
THE BEE LINE



The Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

Volume 23, Number 5

June, 1998

Essential Oils as Miticides

by Dr. Lynn Royce

I would like to embark on writing a series of articles about the use of essential oils in our honey bee colonies to control mites. Essential oils have appeal as control agents because they are natural products and they are biodegradable. There is a lot of research being done on essential oils and their use as acaricides against varroa and tracheal mites. In spite of this intense effort there is a lot we do not know. Important areas of research would be: mode of action of essential oils in mites, affects these chemicals have on queen and drone fertility, behavioral changes of bees or mites in treated colonies, toxicity of these chemicals to bees.

Many essential oils are very complex, that is they are made up of a number of compounds, but major components include compounds called terpenes. Terpenes often produce the odor of the oil because they are volatile. They are usually small compounds of repeating units of five carbons and eight hydrogens. They are the characteristic smell of some of our well known plants: mint, cedar, eucalyptus and many others.

Interestingly, some of these compounds are made by arthropods (insects and the like) to communication with one another. Alarm pheromone in acarid mites has citral as a major component. Citral and geraniol are major components of Nasonov gland pheromone in

honey bees. Some are precursors of insect hormone that regulate growth and egg production. Maybe this is how they affect mites, by interfering with hormone production and thus growth or egg development is hindered.

Many of the names of terpenes come from the plant that is recognized by its odor, for example citral from citrus, geraniol from geranium, and cineole from cinnamon. Plants may make these compounds as deterrents to feeding by herbivores, or as microbial agents.

It is noteworthy that menthol, tested by Ellis and Baxendale (1997) showed toxicity to honey bees increased more rapidly than toxicity to tracheal mites as concentrations of menthol increased. Since arthropods have similar physiologies it is not surprising that these compounds would be toxic to both mites and bees. The message here is be careful with essential oils as they can kill bees and may have sublethal affects on growth and gamete (eggs and sperm) production in honey bees as well. The dose response is a critical factor in how bees and mites respond to a terpene.

Inside:

Latest on the OSBA Web Page

**ABF Award-Winning Essayist
from Tillamook, Oregon**

Oregon State Beekeepers Association

The Bee Line is the official publication of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association and is published ten times a year. Subscriptions are included with OSBA membership.

To join the OSBA, complete the membership application in this issue and send with payment to: Phyllis Shoemake, 1874 Winchester NW, Salem, OR 97304

Editorial Offices: Send news, announcements, letters, comments and advertising to:

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Full page	100.00

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Classified ads, 30 words, per issue:

OSBA members	\$ 2.00
Non-members	\$ 3.00

President's Notes

by Torey Johnson

Rain, rain go away

Hopefully June will be better someday.

By the time you get this you should be knee deep in honey, and by July, money. This message was written on a very rainy day. See what it can do to you!

On a more serious note, the Executive Committee will be meeting this month. We will report back to you in July.

Take a look at the calendar and note the summer picnic scheduled for July 26 at Doug and Maryann Davis' home just north of Keizer. Hope to see you there!



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Ag Fest Notes

by Ray Varner

Ag Fest was held in Salem on April 18-19, and the Willamette Valley Beekeepers Association put together a booth and bee cage. A steady stream of people passed the exhibit and many people, young and old alike, stopped for a look.

A demonstration hive captured a lot of attention, and the most-asked question was "where's the queen?" The demonstration hive was queenless, but three peanut-shaped queen cells were clearly present. People were curious and fascinated by the explanation, which often led to other questions or comments. The bee cage supplied by Dave Loescher was the second biggest attention-getter, and prompted many more questions and comments.

