



The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

Volume 41

Number 6

July 2016

Winter 2015 Honey Bee Colony Losses

Dewey Caron and Ramesh Sagili

Preliminary analysis of the more than 5,700 Bee Informed Partnership national loss survey returns (representing about 15,000 managed colonies in the US) indicated an overwinter loss level of 28%, similar to the 10 year average of 29%. When both overwinter and seasonal losses were added together, overall loss rate was 44%. This number is slightly higher than the previous season (42%). It is obvious from this national survey that the colony losses continue to be at a higher level.

We conducted a PNW colony loss survey as a continuation of our previous loss surveys. Our 2015-2016 colony loss survey included survey returns from 11 Oregon Commercial beekeepers (managing 34,662 colonies in the fall) (simple average =3424 colonies/individual). These 11 individuals reported losing 5,430 colonies for a weighted average loss of 15.7%. Highest individual winter loss rate was 81% and 3 additional beekeepers reported losses exceeding 21%. Summer loss rate range for 6 of the 11 responding Oregon beekeepers was 11.5% to 62.5% (average=32%); three respondents did not know the summer loss rates, 1 respondent reported zero summer losses whereas one other respondent reported that all colonies were rebuilt over the summer. Last year, the average summer loss rate was 31.7%.

Eight semi-commercial Oregon beekeepers (managing between 50-500 colonies) with 1,987 colonies in the fall (248 simple average/individual), lost 465 colonies that accounted to a loss rate of 23.4%. In all the 19 commercial/semi-commercial beekeepers responding to our survey request managed about 50% of the estimated total colonies in Oregon.

The winter colony loss rate for the 28 respondent commercial beekeepers of 3-state PNW (116,881 colonies in fall) (simple average of 4,174 colonies/individual) was 18.2%, which is higher than Oregon losses. For 17 PNW semi-commercial beekeepers (3,836 colonies in fall) (simple average 226 colonies/individual), the loss rate was 20.7%. The 120,717 total colonies owned by the responding beekeepers (both commercial and semi-commercial) represent just over 50% of the 238,000 colonies maintained by beekeepers of the 3-state region (PNW).

The survey also asked the respondents regarding an acceptable winter loss rate. The most common response to this question was 10% loss rate. Among the commercial beekeepers an equal numbers of respondents managed colonies in 2 or 3 states. Further, one hundred and twenty responses were tallied (most individuals had more than a single response) for the question related to potential reasons for colony losses. 36 respondents cited queen failure (30%), 28 said varroa (23%) and 16 said weak colony condition (13%) were responsible for their colony losses. Ten respondents attributed pesticides and another 10 attributed the losses to starvation (9%), 8 respondents cited CCD (7%) and 5 said Nosema (4%). Among others, cited reasons were yellow jacket predation, viruses and poor nutrition.

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www.oregonmasterbeekeeper.org
OREGON MASTER BEEKEEPER PROGRAM
A Joint Venture of OSBA and the
Oregon State University Extension Service
info@oregonmasterbeekeeper.org

Images above: *Taraxacum officinale*, common dandelion (upper), and *Leucanthemum vulgare*, oxeye daisy (lower). All that lovely pollen promoting good bee health is a beautiful thing when we see the bees carrying it into the hive. It is beautiful in its own right, as well.

Source: Steve Hurst, hosted by the USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database.

Message from the President



In the winter of 1990, a neighbor who had me interested in bees offered to sell me his entire outfit for \$100.00. Two hives, extractor, smokers, tools, books, everything for \$100.00.

I had a great time with the bees throughout the following season. Unfortunately, both hives died the following winter. In the following spring, I bought 2 packages from Oliver Petty. They too died in the following winter. I was going nowhere fast with bees, but determined to become a beekeeper.

There was just one little problem: I didn't know what I was doing. It seemed like it would be really great if there was some place to get help. Where could I turn? I couldn't search the Internet because there was no Internet!!

One fine spring morning, I drove down to the Oregon State Fairgrounds to attend Ag-Fest, an event that highlights agriculture in Oregon. At one point, I walked around the corner and couldn't believe my eyes: a bee booth with a beekeeper in a bee suit!! It was there that I met Richard Farrier (a real live beekeeper!) who listened to my sob story and promptly invited me to the next meeting of our regional association, the Willamette Valley Beekeepers Association. It made all the difference in the world.

I increased our hive count slowly, doubling hive numbers every year. One year when I was up to maybe 32 hives or so, Richard called me and asked if I had 20 hives that he could include in a pumpkin pollination contract. It was right then and there I knew what my future held!

During the same period of time, Dr. Mike Rodia badgered me mercilessly into attending my first OSBA Fall Conference. There, I met with many awesome Oregon beekeepers. It made all the difference in the world.

The support, mentoring, networking, and fellowship I have experienced in my 25 years of beekeeping alongside Oregon beekeepers is something you cannot put a price on.

None of this would have come to pass, however, without the generosity of a beekeeper willing to sit in a booth, either at the Oregon State Fair, Ag-Fest, or elsewhere, willing to help "bee-havers" such as myself at that time.

