
THE BEE LINE



The Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

Volume 23, Number 2

March, 1998

MORRIS X. SMITH 1910-1998

by Connie Petty

Morris X. Smith, 87, a friend of beekeepers, apple growers, his neighbors, and all who knew him - Smith never met a stranger - died February 1, 1998 at a nursing home in Toledo, Oregon.

The sixth of twelve children of Maude L. (Whitney) and George T. Smith was born August 29, 1910 in his family home at Chitwood, then a thriving little farming and logging community beside the railroad line connecting the Willamette Valley with the Coast. Today, Chitwood is the site of a few houses, the tumble-down Smith home, the travel trailer where Smith lived, and his garden and the orchard where he kept his bees. The store Smith's father once operated was recently burned.

Located just off Highway 20, Chitwood can be reached through a red covered bridge that crosses the Yaquina River where Smith played as a child, and later got "a whippin'" for endangering his life by playing there. (Smith's sister Maude Eastwood remembers a kayak he built and how they floated it on the Willamette



River. Smith named the kayak "Melfme" for himself and his sisters: Morris, Edith, Lois, Frances, Maudie and Evalyn.)

Smith attended grade school at nearby Eddyville but left 18-student Eddyville High to graduate from Jefferson High - student body 2,100 - in Portland. This launched Smith's travels beyond Chitwood, eventually taking him to state, regional and national beekeeping conventions and events in the United States, and international conferences in Brazil, Japan and the (cont. on page 3)

Oregon State Beekeepers Association

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Diane Varner, Editor

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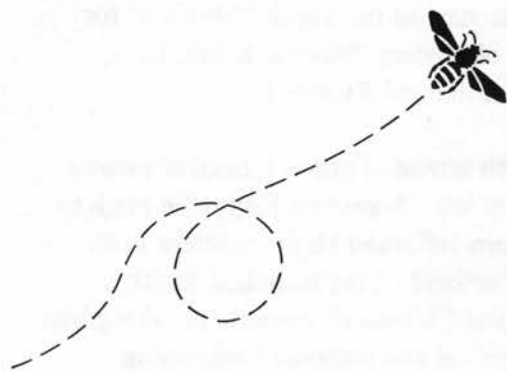
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President's Notes

by Torey Johnson

The bee season is upon us. Thank goodness we have been blessed with decent weather for January and February. Hopefully California will bounce out of their rain pattern soon. I'm sure a few commercial folks are tired of getting stuck in the mud.

Some folks are concerned about queens - will they be available in March? The answer is **yes!** When in March is the real question. (See related story "Queen Breeder Profiles", on page 8. It makes it interesting when we're the ones ahead of the game and California is dealing with the rain.

Whatever you need, the phone lines are open. Try calling an OSBA representative if you have questions or concerns. Their names telephone numbers are on page 10 of every issue of *The Bee Line*.

In Remembrance

The passing of a lifetime member is always a sad but reflective time. Those of us who knew Morris Smith will miss him, but we will also pass on his legacy through the knowledge he passed on to us and the friendship he so easily gave.

May the bees be as friendly and kind as he was to us. (Thanks, Morris.)

Oregon State Beekeepers
Torey Johnson

(cont. from page 1)

People's Republic of China. (While attending an ABF convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, Smith and Albany beekeeper Oliver Petty toured a children's museum in the city's old railroad station. Smith spent most of his time admiring an old engine in the basement.)

After high school graduation, Smith returned to Chitwood and worked as a "whistle punk" for a logging company, relaying messages between choker setters and the steam donkey operator. When he was 21 and working at a local quarry, a blast of dynamite hurled a boulder that hit and shattered Smith's leg. After a year in hospitals, doctors left his leg but he would suffer pain and complications from the injury most of his life.

Smith's handicap failed to daunt him. He sold produce, worked as a log truck driver, as a county assessor, lumber grader, an apprentice cobbler and a night watchman before retiring and moving back to the family farm.

