



The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

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orsba.org

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

Image above: Almond bloom in late February. The 2020 bee season has begun with welcome bloom following mild winter weather in many portions of the state. Planned bee schools and bee days are noted on page 7 and at orsba.org. Please check association websites or contact their presidents (page 15) for any updates or changes. May all bees and all their keepers be well.

How I Learned to Love Pollinator Health!

Andony Melathopoulos, Pollinator Health Extension Specialist

The Pollinator Health Lab focuses on four general areas that are of concern to state beekeepers:

- (1) The Oregon Bee Project (or the state-level bee-protection plan)
- (2) Reducing pesticide risk to bees
- (3) Increasing the amount of land planted to nectar- and pollen-producing plants
- (4) The native bee survey

In some ways, it's as far away from apiculture as you can get and still remain in the orbit of beekeepers. In fact, one way to think of the Pollinator Health Program is as an invisible agency working behind the scenes to help make beekeeping in Oregon fun again (I previously likened the Pollinator Health staff to the characters in the Men in Black movies). It's like working the Ferris wheel, but never being able to ride it. As a beekeeper of 20 years, I have days that I just want to work some colonies. I mean, who in their right mind wouldn't rather be making nucs?

But someone has to do this job. This is my burden. Truth be told, and this admission comes as a surprise to me, this job has begun to grow on me. In fact, I might even go as far as saying I have learned to love this job! What follows is an account of how this has taken place.

Who wouldn't love going to work when you are greeted each morning by a crack team of highly motivated and talented people? I am delighted to announce that the program has expanded. Jen Holt and I (which is how the program started) are now joined by Sarah Kincaid (formerly of Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)) and Lincoln Best (arguably the best native bee taxonomist for the Pacific Northwest). This is a dream team! I can't believe it; I have pinch marks up and down my arm to prove it.



The Pollinator Health Program team (left-right): Andony Melathopoulos, Lincoln Best (Taxonomy), Jen Holt (Master Melittologist Program Coordinator), Sarah Kincaid (Lab Manager, Education Coordinator).

We were able to hire everyone because of a number of generous private donations to the Oregon Bee Atlas and two new federal grants awarded to us together with the OSU Apiculture Lab. What this effectively means is Pollinator Health can now tackle some ambitious goals. I am able to turn my attention to pesticide safety for bees and pollination,

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Things They Don't Teach in Bee School

Writing this from a camper in the middle of Central California after a few all nighters of moving a couple thousand colonies, I find myself pondering the intricacies and oddities of what we pollinators do. These thoughts came to mind while discussing the myriad of things they don't teach you in bee school with Steve Sheppard, Brandon Hopkins, and the rest of the WSU research team. The subject came up around tying down a cumbersome and awkward load of empty bee packages.

One of a beekeeper's worst nightmare scenarios is to lose a load (or partial load) of beehives while transporting. Bees often represent the livelihood and savings of a beekeeper, and to lose that could be catastrophic. Worse, though, is the risk of injuring a crew member or innocent bystander. There is definitely an art and science to securing bees and equipment for transport. Like so much of modern beekeeping, there is zero room for error in this task. With so much blood and treasure at risk, it's a wonder that load-securing techniques are not more widely taught. As with most beekeeping, there is more than one way to accomplish the task at hand.

Whether you prefer ropes or straps, the goal is the same: a safe and secure load. These are valuable, hard-earned techniques that definitely need to be passed on. Being foolish enough to be a self-taught beekeeper, I have learned many of these lessons on my own. Luckily, the highest price I have paid is wasting countless hours doing things the hard way. I kept bees for years before I learned about front-to-back strapping, as opposed to side-to-side strapping. There is a proper time and place to deploy both strategies. Knowing when and how are so crucial, and yet, despite reading every book I could get my hands on at the time, I never came across a proper tutorial. We have now forums that may occasionally shallowly discuss such matters, but learning by doing from someone who actually knows how is always preferable. This is definitely an argument for apprenticing with someone who "knows the ropes." Had I chosen that path at the beginning of my career, it would have saved me countless hours and headaches. How to properly move bees is such a vast, detailed subject that it would, at minimum, take a very nice manual or a small book to properly cover the subject. If any readers know of such an item, please let me know. Pro strap tip: If your load straps are not tight to the load, put a twist in them to keep them from vibrating while cruising down the freeway. They will stay tighter and be much more quiet.



Other topics include things like knowing when to pull the plug on a queen or failing colony, how to write a durable pollination agreement, how to equalize colonies for grading, how to find and maintain bee yard relationships, how to write a bee business plan, and how to finance a beekeeping operation, just to name a few. There is a lot of valuable knowledge out there that we seasoned beekeepers should find ways to pass on to the next generation.

For example, on the subject of knowing when to pull the plug on failing colonies, so often I see beekeepers spending vast amounts of time and resources on the most marginal colonies in their operations. In animal husbandry, there is a concept known as the *feed conversion ratio*, or FCR. Simply defined, the FCR is the measure of how efficiently a livestock animal converts food to the desired output. For bees, this could be brood, wax, food stores, or just more bees. For every dollar spent on feed, one can easily observe that stronger colonies are way more efficient at converting food to the desired outcomes. A beekeeper will typically be well served putting most of their efforts into their best colonies and using those resources to fix problems or create new colonies. It is all too easy to fall into the trap of stepping over dollars to pick up dimes and waste valuable time and money trying to save every little colony. One will get way more bang for the buck investing in their best colonies. A gallon of syrup and a pollen patty will create more useful outputs on your best colonies, which then can be utilized to fix problem units.