The Oregon State Fair will soon be upon us. Please consider sharing your expertise this year. Are you a newer beekeeper? If so, you know 1000 times more than the general public. Pair yourself up with an experienced beekeeper for backup. That is what I did!

Whether you help at the Oregon State Fair, Ag-Fest, the OSBA Fall Conference, or within your Regional Association, thank you for giving back to Oregon's beekeeping community. Your efforts do not go unnoticed.

Harry Vanderpool

Losses—Continued from page 1

We will be preparing a full report pertaining to this year's survey comparing it to our previous sampling years. We appreciate the time and effort of all respondents that participated in this survey.

The bumblebee database USBombus and the National Pollinating Insect Database, which includes specimens dating back to the 1800s, can be accessed through the Global Biodiversity Information Facility website at:
www.gbif.org



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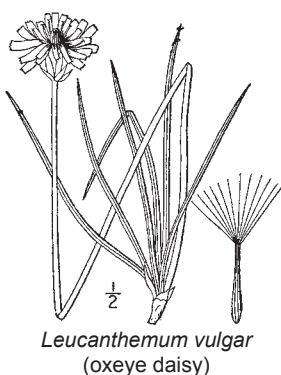
Summer Nectar & Pollen Sources: Some Weedy and Some Obscure

Anita Alexander

Obvious nectar and pollen sources are the rich maples, cascara, willows, berries in variety, lindens, down to the shrubby *Abelia grandiflora* for late fall. Less obvious to us are the many little annual and perennial plants the bees utilize during mid-summer and fall. Many are weeds, in some cases of such abundance as to be worth consideration in choosing bee locations. One is worth moving away from.

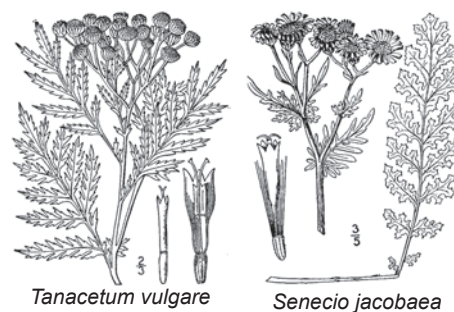
The Composite family is the largest of flowering plants. Most of the 20,000 species are annuals or perennials, although some are shrubs and trees. The flower head is composed of a grouping of a number of individual flowers, encircled by a ring of bracts that protect the flowers as they mature. In each tiny flower, the nectar rises high in the corolla tube and can easily be reached by honey bees, and pollen is generally abundant.

The oxeye daisy, *Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*, whitens fields in summer and fall. The large golden center gives the plants its Latin name, and call bees and butterflies. In the dry sagebrush areas, Eriogonums, or wild buckwheat, provide pollen and an abundant nectar that yields a mild and light honey. Blooms picked in the bud make good "everlastings" for winter bouquets.



Many of the Composite tribe have yellow florets, or at least yellow ray-florets, so are highly visible to honey bees. Along the coast, blooming from June to November, *Grindelia integrifolia*, or gum weed, is common and a good honey plant. The immature flower heads are sticky and the bracts point upward. The rough yellow daisy flowers may be 1½ to 2½ inches across. A less showy member of the family grows in California, and the gummy exudate from the bracts has been used to treat asthma. Honey bees collect nectar and pollen from both varieties. People who know dandelions know a lot, because nearly 1000 kinds bear botanical descriptions! *Taraxacum officinale* is our common kind; the local noninvasive species are smaller and grow in the mountains. Another fine pollen and nectar source is *Agoseris glauca*, or false dandelion. It is a summer and fall blooming plant whose yellow flowers open up after rain. Patches of *Agoseris* near fireweed locations will feed bees and provide a mild light honey whether fireweed does or does

not. The Arnica and Senecio tribes often confuse people. In Arnica, the stem leaves are opposite. Bees like pollen and nectar from either one. One member of the Senecio family has nectar unfit for human consumption. Mike Burgett has done research on this, and has good information on the toxic alkaloid which is cumulative in its effects in warm-blooded animals. It does not harm bees, makes good winter feed, in fact, as they function without livers. *Senecio jacobaea*, tansy ragwort, should not be confused with the medicinal tansy, *Tanacetum vulgare*. The best plant, handsome as it is, has a ring of large and showy ray florets, not *buttons*, and the ragwort leaves are blunt and rounded, not pointed as in *Tanacetum vulgare*. Bees actively collect both nectar and pollen from tansy ragwort. (There isn't any tansy in



our fireweed locations, thanks to the cinnabar moth having killed it out.) One should move bees away from *Senecio jacobaea*, or if that is impossible, take off the honey. Honey that contains tansy nectar has a bitter aftertaste in the mouth, and an identifiable odor. I think that is our only real problem plant. Rhododendron florets don't do bees any good, but they collect so little of it, it is not a problem.

There are about 35 species of asters in our area, and all of them are used by the bees. A home gardener with waste space and a few hives would do well to let the ornamental Michaelmas daisies seed about and enjoy the late August into November bloom while the bees swarm about collecting nectar and pollen. Goldfinches will appreciate the seeds, as well. I know a person who, before beekeeping, was critical of patches of thistles. Now our barnyard is full of them, because they produce an excellent, mild, light nectar in abundance.

