



# The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

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As is true for many events, the 2020 Pollinator Week, June 22–28, will be altered this year. Folks with the Pollinator Partnership write, “We urge everyone to hold a socially distant, appropriate event. In an effort to lighten the load on state governments during this time, we are not pursuing formal state proclamations this year, but will continue to post proclamations that we do receive. Moreover, we encourage everyone to go outside and spend some time with the bees and butterflies that inspire hope in many.”

## ASIAN GIANT HORNET UPDATE

*Ramesh Sagili*

Hope all of you are doing well and staying safe. You probably are glad that, even during these uncertain and difficult times, we can stay sane in the company of our bees. I just wanted to provide a quick update regarding the Asian Giant Hornets that were in the news once again. You may recall an Asian Giant Hornet alert that I sent in March 2020.

### What are Asian Giant Hornets (AGH)?

The Asian Giant Hornets (*Vespa mandarinia*) are native to Asia. They are the world's largest hornet measuring about 2 inches long with a wing span of 3 inches and distinct large orange-colored heads. They mostly nest underground and sometimes in dead logs. They generally prey on different types of insects (beetles, praying mantis, etc.), but may seek honey bee hives during summer and fall when their protein needs are high to feed their young. Their coordinated attack as a group could be devastating to honey bee colonies, as only a few hornets can decimate an entire honey bee colony in few hours. They are generally not aggressive towards people and do not pursue them, but can sting if threatened or if their nest is disturbed.

### Should we be concerned about AGH?

We should not panic about AGH at this time as they have not been reported to have established in the Pacific Northwest or US, but we should be vigilant. There are no confirmed reports of AGH in Oregon. A couple of hornets were found in two different locations in northwest Washington closer to the Canadian border during 2019, but there have been no further reports of AGH sightings in 2020 (as of May 15). As AGH is a potential threat to honey bee colonies, we need to make sure that they are not established in our region/country by active surveillance and eradication measures.

### What to do if you think you have indeed seen an AGH or suspect AGH attack on your colony?

Since the recent media reports, concerned beekeepers, master gardeners, and citizens have been contacting ODA, OSU, OSBA, and other relevant groups for updates and to report potential AGH suspects. Please keep in mind that there are several confusing look-alikes of AGH in the Pacific Northwest, such as sawflies, cicada killers, and other wasps, and it is easy to panic if you see one of these large hornet look-alikes. If you are confident that you have seen an AGH or you suspect an AGH attack on a bee hive, then please report the sightings/incident to ODA at: [oda.fyi/HornetReport](http://oda.fyi/HornetReport) or call (503) 986-4636. If possible, please take a picture of the suspect from a safe distance and upload to the ODA reporting site listed above. You can also report the sightings to us at OSU (Honey Bee Lab or Pollinator Health Extension).

Below are links to some good information on Asian Giant Hornet biology, identification, and monitoring:

[www.oregon.gov/ODA/shared/Documents/Publications/IPPM/AsianGiantHornetPestAlert.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/shared/Documents/Publications/IPPM/AsianGiantHornetPestAlert.pdf)

[cms.agr.wa.gov/WSDAKentico/Documents/Pubs/846-SizingUpAsianGiantHornet.pdf](https://cms.agr.wa.gov/WSDAKentico/Documents/Pubs/846-SizingUpAsianGiantHornet.pdf)

[agr.wa.gov/departments/insects-pests-and-weeds/insects/hornets](https://agr.wa.gov/departments/insects-pests-and-weeds/insects/hornets)

[theconversation.com/what-are-asian-giant-hornets-and-are-they-really-dangerous-5-questions-answered-137954](https://theconversation.com/what-are-asian-giant-hornets-and-are-they-really-dangerous-5-questions-answered-137954)

**NOTE:** In addition to what Ramesh provides here, Lynn Royce has written that she recently saw a video online of honey bees mobbing a Asian Giant Hornet, overheating it and thus killing it. Lynn says the video implied that certain honey bees learned to kill the hornet this way, which may be misleading in that it suggests that killing the hornet by overheating it is a new technique the honey bees have learned. As we know, the bees have long killed yellowjackets and others in this way. It works when there is but one wasp or hornet. This technique will not work, as Lynn puts it, “against a mob.” A National Geographic video ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7zWGOGjLxs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7zWGOGjLxs)) may also be of interest here!



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Beekeepers are used to dealing with uncertainty. A typical two-mile flight radius of a bee colony covers over 2,000 acres. That is a lot of ground that we have little to no control over. Will the bees get into some nasty sprays? Are there any collapsing feral or poorly managed colonies within that radius that will transmit pathogens? Is it going to rain enough for wildflowers to produce nectar and pollen? Is it going to rain too much when it's time to mate queens?

Our industry is rife with uncertainty that goes well beyond geography and weather. What will the long-term impacts of fake, adulterated, or cheap imported honey have on our ability to make a living? What impact will the pandemic have on honey demand? When will the Asian Giant Hornet establish in our territory? Will the million-dollar grant to the Washington State Department of Ag to test robotic drone pollination be successful? How long will we be able to rely on commercial pollination services to make a living in light of so many companies with patents, working robotic-pollination prototypes, and deep pockets attempting to supplant natural pollination? Will what I write here today even be relevant one month from now when this message is published? Change can happen so fast, and we are most assuredly living in times of unprecedented change.

