

The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers' Association

Volume 32, Number 2

March 2007



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OF WHITE CLOVER AND THE HONEY BEE

Dirk Olsen

This last year there were 12,000 acres of white clover planted in the Willamette Valley with most of it being in the mid-valley, where we are located and live. Why so much white clover? The price seems to have gone up to the point at which many growers feel they can make some money on it. Most of the growers raising it are grass seed growers and, by using white clover as a rotational crop, they can clean up their fields of various weeds by planting white clover. They can then rotate back into grass seed at a later time. The fields are usually kept in for two or three years. Many farmers will graze sheep on the fields up until a few weeks before harvest. Needless to say, the sheep seem to do real well on it.

Now many beekeepers hear the word *clover*, and their ears perk up. Clover means honey, right? Sure—in the Midwest, white clover is a major honey plant—if not *the* major honey plant. Is the same true here in Oregon? We've been putting bees on white clover here in the mid-Willamette Valley for several years now. So, I may be able to provide some information that will help prepare you for the day your phone may ring with a grower on the other end asking you about doing some pollination on a field of white clover.

White clover requires bees if it is to be pollinated so that it can generate seed. Growers usually want one–two hives per acre. We recommend one hive to the acre. We are hesitant to put on any less, even if the grower wants us to, because we don't want to get the blame for a poor seed set stemming from a grower who chined on not putting an adequate amount of bees in the field to do the pollination. This last year we charged \$40 per hive. Next year, we will be charging more. (More about fees later.)

White clover usually begins blooming in mid- to late-May. This will vary from year to year according to weather as well as to when the grower removes sheep from the field. A field that has been heavily grazed will sometimes take a few more days or

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The Bee Line

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

Please send news about your bees and your experiences in keeping them, as well as corrections, letters, comments, photographs and stories (old and new), interviews, and requests for advertising to the Editor, *The Bee Line*, PO Box 42363, Portland OR 97242; thebeeline@comcast.net.

Advertising Costs Per Issue

Business Ads:

Business card	\$10.00
Quarter page	\$25.00
Half page	\$50.00
Full page	\$100.00

Classified Ads (30 words):

Members	\$3.00
Nonmembers	\$5.00

Please submit all copy by the 10th of the month prior to publication. The next issue will be April 2007. Contact the Editor for any additional information. Thank you!

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The New Year has begun. Maybe it all started last fall when we put the bees to bed in the best condition possible. At least, many beekeepers feel that fall is the start of the bee year. But, to me, getting into California is the real start of the cycle. If California goes well, it rushes you into the rest of the year with a smile on your face and a spring to your step.



The weather for putting bees into the almond orchards could not have been better. Cold nights, cool mornings, and warm afternoons. Best of all, for those who finished by February 8, there was no rain. The Oregon beekeepers I have talked with say that their bees wintered very well.

Speaking of good news. The Oregon Department of Agriculture has applied with other states in the Northwest for a Section 18 for Hivestan. Hivestan is a new product for control of *Varroa* mites. Hivestan is made by the same company that makes Apistan. The application is expected to be approved.

The Section 18 for CheckMite expired February 1, 2007. It is no longer legal to sell or use it in Oregon. We are looking into reapplying to use CheckMite for both *Varroa* and the small hive beetle. Although Oregon does not seem to have the small hive beetle yet, it seems best to be prepared to fight it when it appears. CheckMite is the only approved control for the small hive beetle.

By the time you read this note, most Oregon bees will be coming out of California. We all hope that no new pests come with them. You will be splitting your bees or buying nucs or packages to cover winter losses. There are many Oregon beekeepers who sell bees and equipment. I hope that you call them first for your replacements and additions.

If you have extra equipment or bees, consider finding a young person to start and then mentor in beekeeping. Teach someone what you know. You then become part of that person. What a great way to live forever.

Chuck

THE OUTGOING OSBA BOARD

Note: No doubt all of us are grateful for the years (past and continuing) of dedication and service that the outgoing OSBA Board has given to ensure the best possible support of beekeepers in the region and the viability of the industry. *Thank you Kenny, Harry, Jan, and Phyllis!*



Past President Kenny Williams

First, I would like to thank the many members who expressed their support to me, considering that, while I was OSBA President, we lost our honey bee entomologist at Oregon State University and the small hive beetle arrived in Oregon! Of course, we had “help” of a negative sort in arriving at these milestones, the sort of help we don’t really need.