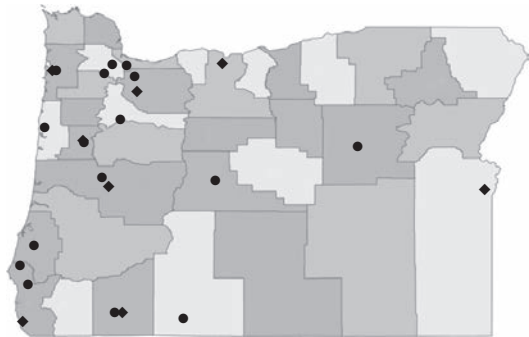
Chlorogalum pomeridianum, or soapwort, is a southern Oregon weed; the onion-like bulb was once used by the Native Americans as soap. The plant is 3 to 5 feet high, has long leaves with waxy margins, and has a lily form white flower with purple-veining. The flower is not very showy, not worth being an ornamental, but is fragrant and bees are drawn to it. One of the common names listed is Bee plant. I don't know if it is as good as *Cleome*, the bee plant from eastern Oregon into Montana.

Many beekeepers grow a variety of annual and perennial herbs to use in cookery, medicinally, or for fragrance. Bees

Continued on page 12

Oregon State Beekeepers Association

EXECUTIVE BOARD AND REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS



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South Willamette Valley

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• OSBA REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Cascadia Queen Breeders

Meets quarterly; contact the secretary for information.
Chair: Paul Maresh
503.283.2060; pmaresh@spiretech.com
Vice Chair: James Hensel
Secretary: Ken Anthony
klanthony1@comcast.net
Treasurer: Tom Chester

Central Coast Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 pm, fourth Wednesday
Newport Library, 35 NW Nye St, Newport
Information: centralcoastbeekeepers@gmail.com
Co-President: Nancy McDowell
541.487.4666; carverranch@gmail.com
Co-President: Anne Schatz
541.418.1156; rapscallion.retiree@gmail.com
Website: www.ccbaor.org

Central Oregon Beekeepers

Meets 6:00 pm, fourth Tuesday (except December)
The Environmental Center, 16 NW Kansas Ave, Bend
Information: contact@cobeekeeping.org
Co-President: Allen Engle
aengle@bendbroadband.com
Co-President: Patricia Moreland
oregonpat@gmail.com
Website: www.cobeekeeping.org

Coffee Creek Beekeepers

Coos County Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 pm, third Saturday (except December)
Ohlsen Baxter Bldg, 631 Alder St, Myrtle Point
President: John Gardner—541.572.3847
Vice President: Shigeo Oku—541.396.4016
Secretary: Betsy Fleming
Treasurer: Jane Oku
541.396.4016; janeoku1958@gmail.com

John Day River Beekeepers

Meets quarterly
President: Matt Allen
541.934.9101; apricotapiaries@gmail.com
Education Coordinator/Secretary: Liz Lovelock

Klamath Basin Beekeepers

Meets 9:00 am, last Saturday (except Nov/Dec)
 OSU Extension, 3328 Vandenberg Rd, Klamath Falls
 President: Paul Davitt
 president@klamathbeekeepers.org
 Vice President: John Wilda
 vicepresident@klamathbeekeepers.org
 Secretary: Judy Olson
 secretary@klamathbeekeepers.org
 Treasurer: Ray Rutler
 treasurer@klamathbeekeepers.org
 Website: www.klamathbeekeepers.org

Lane County Beekeepers

Meets 7:30 pm, third Tuesday, Trinity United
 Methodist Church, 440 Maxwell Rd, Eugene
 President: Pam Leavitt
 541.344.4228; pamseaver2000@yahoo.com
 Vice President: Max Kuhn—541.997.7390
 Secretary: Jodi Wiktorowski
 Treasurer: Polly Habliston
 Website: www.lcbaor.org

Linn-Benton Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 pm, third Wednesday
 Corvallis Waldorf School, 3855 NE Highway 20, Corvallis
 President: Steve Oda
 541.745.7227; steve@lbba.us
 Vice President: Everett Kaser
 541.924.9214; everett@lbba.us
 Secretary: Laurie Bowman
 541.250.1006; secretary@lbba.us
 Treasurer: Suzi Maresh
 541.967.9607; suzi@lbba.us
 Website: www.lbba.us

Oregon South Coast Beekeepers

Meets 6:00 pm, third Tuesday
 OSU Extension Office, located at the Fairgrounds
 in Gold Beach
 President: Jim Sorber
 Vice President: Curt Sawall
 Secretary: Lynn Sorber
 Treasurer: Barbara Fitts

Portland Metro Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 pm, second Thursday
 Clackamas Community College
 Clairmont Hall, Room 118, Oregon City
 President: Joe Maresh
 503.703.5060; joemaresh@bctonline.com
 Vice President: Rex McIntire
 503.720.7958; remcintire_5@msn.com
 Secretary: Patty Anderson
 503.887.7057; wiseacrefarms@me.com
 Treasurer: Barb Derkacht
 503.631.3063; bderkacht@yahoo.com
 Website: portlandmetro.org