There are so many challenges facing the commercial beekeeping industry. As I highlighted in my last message, that passing of knowledge to the next generation is more important than ever. My hope is that beekeeping can remain a viable trade and much of this unwritten knowledge will be passed down and remain of use. After 24 years of beekeeping, the only thing I know for sure is that I don't know. Bees have a way of keeping you humble, and that is a good thing. Sometimes you have to empty your cup of knowledge to have room to learn new things. There are definitely big changes coming, and I really look forward to facing these challenges with you.

Swarm season is upon us and it is time to divide and conquer. Help your bees to do what they want to do, which is to reproduce. A good beekeeper will monitor hive populations closely this month, give colonies the room they need, and always save the bees a risky trip up a tree and divide colonies as they naturally want to do.

I hope April finds your feed conversion ratio efficient and your colonies abundant and prosperous.

John Jacob

Residential Beekeeping Rules in Oregon

Ralph (Mike) Rodia, OSBA Agriculture Liaison

Why Have Residential Beekeeping Rules in Oregon?

To Protect the Public?

There have been very few issues, over the last 30 years, with the public (neighbors or anyone else), anywhere in Oregon, having been stung or let alone “attacked” by honey bees kept by residential beekeepers. This has been true whether the hives were located in residential or urban areas, or in small or large cities. Most issues that have resulted in a government response arose as the result of citizen complaints or concerns about the possibility of being stung, allergic response, or because of honey bees on their property. Most insect stings in residential and urban areas are from wasps and hornets and especially yellowjackets, while less than 3 percent of the population will have an allergic response to honey bee stings.

It has made no difference in the number of complaints or issues raised by citizens, if some cities and counties had rules and others did not. The adoption of residential beekeeping rules, in reality, does not protect the public because there is almost nothing that the public needs protection from. In most cases, the rules have been adopted without any evidence that they have provided or will provide any protection whatsoever.

To Respond to Citizen Concerns?

In response to citizen concerns, some cities and counties have adopted residential beekeeping rules, thus acting in the belief that such rules will eliminate problems that might arise. However, nearly all of these adoptions are based on guidelines beekeepers originally suggested years ago for use by other beekeepers to manage their hives and to maximize honey and hive product yields. Those guidelines were subsequently adopted by governmental agencies into rules and repetitively referenced and adopted by other agencies, again without any evidence that those guidelines would somehow eliminate concerns about honey bees.

That said, some of those guidelines, such as setbacks, providing water, and re-queening, which have been reflected in OSU’s *Residential Beekeeping: Best-practice guidelines for*

nuisance-free beekeeping in Oregon, can be helpful.

To Provide a Tool for Enforcement to Address Problems?

Many of the rules previously adopted by some agencies, rules that might require the use of a particular style of hive, the spacing of hive boxes, a particular race of bees, or the number of allowed hives based on lot size, would permit the code compliance officer to order corrections if those rules are violated. It would make no difference, in the citation process, whether or not compliance with the rule would actually reduce the concerns. It is much more difficult for the compliance officer to have specific evidence and justification to make a case for issuing a “nuisance” citation to address the actual cause of a perceived problem or concern. That is, it is easier, for instance, to cite the beekeeper for having too many hives than it is to tell the complainant there is nothing wrong or to have to justify a nuisance citation to actually address the causative condition or perceived problem that is not covered by a specific rule.

Having specific rules makes it easier to issue citations, but, if those rules are not needed or they will not remove or reduce concerns or any problems that might arise, should they be adopted?

To Prevent Urban/Residential Farming Operations?

Many years ago, as cities and counties addressed the issue of farming activities in urban/residential areas (zones), many adopted rules and codes prohibiting farm animals in their nonfarming zones. The keeping of chickens, livestock, ducks, pigs, and bees was included in those prohibitions. Recently, cities and counties have recognized that the “residential” or “hobbyist” keeping of chickens, ducks, some pigs, and bees is not farming, and they have changed their codes to allow these animals with some limitations. Those limitations, in terms of numbers of animals allowed, management practices, and other conditions, are intended to minimize negative impacts upon neighbors or the public.

It might make sense to have limitations and requirements for keeping animals other than honey bees because of odor and noise control, animal health, and preventing escape. However, such limits should not be applied to honey bees

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KEEPING BEES in APRIL

Max Kuhn

April in Oregon, here west of the Cascades at least, usually means the beginning of SWARM season. Swarm season for many of us is the most exciting time of the beekeeping year.

But swarming is not the only reason to be excited. It is also the time of year when beekeepers are receiving their newly purchased bees. These bees usually arrive in the form of 3-pound packages or nucs. The bees have been ordered a few months before from a variety of suppliers located all over the US. Receiving these new packages or nucs can be as exciting as catching a swarm—especially for those unfortunate folks who are still waiting to catch that first one. To those folks I say, “Don’t give up.” As long as we have honey bees, we will have swarms. And each year that you continue to keep bees, your chances of catching that swarm improve. So hang in there, your turn is coming.