An interest in the vintage apple trees his father had planted and catching honeybee swarms led to friends and membership in the Home Orchard Society and the Oregon State Beekeepers Association. Later, Smith captured these interests and his travels on film, aiming his camera with a professional eye: "You observe a lot you don't see otherwise," Smith once said.

His orchard included 32 varieties of old apples, and nine each of plums, pears and prunes. The Oregon Historical Society and Cornell University both consulted Smith about his knowledge of apples. Smith provided root stocks of trees from his orchard to both, and helped supply the scion wood for the Historical Society's Pioneer Orchard on Sauvie Island.

Smith's horticulture expertise led to serving on the Home Orchard Society's identification team whose members talk about

and identify apples at meetings, fruit shows and fairs. Talking was a talent Smith also shared with the public while tending the Oregon State Beekeeper Association's booth at the Oregon State Fair.

Smith was a generous man. He captured swarms and removed bees from buildings. He rarely charged but would gladly accept a free lunch and what often turned out to be an hour or so of good talk. He also raised berries which he traded to neighbors in exchange for homemade pies. Tables at beekeeping events were often graced with Smith's comb honey.

He always helped his friends and neighbors build fences, prune trees and spent many years caring for Chitwood Cemetery. He helped Eddyville High School students plant apple trees: The Morris X. Smith Orchard near the Highway 20 railroad crossing at Eddyville.

Smith was a life member of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association, and served as a delegate to the American Beekeeping Federation of which he was a member. He was a charter member of the Home Orchard Society, and past president of the Lincoln County Historical Society.

In tribute to her brother, Maude Eastwood wrote: "Morris' way of life is what it is all about. Care about your fellow traveler. Give of yourself, your time, your attention, insofar as you have been gifted to do. Work with the land, with Nature's fruit, berries, bees. Share them. Put in an honest day's work."

Smith is survived by five sisters, Edith Middleton and Evalyn Simshaw of Portland, Lois Jahnke and Frances Smouse of Tillamook and Maude Eastwood of Woodinville, Washington, and numerous nieces and nephews. His family suggests donations to the causes Smith supported: Home Orchard Society, Oregon State Beekeepers Association, Morris X. Smith Orchard, and Chitwood Cemetery.

Tracheal Mite Research

Editor's Note: The following articles were published in earlier editions of The Bee Line. Dr. Royce stated that the articles still contain valuable information for beekeepers and gave permission to reprint them. As current research results become available from Dr. Royce they will be reported in The Bee Line.

Why Do Research on *Acarapis woodi*?

by Dr. Lynn Royce
Oregon State University
Entomology Department
(reprint August, 1988)

Honey bees are important as pollinators around the world and there is commercial demand for their products: honey, wax, pollen, etc. Our research concerns the understanding of the relationship between honey bees and their mite parasites. Since the introduction of *A. woodi*, the tracheal mite and *Varroa jacobsoni*, the brood mite, research on these parasites has become an important topic here in the United States. The question might be asked why work on *A. woodi* when *V. jacobsoni*, an obviously serious pest, is now in the United States. There are at least two reasons: one, several researchers have shown that the tracheal mite does impair a colony of bees (Wilson, Eichen, Dietz, Petis), two, understanding a host parasite relationship with one parasite species may give us insights into the relationship with other parasite species.