Many handouts were provided, including OSBA newsletters, a Honeybee Trivia sheet and "The Bee and Honey Game" sheet, which folds into a finger game, has drawings to color and interesting facts tucked into segments. From comments heard during the event, many people knew something about the mite problems facing beekeepers and expressed concern for the future. Ag Fest gave participating beekeepers another opportunity to educate the public, and have a good time while doing it.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- June 12-14** Pacific NW Apitherapy Conference, Halpern Center, Simon Fraser University, British Columbia Canada. For information contact Fran Calvert by phone at 604-483-4564, or email: calvert@thecentre.com
- June 19** Deadline for *The Bee Line* articles
- July 26** OSBA picnic, hosted by Willamette Valley Beekeepers at the home of Doug & Maryann Davis
- Aug.10-13** Western Apiculture Society Conference, Moscow, Idaho. For information contact Dr. Steve Sheppard at WSU, Pullman, WA 99164-6382, by phone at 509-335-5180 or email at shepp@mail.wsu.edu

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Northwest Beekeeping

June - Crops in bloom producing nectar and/or pollen: berries, vetch, spearmint, radish, mustard, clover. Others: honey locust, poison oak, pyracantha.

- Provide water continuously.
- Examine colonies every ten days and treat as in May, except: toward month's end, reduce the number of empty frames in each super to about ten. Lift off the supers, tilt up the second story and look for queen cells along the bottom of the brood comb. **IF you find** only eggs and larvae in the queen cells and the hive is crowded with bees, remove all cells --- top and bottom. Put the hive body containing mostly worker eggs or larvae on the bottom board, and the other containing mostly sealed brood on top. Add supers to provide 10-18 empty full-depth combs, or their equivalent. **IF you find** sealed or ripe queen cells, or possibly hatched ones, divide the colony. **NOTE:** queen mating is always dependent on decent mating weather and the supply of drones this time of year. **IF you find** eggs and no attempt to rear queens, and the hive is full of bees, examine the supers and add more to provide 10 to 18 empty combs or their equivalent.
- Order queens for July delivery.
- Continue to be on the lookout for American Foulbrood.
- Start moving sealed frames of honey to top supers, or collect to extract.

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

Top Ten States

1997 State Rank and Production in Million Lbs. (1996 rank and production)

1. California - 30.0 (1 - 27.3)
2. N. Dakota - 24.5 (4 - 19.8)
3. Florida - 16.1 (2 - 25.2)
4. S. Dakota - 15.6 (3 - 23.3)
5. Montana - 12.8 (7 - 7.0)
6. Minnesota - 10.6 (5 - 11.6)
7. Texas - 10.0 (8 - 6.8)
8. Idaho - 7.7 (12 - 5.0)
9. Michigan - 6.0 (6 - 8.6)
10. Wisconsin - 4.7 (10 - 5.4)

Product Review

Torey Johnson tested the Queen Marking Pen by Better Bee. He reported that it "dried very slowly and had a very bad smell." At \$5.95 retail, there are better marking pens on the market.

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Three Beekeepers Help National Honey Board

by Joann Olstrom

The "Who's Who" of International Culinary Professionals met April 21-24 at Portland's Convention Center for seminars and a trade show. I was privileged to assist at the National Honey Board's Information/Education Booth on April 24. We distributed recipes and information for using honey as a sweetener.

George Hansen and Torey Johnson hosted a hands-on experience at Foothills Apiary for a busload of food editors, chefs, etc. on April 21. All were dressed in appropriate beekeeper garb and helped to open hives, find the queen, etc. Afterwards they toured the honey house to learn how honey is extracted and packaged.

About 1,500 women and men from all walks of the culinary world came from as far away as Spain and Chile to learn the latest in food preparation, specialty foods, etc. Editors of food magazines, home economists from colleges and companies like General Mills, chefs from large hotels and restaurants were in attendance. Authors of cookbooks, teachers of cooking schools, vendors of ingredients/specialty products and food preparation equipment occupied nearly 200 booths.

This recipe was served as a taster for three different floral source honeys at the show. You may find it an easy one for entertaining sometime. All honey used at NHB demos is "non-branded", that is, there is no label identifying the honey by brand name. Additional recipes are available on the Internet at www.honey.com.

