



The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

Volume 42

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April 2017



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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

Image above: Good things can happen when beekeepers put their heads together—and occasionally at times when they bump heads as well.

Go bees!

The only time I ever believed that I knew all there was to know about beekeeping was the first year I was keeping them. Every year since I've known less and less and have accepted the humbling truth that bees know more about making honey than I do.

—Sue Hubbell, *A Book of Bees: And How to Keep Them*

NEW RULES FOR ANTIBIOTICS FOR BEE USE

Eric Mussen

Beginning January 1, 2017, use of antibiotics for honey bee colony treatments changed significantly. There no longer is an opportunity to drop into the beekeeping supply store or animal feed store and pick up the antibiotic without a prescription, unless some company decides to formulate a product containing an antibiotic under a “Veterinary Food Directive” (VFD). Then you might find it on the store shelf, but you still will need to have a veterinarian’s prescription to purchase it.

So, the first step is for the beekeeper (client) to contact a veterinarian who is willing to join you in a “veterinary client patient relationship.” That means that the veterinarian is willing to come out to your place of business and be shown how and why the antibiotics might be needed for the bees. The veterinarian is going to have to be able to diagnose bee diseases if he or she intends to write a prescription.

There are two types of prescriptions. The first one, a VFD, is for pre-formulated products like the old tetracycline mixes used to be. This approach is going to be a bit of a hassle, since a “veterinarian, client, distributor” chain has to be set up and there are time limits on using the product once you purchase it.

The second approach is simply a straight prescription. That will allow the beekeeper to obtain the raw antibiotic and treat the bees in an allowable fashion. If no restrictions are written on the prescription, then the beekeeper must follow the label instructions on the product packaging, if there are any. Otherwise the beekeeper basically can use it as he or she has previously.

If there are treatment instructions written on the prescription, they must be followed exactly. For instance, the FDA suggested the following for treating with tylosin: “Amount 200 mg/colony in confectioners powdered sugar. Mix 200 milligrams tylosin in 20 grams confectioners/powdered sugar. Use immediately. Apply (dust) this mixture over the top bars of the brood chamber once weekly for 3 weeks.” The idea here is to prevent tylosin, a persistent antibiotic, from being blended with nectar and other syrups and winding up in the honey.

There is an organization (www.honeybeeveterinaryconsortium.org) trying to determine which veterinarians will be willing to provide this service, but the only veterinarians close to headquarters of commercial operators are likely to be livestock veterinarians. Small animal veterinarians will more likely be working with small scale beekeepers. This should be interesting!

Queried about whether Apiary Inspectors of America had more information, President Mark Dykes adds:

"At this point most AIA members are working within their states to assist the

Continued on page 3

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



In January, I was honored to be an invited speaker at the Pacific Northwest Christmas Tree Grower's Association annual conference. The title of my talk was, "Bee Friendly – Tree Friendly Strategies."

Dr. Andony Melathopoulos joined me there, and we were received warmly. Well, on second thought, maybe not at first. Maybe they had to hear what was going to be said and what tone was used before they warmed up.

Hmmm . . . Now that I think about it, I'm certain that there were some that were rather cold to the idea of a beekeeper on the agenda. "This is a Christmas Tree conference! Why is a beekeeper on the agenda? I suppose he is going to tell us what we can and cannot do next year. What is this guy trying to ban this time?" they may have wondered.

The theme and often repeated motto of the presentation was, "We are all working very hard, and trying to make a living at the same time!" The goal in these discussions is to exchange "inside baseball" of our very different work, and increase understanding between very different and often conflicting sectors in agriculture.

The session was very well accepted and warmly received!

What are the best first steps in defusing conflicts in our wonderfully diverse agricultural community?

1) Understanding. Beekeepers have many pests and disease challenges to deal with. Christmas tree growers, cherry growers, almond growers, etc., do as well.

We must respect and appreciate that there is NO easy money in agriculture.

We are all working very hard, and trying to make a living at the same time.

2) Communication. We will never work harmoniously within our wonderfully diverse agricultural community if we cannot even talk. And by "talk" I do not mean "YELL"!

Fifty percent of any good discussion is the listening part!