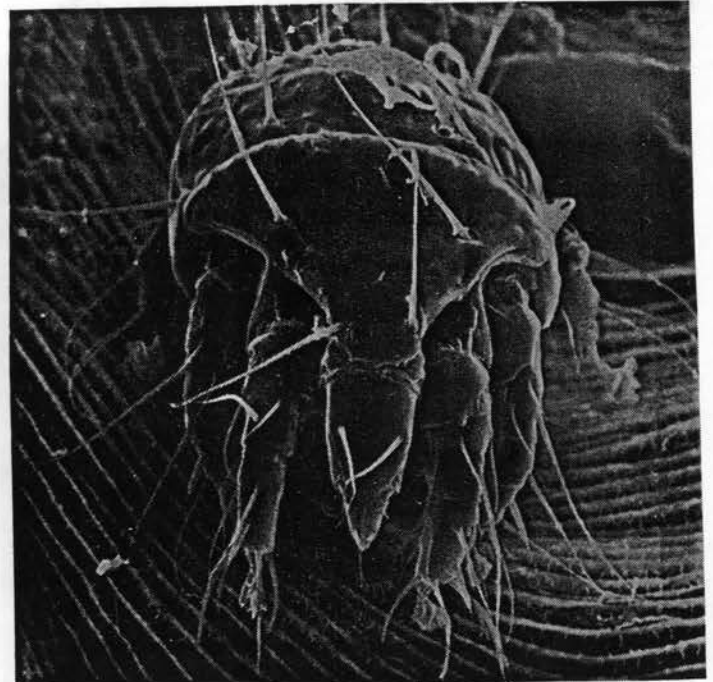
An understanding of the mechanisms by which the mites affect the honey bee colony is the emphasis on our research at OSU. Also being studied are the details of the mites' life cycle, behavior and population dynamics. All of these kinds of information can help us to better manage honey bee colonies by a cleaner and more effective control of the mite.

An understanding on how the mites cause injury to a colony may allow us to treat the symptoms while control efforts are being put into effect, but before mite populations have been

significantly reduced. It will provide a clearer understanding of when injury to the colony occurs, thus giving us a better idea when to implement control efforts. If we control the mites after they have already caused significant damage to the colony we have not done a sufficient job of management and may lose the colony to the mites in spite of our efforts.

It is also very useful to know when the mites are most vulnerable. This is only possible if we know their population dynamics and life cycle. That is: when their numbers are highest, when lowest, and how fast their populations can increase at different times of the year.

It may also be useful to know what population levels are most damaging. Control efforts could then be implemented only when needed.



Acarapis woodi -- the tracheal mite

(cont. on page 5)

(cont. from page 4)

Managing Honey Bees with *Acarapis woodi*, the Tracheal Mite

by Dr. Lynn Royce & Dr. Michael Burgett
(reprint September, 1988)

Research indicates that infestations of *Acarapis woodi* can be pathological to honey bees in the winter. While mite numbers can become quite high during spring and summer months, colonies do not show any detrimental effects caused by the mites during these times.

Our results suggest that the damage is caused when the bees are preparing for winter. This is the time when individual bees begin to build up their body stores. They eat more so that they can develop and maintain larger fat bodies and hypopharyngeal glands (brood food glands) for rearing brood in the middle and late winter. The mites apparently interrupt the bee's ability to develop these body stores. This suggests that at the time of rearing winter brood, colonies infested with *Acarapis woodi* will be unable to do so as efficiently as unparasitized colonies. Thus at the end of winter there are fewer new replacement bees. In spring we commonly find colonies infested with nosema. Nosema has also been shown to inhibit hypopharyngeal gland development and may be detrimental to brood rearing. With both *Acarapis woodi* and nosema, colonies will be hard pressed to replace bees needed in the spring and can dwindle and die.

Colonies can be treated for nosema and even if they don't have mites it is probably a good idea to treat for nosema in the fall and again in the spring. If colonies are to be treated for mites, this should be done after honey is removed but before too many bees have prepared for winter. If you treat too late the bees may not be able to recover and colonies may still winter poorly.

What To Do About Tracheal Mites

by Dr. Lynn Royce, OSU and George Hansen,
Foothills Honey (reprint October, 1990)

Are tracheal mites really detrimental? The answer is **yes**. Preliminary research here in Oregon and the winter loss surveys underline the damaging effect this parasite is having on our bee industry. Tracheal mites shorten a worker bee's life span and possibly also reduce her ability to work. There is some evidence that a bee infested with tracheal mites has a lower tolerance to cold. In warm weather such as during peak summer flower bloom, mite infestation may have little effect on the individual worker. But colonies are made up of many individuals, and the small impact on one infested bee multiplied by all the infested bees may become significant to the colony, even during warm weather. However, we may not be able to measure the resultant effect until conditions become less optimal, such as in winter. On marginally warm, bright winter days, infested bees leaving the hives for cleansing flights may not be able to return because they succumb to chilling.