One thing I am certain of is that we are dealing with very uncertain times, both as a culture at large and as beekeepers. It is not a certainty that we will be able to hold our next fall conference, although my fingers are crossed that it will happen. In the event that we can't, we definitely need to consider other ways we can raise money to support honey bee research. These matters are on the agenda for the

next board meeting on May 16, and we will have more information for you soon. Regardless of whether we can hold the conference or not, I think it is a good idea to add to our current fundraising model. A crowd-funding strategy will help us cast a much broader net and reach people nationally or internationally through our social networks as well as give us some resiliency when something comes up that may prevent us from holding a conference. In these dire times, will people have discretionary funds to donate? One thing for sure is that we won't know if we don't try. Social awareness of the crucial role honey bees play in our food supply remains high, so we may be surprised at the results. The work done at the OSU Honey Bee Lab benefits everyone who eats food or works in agriculture. We will have to cast a very big net to reach all of those stakeholders.

Research has never been more important. As if the global pandemic of coronavirus, bee viruses, and mites was not enough, we are now facing a new pest in the Asian Giant Hornet. This hornet can be a major predator on pollinators and has become an invasive global pest. To date, no country has been able to eliminate them once they become established. Clearly, we need a lot more research to successfully face these challenges, and a well-funded bee lab will remain essential for our success. If we do not meet these challenges, the robo bees and self-driving trucks are going to have a much easier time filling our niche. I don't know about you, but I much prefer a world where real pollinators can thrive, because that is a world in which humans can thrive also. I know there are skeptics out there who think *robo pollination* is a farcical fantasy, so I will leave you with this from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service:

“Recipient: Washington State Department of Agriculture, Olympia, WA

Award Amount: \$993,836.00

Project Type: Food Safety

Advancing Robotic Approaches to Pollination for Improved Yield and Quality in Fruit Crops

There is an estimated 180,000 acres (~2,500 farms) of apples planted in Washington (USDA National Agricultural Statistic Services, 2017) alone, contributing to ~\$2 billion direct and ~\$10 billion downstream economic activities/impact to the state. Another 23,000 acres of apples is planted in Pennsylvania by ~2300 farmers. Other tree fruit crops such as cherries, and pears also make huge economic impact nationally. Profitability of these crops depends heavily on product quantity and quality – two components that are dependent on efficient pollination during flowering stage. For pollination, growers currently rely heavily on renting hives of honey bees, which is declining rapidly. Environmental conditions also interfere with the natural pollination process thus causing huge uncertainty in achieving optimal pollination. The Washington State Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with Washington State University and

Pennsylvania State University, plans to develop a robotic pollination system that can lead to efficient and reproducible pollination of tree fruit crops (e.g. apples). Specifically, the project will focus on; i) developing a machine vision system for identifying and locating blossoms in orchards; ii) determining pollination targets and timing through incorporating horticulture knowledge; and iii) developing and evaluating a pollination end-effector and overall robotic system. By the end of the project, it is expected that a prototype and field validation study will provide sufficient information for companies (e.g., collaborator FFRobotics) to develop and commercialize a robotic pollination system. Commercial adoption of this technology will substantially improve farmer’s ability to pollinate optimal amount of crop at lower cost to achieve high yield and quality of fruit crops resulting in a substantial benefit to the tree fruit industry.”

Not only will this make commercial pollination obsolete but it could also make a lot of honey bee research obsolete. Sustainable natural systems should always be cheaper

to operate in the long run, as long as they are just that, sustainable. From where I sit, obviously I think that money would have been much better spent studying honey bee pests, predators, and diseases, or developing more pollinator habitat—not to mention the fact that I learned today that funding remains a barrier in the efforts to monitor and eradicate the Asian hornet. To succeed at meeting these seemingly insurmountable challenges, we are going to have to dig deep and do the research that will help us understand our pollinators down to the molecular level and up to the macro ecological level. We will only succeed if we do our homework and fund the research that helps us understand every aspect of the biology of honey bees and their pests, predators, and diseases. Honey bees have succeeded for millions of years through their inherent collective efforts, and together we can do the same.

*John Jacob*

## PRELIMINARY OVERWINTER COLONY LOSS REPORT

*Dewey M. Caron and Ramesh Sagili*

After the disastrous record-high winter losses a year ago, the Pacific Northwest colony loss survey of backyard beekeepers and the Oregon State University survey of Pacific Northwest larger-scale beekeepers reveal a more normal loss level between October of 2019 and April 2020. Hopefully, more commercial/semi-commercial surveys will be returned in the coming days. As of May 10, Pacific Northwest commercial beekeepers (10 individuals owning a total of 88,000 colonies) had a colony loss of 20 percent; 12 semi-commercial beekeepers (6 Oregon individuals) with from 50 to 500 colonies (accounting to a total of 2,000 colonies) had a loss of 22 percent. These preliminary data are courtesy of OSU.

The Pacific Northwest backyarder electronic survey response rate was lower by about 100 individuals this year. Forty-six individuals with 10–50 colonies (total 878 colonies) had a loss of 38.5 percent, while 396 individuals