3) Education. Unfortunately, there are a number of organizations that regularly hijack the real work of, "Pollinator Protection" to further their mission that has little to do with bees. The words *Bees* and *Pollinators* attract a lot of attention. We must make sure as beekeepers, the information presented is "pro-bees" and not "anti-everything-else."

I am writing this in the hope that those in our beekeeping community will make every effort to relate to others in Oregon's vast agricultural community with the same respect that we as beekeepers desire.

We are all working very hard, and trying to make a living at the same time!

Harry Vanderpool

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Antibiotics—Continued from page 1

beekeepers and the veterinarians with the changes in the law. Generally speaking it will be up to the beekeepers to form the relationship with their vets in order to get prescriptions for the required antibiotics. AIA will assist our members in providing veterinarians with the needed information for them to serve the apiary industry. If beekeepers or veterinarians have questions we recommend that they contact their state apiary inspection service or if the state does not have one then contact either the state department of agriculture or the state extension service. As more information and guidance becomes available AIA will update our members."

Note: Reprinted from the February 2017 issue of the *Western Apicultural Society Journal*, page 13, with kind permission. Of additional interest here may be a study published March 14, 2017, in which researchers have "... found that exposure to antibiotics significantly alters the honeybee gut microbial community structure and leads to decreased survivorship of honeybees in the hive, likely due to increased susceptibility to infection by opportunistic pathogens." With its implications not only for the potential contribution of antibiotic use to what we know as *colony collapse disorder* as well as how and how often colonies might receive treatment, the study results also point to our own use of antibiotics. See: Raymann K, Shaffer Z, Moran NA (2017) Antibiotic exposure perturbs the gut microbiota and elevates mortality in honeybees. *PLOS Biology* 15(3): e2001861. doi: 10.1371/journal.pbio.2001861.



Congratulations, George Hansen!

**Recipient of the
2017 American Beekeeping Federation
President's Award**

How to Help in 2017

In addition to making donations for honey bee research, as noted in the November–December issue of the newsletter, there are many ways to contribute. Help at the conference is always needed. If interested, contact Jason Rowan. Also, OSBA will be organizing a booth at the Oregon State Fair this summer. To help out, contact Paul Andersen. (Contact information, page 4.) Or if you prefer—and for additional suggestions—go to the Contact page at orsba.org and send a message to the Events Coordinator.

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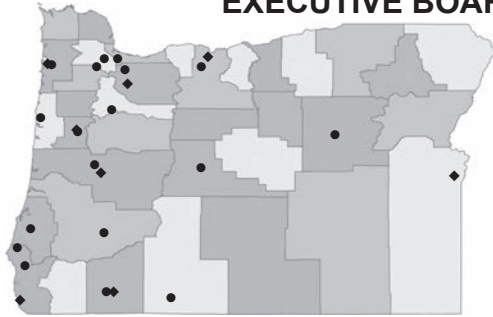
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541.708.1127; sarah@beegirl.org

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Steven Coffman, 2540 Greenwood Rd S, Independence
97351; 503.838.2981

South Willamette Valley

Rita Ostrofsky, 541.685.2875; ostrofsky@pacinfo.com

• REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Central Coast Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 PM, fourth Wednesday
Newport Library, 35 NW Nye St, Newport
Information: centralcoastbeekeepers@gmail.com
President: Rick Olson
541.997.3792; rolson2@attglobal.net
Co-Vice Presidents: Anne Schatz, Kathy Cope
Secretary: Becky Fain
Treasurer: Stan Scotton
Website: www.ccbaor.org; www.facebook.com/Central-CoastBeeKeepersAssociation

Central Oregon Beekeepers

Meets 6:00–7:30 PM (5:30 PM beginners' corner), fourth Tuesday (except November)
The Environmental Center, 16 NW Kansas Ave, Bend
Information: contact@cobeekeeping.org
President: Allen Engle
aengle@bendbroadband.com
Vice President: Patricia Moreland—oregonpat@gmail.com
Secretary: Misty Lee
Treasurer: Steve Crawford
Website: www.cobeekeeping.org

Columbia Gorge Beekeepers

Meets 6:30–8:30 PM, third Wednesday, Hood River
President: Zip Krummel
541.490.0587, zipk@gorge.net
Vice President: James Lombardo
james.lombardo@gmail.com
Secretary: Pat Case
541.806.3052, patcase@gorge.net
Treasurer: Ramona Tamiyasu
541.490.8746, ramona@gorge.net