Portland Urban Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 pm, first Wednesday
 Alberta Abbey, 126 NE Alberta St, Portland
 For information, e-mail: officers@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org
 President: Bill Catherall—503.572.6467
 president@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org
 Vice President: Laren Leland
 vice-president@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org
 Secretary: Simone Miller
 secretary@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org
 Treasurer: Linda Callahan
 treasurer@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org
 Website: portlandurbanbeekeepers.org

Southern Oregon Beekeepers

Meets 7:30 pm, first Monday (6:30 pm demo thru bee season)
 Southern Oregon Res & Ext Ctr
 569 Hanley Rd, Central Point
 President: John Jacob
 541.582.BEES; john@oldsolenterprises.com
 Vice President: Risa Halpin
 rhalpin906@aol.com
 Secretary: Ellen Wright
 541.941.1894; ewright42@gmail.com
 Treasurer: Cheryl Housden
 541.659.6654; chousden@earthlink.net
 Website: southernoregonbeekeepers.org

Tillamook County Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 pm, second Tuesday (except December)
 Fresh Cafe, 9120 5th Street, Bay City
 President: Bob Allen—503.322.3819
 Vice President: Rick Stelzig
 rstelzig@embarqmail.com
 Secretary: Claire Moody
 503.318.9149; claire@vanirmail.com
 Treasurer: Terry Fullan
 503.368.7160; tfullan@nehalem.tel.net

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 pm (6:00 pm social time), last Tuesday
 225 S First Street, Hillsboro
 Contact: tualatinvalleybeekeepers@gmail.com
 President: Jeff Clark
 Vice President: Debby Garman
 Secretary: Dianne Hutto
 Co-Treasurers: Barb Falconer
 Web: www.facebook.com/TualatinValleyBeekeepers

Willamette Valley Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 pm, fourth Monday, Chemeketa
 Community College, Building 34, Room A, Salem
 President: Richard Farrier
 541.327.2673; rfarrierfarms@gmail.com
 Vice President: Mona Kanner
 Secretary: Emily Cross
 Treasurer: Laura Evans
 Website: http://wvbahive.org



BEE EVENTS

July 7, 9, 14, 22 and August 10, 12, 17, 25: Citizen Science Project: Western Bumblebee and Hummingbirds Forever!. McKenzie River Ranger District. Information: Cedric Maforimbo at: cmaforimbo@fs.fed.us.

July 18–20: International Conference on Pollinator Biology, Health and Policy. Penn State, University Park, Pennsylvania. Information: www.cvent.com/events/international-conference-on-pollinator-biology-health-and-policy/event-summary-a63f438020fa4db6a3dd57d5ba0f1acc.aspx. Contact: Kim Swistock: kar3@psu.edu.

July 27–29: Eastern Apicultural Society 2016. Richard Stockton University, Galloway, New Jersey. Information: www.easternapiculture.org.

August 20–21: Oregon Honey Festival. Ashland, Oregon. Information: oregonhoneyfestival.com.

October 12–15: 2016 WAS Conference. Honolulu, Hawaii. Information: www.westernapiculturalsociety.org.

October 28–30: 2016 OSBA Fall Conference. The Oregon Garden, Silverton, Oregon.

November 15–17: California State Beekeepers Association Annual Convention. Kona Kai Resort & Spa, San Diego. Information: www.californiastatebeekeepers.com/events.html.

REGIONAL NEWS

Note: For all groups, see pages 4–5 for meeting time and place, website, and/or contact information. All groups welcome visitors to join them at meetings! In addition, regional groups often offer opportunities for learning, many of which are posted on their websites.

Regional Representatives

North Coast

It is an exciting time of year to be a beekeeper on the North Oregon Coast. The weather continues to improve, the blackberry nectar flow is on, and bees and beekeepers are both happy and busy. Both bee clubs have been active.

Central Coast Beekeepers had a booth at the Lincoln County Master Gardener Plant Sale in May. Staffing the booth were Anne Schatz, Becca Fain, Rick Olson, Dan Speers, and Stan Scotton. Dan's observation hive was the highlight of the booth. Thanks to Anne Schatz for setting it all up and doing the organization. The Central Coast chapter continues to build a strong relationship with the Lincoln County Master Gardeners. The May meeting was a Swarms: Part Two presentation by Max Kuhn. Very informative and well timed. Lots of questions.

The Tillamook County beekeepers enjoyed a presentation by Claire Moody and Anne Schatz at their last meeting. Claire and Anne talked about the material they learned from the Michael Bush presentation they both attended in April. Swarms continued to be a topic for those attending the meeting. The general consensus was that swarm calls are down from last year. Claire Moody got our local swarm collection information out to numerous sources, which the club hoped would get the word out. One of our members was late to the meeting as he just finished picking up a large swarm under an outbuilding. Rick Stelzig got a call to pick up (save) some bumblebees.

Tillamook County beekeepers now have a FaceBook page. For what is happening at the Central Coast chapter, check on their website.

