions of the ABF, Farm Bureau, California Agricultural Commissioners and the almond industry as providing the impetus for ARS reversing its course.

"Dr. Knipling of course stressed the importance of the industry's contacting the Ag Appropriations subcommittees for some additional funding to operate both labs at their optimum levels. The ABF task force will be sending out letters in this regard. We encourage all beekeepers to contact their Congressmen to urge them to support efforts to obtain additional funding for USDA-ARS honey bee research," said Mr. Brandi.



Happy Father's Day!

NW Bred Queens Hygienic and Mite Resistant

By Dan Harvey, Olympic Wilderness Apiary

As beekeepers in the Pacific Northwest, we became increasingly frustrated with the need to spend large amounts of money on chemicals that poorly controlled the pest populations destroying our colonies. Not only were we disturbed by the presence of the residues of those chemicals in our honey and other hive products, we also saw that overuse of those chemicals would eventually result in the loss of their effectiveness, leaving us right where we started. We began searching for a better way.

We set out bait hives in the uninhabited areas of the North Olympic Peninsula, where we live, and successfully captured several wild swarms. Testing of these wild bees at Washington State University in conjunction with the oral history of our area indicates these bees are the Caucasian survivors of those brought here by early homesteaders.

Surmising that these colonies might have some natural resistance, we purposely exposed them to mites, then began the process of selecting breeder queens for their mite resistant characteristics. In 1997 we established an isolated mating yard using the offspring of these feral bees.

Independent lab testing confirmed our hopes of extremely low mite counts. We were very encouraged by the results. Not only were these queens desirable for their mite resistant characteristics, but were also observed to consistently work at cooler temperatures, handily out producing the state average of honey production last year. It was increasingly obvious that they were extremely well adapted to our Pacific North "wet" conditions.

In the spring of 2000, we introduced a USDA Russian breeder queen into our stock selection program. Testing in the fall of 2000 showed extremely low varroa mite levels without the use of pesticides. Preliminary testing also looks very promising for hygienic behavior.

As of spring 2001, we are extending the use of hygienic behavior testing into our strictly controlled drone colony management as well as our breeder queen selection process, further insuring the production of a hardy, mite resistant bee.

Since our goal is chemical-free hive management, we are pleased to report that we have not used Apistan strips since fall of 1999. We feel assured that each year we are closer to a "better way."

June 2001

Western Apicultural Society 2001 Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, August 15th

- 2 - 5 pm: Registration - LaSells Stewart Center
Commercial exhibitors setup
4 - 5 pm: WAS Delegates & Directors meeting
7 - 9 pm: Wine & Cheese Reception - LaSells
Stewart Center

Thursday, August 16th

Venue: C.& E. Hall, LaSells Stewart Center

- 8:30: Welcome to WAS-2001
Michael Burgett, WAS President & Dr. Roy
Arnold, Provost emeritus, OSU
9:00 - 10:00: Dr. Nicola Bradbear, Cardiff,
United Kingdom: "Bees In Development"
10:00 - 10:30: Coffee Break
10:30 - 11:15: Dr. Jim Tew, Ohio State
University, Wooster: "One Dozen
Challenges Facing the Beekeepers."
11:15 - noon: Dr. Eric Mussen, University of
California, Davis: "Drug Resistance in
Afb"
12:00 - 1:15: Lunch
1:15 - 2:00: Mr. Kim Flottum, Editor, BeeCulture,
Medina: "Bigger Pictures - East &
West Coast Beekeeping and Everything In
Between."
2:00 - 2:45: Mr. George Hansen, Colton, Oregon:
"Bees-Bears-Barcodes"
2:45 - 3:15: Coffee Break
3:15 - 5:00: BEE BEARDS
6:00 - 8:00: PNW Salmon Bake

Friday, August 17th

- 8:30 - 9:15: Dr. Lynn Royce, Oregon State
University, Corvallis: "Russian Queens"
9:15 - 10:00: Dr. Jim Tew, Ohio State University,
Wooster: "The Plastic Beekeepers."
10:00 - 10:30: Coffee Break
10:30 - 11:15: Dr. Michael Burgett, Oregon State
University, Corvallis: "Giant Honey Bees &
the Tigers of the Sundarbans"
11:15 - noon: Ms. Jynene Black, Oregon State
University, Corvallis: "Foraging Patterns
of the Eastern Honey Bee (*Apis cerana*) versus
the Western Honey Bee (*Apis
mellifera*) in Northern Thailand."
12:00 - 1:30: Lunch

- 1:30 - 2:15: Dr. Nicola Bradbear, Bees In
Development, Cardiff, U.K.: "Bee
Development in Afghanistan"
2:15 - 3:00: Dr. Steve Sheppard, Washington State
University, Pullman. "Understanding
the Limitations & Possibilities of Honey Bee
Breeding"
3:00 - 3:30: Coffee Break
3:30 - 4:15: Mr. Jack Mattenius, New Jersey
Department of Agriculture. "Where We
Are Today with Honey Bees."
4:15 - 5:00: WAS Business Meeting
6:00 - 7:00: No-host Mixer
7:00 - 9:30: Banquet

Saturday, August 18th

- 9:00 - 10:00: WAS Delegates & Directors meeting
-

Western Apicultural Society of North America
REGISTRATION - Annual Meeting - 2001
OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

August 15-16-17-18, 2001 - LaSells Stewart Conference Center, 26th & Western Blvd. Corvallis, Oregon

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
PHONE _____
Email _____@_____

Housing: Bloss Hall (immediately adjacent to the LaSells Stewart Center)

Housing is a suite arrangement with two adjoining rooms sharing a bath. Linen service is provided.