How can we help our infested colonies?
Treatment with chemicals: More studies have been conducted on menthol than on any other chemical suggested for treatment on tracheal mites in the USA. It is the only currently approved treatment compound in this country. Studies in Nebraska and Texas suggest spring treatment gives the most satisfactory results. In Nebraska colonies were treated in February and March. The recommended amount was a 50 gram menthol cake. However, temperatures need to be 70-90 degrees F. and a weak colony may not generate enough heat to vaporize the menthol.

Prophylactic management: Along with chemical treatment, do everything possible to keep the colony strong. Learn how and when to feed your
(cont. on page 6)

(cont. from page 5)

bees. Encourage brood rearing in autumn by feeding light syrup often and giving a pollen substitute as soon as the bees will take it. Place pollen substitute on top bars and repeat feedings. This will stimulate later brood rearing and help produce a population of young bees to overwinter the colony. Keep the bees healthy by treating for known disease problems such as nosema and foulbrood.

Good wintering yards, sheltered from wind, are important. Added protection against cold, such as a tarp wrap, may also help. An air space between the tarp and colony may help reduce moisture buildup.

In spring, begin feeding pollen substitute a few weeks before pollen will be available naturally. Feed syrup as soon as it is needed in spring. Again, this is to stimulate early brood rearing to replace the dying overwintered bees. If you feed to stimulate bees, you must continue to feed the increased population in the hive until sufficient natural forage is available. Feeding pollen or pollen substitutes is an art that requires some knowledge of weather, pollen plants and some idea of how much pollen is still in the hive. Knowing the condition of your colonies is important or you may just be stimulating swarming. All this care is time consuming and expensive, but it may be less time consuming and expensive than replacing lost colonies each spring.

Editor's note: Dr. Keith Delaplane's book Honey Bees and Beekeeping, University of Georgia (1996) includes an additional cultural control. It is excerpted below, with the written permission of the author.

Another cultural control is vegetable oil which, when applied to the body surface of young bees, protects them from tracheal mites. Vegetable oil confuses mites when they are seeking their preferred host (young bees) apparently by masking odors on bees' bodies that mites use to distinguish young from old bees. Vegetable oil is fed to bees in medicated extender

patties applied in spring and fall. Remove uneaten portions of medicated patties at least four weeks before your first marketable nectar flow.

Editor's note: Rich Farrier from the Willamette Valley Beekeepers Assn. has prepared a handbook entitled Honey Bee Diseases and Pests. In it he describes another way to apply the vegetable oil cultural control. (Reprinted with author's permission).

A method of tracheal mite treatment is to use canola oil. Cut a roll of **shop** (not regular) paper towels in half and remove the cardboard roll in center. Soak the one-half roll of towels in a coffee can of canola oil. Soak until the towels are saturated and then let them drip drain. Simply unroll a sheet of towel off the roll and place this paper between the two brood boxes. The bees will remove this foreign material from the hive, getting the oil on their bodies. It is thought that the oil masks the scent of the younger adult bee and as a result, the female mite can't find the young adult bee.

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Northwest Beekeeping

March - Fruit tree bloom starts from Mar. 15th through April, although this can vary about two weeks.