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

Douglas County Bees

Meets 7:00–8:00 PM, first Wednesday, Douglas County
Courthouse, 1036 SE Douglas Ave, third floor, Roseburg
Information: douglascountybees@gmail.com
President: Phil Moulton—503.349.8463
Secretary/Treasurer: Ivory Los Bonos
www.douglascountybees.org; www.facebook.com/DCBeekeepers

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, 6923 Washburn Way, Klamath Falls
 President: Paul Davitt
 president@klamathbeekeepers.org
 Vice President: John Wilda
 vicepresident@klamathbeekeepers.org
 Secretary: Robert Clements
 secretary@klamathbeekeepers.org
 Treasurer: Ray Rutler, treasurer@klamathbeekeepers.org
 Website: www.klamathbeekeepers.org

Lane County Beekeepers

Meets 7:30/6:00 PM early session, third Tuesday (except Dec)
 Trinity United Methodist Church, 440 Maxwell Rd, Eugene
 President: Max Kuhn
 541.999.0744; t.maxkuhn@gmail.com
 Vice President: Deb Elder
 541.854.5336; dgdeb.elder@gmail.com
 Secretary: Tamara Andreas
 541.406.0244; tandreas6@gmail.com
 Treasurer: Polly Habliston
 541.461.0339; polly@uoregon.edu
 Website: www.lcbaor.org

Linn-Benton Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 PM, third Wednesday
 Corvallis Waldorf School, 3855 NE Highway 20, Corvallis
 President: Everett Kaser
 541.924.9214; everett@kaser.com
 Vice President: Tim Wydronek
 Secretary: Laurie Bowman
 541.250.1006; secretary@lbba.us
 Treasurer: Suzi Maresh
 541.967.9607; suzi@lbba.us
 Website: www.lbba.us

Oregon Prison Beekeepers

Sustainability Program Manager: Chad Naugle
 503.373.7544; Chad.E.Naugle@doc.state.or.us

Oregon South Coast Beekeepers

Meets 6:00 PM, third Tuesday
 OSU Extension Office, Fairgrounds in Gold Beach
 President: Brad Remsey
 330.980.6125; bradleeremsey79@aim.com
 Vice President: Harvey Young
 541.661.0031; fishhawk51@hotmail.com
 Secretary: Shelley Pottmeyer
 shelleypottmeyer@yahoo.com
 Treasurer: Barbara Fitts
 541.698.0300; bgfitts@gmail.com

Portland Metro Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 PM, second Thursday
 Gladstone Senior Center, 1050 Portland Ave, Gladstone
 President: Rex McIntire
 503.720.7958; remcintire_5@msn.com
 Vice President: Doug Sieckmann
 503.804.5417; forty2chev@aol.com
 Secretary: Gary Barnard
 503.898.0301; gary@dranrab.com

Treasurer: Mike Hainley
 503.341.0344; hainleyfam@gmail.com
 Website: portlandmetro.org

Portland Urban Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 PM, first Wednesday
 Rose City Park United Methodist, 5830 NE Alameda, Portland
 For information, e-mail: officers@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org
 President: Bill Catherall—503.572.6467
 president@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org
 Vice President: William Roll
 vice-president@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org
 Secretary: Simone Miller
 secretary@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org
 Treasurer: Amanda Shaw
 treasurer@portlandurbanbeekeepers.org
 Website: portlandurbanbeekeepers.org

Southern Oregon Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 PM, first Monday, 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: Kate Womack
 602.321.6901; k8womack@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: Claire Moody
 503.318.9149; claire@vanirmail.com
 Vice President: Rick Stelzig—rstelzig@charter.net
 Secretary: Kathy Cope
 541.264.9222; beachwalkinlady@hotmail.com
 Treasurer: Terry Fullan
 503.368.9149; tfullan@nehalem.tel.net

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

Meets 6:00–8:00 PM, last Tuesday, Jessie Mays Comm Hall,
 30975 NW Hillcrest Street, North Plains (except Jul & Dec)
 Contact: tualatinvalleybeekeepers@gmail.com
 President: Debby Garman
 503.318.5227
 Vice President: Yvonne Shaw
 Secretary: Laura Stein-Weidner
 Treasurer: Julie Schmidkofer
 Web: http://tvba.weebly.com/