Back in the summer of 2002, I received a phone call from Ray Varner. At the time, Ray was OSBA President and also on the Nominations Committee for the election of OSBA officers at the upcoming fall conference. Ray asked me if I would consider running for President of OSBA, something I had not given thought to previously. But after talking with Ray and other members, I soon realized that, for years (I had been an OSBA member for twenty-three years at that point), I had taken what OSBA had to offer without giving much back. I decided it was time to balance the scale.

What I found upon being elected was that the OSBA membership comprised many intelligent, motivated, good-hearted people also ready to give something back. Whether you work a day job or run a full-time beekeeping operation, it takes a significant commitment of time and focus to do a job well, and we had members with the necessary commitment. Phyllis Shoemake, for example, devoted sixteen years to being Secretary-Treasurer. Fred VanNatta helped us to interact with legislators in Salem about restoring funds for the honey bee entomologist’s position at OSU. George Hansen conceived and established the Honey

Bee Workshops program to educate beekeepers around the state regarding pests, predators, and diseases at locally hosted venues. Jordan Dimock would take two days away from his busy commercial operation to attend Board meetings. Jan Lohman did likewise, to be Co-Secretary-Treasurer. Thom Truscwicz got OSBA onto the Internet with a clean, frequently visited site. Harry Vanderpool organized some of the finest fall conferences we ever had and furthered Oregon’s reputation as a place to go for quality meetings. Presidents of regional associations helped bring both new and established beekeepers into the association, resulting in volunteers stepping up to help at the fall conferences.

So, there was an abundance of help of the positive sort, and this help came in the form of people, members. I do thank everyone for their compliments and supportive remarks. At the same time, I think of the fine souls surrounding me as I tried to do my part, too.



Past Vice President Harry Vanderpool

I would like to thank all of the great beekeepers of the Oregon State Beekeepers’ Association for allowing me to serve as Vice President over the past four years. During my term in office, I have witnessed a strong, healthy organization with a very dedicated and capable membership. It has been very gratifying to hear conference speakers, government officials, and others state the same conclusion: “Oregon beekeepers are a very unified group!”

The Oregon State Beekeepers’ Association maintains an excellent relationship with the Oregon Department of Agriculture, in many separate departments. This relationship is of great value and one that I particularly enjoy.

Members of the press have been good to us. As a new beekeeper some sixteen years ago, I asked, “Why are all of the articles about bees such downers?” The answer that I was given

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was, “They aren’t interested in good news, only bad news makes it into print.” That turns out to be false. The media are very interested in our industry—the good and the bad.

Growers groups, associations, and commissions understand the value of our industry and have come through for us when a clear need was expressed. We must always be ready to do the same for them. Collaboration is the direction specialty agriculture must work toward quickly as a winning strategy for the foreseeable future.

Speaking of relationships, I could say that I gave my very best effort as VP, but honestly, doing your best comes easy when you are blessed with the Executive Board members that I served with. I will always hold them in the highest esteem for their integrity.

I have every confidence that our new officers will enjoy the same success. Please make a special effort to contact the incoming officers and offer your support.

Finally, and on a personal note, I want to thank my many new friends of OSBA that have invited me into their homes and operations. Words cannot begin to express my gratitude for being a part of this fine association.

I hope you all have a great year!



Past Co-Secretary/Treasurer Jan Lohman

I have been part of OSBA for about fifteen years. It all began for me as a quiet observer because there was so much to learn about bees and commercial beekeeping, and so many wonderful, spirited people to learn from. The hallways were “abuzz” at the meetings, something I was not used to as a bookseller.

I began my beekeeping by offering to help Vince in California in the spring of 1991. He was already down there, so I headed south in my “little red sports car” with my brand new bee suit and some cute little *designer boots* that

I bought to complete my look! Vince took one look at the boots and laughed. That’s not exactly the reaction I expected, and they were definitely *not* the boots he expected when he said, “Buy yourself some boots!” Who Knew!

I fell in love with the bees. I had always gardened and thought growing bees was amazing. I began to think about ways that the bees could support both of us. Little did I know that in beekeeping you never run out of work. Vince’s helper could not help him get equipment home from California that year, so imagine this: a girl who has never driven a truck learning from a *new boyfriend* how to drive a 1974 One Ton with a thirty-two foot trailer behind. We had some laughs, and I ran over several curbs before I took the trek north. Vince said the traffic parted as I pulled that trailer through Sacramento. I think that someone put *Driver in Training* on my bumper!