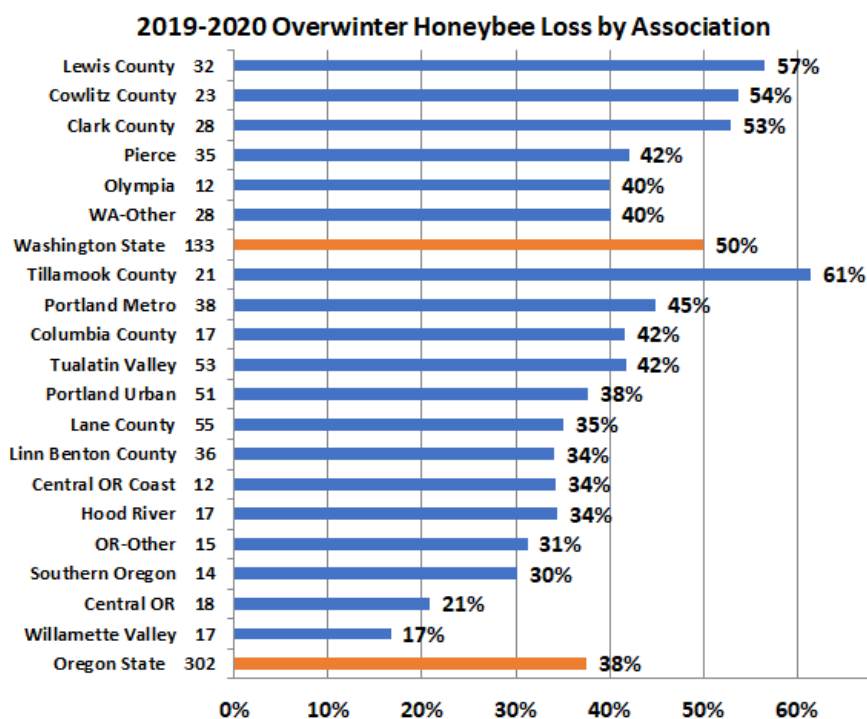
with from 1 to 9 colonies (1,255 colonies) had a 47.5 percent overwinter loss. As in previous years, Oregon small-scale beekeeper losses (38 percent total) were lower than those of Washington beekeepers (50 percent).

The graph presents backyarder losses this past winter by local association representation. Seventy-six percent of returns were from beekeepers in I-5 Corridor (Eugene to Tacoma). There was a 4-fold difference in lowest loss of an association (17 WVBA members – 15 percent) and highest association

loss level (21 Tillamook members – 61 percent loss level). We should have preliminary BIP loss levels (also a record high last year) by mid-month. Reports of backyard beekeeper losses for the state and local associations can be viewed at: [pnwhoneybeesurvey.com/survey-results](http://pnwhoneybeesurvey.com/survey-results).

THANK YOU to all the beekeepers who have returned the surveys. If you still have not returned your survey, then please consider sending it in

asap for a more complete record. See the April 2020 issue of *American Bee Journal* (pages 459–463) for a report on 10 years of Pacific Northwest loss surveys.





## Opportunities to Support the OSU Honey Bee Lab in These Uncertain Times

*Jan Lohman*

Hello, beekeepers, and welcome to our new reality. COVID-19 has impacted all of us in many different ways: loss of loved ones, financial insecurities, and loneliness are just a few of our 2020 experiences.

I have tried to be proactive in my role as chair of OSBA grants and foundations (Northwest Apiculture Fund Committee) and recently talked with Dr. Ramesh Sagili about how the very important work conducted by OSU Honey Bee Lab will be impacted by the possibility of shortages in funding in the future, and, of course, what can be done to mitigate those challenges. Currently, the foundations that support honey bees have some expendable funds, but they will only last a few months to help support the research projects. Ramesh estimates that it costs about \$500,000 a year to run the Honey Bee Lab, which includes expenses related to personnel, supplies, and travel. Over the past ten years, Ramesh has been supporting the lab using funds from diverse sources such as competitive grants from federal and state agencies, nonprofits (PAm, Almond Board, NHB),

funds from the state legislature, and generous donations from local partners (GloryBee, COSI, OSBA, Bambu, all regional beekeeper associations, and Oregon beekeepers).

None of us knows what late 2020 and 2021 will look like personally or financially, so here is my plea: For all of you who have donated funding to the Honey Bee Lab to your capacity in the past, we want to take this opportunity to thank you for all that you do year after year, A HUGE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

If you have had thoughts about donating to the Honey Bee Lab, but not had time to get around to it yet, NOW would be a great time to move forward with those donations. We are all proud of our efforts in getting the honey bee research and extension program back at OSU about ten years ago. We all have benefited from the research program over the years and need now to make all efforts to sustain this research and extension program during these difficult times.

Take a moment to meet the crew at the Honey Bee Lab:

### OSU Honey Bee Lab Worker Bees



in 2018, and she has

**Dr. Ramesh Sagili**, Associate Professor: Ramesh is an Associate Professor at Oregon State University and leads the OSU Honey Bee Lab. He obtained his PhD in Entomology from Texas A&M University specializing in honey bee research. His primary research focus is honey bee health, nutrition, and pollination. Ramesh initiated the creation of the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program and chaired the Oregon Governor's Task Force on Pollinator Health. He has authored several important research and extension publications that are being used by researchers, beekeepers, growers, and pesticide consultants/applicators in the country. He loves playing cricket (not the insects) and badminton when possible. His family got their first-ever dog Misty, a golden retriever, changed their lives forever in many ways (mostly positive).



13-year-old son, Simon, hunting for mushrooms, hiking, and camping in Oregon's forests.

**Carolyn Breece**, Senior Faculty Research Assistant: Since 2009, Carolyn has been a research assistant at the OSU Honey Bee Lab (Go Beavs!). Prior to that, she studied mosquitoes at UO (Go Ducks!) and bark beetles at Northern Arizona University. In addition to managing OSU's apiary of 60 colonies, she has 5 colonies of her own and sells her honey (Honey, I Love You!) to her sister's fitness association. Carolyn notes that it's pretty much all bees all the time for her, but prior to her rapture with the bees, she was a "bird nerd" for 6 years as she traipsed around western forests, mountains, and wetlands recording birds and finding nests for research projects. She knows nearly all forest birds by song! When not in bees, you can find Carolyn and her



Honey Bee Lab, she serves as lab manager and frequently disappears into the pathogens diagnostic lab.