Now back to the Packages and Nucs. A few years back, one of my beekeeper friends received one of those packages of bees and installed them as per directions into a ten-frame Langstroth-style box. He placed the caged queen between two frames in this box, shook the remaining bees from the package into the same box, and closed it up for the night. He then added a feeder filled with sugar syrup. The next day he meandered out to the bee yard to have a look at the new hive. After watching the hive entrance for a few minutes and not seeing the expected bees coming and going, he sensed something was wrong and opened the hive for a closer look. Whoa! Every single bee was gone . . . vanished! No trace. Except one. There in her tiny little cage was the queen. The only bee left in the box!

How could this Happen?! What would cause a package of bees to leave a perfectly good hive box, stocked with sugar syrup, and furnished with the latest in hive hardware!?! — not to mention leaving their newly introduced queen still stuck in her cage? What kind of bees would do this? One possible answer to this mystery lies in the process of the building of the Packages themselves.

If you have never had the opportunity to watch or participate in the package-building process, you are missing a real treat. If you ever have the chance to go and witness this event, grab it; it is worth the effort. For those folks actually working on the process, it is pure work. For the bees, it is pandemonium, but the end result of this event is the nice tidy little packages of bees that you bring home to install in their new home.

The package-making process involves a large box, of sorts,

made from wire mesh to contain a large amount of honey bees. Into this box is inserted a size large funnel made of metal, or



similar material, which provides a slick surface for the bees to slide through on their way into that box. The box and funnel are moved from bee hive to bee hive in the commercial beekeeper’s apiary. At each hive, workers choose a few frames of bees and, after checking to make sure the frames do not contain the queen, they then shake the frames over the funnel mouth. This causes the bees to slide through the slick funnel and into the mesh box.

The process is repeated until the box, which may contain a hundred pounds of bees, is full. The full box is then moved to another area where the bees are scooped out with a scoop that holds about 3 pounds of bees. The scoop is emptied into the funnel again, though this time the bees are sent sliding into the wire-and-wood travel box which you eventually receive and take home to your apiary. (I apologize at this point to the commercial beekeeping profession for my oversimplified description of their package-making process, a process they take very seriously and carry out with the utmost care and consideration of the honey bees.)

The above process is coupled with the little-known fact that as many as 20 percent of all bee hives might, in April and May, contain multiple queens. Yes, it is true. During these spring months, when a colony is preparing to swarm, it may contain more than one queen. Usually they are mother-daughter queens and it is a temporary situation due to bad weather that forces the swarming colony to wait for clearing before completing the swarm process. The daughter queens are much smaller and less distinctive than the larger mother queens, which makes these virgin queens more difficult to see. I believe they can easily slip past the beekeepers preparing the packages for shipment.

Herein lies one possible reason for the absence of the bees in my friend’s hive. When he installed his package of bees, it contained an extra queen! A battle might normally ensue between the two queens in this scenario, except for the fact that the one queen was contained in the small cage. So the bees in this case, not being able to attack the caged queen, may have opted for another alternative, which was to abscond or swarm.

What if this situation were to happen to you? What would you do? I have given it some thought and decided I probably would not complain to the company selling me the package. What could I say? "Hey, you guys sold me two queens for the price of one, so I want my money back." Naw . . . that might not work.

I must point out that a nuc does not have the problem described above. The nuc is normally made with a laying queen which is not caged and has already been accepted by her hive mates. The nucs are more expensive, however.

Happy Swarm Hunting, and may your packages have only one queen!

Note: Reprinted from *The Bee Line*, April 2019.

Classified Ad

Bee truck, 1988 Isuzu NPR Diesel, 237,000 miles, GVW 13,200 LBS, 16-foot Bed, 12 volt Roger Warner Boom (built & installed in 1998). \$4500. In Medford: (541) 951-5026 or apicycle@gmail.com.

Reminder: Classified ads (up to 30 words) are \$3 for members; \$5 for nonmembers. In addition, members receive up to four one-month online ads a year. For nonmembers and for members with ads in excess of four, the cost is \$10 per month.

Portland Metro Beekeeping Association Bee Day



Saturday May 16th from 9am – 3pm

Check in 8:30 – 9am

Attendance limited to 175 people

Registration Online

<https://portlandmetrobeekeepers.org/>

See Flier of Events

Mail in Registration – See Website Download Form

PO Box 158

Gladstone, OR 97027

Pre-registration by April 30th deadline

\$25/person or \$35/family

Day of registration \$30/person or \$40/family

Honey Bee and Pollinator Facility Officially Opened

Scott Weybright, WSU College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences

OTHELLO, Wash. – Washington State University celebrated the opening of its new Honey Bee & Pollinator Research, Extension and Education Facility [March 6, 2020] with a formal ribbon cutting and self-guided tours of the building.



Brandon Hopkins and Steve Sheppard suspend the ribbon while Carol Hiatt does the honors. Cheers for ongoing research at WSU! (Photo courtesy of Washington State University.)