If you are vacationing on the North Coast this summer and want to find out about “bees on the coast,” come to either a Tillamook County or Central Coast meeting, or call one of our beekeepers in the area you happen to be visiting. We always enjoy visitors.

Stan Scotton

Southern Oregon

This Spring has been awash with a very different set of weather, perhaps thanks El Niño. The last two years have had multiple days in the triple digits, a very pitiful blackberry flow, and looming wildfires by mid-June. This year's weather has been on the cooler and wetter side, which is wonderful for the nectar flows. We've, however, also seen some pretty interesting temperature swings. A few days in the 90s followed by a few days in the 30s and 40s. This led to very bustling, then very crowded hives. You can guess what came next. SWARMS! This has been the most active swarm season that I have seen in my last six years here. While beekeepers were working hard to keep their bees in their hives, we also had a very successful Spring Bee School, and are looking forward to our Fall Bee School, July 30th. More information and registration at: www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org/news-and-events/fall-bee-school.

We've also had AFB rear its ugly head in two different occasions near Grants Pass and Ashland, and whisperings of small hive beetle. The SOBA continues to reach out to local beekeepers on the importance of disease and pest detection and management at our monthly meetings, and through social media, and our website. Our membership continues to grow, and we are so thankful for the engagement from our local community with whom we get to share the love of beekeeping.

Sarah Red-Laird

Regional Associations

Central Oregon

In Central Oregon, we're two-thirds the way through our swarm season. We're having quite a few calls, both swarms, but additionally with all the house maintenance, people are finding the wall and ceiling colonies. Lots of extra challenges. With the swarm season, and the on and off cold and warm weather, we are also seeing the need to requeen either from lack of raising a new one, or being too cold to mate. Outside of the city, we're currently in the dearth between bitterbrush and sage brush, although within the cities, there're quite a few forage sources. Another issue that is being discussed in Central Oregon is defensive bees and the possible causes (skunks, ants, yellowjackets, mites, robbing, weather, etc.).

We have several upcoming talks that we're hosting. The invitation to attend is extended to everyone. Please see our website for information. On June 25, Dewey Caron will be talking about Africanized Honey bees at SHARC in Sunriver; June 28, Naomi Price will be discussing non-Langstroth hives at The Environmental Center in Bend; then July 26, we'll have a panel discussion on commercial and migratory beekeeping.

The Oregon Master Beekeeper Program is continuing strong. Naomi Price has led quite a few Saturday classes around the area. Also Heike Williams from Oregon State University has led several Saturday in the Apiary programs. We're also looking forward to our new candidates for next year. Enjoying Spring.

Allen Engle

John Day River

There is a pretty nice flow coming on as the clover pastures start to come into bloom. We had a really awesome workshop on June 4, using nucleus colonies to talk about equalization. There were about 15 people present, including some visitors from the Central Oregon apprentice class of the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program.

We had a great time pulling brood from nucs to build more nucs, caging queens, and requeening with ripe queen cells. We rebuilt a couple of duds, and everyone got to see a laying worker situation (which was then rebuilt with fresh brood



John Day River beekeepers equalization workshop held June 4.

and a ripe queen cell). We also dissected a few extra queen cells to look at their development. The next workshop will probably be sometime in September to talk about fall bee work and successful winter prep.

Matt Allen

Klamath Basin Beekeepers

The nucs and packages have settled in and the flow is now on for central southern Oregon. We had a strong fruit bloom and with the abundance of water early in the year we have had an amazing choke cherry, bitter brush, snow brush, and wildflower bloom.

A KBBA booth including observation hive and free wildflower seeds and honey sticks (of course!) was on display at the Annual Migratory Bird Festival in May. The weather was good and the crowd was huge (along with the infamous midge population) until a thunderstorm abruptly ended the celebrations.

Our president and our educational officer (Paul and Katharina Davitt) attended the Bee Seminar at UC Davis and gave a presentation summarizing the newest updates on honey bee health to the KBBA membership along with a detailed update on the newest findings on Varroa. Many in our club are new beekeepers, and they shared their updates on how the new packages and nucs were doing and a question/answer period answered many of the questions we always have about the ongoing care of the hives.

On June 25th, we hold the annual KBBA field day. Two of our members will allow fellow members to inspect their hives under the tutelage of the KBBA mentors and teachers. They will perform mite checks and discuss hive issues and oxalic acid vaporization for the treatment of Varroa will be demonstrated.

Judy Olson

Lane County Beekeepers

The honey flow has been abundant in the valley. The preparation for extraction has started. The July meeting will feature Ken Ograin demonstrating extracting at the early session and Judy Scher giving the main meeting topic on Fall Management. Certainly with the removal of the honey supers, treating, if necessary, will help the hives be healthy going into fall and winter.



The Bee Line

The Lane County Fair, July 20–24, will be an opportunity for our members to enter their honey and products of the hive. The club encourages participation and the display booth always gets attention from fairgoers.

Congratulations are in order for our own Kelly Goodwin for completing her Oregon Master Beekeeper Journey Program. Kelly is on the Board of Directors of LCBA, and she has a beekeeping website, Lane County Hiveways, at <http://lanecountyhiveways.com>. You can follow Kelly as she does her inspections, observations and demonstrates beekeeping activities.