**Hannah Lucas**, Faculty Research Assistant: Hannah grew up on a small family farm in the Willamette Valley. Back then she spent most of her summers in hay fields: as child labor—spot spraying thistles and bucking hay; as an architectural visionary—constructing magnificent hay forts for sleepovers under the stars; or as an elite equestrian hero—racing her pony over hay bales and through drainage ditches with her cousin. Before working in the OSU Honey Bee Lab in 2014, Hannah spent a decade's worth of summers in Alaska and time on five different continents, including Antarctica. Now she tries to spend her summers in the bees or in her 25-year-old tent, The Princess Palace. Hannah likes turtles and disco balls, and she loves her friends. At the



**Dr. Priya Chakrabarti**, Research Associate: Priya earned her PhD in Zoology from University of Calcutta, where she studied the effects of pesticides on wild Indian honey bees. She is an entomologist working on apiculture, pollination biology, insect physiology, insect nutrition, molecular ecology, insect neuroethology, and ecotoxicology. Currently a postdoctoral researcher in Dr. Sagili's Honey Bee Lab, Priya is focusing on improving bee nutrition, bee health, and pollination services. She is "hooked" on the National Geographic show about North Atlantic tuna fishing and hopes to get a fishing license to head to the nearest fishing pond. Priya wants to travel to the Arctic Circle during winter to watch the Northern Lights. Her favorite hobby is cooking for family and trying different recipes.



**Ellen Topitzhofer**, Faculty Research Assistant: Ellen became interested in honey bees while studying plant genetics and breeding at the University of Minnesota. She then hit the road to study honey bee nutrition as part of her MS at Oregon State University. She fell in love with the Willamette Valley, the final resting ground of our ancestors who traveled the Oregon Trail. After graduating, she worked with commercial beekeepers all over the Northwest as part of the Bee Informed Partnership's Tech Transfer Team mastering on-the-ground testing, secret-keeping, and applicable research. With research interests in pollination ecology and honey bee genetics/breeding, she is currently focusing on several multi-year projects. Her only non-bee interest is fishing.



**Emily Carlson**, Graduate Student: Emily is a PhD student in the Honey Bee Lab and Pollinator Health Lab. She has earned the Graduate Research Fellowship from NSF and the graduate scholarship from the Foundation for the Preservation of Honeybees. Her work involves understanding changes in pesticide risk to pollinating insects with varying landscape context and pollen nutrition. Emily holds a BS in Biology from Gonzaga University and has experience in riparian restoration and science education. She has a passion for working with diverse stakeholders towards pollinator conservation. Emily's favorite non-bee insect is the orchid mantis. She has agility trained her rescue cat to leap through a hula hoop. And she collects pink dice sets to use in Dungeons and Dragons.



**Ellie Chapkin**, Graduate Student: Ellie has a BS in Environmental Science from the University of California, Davis, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Dr. Ramesh Sagili's Honey Bee Lab. She discovered an interest in bees and pollinator health while working in the honey bee lab at Texas A&M University, her hometown of College Station, Texas. For the past year, she has been working on a project involving the altruistic self-removal behaviors of honey bees when infected with a pathogen. People are amused that Ellie is squeamish around most insects, but can work with honey bees. She is obsessed with crafting, so when not in the lab you can find her at a craft store.



**Jen Holt**, Oregon Master Beekeeper Program: Jen Holt is the Program Coordinator for the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program and the Oregon Bee Atlas. Jen was an apprentice student in the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program in its inaugural year, and now has come full circle to be the person in charge. She even met her husband Dan in the program! As luck would have it, her two children Finn and Cale are happy observing bees only from a distance. When she is not working, you can always find her somewhere in the garden.



**Benjamin Sallmann**, FRA, Tech Transfer Team: Ben has been a part of the Pacific Northwest Tech Transfer Team based at OSU since 2017 and works closely with beekeepers and breeders in the region to assist with colony assessments, disease monitoring, sampling for pesticides and viruses, and testing breeder colonies for hygienic behavior. His interest in bees began as a child working on his family's apiary/organic vegetable farm in Wisconsin. He joined BIP in the summer of 2013 in order to be more involved with hands-on research that benefits beekeepers in a tangible way.

*Continued on page 7*



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**Heike Williams**, Bio Science Research Technician, COARC, Madras: Born and raised in Germany, Heike earned a college degree in Food Technology before taking a job analyzing foods for Nutrition Facts labels in Portland. She then discovered her passion for beekeeping. After experience as a commercial beekeeper in the Oregon Coast Range, she went from 600 hives to six and now manages a teaching apiary at the Central Oregon Agricultural Research Center and assists in research in the carrot seed capital of the world. (Did you know that every second carrot eaten anywhere in the world was grown from a seed produced in Central Oregon?) When not counting mites or honey bee foragers in a phacelia field, she enjoys hiking, baking, and pulling weeds in her first-ever garden.