"This new facility will be a tremendous benefit to our WSU bee and pollinator researchers as well as the beekeeping and agricultural industries in Washington and around the world," said André-Denis Wright, dean of the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences. "The support we've had from donors like the Hiatt family, Ken and Sue Christianson, and Eric and Sue Olson, and groups like the Washington State Beekeepers Association has made this possible. We look forward to developing these important relationships as our scientists work to help save the bees."

The nearly 50-acre property, which WSU bought this winter, will house most of WSU's Honey Bee and Pollinator program, which is part of the Department of Entomology. Over \$3 million has been raised and fundraising is continuing to expand the impact of the Honey Bee and Pollinator program.

"Our industry needs to support the science WSU researchers are doing," said Tim Hiatt, co-owner of Hiatt Honey Co. "We're happy to have helped secure this new home for them and are looking forward to the valuable research that will come out of it."

It's not just beekeepers that will benefit, but the agriculture industry as a whole.

"The seed crops we grew are so dependent on healthy pollinators," said Ken Christianson, a retired seed grower and WSU alum. "The WSU bee program and the work they do is so essential to the future of agriculture and feeding the planet."

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BEE CLASSES, BEE DAYS, AND OTHER BEE EVENTS

April 9–10 (1–4 PM): Tillamook Beekeepers Introduction to Beekeeping. Tillamook Bay Community College, on 3rd Street west of Tillamook County Fairgrounds.

April 13–May 18 (Mondays, 5:30–6:30 PM): Plight of the Honey Bee. Tillamook Bay Community College.

April 18 (9 AM–4 PM): Southern Oregon Beekeepers Beginning Bee School. *Information:* www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org/news-and-events/soba-beginning-beekeeper-class.

May 10: Oregon Coast Honey Lovers Festival. Yachats.

May 16 (9 AM–3 PM): Portland Metro Bee Day. Foothills Honey Farm, 30576 S Oswalt Rd, Colton. *Information:* portlandmetrobeekeepers.org. See ad, page 5.

July 6–8: Heartland Apicultural Society Conference. University Southern Indiana, Evansville. *Information:* heartlandbees.org.

August 3–7: Eastern Apicultural Society 65th Short Course and Conference. University of Maine, Orono. *Information:* www.easternapiculture.org.

August 8: Klamath Basin Intermediate Beekeeping Class. KBREC, 6923 Washburn Way.

September 12: Game Changer Conference. Hood River. *Registration:* bg-bees.com.

October 3–4: Washington State Beekeepers Association 2020 Conference. Central Washington University. Ellensburg.

October 23–25: Oregon State Beekeepers Association 2020 Conference. Florence, Oregon. Save the date!

November 17–19: California State Beekeepers Association Convention. *Information:* www.californiastatebeekeepers.com/annual-convention.

2021

July 8–10: Annual Western Apicultural Society Conference. Missoula, Montana. *Information and updates:* westernapiculturalsociety.org.

July 11 & 12–13: Technology Demonstration Field Camp & 4th International Conference on Bee and Hive Monitoring. Missoula. *Information:* westernapiculturalsociety.org.

REGIONAL NEWS

Note: All affiliated associations invite and welcome visitors to join them at meetings. See page 15, their websites, or orsba.org for meeting time, website, and/or contact information.

Many regional associations also offer additional opportunities for learning, including classes and bee days listed above; take care also to check their websites as well as postings under *Events* at orsba.org.

Regional Representatives

North Coast

Spring is here with some really beautiful days following pretty frosty nights. Beekeepers around here are getting woodenware and equipment ready for new bees coming in April. There were losses but some beekeepers I've talked with reported hives, which the beekeepers did not expect to survive, making it through the winter. Others are preparing bait hives, hoping to pick up a spring swarm.

It's nice to have a hobby that keeps you outdoors in the fresh air. Stay well, folks.

Kathy Cope

Regional Associations

Central Oregon Beekeepers

Things are warming up rapidly. Bulbs have bloomed, some of our ornamental trees (maples, aspens, willows, birches) bloomed in March, and there should be even more this month. Many of our fruit trees are blooming this month

as well. It's interesting as a beekeeper hearing about some newer and unusual types of the fruit not heard of before. We still have occasional frosts, and week-long days of grey weather (normal in some locales, but here we expect mostly blue skies). Our swarm season usually starts about mid-April and runs to about mid-June. This year, with the warmer winter and early spring, we're wondering if it might start and end earlier.

We hosted two woodenware construction seminars for our newer beekeepers at a local member's shop. These are a great way to help the newer folks, both with the tricks we've all learned over the years and by letting them use some of our tools and jigs.

Our organization is looking forward to the BIP poll this month. Hopefully, with more education, discussion, and mentoring this year, our winter losses will be even lower than last year. Anecdotal results seem to indicate initial mite levels lower than in years past, and a higher interest in assessment and control than in the past.

In February, we had a wonderful talk about products of the hive (both natural and crafts) by two of our members. In March, Dr. Sagili of OSU gave a presentation. In April, we will be discussing colony splits and swarm control.