Cheese and Honey Snacks

Choose some rather plain-tasting fancy crackers such as "water" crackers. Arrange on a pretty plate with one or two kinds of soft cheese: gorgonzolla (used at the show), non-fat cream cheese, sharp cheddar are suggestions. For toppers on the cheese and cracker, select one or more honeys in squeeze bears---perhaps a mild fireweed and a more flavorful pumpkin blossom.

Joann's Snappy Ginger or Cranberries 'n Honey are also tasty toppers. As an added garnish you might also serve walnut or pecan chunks. People assemble their own crackers from the assortment of ingredients.

Editor's Note: As a result of that hands-on experience at Foothills Apiary, I was contacted by Northwest Palate Magazine and asked to provide photos for an article they are doing in their July, 1998 issue. Watch for it!

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Bee Musings

by Diane Varner

Last month Ray and I visited the Southern Oregon Beekeepers at their meeting May 4th in Central Point. Some said the steady rain prompted the heavy turnout, and it was a lively, highly interesting meeting.

Beekeepers in the Rogue and Applegate Valley areas of our State face problems unique to the area because of geographical boundaries. In normal years, rainfall averages 18.9" in Ashland and 32.31" in Grants Pass. In the Willamette Valley those are drought figures! Because of El Nino, for the first time in many years, beekeepers saw Nosema and some newer beekeepers lost hives to it because they did not know what to do for it until it was too late.

Most beekeepers in Southern Oregon are hobbyists and sideliners, with two or three commercial operators. During the summer there are about 6,000 hives in the area, foraging on crops like vetch, mustard, blackberry and star thistle. Mites are their principal problem, but they also deal with American Foulbrood. They are field researching products that appear to work for them in their region.

At the meeting we attended, at least five new members were present, recruited by VP John Campbell. The group makes a point of not selling bees or nuc hives to anyone unless they attend meetings and learn how to take care of their bees first. In this way they have a continuous bee school, and participants say they would have lost bees without the club's help.

A lengthy discussion centered on 1997 hive losses to Penncap M, a chemical used in orchards in July and August. Penncap M is methyl parathion, encapsulated for time release. Said to have a short-term effectiveness on the ground of only two days, problems arise for bees as they mistake it for pollen granules and carry it back to the hive. In the hives it is extremely deadly! The group is planning an educational campaign with orchardists and other users of the chemical, as well as the local extension agent and chemical companies.

Another topic of concern was the possibility of hives being brought up from Arizona for the cranberry pollination contracts. An estimated 3,000 colonies could be brought north, and local beekeepers are worried that African bees, documented to be in the State of Arizona, could be brought into Oregon, and that Arizona bees might also be fluralinate-resistant. Cranberry growers and local beekeepers have been unable to agree on contract terms such as liability and cost, and growers have indicated that Arizona bees may become an option for them.

After the meeting we visited with some beekeepers for about an hour. John Campbell, Morris Curtis, Dennis Morefield, Stan Kee and George Steffensen were most generous with their time and expertise. There is so much more to learn about the Southern Oregon area and the unique challenges they face, that I will have to go back again later this year. I would encourage other OSBA members to visit!

The day after the meeting Ray and I visited Glenn Miller at Miller Wood Products in White City, just northeast of Medford. Glenn generously spent several hours with us, and gave us a tour of his facility. Since 1984, Miller Wood Products has produced high quality bee equipment, and since 1989 he has shipped his product all over the United States. Miller Wood Products also makes specialty products, such as marketing crates.

This month we will visit Coos County on June 19th. We were invited down for their annual potluck, and look forward to making new friends and learning about beekeeping on the Oregon Coast.

The May 8th and May 15th issues of the *Capital Press* had five well-written articles about beekeeping by John Schmitz. The article submitted by Joann Olstrom on page 5 was written for local (Coos County) newspapers. Chuck Sowers was featured in a May 6th *Oregonian* article. It's great to see our industry's issues thoughtfully portrayed in the press.