Dining: Arnold Dining Hall (immediately adjacent to Bloss Hall)

Full Housing & Dining Package (three nights - 6 meals) Single Occupancy Double Occupancy (per person)

Nights of 15, 16, 17 \$145.00 \$105.00

Meals included:

- Dinner on the 15th
Breakfast & Lunch on the 16th
Breakfast & Lunch on the 17th
Breakfast on the 18th

Dining only is charged at the following individual meal rates:

- Breakfast \$5.00
Lunch \$6.00
Dinner \$7.00

Special Meals

- Salmon Bake (evening of the 16th) \$35.00
WAS Banquet (evening of the 17th) \$18.00

Conference Registration Fee

- Individual - 3 days \$50.00
Family - 3 days \$75.00

Please make checks payable to: Western Apicultural Society

Please mail registration & payment to:

Mrs. Deanna Watkins
Department of Entomology - 2046 Cordley Hall
Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR 97331-2907

Phone: 541.737.4733 - email: watkinsd@bcc.orst.edu

Registration will begin at 2:00 PM on the afternoon of August 15th.

Commercial exhibitors are encouraged to setup their displays during the afternoon of the 15th.

The Wine & Cheese Reception will be held in the LaSells-Stewart Center at 7 in the evening of the 15th.

FOR ADDITIONAL FORMS SEE WEB SITE: http://www.honeybee.com/clubs/was2001registration.htm

New Alternative Varroa Treatment Registration Sought

Reprint of letter from Brushy Mtn. Bee Farm, forwarded to the OSBA by Oregon Dept. of Agriculture rep Jim Cramer

“We need your help! Please help us and your fellow beekeepers in the USA! We must have more controls for *Varroa* mites and for over two years we have tried to get ApiLife VAR, a natural product containing Thymol, labeled for their control. Finally we have gotten the petition before the EPA. There is a good chance we can get the labeling rushed up and have another product in the arsenal for the fight against *Varroa*. But we need a groundswell of support documenting our need for more controls. Please help us! Do anything and everything you can to help us along! Please write a letter to the following EPA Administrator and refer to our EPA file symbol, 73291-R:

**Janet Anderson, United States EPA
BPPD/OPP (7511C)
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20460**

How about giving the product manager Adam Heyward a call at 703-308-5422 and plea our case. Contact anyone in your state that can help. We need this product very badly and it will help beekeepers all over the US to get it approved. We are not a big chemical company and unfortunately do not know the tricks or have the big bucks to deal with the EPA, but with a statement of need by you this could get approval.

I have just spoken to the distributor of Formic Acid (Apicure) and because of problems they are having Apicure will not be available again this spring. They will be submitting a new form of packaging which will require another label and who knows how long this will take.

As you know the best approach to any pest program is Integrated Pest Management and having another product to rotate in a control program will benefit everyone. Unfortunately more and more resistance is being found to fluvalinate. CheckMite+, with the active ingredient coumaphos, is a very strong chemical which is the only product that many beekeepers now have for controlling resistant *Varroa*

mites. ApiLife will kill these resistant *Varroa* mites and at a much lower cost and with natural chemicals.

Dr. Keith Delaplane and Dr. Mike Hood have proven that Apilife VAR is a very effective control against *Varroa* mites. They also experienced control of tracheal mites, too! They tested Apistan and Apilife VAR with and without screened bottom boards. Using screened bottom boards they received a 90% control of *Varroa* mites in both South Carolina and Georgia, where the mites are resistant to fluvalinate. We have enclosed a copy of their research.

Dr. John Skinner has tested Apilife VAR against the *Varroa* mite and he has found it to be 80% effective also. I am enclosing a copy of a letter from him summarizing his work.

We have a product that will work. It has worked well in Europe. It will be less expensive and very effective. Please take just a little time to make your feelings known to the EPA.”

The letter is signed by Steve Forrest from Brushy Mountain Bee Farm. He can be contacted at 1-800-233-7929. The supporting documents referred to will be reprinted on the OSBA web page if permission can be obtained from Dr. Delaplane and Dr. Skinner.

NHB News and Notes

- Beekeepers can now get help from their computers when *Varroa* mites show up. Navigate to the Carl Hayden Bee Research Center <http://gears.tucson.ars.ag.gov/soft/vpop.html> to download “Varroa Pop”. This software simulates the growth of *Varroa* mite populations in bee colonies.
- The ABF requests that beekeepers experiencing heavy losses of bee colonies collect and send samples of bees to USDA-AFS labs for testing. There are certain requirements for collection and shipping of the samples. Call the Honey Board office at -1800-553-7162 to receive a copy of the instructions.

Summary of NHB report on six key issues:

- Issue 1: Protect the wholesome image of honey. Maintains an issues management program to protect honey’s image; has convened a group of industry members and experts to create a standard of identity

for honey and to evaluate various strategies for a voluntary quality assurance program; is sponsoring research to find a technique to eliminate *Clostridium botulinum* spores in honey without destroying honey's valuable characteristics.

- Issue 2. Promotion of varietals/regional/US. Continues to collect varietals for evaluation; varietals will be showcased at events all year long; created "Honey Locator" – an online search engine for US varietals and suppliers.
 - Issue 3. Eliminate potential for adulteration. Sponsoring research project at Penn State to develop testing method for detect adulterants at low levels.
 - Issue 4. Price cannibalization. Takes no position.
 - Issue 5. Industry communication. Holds roundtables and regional seminars; maintains web site at www.nhb.org.
 - Issue 6. Honey blends (food)/Market innovation. Ongoing research of unique characteristics of honey v. other foods, sweeteners and carbohydrates; sponsors market research studies on honey sales and consumer perceptions of honey.
-