Allen Engle

Columbia Gorge Beekeepers

Hopefully the bees are not as confused as the beekeepers in the Gorge area! Although the nighttime temperatures are hovering in the 30s, the daytime numbers are elevating into

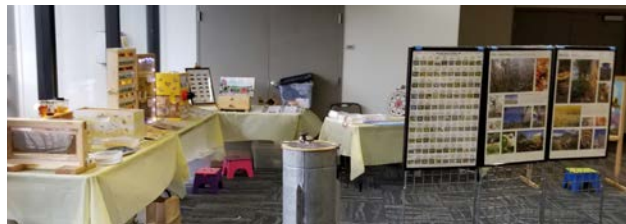
to the 50s. The good news is the bees have been able to exit their abode for the much needed voiding flights; the bad news becomes the mite loads that are anticipated to be high this year. Our March meeting was fortuitous as Ellen Topitzhofer, Oregon State University Faculty Research Assistant, provided our association a great presentation on honey bee diseases. The evening began with a demonstration of the “how to” on installing a nuc. A dive into one of the hives at the Extension Service which had not survived the winter to conduct a post mortem set the tone for the evening.

Daffodils, crocuses, and hyacinths have been blessing our area for the past month. There is nothing like delighting females with a bouquet of flowers, even honey bee females. Although no formal survey has been conducted of hives lost, anecdotal information has not seen high numbers of losses (good news). Dr. Dewey Caron will be introducing our association, in a timely fashion, to the Pacific Northwest Honey Bee Survey, which always provides great morsels of information to improve the beekeeper’s management regime. For the past couple of years, CGBA has sponsored a beekeeping class for “challenged boys.” Each week, a couple of our association members assist the boys as they explore the active hives housed at the Hood River Extension Service. During the off season, a shift is made to the classroom to discuss native bees and honey bees. This will be the second year to host the Master Beekeeper Program here in Hood River. 2020 finds nine students eager to enhance their beekeeping skills. *Jerry Frazier*

Klamath Basin Beekeepers

Here in the Klamath Basin, we seem to be winding down from a mild, dry winter. The warm weather is driving concerns on food storage for the bees, so our members are still feeding drivert sugar to lessen the chances of early spring starvation. Some beekeepers are doing open feeding on the many warm days. Nothing really blooming other than some bulbs.

This month our association will have its annual beginning beekeeping class the third week of March with our monthly meeting the following Saturday.



Last month Paul and Katharina Davitt had an educational booth at Oregon Institute of Technology for the annual Winter Wings event [above]. John Wilda gave talks to over 900 4th graders from Klamath and Lake counties as well as students from Tulelake, California, at the annual Farm Expo.

In February, the association had our board elections; two new members, Christy VanRooyen and Lorena Corzett, were voted in as secretary and treasurer, respectively, to replace Mark and Annette Coleman, who stepped down after two years of conscientious service to the association.

With the warm weather, we’re all hoping to get an early start on working our bees this year while hoping the drought won’t affect plants too much this season. *Paul Davitt*

Lane County Beekeepers

Our Lane County Beekeepers are very busy getting ready for the 2020 beekeeping season. We are busy building and assembling equipment and ordering our packages and nucs. With the mild spring we are experiencing, we are expecting to start getting into our hives earlier than usual for spring inspections and for splitting hives.

Our association is excited to host our bee school on Saturday March 14. We have a full day planned for both new and experienced beekeepers to learn from our association experts.

We are looking forward to National Pollinator Week this year, where we will be participating with the Eugene Public Library and putting on a presentation entitled “Pollinators in My Garden” on Wednesday, June 24, at 2 PM. We have participated for the past two years in the National Pollinator Week and are looking forward to this new event this year. *Michael France*

Linn Benton Beekeepers

Here at LBBA Corvallis, we had our first bee school class orientated to new beekeepers. It was a great success with 20 attendees with their great enthusiasm and lots of good questions.



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Amber Reese put together a great package of info for the students, and GloryBee provided the door prizes, pens, and Save the Bee stickers. Thank you, GloryBee!



We also had some great speakers from our own LBBA board members to Jen Holt from OSU, and even our own premier Master Beekeeper, Amber Reese [above]!

We feel the class was a complete success and will consider doing it again next year. The feedback from the group has been very positive as well. We are proud to have such talented people on our board and in the community.

We as board members have voted to cancel March's meeting due to COVID-19.

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy spring!

Ray Juhasz

Oregon Central Coast Beekeepers

We are on the cusp of spring on the Central Coast with mostly sunny and warm days interspersed with some rainy days. Everything is budding up and ready to burst, and we are all anticipating a good bee year with lots of forage and a good honey flow. We have had Ramesh and Carolyn from OSU for association meetings already and are looking forward to Priya coming out from OSU in late April to update us on nutritional research and issues.

We will be delivering bees, from our annual association order, in April and have an early association session on April 1 set aside for those beginning their beekeeping journey this year to cover equipment, apiary set up, and installation of nucs and packages. As we get into the swarm season, we will

also be having sessions on splits and swarm catching.

The association is beginning to get many requests for educational presentations and boothing. We will be doing booths at Earth Day events, Master Gardener and garden association plant sales, farmers markets, the Yachats Honey Lovers Festival, and the Lincoln County Fair as well as doing many presentations to groups.