Oregon Student Winner of ABF 4-H Essay Contest

Tillamook student and OSBA member Aaron Nice, 13, was the second place essayist and winner of a \$100 prize in the American Beekeeping Federation's 4-H Essay Contest. Aaron wrote about the variety of crops Oregon bees pollinate. Congratulations, Aaron! With the permission of the ABF, Aaron's essay follows:

Beekeeping in My State: Oregon

by Aaron Nice

Oregon. The word creates visions of wilderness, small towns and "living the simple life". Oregon is more than this. Along the coast grow cranberries, timber and grass for dairy cows. In the valleys there are grapes, grain and grass seeds. The Columbia River Gorge and the southern Oregon hills are covered with apples and peaches. In the east, alfalfa and grass are grown for hay and seed. With such variety, it is no wonder that Oregon beekeepers are diverse in their methods and goals.

Oregon is a special state. It has a wide variety of plants and has recently added a new crop called meadowfoam. Meadowfoam comes in different varieties, and is mostly grown in the Willamette Valley. This crop is produced for oil and depends heavily on honeybee pollination. The Growers Association is planning to plant 8,000+ acres for 1998. Meadowfoam forms a working relationship between the farmer and the beekeeper. An acre of meadowfoam will contain many millions of blooms, far more than can be efficiently pollinated by the local wild bee population. It is, therefore, critical for meadowfoam growers to arrange for the placement of healthy, populous honeybee colonies in or very near their fields during the blooming season. To get a good crop, farmers must have 2-8 hives per acre in their fields. Commercial bees that work in meadowfoam fields need to have a healthy, mated queen who is actively laying eggs; there should be between 4-6 deep combs well filled with brood and enough adult bees to cover 10 combs. This assures that

the bee population does not die due to overwork. Colonies should be in the fields by the first week of May, a few days before the first bloom. The bloom time is more than three weeks long. I spoke with Mark Nofziger, a meadowfoam farmer near Lebanon. He said, "Honeybee pollination in meadowfoam fields is an absolute must. Each flower has five parts that must be touched by the bees."

Weather is a problem for any crop in Oregon. Beekeeper Joann Olstrom of the southern Oregon coast says, "Keep bees out of flood zones, place them where they will get lots of sun, and shelter from wind. You also need to face them northwest in the summer and southwest in the winter, and protect them from bears." Tillamook, where I live, is on the northern coast. I place my hives on higher ground behind a small shed where they are safe from the wind.

The Tillamook County Bee Association is mostly made up of hobbyists owning 2-16 colonies each. Tillamook County Beekeepers produce approximately 60 lbs. of honey per colony. Local beekeeper Ted Winters keeps bees not just for local and state honey sales but for pollination of crops throughout the northwest region. He also carries and sells bee supplies.

In the Willamette Valley, Chuck Sowers says that pollination is 75% of his annual beekeeping income. He takes his colonies to pollinate all over the state and into California where they pollinate almonds. The main crop they pollinate in Oregon are pears, cherries, meadowfoam, berries, cucumbers, squash, pumpkins and vegetable seed. In the hot, dry climate of Eastern Oregon, Vince Vazza and Jan Lohman manage 1,000 hives. Crops grown there include almonds, cherries, apples, pears, watermelons, carrots, onion, kale and radish seed. On the southern coast, Joann Olstrom manages 125 hives, mostly for honey. An interesting thing she said was, "The south coast's honey flow starts earlier and last longer than inland." Her bees do some pollinating, including vegetable seeds, cabbage, cherries, kiwi, prunes, oranges, pears, raspberries and apples. Cranberries are grown in

Coos and Curry counties. For bad weather areas you need two hives per acre. Bees don't prefer cranberries because they have very little nectar and are not sweet; therefore cranberry plants must outnumber other sources of vegetation in the area where the hives are placed. Honeybees forage on cranberries primarily for pollen since little nectar is produced. The average rental fee per hive in Oregon is \$31.55. A 1996 survey of one-fourth of the commercial beekeepers in the Pacific Northwest showed a total income of \$2,501,504 in colony rentals for pollination. This means the total income from pollination could exceed \$10,000,000. This is less than 1% of the estimated farm-gate value of crops benefiting from managed pollination.