I began attending OSBA meetings in 1991 and was very impressed with the speakers and the camaraderie present there. I also watched many OSBA administrations come and go. Yet, ever present was Phyllis Shoemake. She was always kind, thoughtful, and informed. At some point in the past five years, knowing that she wanted to retire, I began to offer her some help when I could. Even so, given our hectic schedule, I did not feel like I had the time to do her job. In Salem in 2004, I was asked if I would consider being Secretary / Treasurer. I knew that I didn’t have enough time to do the job justice, and Phyllis has some pretty large shoes to fill. The Nominations Committee then suggested that we break up the job to Co-Secretary and Co-Treasurer. That was the change I needed to accept the nomination. I was very happy that I did. I have learned so much and thankfully still had Phyllis on the Board to guide me. I think that our Board worked beautifully and tirelessly together as individuals with the betterment of OSBA at heart. I think that it is healthy for an organization to change leadership so that other members’ priorities can be accomplished. I look forward to the new leadership and to

where OSBA will go next, and I appreciate the opportunity that I had to be part of the past Executive Board.



Past Secretary/Treasurer and Co-Secretary/ Treasurer Phyllis Shoemake

It was about 1989 when I was first elected to be the Secretary /Treasurer of OSBA. Bill Rufener had held that job for quite a while and was likely very happy to have a replacement. Oliver Petty preceded Bill and held that position for many years. It would seem that this is no short-time job.

At that time, we did not have very much money in our bank account, and the only income was from advertising and dues, plus any surplus from the conference. Dues and advertising paid for the publication of *The Bee Line*—as it still does today.

With increasing attendance at the conferences, our income has grown to the point where we have a reasonable amount of money available for our projects. We have also established an account meant to help in the restoration of the honey bee entomology position at OSU. For the past three years, all proceeds from the auction have been deposited in this account.

More money meant that we had to start doing business with the IRS. Three years ago, OSBA became a nonprofit, charitable, tax-exempt organization. This also means that we are required to file annual reports with the IRS.

I have always been a hobbyist, never caring for more than three hives of bees. This job has been a tremendous learning experience for me. Although I won't miss the work of keeping records, banking, etc., I sure will miss the association with the many fine people I've met over the years.

Note: More about Phyllis and the job that has been anything but "short term" for her in the June 2005 issue of *The Bee Line* (see the OSBA web site).

OSBA BOARD MEETING MINUTES

December 2, 2006 in Canby, Oregon

The Board Meeting of the Oregon State Beekeepers' Association was called to order by Chuck Sowers at 1:00 PM. Minutes of the General Membership Meeting were read by Lynn Royce. Treasurer's report was received from Patricia Swenson. Jordan Dimock made a motion to accept the minutes and Treasurer's report, seconded by Mark Johnson. The motion carried. There was some discussion regarding donations to the endowment fund and whether checks should be written to the OSU Foundation, with an indication on the check that the funds should be applied to the Northwest Apiculture Research and Professorship Fund for honey bee research, extension, and education, or if they should be written to OSBA. Because more information was needed, decisions and discussion were tabled for a later meeting.

Regional Directors' Reports

Pat Morris, Southern Oregon, brought up the confusion regarding voting by the regional Presidents. Mark and Chuck will find the most current copy of the OSBA Constitution and clarify this point. Pat also brought up the idea of a "Queen Breeder's Cup," but the Board felt we did not have enough details to discuss the idea.

Jordan Dimock, Eastern Oregon, pointed out that Idaho wanted to donate towards the *How to Reduce Bee Poisoning* booklet, but were withdrawing that proposal to donate to the endowment fund. They have also pulled their support from Dr. Steve Sheppard's program.

Old Business

Kenny Williams passed out copies of the current draft of the endowment agreement with the OSU Foundation. After providing a few minutes for the Board to read this draft, some discussion was held. Kenny asked that members of the Board give this draft a careful reading and pass any further discussion points on to him within the following week.

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New Business

Pesticide Use Reporting

The new Pesticide Use Reporting Law now has funding, and anyone using pesticides will be required to report starting January 2007 [See page 11.]. It was suggested that Chuck Sowers and a designated group meet with Chris Kirby of the ODA Pesticides Division to gather information and get answers that can be published in *The Bee Line* for our members.

Fall Conference

The Washington State Beekeepers' Association is setting up its own 2007 Conference to be held in Winthrop WA. Dr. Steve Sheppard invited OSBA members to attend. This conference will take place in October around the 20th. The Washington group is unhappy with how auction disbursements are made at joint meetings. Idaho beekeepers were dissatisfied with the 2006 joint conference and are also setting up their own conference to be held December 6–8, 2007.