- Swarming season starts; be observant on each inspection. Queen cell construction on the frame bottom can be from spring dwindling, hive confinement, congested brood area, low quality stores, predators, or queen over a year old. Remove each queen cell found on the bottom of the frames. Queen cells in the brood area (sides of frame) may indicate a failing queen. Requeen.
- Feed all colonies Terramycin in pollen patties using a recipe from a bee keeping book or purchased patties, placing one patty per hive on top of the brood frames. Put on more patties as they are used up over the next few weeks.
- Don't let colony stores get below 15 lbs. (3 full frames of honey). Feed light colonies sugar syrup (1 or 1 and 1/2:1 ratio) or diluted (2:1) honey (if no American Foulbrood in the honey)
- To equalize stores between colonies, rob combs of honey from colonies with excessive stores. (Put the empty replacement frame back in the strong colony next to the brood nest, to expand egg laying). When equalizing brood, do not remove over 20% of the sealed brood per colony. Give special attention to the feeding needs of colonies that donated brood and stores.
- A strong colony can also be placed over a weak colony, by placing a sheet of newspaper and a double excluder between them. Use a separate entrance for each hive.
- Unite queenless colonies with those needing bees, unless there are laying workers. If so, smoke well and shake all bees from frames and supers, onto the ground 50 feet away. Leave their hive space empty and most will unite with adjacent colonies.
- Remove mouse guard screens.

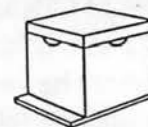
- Look for colonies with nosema/dysentery (fecal matter streaked on the hive). Treat with Fumidil B according to instructions.
- Clean existing bottom boards.
- Place hives on stands about 12-18" above the ground where skunks are a problem.
- Check your stored comb for possible wax moth infestation.

Thank you to Portland Beekeeper Association members Stephanie Barnes, David Gage, Rosemary Marshall, Ernie McCormack and Bill Ruhl, for Almanac review and suggestions, 1996.

Editor's note: This column was formerly known as "Basics in Northwest Beekeeping". Ron Bennett informed me that he has copyrighted that title for his personal use and asked that it no longer be used in The Bee Line.

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Queen Breeder Profiles

by Diane Varner

John and Lorele Tollett of Millville, California have been married for 37 years, and have been in the bee business for 35 years. They started out with Homer Park, who told them if they really wanted to know about honey they should talk to Carl Hillman, a well-known area beekeeper who passed away last summer. Carl mentored them and when he retired John and Lorele bought his business. From the beginning, their emphasis has been on producing high quality products.

The Tolletts produce between 16,000 and 18,000 queens annually, and about 14,500 two-pound packages. They report the wet weather this year is putting them between five and seven days behind schedule, but they will have queens and packages ready for sale in spite of El Nino. John and Lorele welcome your questions and can be reached at 530-547-3387.

Pat Heitkam of Orland, California started keeping bees in 1975 as a hobbyist, with one hive. Within a few short years he had 100 hives and kept increasing his hives until he reached his current level of about 3,000. While he was building his business Pat worked for Wenner Honey Farms, and on local dairies. Pat said that he likes raising queen bees best, and produces about 20,000 annually. He also produces about 3,000 package bees.

Pat breeds both Carniolan and Italian bees and says that Carniolian bees tend to be more winter-hardy, while Italians tend to be more populous earlier in the year. He's involved in breeding for hygienic behavior, which he believes would help with chalkbrood and foulbrood resistance, and possibly Varroa. Pat also reports a production delay due to the wet weather of up to a week, but will be ready for business. Pat would be happy to talk to you and he can be reached at 916-865-9562.

Postal Rates May Increase Beekeepers Costs

The following letter was addressed to Phyllis Shoemake and OSBA membership:

"We recently returned from the ABF Conference in Colorado Springs. One session had some disturbing news. The Postal Service is in the process of planning a major rate increase for Special Handling. The rate increase would apply to package bee and baby chick shipments. Here are the proposed changes:

	<u>Present</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>% Increase</u>
Up to 10 lbs.	\$5.40	\$ 17.25	219%
Over 10 lbs.	7.50	24.00	220%

This rate increase will adversely affect hobby beekeepers and package bee shippers. You will have to pay more for your package of bees. At a time when bees are in short supply, the hobbyist beekeeper is extremely valuable to contributing to the pollination of crops and wild lands. At the present time there are no good alternatives for the shipment of package bees. These will not affect queen shipments as we can use Priority and Express Mail. Package bee shippers do not have these options.