### How We Can Support the Work of the OSU Honey Bee Lab

Here are a few ways to donate and to ensure that your donation supports the work of the amazing researchers at the OSU Honey Bee Lab:

- (1) Go to the Oregon State Beekeepers Association website at: [orsba.org](http://orsba.org), and make a donation to OSBA Research Fund, either online through the link or by check. By check, be sure to write *Research Fund* on the memo line and mail it to: OSBA Treasurer, PO Box 10, Aurora OR 97002.
- (2) Send a check to the OSU Agricultural Research Foundation, 1600 SW Western Blvd, Suite 320, Corvallis OR 97333. On the memo line, take care to write *Honey Bee Research*.
- (3) Make a donation to the Northwest Apiculture Fund for Honey Bee Research, Extension, and Education. Make checks to OSU Foundation and on the memo line write *Northwest Apiculture Fund for Honey Bee Research, Extension, and Education*. Include a cover letter explaining your donation and repeating the name of the fund, and mail to: OSU Foundation, 4238 SW Research Way, Corvallis OR 97333. Making out a check with the memo line as described will ensure that it goes to the desired endowment fund rather than the OSU Foundation's general fund.
- (4) Create a five-year plan. Determine how much you can afford to donate to the Honey Bee Lab annually and call me to discuss the best way to put these funds to work. My cell is (541) 980-0304, and I am happy to talk with you about how to make a projected investment.

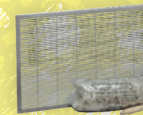


Our sensational group of hard-working Honey Bee Lab researchers all clearly have an amazing work ethic and passion for honey bees as well as a great sense of humor. My hope is that seeing them in action and getting to know them on a more personal level, you will take the time to think about how important they all are to our understanding of honey bees here in Oregon and join me in doing what we can to help fund their work.



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## New Avenues in Honey Bee VIRUSES ~ PESTS ~ NUTRITION

**Samuel Ramsey, PhD**, Studied at Cornell University and University of Maryland, completing his Doctoral Thesis on Varroa Destructor Mites. His thesis articulated that mites were feeding off the 'Fat Body' predominately, rather than the bee's hemolymph. Dr. Ramsey, currently employed at Bee Research Lab, Beltsville MD, is currently in Thailand researching the Tropilaelaps Mite.

**Michelle Flenniken Ph.D.** is an assistant professor in the Plant Sciences Department at Montana State University. She is a microbiologist investigating honey bee host-pathogen interactions, and she also serves as a co-director of the Pollinator Health Center at MSU.

**Vanessa Louise Corby-Harris Ph.D.**  
USDA, Honey Bee Research: Tucson, AZ  
The common goal uniting Corby-Harris's research is understanding the ecological and physiological mechanisms that enable organisms to respond to their environment.

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## KEEPING BEES in JUNE

### The Honey Bees Are Buzzing

*Jan Lohman*

What an unnerving time this has been for us all. The worry about COVID-19 has our nerves on edge and our fears for our uncertain futures are like no other time in my life, but we will survive . . . Fortunately for beekeepers, our natural beekeeping experience is usually socially distanced, so in that regard it is somewhat business as usual. The bees still need managing, and the work goes on.

In 2019, our California almond experience was rain, rain, and more rain. The year 2020 was just the opposite with reasonably warm and very dry working conditions for bees and beekeepers. For those in the almonds, the bees got a very good start for the year.

Oregon, however, has had its ups and downs so far this year. We returned to Eastern Oregon from California with nucs on our truck driving straight through to Hermiston because of the COVID-19 shut down. The nucs had to be stored in our building for several days because it was freezing in Hermiston in mid-March. My point here is that the up and down temperatures in parts of Oregon have stalled the usual swarming tendencies of the bees, and so far we have had very few swarm calls, have had enough beautiful days to get our requeening done, and have been able to get positioned for hopefully making some honey!

**For June in the Beeyard**, the three most important things that you can do to maintain strong, healthy colonies . . . any time of year are:

1. Make sure that you have a productive queen—not just adequate, but productive.
2. Make sure that your hive has enough stores to prosper—again, not just survive but prosper.
3. Check your Varroa levels and manage your colonies accordingly.

When you are sure that all three of the above criteria are met, you can add swarm control to your worry list.

If your hives are busting at the seams, it is time to consider making splits. You can do this by alleviating over population and brood by pulling several frames of brood and several shakes of bees to build either a nuc or two or add another colony to your apiary in a deep box. You can try to let your nuc or hive raise its own queen by pulling a frame of young eggs for the new colony.

In addition, it's really important to keep records of bloom dates in your area from year to year and also a journal of your bee work.

Have your supers and excluders ready for supering your colonies prior to the honey flow, and check to see if they need additional supers as they start to fill up.

Remember to enjoy your bees and keep safe.

## BEE CLASSES, BEE DAYS, AND OTHER BEE EVENTS

### — 2020 —

**June 22–28:** National Pollinator Week. *Information:* [www.pollinator.org/pollinator-week](http://www.pollinator.org/pollinator-week).

**June 28** (9 AM–5 PM): Oregon Coast Honey Lovers Festival. Yachats. Save the date!

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

**August 15–30:** Mite-A-Thon. *Sign up and participate:* [www.pollinator.org/miteathon](http://www.pollinator.org/miteathon).

**October 3–4:** Washington State Beekeepers Association Conference. Central Washington Univ. Ellensburg.

**October 23–25:** Oregon State Beekeepers Association 2020 Conference. *Information soon at:* [orsba.org](http://orsba.org).

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

### — 2021 —

**July 8–10:** Annual Western Apicultural Society Conference, and **July 11 & 12–13:** Technology Demonstration Field Camp & 4th International Conference on Bee and Hive Monitoring. Missoula, Montana. *Information and updates:* [westernapiculturalsociety.org](http://westernapiculturalsociety.org).