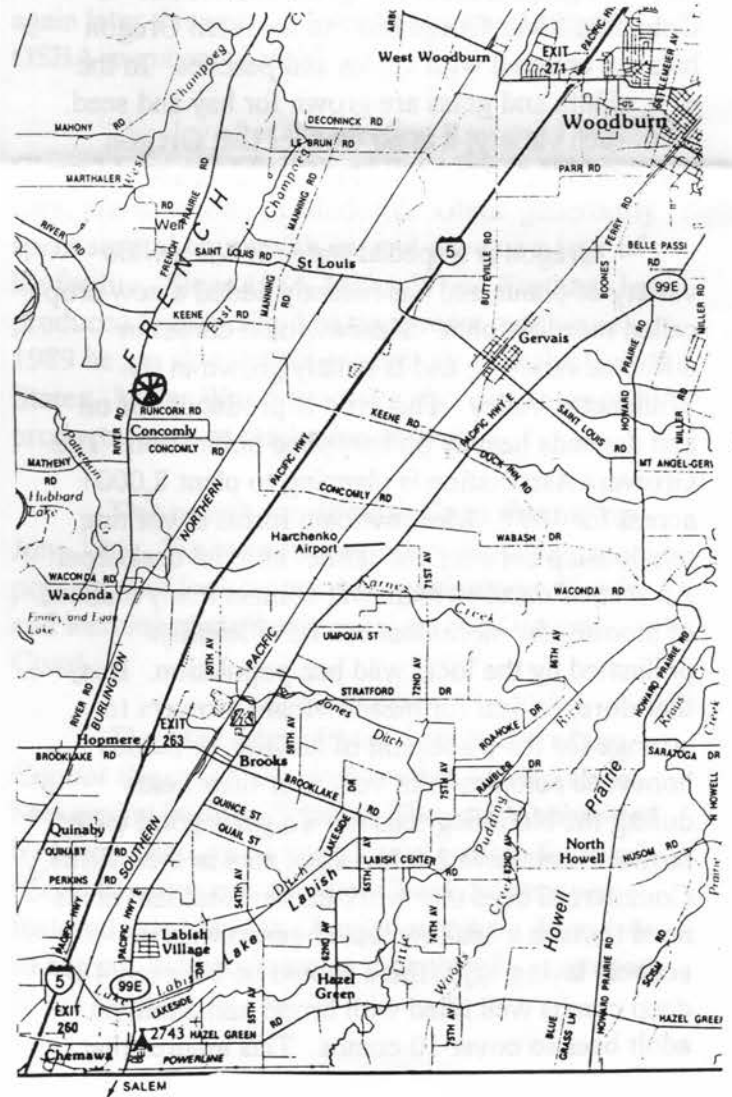
Oregon's bee population includes more than honeybees. Wild bees have been a source of pollination and honey for years. Oregon State University has an Entomology Department which studies bees and pollination in Oregon and the Northwest. Scientists have recently discovered that wild bees are dying from mite infestation in Oregon. An Oregon State University scientist said, "The wild honeybee is in danger of disappearing." So far, 85% of the wild honeybee population has died and it is unknown how many more will go. In places where there are no domestic bees, gardeners are struggling to keep their crops thriving. Now the concern is for domestic honeybees dying from mites. These pests can kill a hive in a short amount of time. There are things to prevent this from happening. To prevent infestation, Dadant & Sons recommend, "During the late fall and early winter the varroa mite is very susceptible to treatment from essential oils. By treating hives with these grease patties and syrups containing wintergreen, tea tree or patchouli oils, and making sure the treatments are near the cluster, this will decrease the mite population."