The withdrawal of Washington and Idaho from our joint 2007 Conference means that the capacity of the Seaside Convention Center is too large for the event. The Center is willing to reschedule the reservation without our losing our deposit. Pat Morris moved that the 2007 OSBA Conference be held at Agate Beach Inn in Newport OR. They are able to fit us in for the dates of November 1, 2, and 3, 2007. We will work with Washington and Idaho to overcome our differences and reschedule the Seaside Conference with them in 2008. Jordan Dimock seconded. The motion carried.

There was discussion regarding the Lane County group's suggestion that a conference be held in Eugene. It was recommended that communications with Eugene be continued.

Bee Poisoning Publication

The new *How to Reduce Bee Poisoning* publication was produced as a joint effort with contributions from, among others, OSBA. Because of our contribution, we will receive 250

copies free of charge. These will be distributed to our members. Kenny Williams and Rosanna Mattingly will work together to mail out copies. Patricia Swenson moved that OSBA pay the cost of mailing the booklet to each member. Jordan Dimock amended the motion to limit the cost of the mailing to not more than \$500.00. Thom Trusewicz seconded. Motion as amended was carried.

Kenny Williams reported that the ABF Society for Preservation of Honey Bees would grant \$200 to the first ten states to get a mentor for new beekeepers under the age of eighteen years. Pat Morris requested the information since he currently mentors young beekeepers in southern Oregon.

Harry Vanderpool presented Kenny Williams a thank you from the previous Board for his leadership as President of the Oregon State Beekeepers' Association for the last four years. The next Board meeting will be scheduled in the spring 2007, after almond pollination.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lynn Royce

CLASSIFIED ADS

NUCS FOR SALE: Four-frame nucs for sale, late April/early May. Nucs with spring queens—\$55. Nucs with late summer (July) queens—\$65. Later summer queens have wintered over as four-frame nucs and that's it. Place a \$25 deposit on nuc boxes or bring your own. These are limited supply. I will take a list of names and fill first come, first serve. Contact Andrew Schwab at pyr4ausi@verizon.net or (503) 537-0506 evenings/weekends.

USED BOXES (all sizes), frames (wood, wood with inserts, plastic), Kelly wax melter, new frame parts, Boardman and plastic feeders, miscellaneous. Various prices. Call Philip (Eugene): (541) 302-1419.

REMEMBERING BILL RUHL

January 19, 1919–January 29, 2007

Sheryl Johnson

Uncle Bill had a huge, generous heart and a great sense of humor. He and his first wife Wilma sold Ruhl Bee Supply to my husband Ed and I in 1986. I had worked part-time in the store from 1979 to 1986. I didn't know anything about honey or honey bees when I started. Bill taught me so much. As a result his great teaching, I began to develop an interest in keeping bees. Then I became a beekeeper. Bill got me started with two hives.

All of our children and grandchildren have worked in the store at some time. Our daughter Heidi started coming to work with us at three months of age. And she did so until she was ready for kindergarten. She looked forward to helping Uncle Bill at the store and selling honey. Our son Torey came to work part-time and ended up with the beekeeping bug big time. He became an excellent beekeeper and continued to work with us at the store until 2003, when he went into beekeeping full time. Bill guided Torey through those first years when he was young. He always said: "Check your hives. They will tell you what is wrong. Don't take shortcuts to save money."

Our entire family has a deep love for Bill. And we know that, were it not for him, we wouldn't be where we are today. Bill was a kind, gentle man with a firm belief in God and family. He has so impacted my life that I know it will be very difficult without him as my mentor, both spiritually and in our shared world of beekeeping. Bill taught beekeeping classes with Torey for many years, as well as at several of the local colleges and at field days. We know our customers just loved him. Whenever he stopped in at the store, they surrounded him to hear his words of wisdom for the day.

During our final visit with Bill at the hospital, my daughter told him that he was an awfully good man and that he had lived a great life. He replied, "Well, I couldn't see living any other way." A wonderful man filled our hearts, and now is gone. There is a hole in our hearts, and in the world as well.

Note: Bill touched the hearts of many of us through his enthusiasm, commitment, and genuine concern and interest. We will miss him and his gentle presence, and extend regrets to his family and loved ones. Part of Bill's story can be found in the March 2007 issue of *The Bee Line* (archived on the OSBA web site).