## REGIONAL NEWS

### Regional Representative

#### North Coast

The north coast is enjoying some of the nicest weather I remember having at this time of year . . . lots of sunshine, cool breezes, just enough rain to keep things watered. When

I take the dogs out on the logging roads, I see great stands of Scotch broom, which are so beautiful (but probably making some of you start sneezing just thinking about it). Our beekeepers are busy with hives that made it through the winter and the new packages they've installed. And the bees are busy stocking up for the season—no stay at home order for them. Both the Tillamook association and the Oregon



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Central Coast association have maintained contact with their members with interactive online meetings, and we are appreciating the programs offered by the folks at OSU. It's a great way to stay connected in this difficult time.

Now I'm off to enjoy my first social event in several weeks, where I'll be taking a lunch (purchased with stimulus money from one of the restaurants doing take-out) and camp chair to a large grassy area in Newport to meet with two aquarium friends. We will set our chairs 8 or 10 feet apart and holler at one another. Looking forward to it.

*Kathy Cope*

## Regional Associations

### Central Oregon Beekeepers

We've had the usual nice warm weather during May interspersed with both series of cloudy days and a couple of freezes. The usual rule of thumb is that you are pretty safe planting your tomatoes on June 1, but if you want to be almost perfectly safe, you should wait until June 15. Anyway, all the fruit trees did well this spring. The bitterbrush had a wonderful bloom (it's nice seeing all the blooms as you drive through the desert, especially as they tend to bloom in the otherwise nonproductive areas). Sagebrush is next.

Swarm season this year was quite "productive." Lots of swarms. We're doing some extra education on how to avoid/mitigate swarming, especially in urban areas. Suppliers were a little bit late this year with nucs and packages because of the cold weather in March and April. We are particularly thankful for the time and effort the breeders and commercial producers put into the nucs and packages our members use to restock their winter losses. We are also waiting to hear the results of the two winter loss polls for Central Oregon.

With swarms, we in Central Oregon are having a few more interactions between urban beekeepers and their neighbors. We

are taking time to educate our members in the best practices for beekeepers to avoid negative interactions with neighbors, especially in an urban setting, and also are hoping to reach out to nonmembers in this issue. Our meetings are currently being held online via Zoom. You are invited to join us; please see the announcement on our website: [www.cobeekeeping.org](http://www.cobeekeeping.org).

*Allen Engle*


### Columbia Gorge Beekeepers

Humanity as a lot has proven impatient! Heart disease, cancer, and now the COVID-19 epidemic must be eradicated. Yet, in spite of vast amounts of resources, each prevails. Thus it is with the Varroa mite. Beekeepers have integrated into their management regimes sampling for the pest, miticides (chemical pesticides), and mechanical techniques in hopes of mitigating the onslaught.

Honey bee colonies explode from their winter numbers of 15,000 to 20,000 into an abundant 50,000–60,000 by June. Each honey bee brood cell finds an adult bee emerging along with a mother and her daughter mite. Two thousand bees emerging per day finds the singular hive welcoming 4,000 mites who rapidly find new brood cells available to support their proliferation. Similar to many diseases suffered by the human population, the mite has no enemies or diseases to eliminate or reduce their destructive behaviors.

Each year, honey bee surveys are conducted with all levels of beekeepers. Dewey Caron conducts a Pacific Northwest Honey Bee Survey annually. The 2018–2019 season found 60 percent overwinter loss in Washington and 48 percent loss in Oregon. The Columbia Gorge region incurred a 58 percent loss for the 2018–2019 season. Preliminary reports for the 2019–2020 overwintering indicate an improvement downward to 34 percent.

It was not until Dr. Samuel Ramsey delved into the feeding habits of the Varroa mite that well accepted knowledge the mite thrived on the hemolymph of the bee was found to be inaccurate. In fact, the mite hides between the abdominal segments. The mite can be found splayed flat with its mouth firmly entrenched in the tissue injecting viruses while nourishing on the fat bodies of the bee. The distinction seems irrelevant to the novitiate, but in terms of battling the destructive pest is clearly a *game changer*. Rather than focusing on external treatments, scientists may now alter their course to treatments that may be absorbed into the body tissue of the honey bee.



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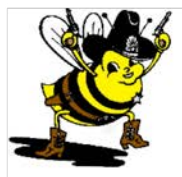
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Beekeeping is truly an awe-inspiring venture that delights us but also frustrates our perceived intelligence. Those committed to a consistent management routine throughout the year find success while those who are less diligent in their bee practices suffer colony losses. Columbia Gorge Beekeepers ([www.gorgebeekeepers.org](http://www.gorgebeekeepers.org)) meets with a differing subject presented by differing entomologists or beekeepers and a premeeting event which has a hive demonstration of some aspect of beekeeping (e.g., hive split, Varroa mite testing).

*Jerry Frazier*

### Klamath Basin Beekeepers

Like many bee keeping organizations across the country, the Klamath Basin Beekeepers Association has had to adjust our regular meetings to align with recent COVID-19 mandates. On March 28, Paul and Katharina Davitt hosted the beginning bee keeping class remotely via Zoom and posted additional resources related to bee keeping on the organization's Facebook page. Having overcome the challenge of offering the bee keeping class, board leadership turned their attention to placing a bee order and distributing the bees.