Becca Fain

Portland Metro Beekeepers

The PMBA February meeting was a packed room and full agenda. There was a great presentation regarding the inclusion of trees in addition to annuals and perennials to promote honey bee health. Also, on display were microscopes for viewing queens, workers, and drones with magnification. What amazing creature are our *Apis mellifera*. Over 20 varieties of monofloral honeys were available for sampling. Who knew there were so many varieties and tastes available?

Planning continues for the PMBA Bee Day event. This year, it is being held on May 16, from 9 AM to 3 PM at Foothills Honey Company in Colton. It's shaping up to be another great event. Stay tuned for a more complete list of topics and events next month. Or see our ad in this *Bee Line*, page 5. Many thanks to Foothills Honey for hosting us again for this event.

February weather in the Willamette Valley is unpredictable, at best. This year was no exception. Our bees had to contend with daytime highs some days of over 60 degrees and some nighttime lows below freezing. There was also 18 days of rain, with a total of 7 inches accumulated. For those of us who keep bees at home, the weather reminds us to check for food stores in the hive when we can peek into them. Keep an eye on this and feed as appropriate. In keeping an eye out for warmer weather in the future, consider stocking up on sugar, pollen substitute patties, and treatments. Also keep getting ready for the upcoming season. Get boxes, frames,

swarm traps, and nucs ready now for the delivery of nucs and packages and for swarms next month and later in the season.

David Schwartz

Portland Urban Beekeepers

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pandemic, the Portland Urban Beekeepers' February member meeting was very well attended with 65 people. Of those, we had about six brand new attendees. Having added a show and tell feature, we had some very interesting presentations—one long-time member brought his tool box with his notebook, hive tools, bee brush, smoker, fuel and lighter, a very nice set up. We were also shown a modified feeding frame that a fellow was using for ventilation, and an electronics whiz made an individual bee counter that looked like an electronic entrance reducer. Seasonal beekeeping questions were focused on what the mites are doing right now, and what part of the day oxalic acid vapor might be most effective.

Our featured speaker was Aaron Anderson, a PhD student in the OSU Department of Horticulture, who discussed his research on gardening with native plants for pollinators. Currently, Aaron is running a large field trial at OSU's North Willamette Research Center studying 23 native Willamette Valley wildflower species. Aaron monitors the floral bloom, performs timed pollinator observations, and samples the insect community on each plot. Additionally, he is currently asking gardeners to rank the aesthetics of these flowers via an online survey. From this research, Aaron plans on developing pollinator-friendly planting lists of Pacific Northwest native wildflowers that are also attractive to home gardeners. His talk was excellent. He described his research design, methods, and theories about which native plants pollinators were most attracted to, and, of those native plants, which ones gardeners found most attractive. Interestingly, with very little education, most gardeners who were not initially attracted to some native plants reported that they would be more willing to plant those plants that pollinators found attractive in their gardens.

Aaron's talk was augmented by Glen Andresen's photo essay on what's blooming in Portland that included rosemary, dandelion, crocus, maple, Asian pear, cherry, hellebore, snowdrop, clematis, manzanita, heather, mahonia, Japanese Andromeda, Viburnum, witchhazel, flowering

currant, pussy willow, and black cottonwood, to name a few. Last month Glen put out a request for a picture of a bee visiting Walnut trees. You can send the picture to glen@bridgetownbees.com.
Jessica Anderson

Tillamook Beekeepers

Last year TBA created a website that has taken Tillamook Beekeeping to a new level. Check it out at: www.tillamookbeekeepers.org. The site is more than just bee stuff, pictures, videos, etc. It is also a membership management system with automatic emailing of event notices, membership renewals, and any message the board of directors wishes to send to the members. We use it to sell any product such as raffle tickets, logo items, and our annual NUCs and Packages. We highly recommend using Wild Apricot as a website platform.

This year, we have taken on a bookkeeping system that is world class: Oracle NetSuite. NetSuite would normally cost a small business roughly \$5,000 to set up this level of bookkeeping. But Oracle has a program to offer the complete system for free to nonprofit organizations such as our bee association. Oracle has provided us in-depth training to help us get things set up. We are now live and literally every penny that comes in or out is recorded, categorized by unique accounts, classes, and relationships. Our treasurer has NetSuite on his cell phone and can enter all revenue and expenses immediately upon any occurrence. Reporting is amazing and simple. We highly encourage you to look into Oracle NetSuite.

Our annual Raffle Hive is on display in the Tillamook Public Library for the month of March. The raffle takes place at the Tillamook Home and Garden show held at the fairgrounds April 4-5. Of course, we have a large booth at the event as we have had for the past several years complete with an observation hive, tons of bee-friendly plants for sale, bee crafts such as candles, lip balm, and bee wrap, and sewing crafts like



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Our March meeting featured Christine Buhl, PhD and Entomologist. Christine currently serves as the state Forest Entomologist with the Oregon Department of Forestry providing entomological technical assistance to various types of landowners and flies aerial surveys of forest damage. Great meeting and amazingly beneficial information provided.

The status of our bees is discouraging. Many have lost their colonies. Some have lost as much as 60 percent. Our concern is that many beekeepers are suggesting that they just may quit trying. That is a terrible state. If we are to truly “Save the Bees,” then we can’t give up. This is a hard task, and, when one opens up a hive and sees a ton of dead bees or no bees at all, clearly it is discouraging. But, please don’t give up. We can beat this, and the more we work together to solve the dilemma of losing our bees, the greater will be our success.