Carolyn Breece came to our June meeting, early session, to promote the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program. Our

regional representative is Rick Olsen. The LCBA board has voted to provide financial support for members who apply and are accepted into the Apprentice program. We also have voted to provide a monetary Recognition Award to members who complete and receive their Journey certificate. We recognize the value of the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program and want to encourage participation from our members. See the article written by Katharine Hunt on our joint Field Day with LBBC at the end of May at the OSU Apiary [page 9].

Stay hydrated, protect your back, and happy honey extracting to all of you.

Pam Leavitt

Linn-Benton Beekeepers

As summer officially begins, we are seeking club members

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to channel their enthusiasm for bees by volunteering for shifts at the OSBA booth at the State Fair in late August.

In May we teamed up with LCBA, our sister club to the south, for a great field day at OSU's apiaries in Corvallis, with about 70 attendees. The event included morning sun and informative talks from Dr. Ramesh Sagili on diseases and pests, Ellen Topitzhofer on preliminary results and analysis of the 2015–2016 Bee Informed Partnership National Management Survey, as well as others. After a catered box lunch of sugar water and protein patties, afternoon rain showers arrived just as demonstration hives were opened. A flurry of well-supplemented beekeepers moved canopies and held umbrellas over the hives, allowing the show to go on.

June's meeting will feature Dewey Caron. His title for the talk is "Do You Have A Plan?" regarding June & July Hive Management. There is speculation from the National Beequirer about whether Dr. Caron will include Colony Earthquake Preparedness and identification of the newly discovered "duck and cover dance" during frame inspection as an early indicator of The Big One. On a sobering note, he will also be sharing the results of the annual bee survey.

In July our meeting will feature Kenny Williams, who will tackle the sticky subject of honey extraction. Our members will be tabling at the bustling Corvallis Farmer's Market with an observation hive.

Laurie Bowman

Portland Metro Beekeepers

We opened our June meeting with Carolyn Breece from Oregon State Honey Bee Lab. The OSU Honey Bee Lab and the Oregon State Beekeepers Association have teamed up to develop the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program. Carolyn discussed the three levels of the program. The Apprentice level, the Journey level, and the Master certification program. It was very informative and entertaining. Carolyn is a great speaker and we thank her for taking the time to visit us!

We also had a roundtable discussion on requeening and making splits. Several experienced beekeepers explained their different routines of installing queens and/or making splits. No matter what the level of experience the folks attending our meetings have, there are always new things to learn each month!!

We are hosting two mite control workshops in June. This is a particularly bad year for mites due to the long bee season. The first one will be held at our President Joe Maresh's home on June 18th at 10 am. It should wrap up by noon. The second one will be with VP Rex McIntire on June 26th,

also beginning at 10 am.

We will hold our annual picnic on Saturday, August 13th at the home of club member Andy Rapp. Thanks for hosting, Andy! This gathering will take the place of our August monthly meeting. There will be no regular August meeting.

Patty Anderson

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

The Tualatin Valley group thanks Ron Spendal for a great presentation on native pollinators and Mason bees at our May meeting.

The TVBA July meeting will be in the form of a members field day and picnic on Saturday, July 16, at the Van Dyke farm on River Road in Hillsboro. There will be a potluck picnic at noon, followed by hive inspections and mite counting demo with Dr. Dewey Caron. In addition, new members will be introduced to the TVBA "Honey House," equipment and systems, so they will have all the info they need to be able to extract their honey later in the season. For more details, please inquire; send a request to tualatin-valleybeekeepers@gmail.com.

Debby Garman

Combined LCBA and LBBA Field Day

Katharine Hunt

The combined Lane County Beekeepers Association and Linn-Benton Beekeepers Association field day was held on Saturday, May 21, at OSU Apiary/Oak Creek Center, Corvallis. The day was organized by LCBA members Nancy Orgain and Katharine Hunt along with LBBA members Steve Oda and Tim Wydronek. In the morning, there were 4 different presentations:



Beekeeping Tools & Smoker Lighting/Cleaning - Tim Wydronek and Fred Mann (Fred Mann shown, left)



Bee Informed Best Practices - Ellen Topitzhofer



Medication & Foul Brood - Ramesh Sagili (Ramesh shown here, right, with Kenny Williams)



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Each presentation was offered three times so the 70+ people in attendance could choose 3 of the 4. These presentations included Beekeeping Tools & Smoker Lighting/Cleaning, Bee Informed Best Practices, Medication & Foul Brood, Dividing Hives, Robber Screens & Moisture Boxes [presenters shown on page 9].

In the afternoon after a relaxing lunch, everyone either attended a beginner/intermediate hive demonstration or an advanced. Beginner/intermediate demonstrators were: Art Martinac, Kenny Williams, Kelly Goodwin, and Jason Rowan. Advanced hive demonstrators were: Jared Jorgenson and Judy Scher. All in all it was a very successful day despite a rain shower just when we started to open up the hives!