In our first-ever drive-through operation, association members were able to pick up their packages and nucs on April 25. Board members arrived early that morning to organize



the delivery into individual orders. When members came, they drove to the loading zone to receive their order. To protect public health during this process, board members maintained

the social distancing requirement of 6 feet and wore masks. A similar operation was used the next week for equipment drop off. Following the bee order delivery, another meeting was offered via Zoom on the 26th to address any concerns or questions about people's new bees. Our thanks to Katharina Davitt who made adorable bee masks for the board to wear. Special recognition to Terri Torres who manages our bee order every year and John Wilda who drove to central California to pick up the delivery. The May KBBA meeting will be on Zoom. Information:



[www.facebook.com/groups/kbbafb](https://www.facebook.com/groups/kbbafb). Given the request by Klamath County Commissioners to reopen on May 15, we are hopeful that we will be able to have a field day in June. More details will be forthcoming pending instructions from county leadership about social gatherings. We hope to see you all in person soon. *Christy VanRooyen*

### Lane County Beekeepers

There are certainly lots of questions right now in this world. One question that has a positive answer is, "How are the bees?" Good reports from the association members of more overwintered colonies. There are also lots of swarm calls for LCBA members this year. We are hearing positive reports on the health and strength of package bees from California and the same for nucs from Oregon. On top of that, we have weather that puts us about a week early this year. So, get those honey supers on now!

The bad news is that our association has not met for two months now, and we do not know if we will meet in May or June at the earliest. But we will all come together again soon and share our bee stories and laugh together. Even though we are not meeting in person, the association is not standing still. We have been busy adding content to our [lcbaoor.org](http://lcbaoor.org) website. Check out some of the presentations by clicking on the "LCBA TALKS" tab. You will find some valuable information by our knowledgeable association members. It's not quite as great as our monthly meetings, but very informative still.

*Michael France*

### Linn Benton Beekeepers

Hello from our great state of Oregon. We are still not able to have any large gatherings at this time, so we will not have our association meeting this month. We are getting lots of reports of swarms from everyone. Oregon State University has also reported more swarms this year and has been really great on putting on videos directly from their apiary and making them available to all of us. They have also been having monthly conference calls on Zoom for everyone to call in with bee questions. These e-meetings have been really awesome. Many thanks to the staff at the OSU Honey Bee Lab and Dr. Ramesh Sagili for what they are doing at this time.

Everyone, take care and stay safe.

*Ray Juhasz*

### Portland Metro Beekeepers

Swarm season arrived early in the Portland Metro area. It started 2 or 3 weeks earlier than average, catching some of us off guard. The Facebook sites for Portland Metro Beekeepers Association and the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program had posts of many beekeepers catching swarms high and low.

Personally, I was able to get a lead and capture a small swarm



that had settled in a bird feeder less than 5 feet off the ground. One member had a swarm and an after swarm that landed on the same shrub 3 feet off the ground. It is a great reminder to keep looking in your hives for signs of swarming before they swarm and to make plans ahead of time. It's disheartening

to have your hard work and resources literally fly away.

Like many groups these days, PMBA is using virtual meetings to stay connected. Our April meeting was held virtually, and plans for the future include continuing this practice until federal, state, and local officials approve meeting publicly or arrangements are made for conducting safe meetings. Similarly, our planned Bee Day for May 16 has been postponed. We will look to a later date to reschedule, depending upon when it is safe and when Foothills Honey can accommodate.

There is promise of warmer temps and dry days ahead. Already California poppies are starting to flower, apples and cherries are either done or nearly done, blasted buttercup is blooming, and raspberries are showing flower

buds. I've even heard of a blackberry blossom sighting down towards Eugene. Some PMBA members have their hives in pollination services for cherries and blueberries. In preparation for the nectar flow, many of us hobbyists have put honey supers on and are withdrawing feed. The gals are bringing back lots of pollen, and food stores are looking good in my hives. Like many of you, I'm hoping (and praying) for a bountiful nectar flow and a good honey harvest.

*David Schwartz*

### Portland Urban Beekeepers

After skipping April, PUB held its first Zoom meeting in May. We were fortunate to have Dewey Caron as our featured speaker, and the meeting was a great success. At one point, we had 52 participants, which rivals some of our in-person meetings! Our president, Cheryl Wright, welcomed everyone with her customized Zoom background of tropical trees swaying in the sun. One of PUB's new endeavors, spearheaded by former PUB President Tim Wessels (who runs the apiary where we have our association hives), is to form a committee dedicated to gardening for pollinators. The focus will be on providing access to plants with high-quality nectar and pollen. The plants would be offered for sale at the Green Anchors garden center at about \$1 per plant, with the money going to PUB. As an association whose mandate focuses on education and supporting bees in our environment, we're excited about this new blending of association goals.

Dewey spoke for almost our entire meeting time and provided outstanding guidance to new and seasoned beekeepers. To start, he reported on the Pacific Northwest Honey Bee Survey results which had recently wrapped up data collection. As an association, we were so pleased to have only a 38 percent overwinter loss, a BIG drop from last year's 62 percent! The rest of the evening was dedicated to spring management, and the big question of the night was, "What is your May plan?" Apparently, our efforts to "flatten the curve" apply to mites as well as COVID-19, and Dewey laid out a plan

for ensuring good mite counts in the late summer which will maximize overwinter success. Beautiful late-winter weather ensured an early brood build up in the Portland area, and we're well ahead of our typical build-up schedule this year.

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Swarms have also been very active, with our first association swarm alert going out in March. As Dewey noted, the months of May and June come with lots of decisions about management, and thinking ahead about your personal objectives as a beekeeper is an important part of that process.

With the beautiful weather and warm rains we've had this spring, Oregon native Douglas' meadowfoam is blooming, as are the poppies, bellflowers, and our Portland roses. Garlic and alliums as well as sweet-smelling jasmine and ligustrum and climbing clematis are all available. The wisteria is in full bloom, and the fruit trees and bushes are opening up. It's looking to be a wonderful year for nectar flow!