Brad York

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

Spring seems to be coming along, with good dandelion, daffodil, Andromeda, and camellia in bloom. We are looking forward to March 14 Bee School, April nucs delivery, and Dr. Dewey Caron returning like a swallow from Capistrano to shake us down for colony overwinter data statistics. Our meetings are being well attended (60–75 or so). All are welcome to join us on monthly last Tuesdays. Oregon State University’s Dr. Sagili delivered a ton of great Varroa information at our February meeting, and, coronavirus willing, we look forward to great small group demos on key fieldwork tasks on March 31. Our new website resources and forum areas are growing and offering good value at: tvbabees.org.

Debbie Garman



Honey bees in the almonds, strapped and readied for their return to Oregon in March. The work of the bees and beekeepers from the start of bloom (photo, page 1) to the trip back home again has only just begun!

Residential Beekeeping —Continued from page 3

as, for the most part, they do not have these issues. Honey bees do fly up to 2 or more miles away seeking nectar and pollen. That is their nature, and there is no way that can be prevented other than placement in a very large screened enclosure, in which they would ultimately die.

Bottom Line?

Are specific residential beekeeping rules needed? The simple answer is *no*. As recommended by the OSBA, the use of general nuisance codes, as many cities now do, is sufficient for the few instances when issues have arisen. This is in accordance with the 2015 Residential Beekeeping legislation adopted by House Bill (HB) 2653 and codified as ORS 602.035 and 602.045.

But will specific rules be adopted? The answer is *yes*, as long as citizens and governmental agencies believe that by doing so they will somehow address and eliminate the concerns and problems that might arise. Our role as beekeepers is provide input so that the adopted specific rules reflect good beekeeping practices, in accordance with the OSU's *Residential Beekeeping*, which will reduce and eliminate problems before they arise and such that the specific rules do not place unnecessary and ineffective limits and restrictions on residential beekeeping.



SIGNS OF SPRING

In addition to the trek back home from the almonds and the buds and blossoms we now see at every turn, temperatures are on the rise and colonies everywhere are making their own preparations for the season :-)

The 2020 OSBA Swarm Call List is open. To be listed, please send: your name, phone number, and whether or not it is okay to text the number; indicate whether or not you charge a fee as well as if your availability is limited (e.g., weekends only); and provide up to 10 areas for listing to osba.newsletter@gmail.com. If applicable, also indicate listing for bee removal: the general area you will cover and conditions. Thank you!

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Pollinator Health —Continued from page 1

while the staff can shuttle our new volunteer native bee survey program (get this, it's called the *Master Melittologist Program*) as well as our research on forage plants for bees. A big thanks to OSBA, the Portland Urban Beekeepers and Lane County Beekeepers Association for supporting our program in 2019.

What About the Oregon Bee Project?

For those of you who don't know about it, Oregon Bee Project is a collaboration among OSU Extension, ODA, and Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF). We developed a Strategic Plan to coordinate our activity that ran from 2018 to 2020. The Plan focused our activities towards four goals, to: (1) protect bees from pesticide exposure, (2) increase habitat for bees, (3) reduce impacts of diseases and pests on bees, and (4) expand our understanding of the bees of Oregon. We made huge inroads over the past two years against Goals 1 and 4, but we really didn't make much of dent on increasing pollinator habitat and, as all of you know, Goal 3 didn't pan out; Oregon had a bad Varroa year (2018), followed by a bad European foulbrood (EFB) year (2019). We are in the process of drafting our next Strategic Plan (2020–2025) with an effort to try and do better on Goals 2 and 3. We will be looking for feedback from all of you through the summer.

Dr. Sagili and I were successful on two federal grants that will help us meet the shortcomings from the first Strategic Plan. The first grant (Pollinator Health Through Extension Volunteer Programs - USDA) will help build OSU's capacity to train not only you on bee diseases, but also land managers on how to increase pollinator habitat. The grant will also help support the fledgling Master Melittologist Program. The second grant (Building New Opportunities for NRCS Pollinator Habitat in the PNW - NRCS) will focus on building high quality bee pasture under three situations: (1) young hazelnut orchards, (2) non-irrigated pasture, and (3) cherries (the focus in cherries is more on native bees). We are also waiting on some grants that would fund our research into keeping bees healthy in blueberries (and we are working with Michigan, Washington, and Florida on a new grant that would integrate our work across the US).

Odds and Ends

Beekeepers Harry Vanderpool and Mark Johnson joined Dr. Sagili, myself, and members of the Oregon Clover Commission on January 2 to develop a Clover Seed Bee Protection Protocol. This document will help reduce problems for beekeepers during clover seed production. I presented the document to the Clover Commission in February, and they were extremely pleased. Oregon Bee

Project will produce three seed packs this summer, one with a honey bee on the front, that are available for beekeepers when they table around the state. We also have a number of informative postcards to help educate the public. These postcards are available after you watch a short video on how to use them (which we should have up on our Extension Website shortly). The podcast is going strong – 130 episodes of PolliNation to date (pollinationpodcast.oregonstate.edu). The most recent episode features Carolyn Breece talking about what a beginner beekeeper should consider before getting started. Check it out.