Willamette Valley Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 PM, fourth Monday, Chemeketa
 Community College, Building 8, Room 201, Salem
 President: Richard Farrier
 541.327.2673; rfarrierfarms@gmail.com
 Vice President: Mona Kanner
 Secretary: Shelley Growell
 Treasurer: Laura Evans
 Website: http://wvbahive.org

BEE SCHOOLS & OTHER BEE EVENTS

April 1: Tillamook County Beekeepers Bee Day. Fairview Grange Hall, next to fairgrounds.

April 7–8: GloryBee Bee Weekend (see ad, this page).

April 8: Beekeeping 101. Columbia Gorge Community College. The Dalles. *Information:* 541.506.6011

April 8 (NOON–4:00 PM): John Day River spring workshop, Kimberly.

April 15: Beekeeping 101. Columbia Gorge Community College. The Dalles. *Information:* 541.506.6011

April 15: Southern Oregon Beekeepers Association Spring Bee School. *Information:* www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org/news-and-events/soba-beginning-beekeeper-class

April 22 (9:30 AM–4:00 PM): Michael Bush, *The Practical Beekeeper*. 1785 Meyer Pkwy, Hood River. *Information:* http://bg-bees.com/michael-bush

April 22: Portland Metro Beekeepers Bee Day. Foothills Honey Company, Colton. *Information:* portlandmetro.org

April 22 (10:00 AM start): GloryBee Walk/Run (see ad, page 11).

April 29–30: Oregon Ag-Fest. *Information:* http://oragfest.com

May 20 (9:30 AM–4:00 PM): Randy Oliver/Morris Ostrofsky. Hood River. *Information:* http://bg-bees.com/randy-oliver

September 5–8: Western Apicultural Society of North America 2017 40th Anniversary Conference, UC-Davis. *Information:* www.westernapiculturalsociety.org

October 27–29: OSBA Fall Conference. The Oregon Garden.

November 14–16: CSBA Annual Convention. Lake Tahoe. *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 invite and welcome visitors to join them at meetings! In addition, regional associations often offer opportunities for learning, many of which are posted on their websites as well as on this page.

Regional Representatives

North Coast

Still plenty of weather with hail, rain, and wind. Both Tillamook County and Central Coast Beekeepers Associations are thriving. At our January Tillamook meeting we had the pleasure of having Glen Andresen, of Bridgetown Bees, present. Trisha Kauffman, our host at the Fresh Café, offered to host dinner prior to the meeting so we could at least feed Glen dinner. After soup, salad, bread, and dessert, Glen did his presentation on Pragmatic Beekeeping. We had 38 attendees and Glen’s presentation was well received. I took my original beekeeping class from Glen at Portland Community College many years ago and credit him with igniting my initial and continuous interest in beekeeping.

The Tillamook County Beekeepers Bee Day is Saturday, April 1, 2017, at the Fairview Grange next to the Tillamook Fairgrounds. Start time is 8:30 AM and Dr. Dewey Caron is our featured speaker. Contact Claire Moody, Rick Stelzig, or myself with questions or for preregistration.

I would like to say how lucky Central Coast Beekeepers is to have so many club members who are willing to do presentations at meetings. President Rick Olson and his committee have a great lineup of presentations for 2017. Anne Schatz, who is one of our past presidents, also a Master Gardner, did a presentation on plants and pollinators at our January meeting. Anne has also presented at the Tillamook County beekeepers meetings and I always learn something.

Oregon Master Beekeeper classes in Newport are doing well. Dan Speers, Regional OMB Representative, writes that classes are “progressing nicely.” *Stan Scotton*

Southern Oregon

Slovenian Beekeeping Tour is next up for two founders and a current member of Oregon South Coast Beekeepers, who



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WEEKEND

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already own the AZ hives from there, and are preparing to go to there in mid-May to learn more about management techniques for the two-story bee cabinets, while enjoying the colorful variety of hives, hive houses, and mobile hive houses. There may yet be opportunity to join in on the tour, for the quick mobilizer. For this tour or autumn, or the following spring, or to order Slovenian Bee Hives, e-mail to beeslovenia@gmail.com.