*Jessica Anderson*

### Tillamook Beekeepers

Beekeepers are and have been keenly aware of how disease, pests, and natural and man made environmental conditions affect the life of our bees. We are now in the in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic experience that affects us beyond most of our imaginations. I for one have reflected on the current conditions and tried to imagine how we are going to survive this mess. Just as the honey bee is affected by the Varroa mite or Nosema or humans killing them with pesticides, far too many humans are now being mortally affected by an unseen enemy, which is clearly compounded by our own reactions to the conditions.

I just got a glimpse of the pnwhoneybeesurvey.com results for the 2019–2020 overwinter data, and Tillamook beekeepers had a 61 percent loss—the worst loss for us ever, and the worst loss of all associations surveyed. The data are terrible, and I can only hope that the 21 participants of the survey from our association are not the total picture of all beekeepers in our area. We have approximately 75 beekeepers in our association, and I estimate that we have another 75 beekeepers in Tillamook County who are not members. With 21 participants, however, statistically speaking, I am forced to believe that the survey is a fairly good sample of how bad this year has been for us. What else can go wrong?

While in the midst of all this, we are facing another



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possible enemy to both us and our bees. The sighting of the Asian Giant Hornet just 300 miles north of us has added one more straw on this proverbial camel's back of our concern for the honey bee. I received a call from a man in Nehalem telling me he had trapped a murder hornet in a bottle. Out of curiosity and a hope that he was wrong, I drove an hour north to see for myself. After several email conversations with Carolyn Brece



and Dewey Caron, we concluded that this exceptionally large hornet was NOT an Asian Giant Hornet, but rather a Pacific Sawfly ([bugguide.net/node/view/1405402/bgp](http://bugguide.net/node/view/1405402/bgp)).

That was nevertheless an interesting experience for me. Carolyn called it “fun,” and Dewey called it “cool.” A curious part of the story is that the bottle was the second choice to capture this *bug*. The first was a plastic sandwich bag. The *bug*, however, was literally eating its way out of the bag. He chewed a hole in it and was about to escape when he was quickly transferred to the bottle. The bottle was a storage container for marijuana, which was quickly dumped onto a table and used to serve as its final resting place. Note the residue on his back and wings. He died a couple hours later in my freezer with the munchies.

Irrespective of social distancing and lockdowns, Tillamook beekeepers are managing to enjoy spring and keep their bees happy. We are feeding, treating, observing, and hoping. Here's to a better beekeeping year!!! *Brad York*

### Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers has switched to the Zoom platform for board and member meetings for the time being to keep everyone safe. We enjoyed a great presentation on brood diseases from the OSU Honey Bee Lab's Ellen Topitzhofer in May.

Swarms have been plentiful, making up for winter losses for some members. Nucs are thriving as well. As we draft this text, members are reporting the capture of yellowjacket queens—hooray! And pollinators of all shapes and sizes are feasting on Ceanothus and many other spring blooms.

Members continue to make good use of the new Forum feature on our [tvbabees.org](http://tvbabees.org) website. *Debby Garman*





# Oregon State Beekeepers Association Membership Form

The **Oregon State Beekeepers Association** is a nonprofit organization representing and supporting all who have an interest in honey bees and beekeeping. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in bees and beekeeping. You do not need to own bees or reside in Oregon to join. Membership includes the ongoing work of the organization on behalf of the honey bee and beekeeping, a vote in OSBA elections, swarm call listing, four free online classified ads per year, discounts on publications, and an annual directory and subscription to *The Bee Line*.

Please send check made payable to OSBA with a **completed form for each individual to:**

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Do not include contact information

Share all information **OR Share:** mailing address phone number e-mail address

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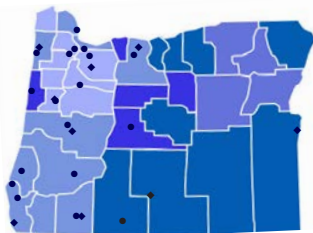
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*Thank you!*



## Oregon State Beekeepers Association

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



#### OSBA OFFICERS

##### President

John Jacob—541.582.2337; oldsolbees@gmail.com

##### Vice President

Joe Maresh—503.703.5060; joemaresh@bctonline.com

##### Secretary

Karen Finley—541.753.4120; osba.secretary@gmail.com

##### Treasurer

Joe Hansen—503.824.2265; osba.treasurer@gmail.com

##### Past President

Harry Vanderpool—503.399.3675; shallotman@yahoo.com

#### ◆ OSBA REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

##### North Coast

Kathy Cope—541.264.9222; beachwalkinlady@hotmail.com

##### South Coast

Mureen Walker—541.425.0535; mureen.walker.111@gmail.com

##### Columbia Basin

Bill Edwards—541.354.2223

##### Eastern Oregon

Jordan Dimock—541.372.2726

##### Portland Metro

Tom Cinquini—503.547.5386; tomcinquini@gmail.com

##### South Central Oregon

Robert Clements—541.205.8562; kbbabees@gmail.com

##### Southwestern Oregon

Eric McEwen—541.415.5171; beetruehoneybees@gmail.com

##### North Willamette Valley

Steven Coffman—503.838.2981

##### South Willamette Valley

Tim Wydronek—541.740.4127; tim@aldercreekhoney.com

#### ● 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—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 **July** issue, 2020. The deadline for submitting copy is **June 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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