COLONY COLLAPSE DISORDER

During 2006, an alarming number of honey bee colonies began to die across the continental United States. Reports of similar die offs are documented in beekeeping literature, with outbreaks possibly occurring as long ago as 1896.

How can beekeepers help? Take time to complete the National Bee Loss Survey found at: www.beesurvey.com. More about CCD in an upcoming issue. In the meantime, visit: maarec.cas.psu.edu/pressReleases/ColonyCollapseDisorderWG.html.

OREGON STATE BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION RESOURCES

OSBA REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Columbia Basin: Debbie Morgan
3800 Benson Rd, The Dalles; (541) 298-5719

Eastern Oregon: Jordan Dimock
2635 Mitchell Butte Rd, Nyssa; (541) 372-2726

Metropolitan Area: Doug Woods
14285 S Union Hall Rd, Mulino

North Coast/Webmaster: Thom Trusewicz
90041 Logan Rd, Astoria
(503) 325-7966; ccbee@intergate.com

Southern Oregon: Pat Morris
1333 Rogue River Hwy, Gold Hills
(541) 855-1402

Willamette Valley: Harry Vanderpool
7128 Skyline Rd S, Salem; (503) 399-3675
shallotman@yahoo.com

OSBA REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS



Central Oregon Beekeepers
Meets 6:30 pm, third Tuesday, Bend
Deschutes Public Library, Hutch Rm
President: Dennis Gallagher
(541) 389-4776; haymakeroo@yahoo.com
Secretary/Treasurer: Glenda Galaba
(541) 383-1775; galaba@msn.com

Coos County Beekeepers
Meets 6:30 pm, third Saturday (except Dec)
Olsen Baxter Bldg, 631 Alder St, Myrtle Pt
President: Thomas Kyelberg
(541) 297-4017; usvi@charter.net
Vice Pres: Spike Richardson; (541) 267-4725
Secretary: Marda Burgdorff; (541) 888-5695
Treasurer: Jane Oku; (541) 396-4016
jane_oku@hotmail.com

Lane County Beekeepers
Meets 7:30 pm, third Tuesday, Eugene
EWEB Meeting Rooms, 500 E 4th Ave
President: Morris Ostrofsky
(541) 685-2875; ostrofsky@pacinfo.com
Vice President: Judy Scher
judy_scher@catdreams.com

Secretary: Barbara Bajec; (541) 767-9086;
mbartels@bbastrodesigns.com

Treasurer: Nancy Ograin
(541) 935-7065; woodrt@pacinfo.com
web site: www.lcbaor.org

Portland Metro Beekeepers

Meets 7 pm, second Thursday, Oregon City
Hous Auth Clackamas Bldg, 13930 S Gain

President: Kerry Haskins
(503) 632-8448; kh251@aol.com

Vice President: Peter Forrest
(503) 236-7787; pdxpete57@msn.com

Secretary: Paul Hardzinski; (503) 631-3927
Treasurer: John Keeley

(503) 632-3682; keeley@bctonline.com

Southern Oregon Beekeepers

Meets 7:30 pm, first Monday, Central Pt
So Or Res & Ext Ctr, 569 Hanley Rd

President: John Jacob
(541) 582-BEES; oldsol@jeffnet.org

Vice President: Floyd Pawlowski
415 Pompadour Dr, Ashland

Secretary/Treasurer: Suzanne Davis
suzanne@mighty.net

web site: www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org

Tillamook County Beekeepers

Meets 7 pm, first Thursday, Tillamook
Forestry Building, 5005 Third St

President: Bob Allen; (503) 322-3819

Vice President: Terry Fullan
(503) 368-7160; tfullan@nehalemtel.net

Secretary/Treasurer: Wayne Auble

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

Meets 7:30 pm, last Friday, Beaverton
OSU Ext, #1400, 18640 SW Walker Rd

President: Andrew Schwab
(503) 537-0506; pyr4ausi@verizon.net

Vice President: Todd Balsiger
(503) 357-8938; toddbalsiger@comcast.net

Secretary: Preston Gabel
(503) 530-1436; preston@gabelhaven.com

Co-Treasurers: Michael and Brigitte Hendrickson
hendricm@ece.pdx.edu

Willamette Valley Beekeepers

Meets 7:30 pm, fourth Monday, Salem
Chemeketa Comm College, Bldg 34, Rm A

President: Richard Farrier; (541) 327-2637
Vice President: Harry Vanderpool

(503) 399-3675; shallotman@yahoo.com
Secretary: Mike Rodia

(503) 364-3275; drodia@yahoo.com
Treasurer: Susan Rauchfuss

(503) 391-5600; smokfoot@cyberis.net

AROUND THE REGION

Lane County Beekeepers

Ken Ograin notes that the club had a booth in the *Good Earth Home Show* held at the Lane County Event Center. This allowed them to talk bees with many people and showcase their upcoming Bee School (see page 11). In addition, group members are excited about a plan to market honey cooperatively at Eugene's Saturday Farmers Market beginning in April. Members will take turns staffing the booth, each selling their own honey under the club label.