Please inform your members. What can they do? Write letters of protest to:

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Product Review: "Melt Belts"

by Richard Farrier

I recently bought two of the Melt Belts made by Bee Works, 9 Progress Drive, Unit 2, Orillia, ON L3V6H1 (phone 705-326-7171). The Melt Belts cost \$14.75 each plus \$5.60 shipping for the two.

One Melt Belt was put around a five gallon bucket. The honey in the bucket was crystallized. After poor results in ten days, a second belt was put around the bucket. After another ten days the bucket was still crystallized. It should be noted that each belt is only 20 watts. However, it does reach 120 degrees F. The honey did melt about two inches above and below each belt. So if a person keeps moving the belts it would work.

I found that my old refrigerator with a light bulb works much better for melting crystallized honey. I did find that the Melt Belts work great for the bottling buckets. I put one belt near the bottom of the bucket. This warms the honey and makes bottling much easier.

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Book Review: "Nectar and Pollen Plants of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest"

By Susan Miller

This small book is a gem. Published in 1989 by Dr. Burgett and La Rea Johnston from OSU and Bertie Stringer from the OSBA, it's an invaluable tool for anyone interested in plants that produce pollen and nectar. While these are plants of particular interest to beekeepers, they are also plants that attract hummingbirds and butterflies.

The book illustrates each plant, and lists the botanical as well as the common names. Other details include how the plant grows (climber, shrub, tree, etc.) its bloom period and flower color, where it can usually be found (Western Oregon, Eastern Oregon, Klamath region, etc.), and describes the pollen and/or nectar availability. The authors add descriptive notes to each plant, giving information such as whether or not the plant is native, why the plant is grown commercially (seed, hay crop, etc.) and other details.

As a hobbyist beekeeper, a hummingbird enthusiast and a weekend gardener, it is helpful to find a reference book that gives condensed, useful information almost at a glance. After studying this book last fall, I planted several hundred crocus bulbs (nectar and pollen in the early spring), snowberry bushes, vine maple, English ivy, more heather, red flowering currant (for the hummingbirds) and borage. Since I was going to be adding plants to our property anyway, they may as well be plants that have some value to the honeybees and hummingbirds.

This book definitely deserves a place in your library. Even if you're not planning to add plants to your own yard or property it can help you identify plants in your area, and give you an idea as to what kinds of nectar your bees are converting into honey.

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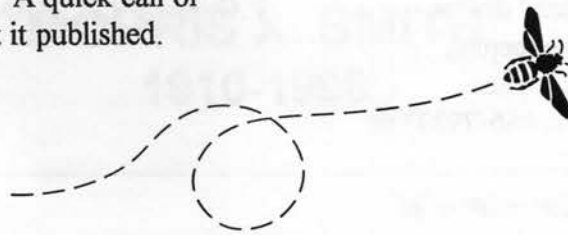
* Dr. Lynn Royce from OSU has offered to be a regular contributor, keeping OSBA readers up to date on what's happening in research.

* Evaluating honey bee colonies for pollination-some guidelines for beekeepers and growers

*Is your club having an event, school or fundraiser you'd like to promote with OSBA? A quick call or note to *The Bee Line* editor will get it published.

Check Your Address Label

In order to stay within our operating budget while providing the best publication possible, expiration dates on mailing labels will be monitored and *The Bee Line* cannot be mailed to memberships 60 days past the date code. As an additional service, a membership and publications form will be printed each month. Note additional savings are available when ordering magazines through OSBA.



Membership and Publications

Membership in the Oregon State Beekeepers Association is open to anyone who has an interest in bees and beekeeping. You do not need to own bees or reside in Oregon to join. OSBA membership is \$15 per person and includes a vote in OSBA elections, listing on the World Wide Web Home Page, discounts on other bee related publications, ten issues of *The Bee Line*, and more. If you are already of member of a local group, your group will receive \$1 from your OSBA dues. Foreign membership is \$23.

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