In all, Oregon has more than 20,000 honeybee hives. You can see a direct relationship between the many types of agricultural crops and the beekeeping industry. Bees are indeed a vital part of the growth and prosperity of these Oregon crops. Without these little wonders, I do not think Oregon would be as unique and as beautiful as it is.

OSBA Summer Picnic

The annual OSBA summer picnic will be hosted this year by the Willamette Valley Beekeepers Association. Scheduled for July 26th, the picnic will be held at the home of Doug and Maryann Davis. Their home, Rossmoor Farms, is located at 12524 River Road, Northeast. Although they have a Gervais address, they are located on the west side of I-5, eight miles north of Keizer on River Road (see map). They are four miles from the Brooks or Gervais exit of I-5. The nearest crossroad is Runcorn.

There will be a meeting at noon, followed by a great potluck picnic at 2 pm. Please bring chairs, eating ware and your favorite food. The club will furnish drinks. Doug and Maryann are also ostrich ranchers, so you can look forward to a fun and interesting day.



Web Page Update

Bill Rufener has the OSBA web page up and running. The address is
<http://members.aol.com/osbeeea/>

When you access the web page, you are greeted with these words:

Oregon State Beekeepers Association

Welcome to the OSBA Website

We are a disparate bunch of individuals who share a fascination for the honeybee and its workings.

There are even a few of us that have a business interest, sort of a livelihood, supported by the six legs and filmy wings of *Apis mellifera*.

So, welcome to these digitalized pages of news about bees and their keepers. We intend to have a lively site, to the point, opportune, a little frisky, like a beehive on a rare, good Oregon spring day.

Please send your ideas for content to the keeper's e-mail address on the bottom of each linked page.

And members (with talent), do please get out the brushes and sketchpads and come forth with a better bee image to replace our anatomically incorrect clipart.

To contact us:
 Torey Johnson, President
 503-771-3942
 503-256-4231

Web keeper:
Brufener@teleport.com

Also on the web page are several icons for the **OSBA Home Page, The Current BeeLine, OSU Reports, Pollinators Willing, A Few Choice Links, Beekeepers in the News and Unbridled Passion.** Check it out! Thank you for your hard work, Bill!



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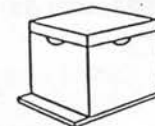
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FOR SALE: FOUNDATION. Make honeycomb candles. 8"x16 3/4" medium brood, \$100 per 25 lb. case; 4"x16 3/4" medium brood, \$125 per 30 lb. case. Colored 100% beeswax sheets \$.80 each. Christine Erwin, 541-942-7061, Cottage Grove.

WANTED: Kiddie suit, veil and gloves. **For sale:** Little Wonder 4-frame non-reversible hand powered stainless extractor. \$225. (503)556-0524.

CLASSIFIED ADS CONTINUED ON PAGE 12.

Concentrates

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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, discounts on other bee related publications, ten issues of *The Bee Line*, and more. Foreign membership is \$23.

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Salem, OR 97304

Classified Ads

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FOR SALE: Steel 55-gallon open head drums, \$6.00 each. Free catalog, includes beekeeping equipment, candle and soap making supplies. Contact Glorybee, 1-800-GLORYBE (456-7923) or in Eugene, 689-0913.

WANTED: Northwest produced honey in 55 gallon drums. Also looking for vetch, snowberry and fireweed honey. Call Bee's Knees Honey at (503) 225-0755 or (503) 640-5757.

WANTED: Bee blower. Please call Karen Finley in Corvallis (541)753-4120.

NOTE: CLASSIFIED ADS
CONTINUED ON PAGE 11.

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Diane Varner, Editor

Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

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