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Keeping Bees in July

July Colony Management

Karessa Torgerson

In most parts of Oregon, July brings the end of the honey flow and the beginning of dearth. This can be a challenging time for bees in any year, and in a year with extreme weather and another very early nectar flow, bees may need more TLC than usual. Fortunately, a few actions taken by a proactive beekeeper can do wonders to relieve colony stress.

The end of the nectar flow means bees will not be drawing out wax or bringing in loads of wet nectar to cure. If you haven't started consolidating already, do so now by rearranging honey supers where possible, removing empty and nearly empty frames so that the remaining boxes are filled with full ones. By the end of July you should be ready to harvest. If July seems early, keep in mind that most colonies don't gain much harvestable weight after the end of this month.

More importantly, your bees will fare much better in the seasons to come if you can get any needed Varroa mite treatments done before mid-August. If you can knock the mite levels down at the beginning of the beekeeping new year (August 1), your current bee population can rear a generation of well-nourished bees that have not been immunocompromised by mite infestations nor mite treatments. The workers will have longer lifespans and should be more resilient to the stresses of winter.

Before deciding whether to treat for mites, you may want to do a mite count. A powdered sugar shake or alcohol wash can both give accurate results. There is an excellent video on how to sample mites posted on the Oregon State University Extension Service YouTube page.

The recommended treatment threshold/infestation level for fall tends to be a bit lower than in spring. A colony going into winter with high mite numbers is unlikely to survive, so many beekeepers are opting to treat for mites in fall when they count 3–6 mites per three hundred bees, or a 1%–2% rate of infestation. Colonies with counts even a little higher than that often appear to collapse from thriving hive to dead out in just a few weeks come August, September, or October.

Before choosing your treatment, consider factors such as temperature, time available to treat, and the use of previous treatments. Formic acid, while effective and safe to use with honey supers on, can cause queen loss and other problems in high temperatures. Other treatments, such as synthetics

and essential oil formulations, require that honey supers be removed before use. See the documents section of the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program website for a handy breakdown of the pros and cons of the most-common Varroa mite treatments.

More Tips for July

The end of the nectar flow signals the beginning of robbing season. Vulnerable colonies can be completely plundered in a matter of days if they are found by worker bees on the lookout for an easy harvest to help ease the sudden nectar shortage. Robbing also transmits Varroa and disease. To prevent problems:

Don't spill honey or nectar near your colonies nor keep them open any longer than you absolutely must.

Cover open boxes and frames with cloths to prevent easy access.

Reduce entrances on weak colonies and keep a robbing screen handy, just in case.

Speaking of weak colonies, consider combining them with stronger hives if you can determine they aren't afflicted with Varroa or disease.

Continue supplying water for your bees if there isn't a dependable source available. This will keep your colonies from drawing the ire of birdbath watchers and swimming pool owners.

Ensure your colonies are queen-right while queens are still available.

Don't forget to leave plenty of honey for the bees when you are removing honey supers. Colonies in many parts of Oregon will need 80–100 pounds of honey to get through the winter.

If you plan to rent/borrow a honey extractor, stop reading and make that phone call! Some years it seems like entire counties of beekeepers want to harvest in the same 48-hour window.

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Summer Plants—Continued from page 3

swarm about herbs. Some of them, such as mint, will really flavor the honey; others are mild and light. I like to grow Borage, a large 2x3-foot plant with striking blue flowers with long, protruding stamens. I first met the flowers floating in a punch bowl. They were decorating tiny cakes at the same tea, after having been dipped in egg white and sugar. The large, rough and hairy leaves are often used as greens, usually steamed briefly with a touch of onion. The plant is an annual, but will reseed all over the garden if one leaves the seeds for the goldfinches. Bees forage the plant, early and late, during the long blooming season.

I grow sweet marjoram as a winter decoration for dried material and for seasoning in cookery. It is easy from seed, blooms 8 to 10 weeks if cut back, and bees cover it, early and late. Summer savory leaves are good in salads and the florets are attractive to bees. Lemon balm, *Melissa officinalis*, has small white flowers in close clusters in the leaf joints. Flavor your tea with part of it, and let the bees have the rest so that it can earn its other name, Bee Balm.



Melissa officinalis

Note: As many remember, Anita was a Life member of OSBA who passed in 2013. This article appeared in the June 1981 issue of *The Bee Line*. Her reminder of the importance of these plants remains relevant through ongoing changes in timing of bloom, naming, and so forth.

Images Source: USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database* / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Vol. 3: 518.

*The database is a fine resource: <http://plants.usda.gov>.

An Evening with Wasps

Dear Joyce,

I was reminded recently of the time Martin Brandon called about this big paper wasp nest in his dynamite shack out by the dump. The logger who went for the dynamite that morning decided not to challenge those aggressive critters who bought the shack was their domain and were prepared to defend the place with their lovely venom-armed stingers. Bob and I went out in our bee gear, with extra duds underneath since NO WAY were we going to use a smoker to calm them. As you know, smoke means fire somewhere, and we weren't sure that fire and dynamite were a good mix. Armed with a hive tool, a machete, a butcher knife (one would work maybe to cut the nest from the shack's ceiling), and two very large black plastic trash bags, we got out of our car to go to work. And dang if we didn't have an audience. You and Ray, Martin and his wife, and I'm not sure who else were all parked in closed cars to watch the spectacle. Remember that evening?