Ken says that weather has been a big problem for beekeepers at the southern end of the valley. The early January storm left many without power for some time; then the ice storm came along and they had to cancel their monthly meeting due to road conditions. As it turned out, their planned speaker was snowed in. The bees did not appear to have any trouble with these conditions, other than those belonging to one member who reported that the wind storm took down a tree that landed on his hives. He scooped up all the boxes and parts and moved them into a barn.

Jonathan Loftin adds that a representative from the organic certification agency *Oregon Tilth* spoke on "Organics and Honey" at the February meeting. The March 20 meeting will focus on Spring Management. More information, including the group's current newsletter and a calendar of meeting topics, can be found at the club web site. Their meetings are always lively, and they would love to have visitors!

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

Andrew Schwab reports that the group's last meeting included a summary of what went on at the American Beekeeping Federation meeting in Texas. The fall die-off that was/is happening seemed to be the main topic. It appears to be more important than ever to start looking at hygienic queens. The less chemicals used, the better for the bees. In addition, it is important to purge old comb that has been in

hives with chemicals used during its lifetime. As most beekeepers know, the wax holds all these chemicals in. This is also believed to be a reason that young queens are being killed or superseded so often. The group had a small discussion about moving meetings to another day of the week. They will consider this for the next two months before making a decision.

TAKING A PULSE

Margaret Forsythe at GloryBee Foods says that the beekeepers are starting to come out (just like the bees!). They have had early, strong sales of package bees through January and these first weeks of February. And they have a warehouse and store stuffed full of supplies. New beekeepers are beginning to come in and get start-up equipment in anticipation of the season. And people who have been keeping bees are coming in to pick up medications (mostly Apistan and Terramycin) in preparation for treatments. They are also purchasing Bee Pro Patties to give their hives a bit of a boost. The recent talk has been around the news of Colony Collapse Disorder. An article in the local paper caused concern. Margaret notes that there are mostly questions and not a lot of answers at this point, and they are just waiting for some understanding of what is going on.

KEEPING BEES IN WESTERN OREGON

Todd Balsiger

Harry Vanderpool has done a wonderful job over the last few years giving monthly beekeeping advice. I have been asked to fill his rather spacious shoes. I realize the difficulty in this job will be giving recommendations that I don't do myself. In this regard, I will limit my recommendations to what I consider to be reasonable. I will attempt to make the tips contemporary, reflecting the changing nature of some beekeeping practices. If you feel I have omitted important tips, let me know. You can contact me through the OSBA web site Message Board for the Tualatin Valley group.

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KEEPING BEES—Continued from page 9

I have kept bees since 1996, when I inherited six hives from my late grandfather, Lucien Alexander. Today I have around eighty hives. I have never sustained heavy losses, except for the first year—probably due to tracheal mites. I attribute my beekeeping success to learning efficacious treatments and procedures, to doing them on time, and to limiting hive intrusions.

Beekeeping Tips for March

- ❖ Heft colonies to find light ones.
- ❖ Feed light colonies sugar syrup (1:1 ratio or higher sugar concentration by weight). You can also swap frames from light colonies with frames of honey from colonies with excessive stores. When making syrup, remember that water weighs 8.3 pounds per gallon and that granular sugar weighs approximately 7.1 pounds per gallon.
- ❖ Feed colony syrup if a fast build-up is desired (1:1 by weight).
- ❖ Feed pollen substitute if colony has no access to pollen. This generally is not the case in western Oregon.
- ❖ If not done yet, dust colonies with 2 table-spoons of Terramycin and powdered sugar mix every 5–7 days to ensure a continuous treatment that will last 21 days. To make the mix, thoroughly combine and mix 2 pounds of powdered sugar with one 6.4 oz packet of Terramycin. If American or European Foulbrood resistance is present, consider use of Tylan. If the infection is severe and scale is present, burn the colony.
- ❖ Tracheal mites may be controlled in the spring by using grease patties. Patties are 1 part shortening, 2 parts sugar. Indicators of tracheal mites can include bees crawling on the ground and K-wing.
- ❖ Look for *Nosema* disease—fecal matter streaked on the colony (this can simply be dysentery from poor stores) or a colony that “hangs in there” when it should be building up