Barbara Fitts is the instructor for the classes for the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program for Apprentice level. She has plenty of help from the members of the beekeepers club who attend the classes and provide a lot of additional information to the students. "There are six energetic and curious students," says Barbara. "They have been asking a lot of good questions and keeping us on our toes. We are very proud of our students and know they will be awesome beekeepers."

Mike Hewgill, 2016 OMB program Apprentice, has made four Kenya Top Bar hives, three of them with overwintering colonies and one which won a top prize in the HobbyCraft department at the Curry County Fair. Now he has built a first made-to-order horizontal "Long Lang." It will soon be up for occupancy nearby.

Purchased bees arrive in early April, bee packages as well as the new wooden nucs (for the first time, replacing the cardboard ones of years past). During the past two years, excitement has been building about the Caucasian, while the Survivor Stock has been a staple. *Mureen Walker*

Regional Associations

Central Coast Beekeepers

At our February board meeting, we've continued to develop outreach & education programs, public relations & promotion, and program committees. We will be offering a beginners class, a bee school, and a field day this year. We hope to offer two apprentice scholarships this year as well.

Anne Schatz give her talk, "Strategies for Augmenting Honey Bee Forage" at our February meeting. Anne is an Oregon Master Gardener and is well on her way to her BeeHD! Her understanding of the mutual partnership of plants and bees is amazing. She gave us many advanced strategies for designing a nourishing environment for our honey bees.

Max Kuhn, Journey beekeeper with a dozen years of experience, will be giving a talk on spring management

at our March 22 meeting. In April, Dr. Ramesh Sagili, assistant professor of apiculture from OSU, will be speaking on honey bee nutrition, and in May, Carolyn Breece, faculty research assistant and OMBP board member, will be speaking on integrated pest management. In June, Ken Ograin from the Lane County Beekeepers Association will be giving his talk on "Reading Frames." Lynn Royce is coming out in August to talk about her research findings on wild bees and how it applies to keeping our domestic bees alive. These speakers all bring invaluable information and experience for getting strong healthy hives ready for the honey flow. *Rick Olson*

Central Oregon Beekeepers

We're finally finishing up with the winter (or so we hope), occasionally getting up into the 50s. Main threat currently is starvation in that we don't have many blooms until mid-April. Still counting losses though.

Even with the harsh weather, we've been able to (with last-minute replannings and speakers) continue with our meetings. December, we had a honey tasting with a gadget garage (what gadgets our members have invented or used in unusual ways). January brought a discussion about buying and acquiring honey bees. In February, we had a great and very timely talk about post mortems, where we can figure out exactly, or at least narrow the possibilities, of what killed the hives. Then in March we're planning on a recap of our beginner bee school with newly thought of questions.

Finally, we're very excited to have Richard Little over to talk with us about the initiation, maintenance, and stewardship of Mason Bees on March 30 from 6 PM to 8 PM at The Environmental Center.

Our beginner bee school was on February 25 at COCC and we had 82 students/new members. It definitely puts a reality check on things when you have real, honest basic questions.

In Central Oregon, we're excited to have a new group of apprenticeship OMB students as well as students who are continuing on through the Journey program. We are especially lucky and proud to have had several of the Journey OMB students mentoring some of the new Apprentice students, as well as teaching portions of our Beginner Beekeeping School. *Allen Engle*

John Day River Beekeepers

Spring is slowly on its way to the John Day Basin. Across the region, bees have had a chance to fly. In areas with Japanese Maples, they have even had a snack. Willows are starting to bud, and the buds on Apricots are starting

to swell. By the time this goes to press, spring will be in full swing as a variety of fruit trees start to bloom. Our beekeepers are starting to report a whole range of successes and failures. One thing is for sure, after this long, cold winter it is time to feed, feed, feed.

We are having an open hive workshop April 8, from 12 to 4 PM in Kimberly, Oregon. This first spring workshop is mostly aimed at new and inexperienced beekeepers and will cover nuc installation, package installation, feeding, and basic hive inspections. Happy beekeeping. *Matt Allen*

Klamath Basin Beekeepers

Klamath Basin Beekeepers Association is going strong. We have been blessed with an abundance of snow this winter season, but it feels like winter is finally breaking. We have some warm days coming up, but with our mountain weather we could get more snow any day. We are currently taking club member orders for new bee packages, nucs, queens, and 10-frame single deeps for the upcoming season.