Actually, it turned out to be a "piece of cake." We carefully pulled the opened plastic bag up over the rather large nest. I held it tightly at the top. Bob used one of the tools to cut it loose. As it came off, I clutched the opening of the bag tightly. Bob put a string around. Those bags were before the present drawstring ones. Then we double bagged the whole lot and had a happy night. No one got stung, and we didn't blow up the explosives.

JoAnn Olstrom

Note: JoAnn writes that this letter is from the 1970s and says she and her husband Bob were the "town beekeepers." Joyce was a fellow retired teacher, and Martin was Joyce's brother-in-law. May those collecting wasps these days find them in more-hospitable locations.

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Colony Collapse Disorder, CCD, Observed

Shigeo Oku

I have witnessed Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) in progress in Oregon, and believe that it is caused by Queen Failure: poor mating, viruses, noseamas, and bacterias. This year, 2016, the Coquille/Myrtle Point Valley experienced the highest bee colony loss ever. I have lost all four hives at the Coos County Bee Yard. At home, I lost three out of four hives. A local beekeeper lost 70 out of 80 hives, and one of our Coos County Beekeepers Association members lost 13 of his 15 hives, and others have reported similar losses.

We have witnessed CCD year after year, with the hives empty of bees, yet they all have plenty of sealed honey stores. A few years back, I was delighted to find bees nested in a 40+ inch diameter myrtle wood trunk. It was exciting to visit the natural hive and to witness nature at work. Following that winter's cold, I noticed there was no bee activity. I opened the hive and observed an ample amount of sealed honey and no bees.

We normally experience a few cold spells of from 20°F to 30°F weather in December, and then it will rebound for a week or two of from 60°F to 70°F weather shifts in January and February. High bee activity, their cleansing flights, typically accompanies this warmer weather. We often encounter climate swings during January and February, noticing the disappearance of the hive's bees by February and March, leaving stored honey.

On February 22, 2016, I conducted a pre-spring colony inspection at my home in the Coquille Valley with a master beekeeper student. We opened my two remaining hives and found one of the hives was going very strong with lots of bee activity. Pollens were being carried in, no drones, and lots of sealed brood. In contrast, the second hive was very weak, with hardly any bee activity. Inside we observed a handful of workers at best. The student was first to spot the queen amongst the few remaining workers. The queen appeared normal in size, no eggs, no brood, and plenty of sealed honey.

I re-inspected the weak hive two weeks later and found no live bees, no dead queen, and a handful of dead worker bees on the bottom board. It looked to me like the bees had absconded.

My field observation of CCD is this: Queen Failure! A broodless state, the remaining workers carry on the life cycle and one by one dies off, eventually leaving the colony so compromised that the queen herself dies leaving behind stored honey that would have been used in maintaining the

colony life cycle.

The dynamics of queen failure are complex: Poor mating, a fellow beekeeper lost 70 hives following this last summer's abrupt disappearance of drones at the height of the nectar flow in July. The assessment is that the queens did not have proper mating, less than the usual average of 20. Researchers from a Midwest university noted that there are up to 20% of non-viable drones in the wild. Moreover, use of the caustic miticides may be the cause of drone and queens diminishing fertility.

Of the queen failure, I believe that mites are a catalyst for the ills of infections, such as: viruses, noseamas, and bacterias. Of course, to differentiate them, these microsporidia infections have to be studied. I tried hard to enlist a microbiologist couple, but am unsuccessful thus far.

The USDA has announced two initiatives in support of the President's National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honeybees and Other Pollinators. See: www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2016/06/0152.xml

Honey Peach and Blackberry Cobbler

Ingredients

2¼ cups all-purpose flour, divided
 8 cups chopped peeled peaches
 ¼ cup honey
 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 ¾ teaspoon salt, divided
 3 cups blackberries
 Cooking spray
 ¾ cup granulated sugar
 1 tablespoon grated lemon rind
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 6 tablespoons chilled butter, cut small
 1¼ cups low-fat buttermilk
 2 tablespoons turbinado sugar

Preparation

Preheat oven to 400°F. Lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife.

Combine ¼ cup flour, peaches, honey, juice, and ¼ teaspoon salt in a large bowl; toss gently. Let stand 15 minutes. Fold in blackberries. Spoon mixture into a 13x9-inch baking dish coated with cooking spray.

Combine 2 cups flour, ½ teaspoon salt, granulated sugar, rind, and baking powder in a medium bowl, stirring with a whisk. Cut in butter with a pastry blender or 2 knives until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add buttermilk, and stir just until moist.

Drop dough onto peach mixture to form 12 mounds. Sprinkle mounds with raw sugar. Bake at 400°F for 40 minutes or until bubbly and golden.

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The next issue to be printed will be the August issue, 2016. The deadline for submitting copy is **July 10, 2016**. Please let me know if you find difficulties with the deadline so we can work out the space and timing for the material.

Thank you!

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