or that dwindles when it should be increasing in population. Infected bees lose their ability to produce royal jelly—meaning the queen and brood aren’t fed well. If the queen is infected, she will become useless in about 30 days. Often colonies become queenless. Mark these colonies for treatment with fumagillin syrup. The primary treatment time is in late September, but I would consider feeding infected colonies a gallon of medicated syrup early in the spring. Scrape fecal matter off the equipment that carries the spores, and don’t share these frames with other hives, thereby spreading the disease. (I will have more on *Nosema* next month.)

- ❖ If you did not treat for *Varroa* in late January or early February (or even if you have), consider employing *Varroa* sampling techniques such as using drop boards or contact paper to determine colony mite loads. Determine threshold levels for *Varroa* treatment. Consider the use of management modifications as well as chemical treatment.
- ❖ Clean the bottom boards, or better yet, replace them with dry boards altogether.
- ❖ While cleaning or replacing the bottom boards, consider reversing the brood boxes, especially if the lower box is empty. Be careful in reversing boxes too early and separating brood from the main cluster. This may lead to chilled (dead) brood.
- ❖ Investigate the cause for an underperforming colony—disease, poor queen, queenlessness, laying workers, poor equipment, or colony placement? Take appropriate action—e.g., treat the disease, plan to replace the queen, unite queenless colonies with queen-right colonies, dump the bees out with laying workers, replace leaky lids, or move the colony to a better location (in the sun, out of the wind).
- ❖ Remove mouse guards on strong colonies.
- ❖ Make sure there is no wax moth activity in your stored comb. Moth crystals (paradichlorobenzene) can be used for control, as well as can freezing the frames. Exposing the frames to light can inhibit the moths, too.



It's time to mark calendars and make plans for the bee days that are among the surest signs of spring. Is there a bee day coming soon to a yard near you?!

Astoria Bee School, Saturday, March 10, 8:00 AM–3:00 PM. Location: Clatsop Community College, Fertig Hall, Room 16. Fee: \$10. Register at class. For more information, please call Thom Trusewicz at (503) 325–7966. Please bring a lunch. This will be an indoor class with an equipment demo and an extensive slide show. Bring your questions.

Central Oregon Beekeepers in Bend will have Bee School at Central Oregon Community College on Saturday, May 5, and a field day work session on Sunday, May 6. Details will be provided soon.

The annual **Lane County** Beekeepers' Association Bee School will be held Saturday, March 17, at Invitrogen, 295831 Willow Creek, Eugene OR. Bee School is a full day of talks on the basics of honey bee biology, equipment assembly, package installation, and seasonal management. It's geared to beginning and backyard beekeepers, but experienced beekeepers are likely to come away with a few tips, too! Beekeepers from outside Lane County are always welcome. Registration forms and more information are available at the LCBA web site: www.lcbaor.org.

Portland Metro Beekeepers will host their annual Bee Day on April 21. The group will detail the day's events and provide a registration form in the April issue of the newsletter as well as post information on the OSBA web site (www.orsba.org) as plans are finalized. Contact the group for current information.

The **Willamette Valley** Beekeepers' Association will hold its annual Bee School on March 12, 19, and 26 at Chemeketa Community College, Building 34, at 7 PM. Cost is \$25.00, which includes dues for one year in the association. All materials and refreshments are provided.

PESTICIDE USE REPORTING SYSTEM

Lynn Royce

New paperwork is now required by the State of Oregon for all who report beekeeping as a business. This is a web-based system for reporting all pesticide applications in the state. The law requires reporting of pesticide applications conducted: in the course of business; or for a government entity; or in a location intended for public use or access. Reports must be filed once per year starting this year (2007) and will be due by January 31, 2008.

As an agricultural industry, beekeepers will be required to report all use of registered pesticides. These include herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, defoliant, plant regulators, and

the like. It does not include antimicrobials (disinfectants and antibiotics).

A pesticide is any substance or mixture of substances intended to prevent, destroy, repel, or mitigate any pest. The goal of the program is to collect information that will help to ensure public health and safety, and to protect Oregon's water and environment.