Klamath Basin Beekeepers recently held our annual Beginning Beekeeping Class, taught by Katharina and Paul Davitt. This year there were over 30 attendees. We

will also teach another class in Mt. Shasta, California, on the 26th of March.

This year so far, we have had educational booths at three events; the PLAY (Promoting Lifelong Activities for Youth) Outdoors children fair, the Winter Wings Festival at Oregon Institute of Technology, and the Klamath Basin farm expo. Our public outreach officer has several events in the planning stages, such as the Migratory Bird Day event in May.

At the last meeting, our Education Officer, Katharina Davitt, gave a great presentation on the effects of mites on wild honey bee colonies and how to apply the research to our own apiary sites. This was based on the great presentation that Dr. Seeley gave at the last OSBA conference and his research papers. She will do a presentation at this next meeting on native Oregon bees. In May, Dr. Ramesh Sagili, OSU Honey Bee Lab, will come to our club to talk to our members. *Robert Clements*

Lane County Beekeepers

The weather seems to be the topic of choice in most conversations I hear these days. Rightly so, I suppose. It has been a rollercoaster of a ride this last month, with rain,



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snow, hail, wind, and a tiny bit of sunshine here in Lane County. I expect the remainder of the state has suffered through similar weather. If our bees can tolerate this kind of weather for a little longer, the Spring season will be upon us. I see a few blooms here and there giving me hope that better times are ahead. I wish you all the best when you are finally able to open your hives.

We just finished our 33rd annual bee school on Saturday, March 4th. I am certain that the 55 Students who attended this 8-hour, intense, beginning beekeeping class are feeling a bit overwhelmed about now. Even before they receive their packages of bees, they are having a few second thoughts. But I hope their training will get them through this period of uncertainty and they will soon realize their chosen endeavor is just as rewarding as it is demanding. Soon they will be engulfed in beekeeping activities, and I hope, continued studies of their new craft. As we all know, beekeeping requires a lifetime of study and is ever changing. I welcome these new beekeepers, and all the others statewide. I hope they are soon mentoring and instructing more new beekeepers, thus starting the cycle all over again. Repopulating the beekeeper supply . . . sort of like a colony of honey bees swarming. Hmmm . . . Best wishes to all from LCBA. *Max Kuhn*

Linn-Benton Beekeepers

In February, Richard Farrier of Queen Bee Honey gave a talk titled “Sprint Time in Your Apiary.” We had a fine turnout of 63 attendees. We survived March Madness with the help of Kenny Williams and his talk on “Queen Evaluation and Queen Introduction.” This month, Morris Ostrofsky will be warming us up to swarming season. In May, instead of an evening meeting, we will have our annual field day at the OSU campus apiary.

On April 1st, area beekeepers gleefully installed sticky boards after a news leak in *The Daily Destructor*. This mitey small paper announced that all Varroa west of the Rockies would be staging a “Crawl Out, Drop Off” all day Monday to protest the recent rise in complex IPM strategies. In an exclusive exit interview, their spokesmite said, “At 6:00 AM we will congregate en masse for hive rallies throughout the region. We are absolutely up to our peretrimies with beekeepers effectively breaking the brood cycle and blasting us with organic acids. Certain bad people have infiltrated our organism to the nth degree. Their ability to bridge communication gaps between scientist, beekeeper, and even bee, is endangering our species. Rallies will be held below the screened bottom board, a place of intrigue in the mite imagination. We hope mites worldwide will protest in solidarity.” *Laurie Bowman*

Portland Metro Beekeepers

Bee Space. That space needed for bees to be able to pass easily between two structures in a hive. Our problem at Portland Metro Beekeepers is that we have run out of people space. There is no longer room to pass easily between the desks and chairs. This is a good problem to have, but we have continually been exceeding the maximum occupancy at our current location. We are not quite ready to swarm, but we are ready to move. Starting with our April 13, 2017, meeting, we will be moving to new digs. Our new meeting location will be at the Gladstone Senior Center at 1050 Portland Avenue, Gladstone, Oregon.