Pollinator Health has turned out to be more interesting than I ever thought. We are reaching a whole new group of people who are motivated to help bees. We are giving them practical tools to be better pollinator stewards. It may not be as fun as making a massive two-queen colony or wearing a bee beard, but it's proving just as satisfying.

Washington Research Facility—Continued from page 5

Research Work

The 2020 season for WSU bee scientists will mostly be focused on getting moved in and set up as well as increasing their stock of honey bees. One of the biggest benefits of the new location is being able to have a commercial-sized number of colonies.

“Having more colonies allows us to do larger field studies on a wide variety of topics,” said Steve Sheppard, P. F. Thurber Endowed Professor of Pollinator Ecology in WSU's Department of Entomology. “We're working on scaling up our fungi research to a commercially relevant scale, plus we hope to collaborate more with the seed production industry.”

The program has indoor cold storage chambers already located in Othello that will be used to ramp up previous work researchers have done on a smaller scale. Now they can test the impact of in-season bee hibernation to fight Varroa mites, one of the major causes of colony collapse, on a commercial scale.

New Projects Possible with More Support

The new property has two other structures that the bee program plans to make the most of: a greenhouse and a large building with netting inside. While they both will require updates to be functional, they will allow the program to expand its research into working with other pollinators like bumble bees and other native pollinators. The program is now fundraising to allow for new projects, and the scientists feel their research track record will instill confidence in future donors. This summer, WSU will host its annual beekeeping short course at the new facility, allowing both classes and bees to be located in the same place. Visit the program website [bees.wsu.edu] to learn more about bee research at WSU.



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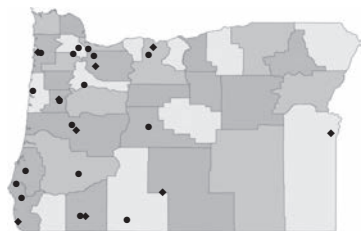
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Oregon State Beekeepers Association

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• AFFILIATED REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Central Coast Beekeepers

Meets 6:00 PM, fourth Wednesday, Newport
 President: Becca Fain—rfain18@gmail.com
 Website: www.ccbaor.org

Central Oregon Beekeepers

Meets 6:00–7:30 PM, fourth Tuesday, Bend
 President: Allen Engle—aengle@bendbroadband.com
 Website: www.cobeekeeping.org

Columbia County Oregon Beekeepers

Meets 6:00 PM, first Thursday, Deer Island
 President: Linda Zahl—503.799.7073
 Facebook Page: ColumbiaCountyOregonBeekeepers

Columbia Gorge Beekeepers

Meets 6:15–8:15 PM, third Wednesday, Hood River
 President: Jerry Frazier—jerry1.frazier@gmail.com
 Website: gorgebeekeepers.org

Coos County Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 PM, third Saturday, Myrtle Point
 President: Randy Sturgill—541.430.4095; randys@rfpco.com

Douglas County Bees

Meets 7:00–8:30 PM, first Wednesday, Roseburg
 President: Jack Reilly—douglascountybees@gmail.com
 Website: www.douglascountybees.org

Klamath Basin Beekeepers

Meets 9:00 AM, third/fourth Saturday, Klamath Falls
 President: Paul Davitt—president@klamathbeekeepers.org
 Website: www.klamathbeekeepers.org

Lane County Beekeepers

Meets 7:30 PM, third Tuesday, Eugene
 President: Mike France—michaelj62@gmail.com
 Website: www.lcbaor.org

Linn Benton Beekeepers

Meets 6:30 PM, third Wednesday, Corvallis
 President: Everett Kaser—everett@lbba.us
 Website: www.lbba.us

Oregon Prison Beekeepers

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

Oregon South Coast Beekeepers

Meets 6:00 PM, third Tuesday, Gold Beach
 President: Jesse Fletcher—jesse.l.fletcher@gmail.com

Portland Metro Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 PM, second Thursday, Gladstone
 President: Doug Sieckmann—503.804.5417
 Website: portlandmetrobeekeepers.org

Portland Urban Beekeepers

Meets 7:00–9:00 PM, first Wednesday, Portland
 President: Cheryl Wright—cwright80@hotmail.com
 Website: portlandurbanbeekeepers.org

Southern Oregon Beekeepers

Meets 6:30–9:00 PM, first Monday, Central Point
 President: Risa Halpin—303.807.1830; rhalpin906@gmail.com
 Website: southernoregonbeekeepers.org

Tillamook Beekeepers

Meets 6:30–8:00 PM, second Tuesday, Tillamook
 President: Brad York—dbradleyork@gmail.com
 Website: www.tillamookbeekeepers.org

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

Meets 6:00 PM, last Tuesday, North Plains
 President: Debby Garman—debbygarman@gmail.com
 Website: tvbabees.org

Willamette Valley Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 PM, fourth Monday, Salem
 President: Richard Farrier—rfarrierfarms@gmail.com
 Website: wvbahive.org

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The next issue to be printed will be the **May** issue, 2020. The deadline for submitting copy is **April 10, 2020**. Please let me know if you find difficulties with the deadline so we can work out the space and timing for the material.

May all be well!

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