Information provided to the PURS system is specifically exempt from public records, as is any information that would identify a user or physical location of application. For additional information, please read (very fun) the statute and administrative rules on the PURS web site: www.oregon.gov/ODA/PEST/purs_index.shtml.

WHITE CLOVER—*Continued from page 1*

weeks to bounce back to a point at which bees are needed.

Bloom time is also weather-related. Unlike some clovers, such as crimson, white clover can continue to bloom over an extended time period. With regular rains, the plant will continue to send up new heads that will need to be pollinated. During years with regular rains, we have moved bees in the middle of May and not been allowed to move out until mid-August.

Usually about halfway through the bloom, the clover will get “buggy” and will need to be sprayed. Most growers will use a spray that is not *too* harmful to the bees. But, even at that, your bees will suffer consequences from being sprayed. We have never suffered a massive spray kill, but we have noticed other effects after the fields have been sprayed. Field activity decreases and queen supersedure begins. Your hives will suffer.

I failed to mention that moving the bees into fields can at times be very trying. Many years about the time that the clover is ready for bees, the late spring rains will begin or be continuing—and many of the fields will be very wet and sloppy. Most white clover fields are located on flat, heavy clay soil with poor water drainage. Some fields take weeks to dry out enough for a vehicle to get on them. Be warned! Usually when it is time to remove the bees, the fields will have dried out enough so access onto them is not a problem. Most bees are placed into the clover fields easily, and, once the fields are dried out and ready for windrowing, the growers will want the bees removed. The valley is pretty much done at this point, and so the bees are moved to winter yards.

As for honey production, our experience is that, at least in the Willamette Valley of Oregon, white clover is a very poor honey producer. Most years a small amount of honey will be realized. It is a nice honey and usually white in color. In some fields, there may be some nearby blackberries or brush that the bees can work. But ninety percent of white clover fields are

located out on the grass seed prairie. Bees are pretty much a captive audience to the white clover field they are on.

This past season (2006) was a particularly bad year for bees on white clover. We had over 2,000 hives on white clover. We had another 1,500 hives on honey yards. The bees on honey yards made a decent honey crop and heavied up real nice in the broodnest. They went into winter with lots of bees, and the fall cullout rate was very small. In comparison, the bees on white clover (with the exception of one or two fields) made very little honey. Most continued to brood while on the clover, but then began to decline. Very little honey was stored in the broodnest, and these white clover bees needed several feedings to get them up to weight for winter. These clover bees had a high cullout rate—at least 20–25 percent.

With an increasing honey market and the high pollination fees being paid for almond pollination in California, it is a “no brainer” to see that we did not make any money at a \$40 per hive pollination fee. Be careful when renting bees into white clover.

This year an outfit from southern Oregon came up in a big way and dumped thousands of hives into white clover for a pollination fee of \$20 per hive. I’m sure these folks are now scratching their heads and wondering what happened. What happened is that they did not do their homework on what they were getting into. They are now paying the price.

What is a fair price to charge for white clover pollination? I’ll let you decide that. Just keep in mind the price you will pay if you decide to take the plunge!

Note: Dirk’s experience is similar to that of another beekeeper, at least as far as honey production is concerned. According to the minutes of the OSBA Board Meeting held January 8–9, 1971, at the Rose Manor Inn in Portland: “Oliver Petty related his experience in white clover as having had up to 300 hives in white clover and still not having made honey.”

FALL CONFERENCE TIMING?

Patricia Swenson writes that she asked the same question Todd Balsiger raised about having the fall conference on a week day at a recent Board meeting. She and her husband take a day off to attend, and they “treat those days like gold.” She says she learned that guest speakers prefer to be there on a Friday and leave on a Sunday. She continues, “I guess it wouldn’t be much of a conference without those specialists we have come to gather information from.”

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Membership in the Oregon State Beekeepers' Association is open to anyone with an interest in bees and beekeeping. You do not need to own bees or reside in Oregon to join. Membership includes a vote in OSBA elections, discounts on publications, and ten issues of *The Bee Line*. Send check made payable to OSBA with completed form to: Patricia Swenson, 11665 Webfoot Rd, Dayton OR 97114.

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Note: *The OSBA respects the privacy of members and will not sell any information provided. May we include your name and address in a membership list that will be given to OSBA members only? YES/NO (please circle one).*

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The Bee Line
Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers' Association
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This issue of *The Bee Line* is printed on recycled paper by Powell Minuteman Press; (503) 234-2040.