Our Bee Day will be on April 22, 2017, at Foothills Honey Co, in Colton, Oregon. Please visit our website, portlandmetro.com, to view the flier and to register.

Our March meeting concentrated on Nucs and the various methods to transfer these bees to their “forever home,” the proper care and feeding, and plenty of round table discussion. See you in April at the Gladstone Senior Center. *Gary Barnard*

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

The Tualatin Valley Beekeepers Association is in full swing with bee school off to a great start. 60+ participants have now completed the classroom portion of the series that teaches new beekeepers how to tend their hives. Attendance at our monthly meetings has gone up to about 100 people as our focus shifts from carefully monitoring wintering over colonies to eagerly embracing the Spring pollen burst. This is a significant increase over the 50 or so we were seeing this time last year. It is a credit to the many excellent media campaigns supporting pollinators in general and bees in particular. Past President Jeff Clark recently taught a beginner beekeeping seminar at the North Plains Library and received a full-page write up in the *Hillsboro Tribune*. Backyard beekeeping is a thriving hobby in Washington County.

April and May programming is all about supporting new colonies, capturing swarms, and avoiding common apiary mistakes. Speakers include Dr. Dewey Caron, Karessa Torgerson, and our own Jeff Clark. Check out our Facebook page for the schedule. In July we skip the regular membership meeting in exchange for our annual Bee Day Picnic. *Yvonne Shaw*

Willamette Valley Beekeepers

Willamette Valley Beekeepers Association had the pleasure of hosting Ross Conrad at last meeting. He spoke on the subject of natural beekeeping. The information was great.

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The event was well attended. Thanks to Mona Kanner and her husband for putting up Ross for the night.

We hosted a Bee School again this year. Everyone is excited to get another bee year started. Thanks to Anna Ashby and Laura Evans for all their help. Oregon Master Beekeeper Program Apprentice classes for the Salem area are starting soon. We will be hosting the Ag Fest Bee Booth at the Oregon State Fairgrounds on April 29 and 30. Ag Fest is great for the children. They learn about all aspects of agriculture.

Richard Farrier

KEEPING BEES IN APRIL

Kenny Williams

April is one of the busiest months for a beekeeper. The weather begins to settle down, more plants come into bloom, especially trees, and beehive populations continue to increase. Among the concerns for a beekeeper in April are hive inspection and manipulation, monitoring food stores, queen evaluation and possible replacement, swarm control and capture, making increase to establish new colonies, and equalizing hives.

Settled weather and rising temperatures allow us to examine and manipulate a hive in more depth. Use this opportunity

to clean or replace the bottom board and to remove any entrance reducers or mouse guards. This is also a good time to replace aging hive bodies, as the colony is still relatively small and the April inspections often involve removing frames for other purposes anyway.

Check for stored honey. There should be at least two frames of honey, if not more, clear up until the major honey flow in your area. If you find less, then feed with sugar syrup to bridge the gap. With experience, a beekeeper can learn to estimate, by hefting one end of the hive before examining frames, whether or not the colony has enough stored food. Weather can be changeable in the Pacific Northwest and two frames of honey can vanish in less than two weeks if those two weeks were to be cold and wet. It would be a shame to get a colony this far only to lose it to starvation which could be avoided. Stay ahead of feeding and use a feeding method whereby the syrup remains accessible to a cluster in cool weather, such as an inside feeder (also known as a division board feeder), or a hive top feeder placed over the cluster, so that the syrup remains within reach of the cluster on a chilly spring day.

A healthy, vigorous queen is key to the productivity and survival of a hive. With experience and with the help of a mentor or other help offered through local bee clubs, one can learn to evaluate a queen and her brood pattern. While you have the hive open for an April inspection, consider the following queen attributes. Is the queen laying in a solid, regular pattern? Is the queen old and beginning to fail? Is she a drone layer? Is the colony preparing to swarm? If the queen needs to be replaced, April is a good month to do so. The population of an over-wintered hive also reflects the quality of a queen, and ought to be at least ten to twelve frames of bees in mid-April, certainly not less than eight. If larger, the colony may swarm in coming weeks, before the honey flow. If smaller, perhaps a combination or a boost is in order.

In my mind, the two notions of swarm issues and the making of increase are intertwined, so I will address them together here, since making divides can be part of your swarm control and management. Your strategy to obtain a good honey crop as well as to minimize swarming can be attained by reducing congestion in a strong hive with the aim of planning for a peak population at the start of the main honey flow in your area, usually around late May in the Willamette valley, later in cooler areas. To do this, one may remove several frames of brood with adhering bees, perhaps anywhere between two and six frames, depending on the strength of the donor or "parent" colony. Be sure not to remove the existing queen accidentally. One may make up a nuc or a single story hive, utilizing these frames,



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by adding a purchased queen. Alternatively, frames of bees and brood removed this way may also be used to boost the population of a weaker but queenright colony. If you observe swarm preparation while taking out frames, you may make up a divide including one or more queen cells, which should result in a mated and laying queen about three weeks later. This so-called equalizing, or balancing, of hives in your apiary is one of the best things you can do in order to reduce swarming, maximize honey production, and assist colony survival. Of the eighteen frames in your parent hive, shoot for a colony with a good older queen or a better replacement queen, ten or more frames well (75% or more) covered with bees, four to six empty frames for the queen to lay in, and at least two frames



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of honey. Leave the colony with the queen, some brood and some empty frames in the lower box, as the queen tends to move up over time in her egg-laying.

Another plan for increase might be to remove the good, older queen from a strong hive showing swarm preparation (congestion and the presence of swarm cells), along with three or more frames of brood with adhering bees. This is equivalent to removing a swarm before they swarm on their own and can greatly reduce or eliminate the swarm impulse. The larger hive left behind can raise a queen from two or three swarm cells you leave intentionally, or can be requeened with a purchased queen after scraping out other swarm cells. Incidentally, removing unwanted swarm cells gives the beekeeper a chance to taste royal

jelly, an ancient food unchanged for millennia.

To re-queen or to make up divides, one may need a small number of queens. These may be hard to come by on short notice. Check ads in the bee periodicals placed by producers who state the price and availability of one to ten queens; some producers have a larger minimum order. Learn who in your area may be a larger beekeeper who may be willing to sell a small quantity from the stock many beekeepers keep on hand in a "queen bank." Or perhaps somebody in your club may be putting together a group order. Some of the bee supply outlets stock queens but supply is variable. It is well to plan queen needs ahead. Placing a queen order in January or February is not too early.

Other ways to make increase include installing a package of bees, purchasing a five-frame nuc and capturing a swarm. Since a nuc comes with an already accepted and laying queen, it is, in effect, three-to-five weeks ahead of a package or a captured swarm. Capturing a swarm can provide you with additional bees to boost a weaker hive, or a spare queen, or just another start-up. It helps to have more than enough boxes and frames ready to go.

Before closing up the hive after inspection and manipulation, checking food stores, and making divides, monitor for mite levels with the mite drop method, the sugar shake method or the alcohol wash method and treat with a "soft" treatment if levels are too high, as you will soon be supering.

In conclusion, I would emphasize that much of what I have described here to do in April is dependent upon planning and actions taken in previous months, such as ordering queens or packages and having hive bodies and frames ready to go. In addition, I would encourage beekeepers to avail themselves of the many benefits to be gained by attending local bee club meetings, field days, bee schools and mentoring programs. Those who wish to take their beekeeping skills to the next level might want to look into the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program offered by the OSBA in collaboration with Oregon State University.

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The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

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Bees underline the reality that we are more, not less, dependent on nature's services in a world of close to 7 billion people. —Achim Steiner, UN Environment Programme Executive Director

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The Bee Line

The Bee Line is the official publication of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association. Annual subscriptions to the newsletter are included with each membership in OSBA.

Please send news about your bees and your experiences in keeping them, as well as events, corrections, comments, questions, photographs and stories, interviews, recipes, points of view—and ads/advertising—to: Rosanna Mattingly, *The Bee Line*, 4207 SE Woodstock Blvd Ste 517, Portland OR 97206; e-mail: osba.newsletter@gmail.com. It's *your* newsletter—we want to hear from you!

The next issue to be printed will be the May issue, 2017. The deadline for submitting copy is **April 10, 2017**. 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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