



# The Bee Line

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Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association



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The theme of this year's World Bee Day, May 20, is "Bee Engaged." Let us count the ways to contribute to the United Nations focus on bee-keeping awareness and the importance of bee-derived products!

## How to Read a Pesticide Label to Protect Bees

*Andony Melathopoulos*

All insecticides convey, at minimum, two pieces of information, namely how acutely toxic the insecticide is to bees and how quickly that toxicity breaks down in the field. You can locate all this information by opening the label and going to the Environmental Hazards section (Figure, page 9, step 1).

Under the Environmental Hazards section of the label, look for the key words associated with acute toxicity of the pesticides to honey bees, namely the words "toxic to bees" or "highly toxic to bees" (step 2). If you don't see either key word on the label, this suggests the product is relatively non-toxic to bees. Pesticides labeled as "toxic" or "highly toxic" to bees should not be applied to a bee-attractive crop during bloom, but either applied before bloom or after petal drop.

Of course, the world is never perfect, and you may experience insect pest pressure during bloom and not have a relatively non-toxic alternative to turn to. Fortunately, the acute toxicity of some products dissipates quickly, such that you can apply them after bees return to their nests in the evening, and the product will become relatively non-toxic by the next morning. Products that dissipate overnight will be accompanied with the following phrase (step 3): "Do not apply this product or allow it to drift to blooming crops/weeds when bees are actively foraging on the treated area." In contrast, products that remain toxic into the next day will have the same phrase, except the word "actively" will not appear, so: "Do not apply this product or allow it to drift to blooming crops/weeds when bees are foraging on the treated area." A subtle difference, but there you go.

Now, while all labels will have warning in the Environmental Hazards Section, many of the labels of newer products will have additional instructions under parts of the label, titled General Use Directions or Specific Use Directions. This will come in the form of a specific pollinator section marked with a bee in a red diamond (step 4) or specific restrictions stated in association with the specific crop you are using the pesticide on (step 5).

Understanding pesticide label information on the hazard and risks of bees is an important first step to protecting bees. But you can also take the following extra steps to ensure protection of bees and other pollinating insects.

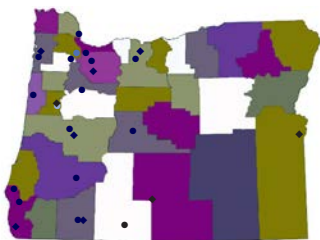
1. **Avoid sprays during bloom.** Bees face the highest exposure to pesticides when they are applied to the bloom of bee-attractive crops and weeds. When possible, use clean-up sprays before bloom to knock pests and diseases down to reduce the need for bloom treatments.

2. **If you must treat during bloom, choose products carefully and apply in the evening.** Choose insecticides that are not labeled as 'Toxic' or 'Highly Toxic' to bees (step 2). Avoid insecticides with residual acute toxicity to bees (step 3). Treat in the evening or not more than 2 hours before sunset.

3. **Communicate with beekeepers.** Contact beekeepers at least 48 hours prior to

*Continued on page 9*

## OREGON STATE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



### OSBA OFFICERS

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### • AFFILIATED REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

#### Central Oregon Beekeepers

Meets 7:00–8:30 PM, fourth Tuesday, virtually  
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 PM, third Wednesday, Hood River  
President: Jerry Frazier—jerry1.frazier@gmail.com  
Website: gorgebeekeepers.org

#### Douglas County Bees

Meets 7:00 PM, first Wednesday, Roseburg  
President: Robert Baune—541.863.9414  
Website: www.douglascountybees.org

#### Klamath Basin Beekeepers

Meets 9:00 AM, third/fourth Saturday, Klamath Falls  
President: Paul Davitt—541.591.2260  
Website: www.klamathbeekeepers.org

#### Lane County Beekeepers

Meets 7:30 PM, third Tuesday, Eugene  
President: Brian McGinley—56magoo@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 Central Coast Beekeepers

Meets 6:00 PM, fourth Wednesday, Newport  
President: Stu Willason—swill29w@gmail.com  
Website: www.ccbaor.org

#### 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—beekeeperscoastal@gmail.com

#### Portland Metro Beekeepers

Meets 7:00 PM, second Thursday, virtually  
President: Doug Sieckmann—503.854.5417  
Website: portlandmetrobeekeepers.org

#### Portland Urban Beekeepers

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

#### Southern Oregon Beekeepers

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

#### Tillamook Beekeepers

Meets 1:00 PM, second Saturday, Tillamook  
President: Brad York—dbradleyyork@gmail.com  
Website: www.tillamookbeekeepers.org

#### Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

Meets 6:00 PM, last Tuesday, virtually  
President: Debby Garman—tualatinvalleybeekeepers@gmail.com  
Website: tvbabees.org

#### Willamette Valley Beekeepers

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

## Message from the President

### Group Decisions

Honey bees are a model study subject for animal behaviorists and sociobiologists. They are an ideal organism for the study of group decision making. The decisions individuals and groups make are extremely consequential and a matter of survival. There are some really excellent examples of this that we are familiar with concerning honey bees. One of the more well known examples is how foragers can gather information about the sugar content of various nectar sources and recruit more workers to prioritize the richest, most concentrated sugar sources first. It is amazing they can gather so much information, ranging from sugar concentration, sugar type, location, color, and odor of an array of potential forage targets. Not only is this information gathered, it is also disseminated and acted upon in a timely, efficient manner. Flowers are fleeting, and the season is short. This requires a colony of honey bees to be efficient resource and labor economists, as well as gather accurate information. This means allocating precious limited time and resources to the most productive forage opportunities so that the colony maximizes its chances of survival. For a deep dive on the subject, check out the article “Honeybees tune excitatory and inhibitory recruitment signaling to resource value and predation risk” found here:

[escholarship.org/content/qt3vr861xt/qt3vr861xt\\_noSplash\\_69b6c3b6453645d1f777abc762797f73.pdf](https://escholarship.org/content/qt3vr861xt/qt3vr861xt_noSplash_69b6c3b6453645d1f777abc762797f73.pdf)

Another good example of life or death decision making by honey bees is when a swarm builds a consensus and decides as a group on where to establish a nest from a plethora of options. A lot of data must be collected, evaluated, and shared. Most amazingly, a group of sometimes tens of thousands of individuals is able to build a consensus from diverse information inflows so they can move together to a new nest cavity. This is no small feat considering that as soon as a swarm alights around 5 percent of the cluster has the job of scout bees that search in every direction for a cavity of the appropriate volume, entrance size, height, and distance. Great choices must be made at this point by the group. Poor cover from weather and predators, or not enough room to store a winter’s worth of honey will result in certain death for the colony. Think about how amazing this is. There is competing information coming in from all directions as scout bees report back their various findings to the group. Gradually the data are evaluated, prioritized, and shared with all the bees in the cluster, and they make a choice as a cohesive unit and move en masse to their best option for a new home. Wouldn’t it be great if humans were as good at gathering quality data and making good choices? Try getting 10,000 humans to agree on anything in this day and age.

I would highly recommend Tom Seeley’s books *The Wisdom of the Hive: The Social Physiology of Honey Bee Colonies* and *Honeybee Democracy* for those who would like to learn more about honey bee decision making and nest cavity preferences. Dr Seeley’s observations and experimental design are very noteworthy. For example, did you know that honey bees prefer a nest volume of about 40 liters when allowed to self-select? This could have significant management considerations. So many beekeepers ask their bees to winter in a 10-frame double deep with a total volume of 85.5 liters. This is a tall order to ask a colony to manage, patrol, provision, and thermoregulate.

Is it time to consider keeping bees in smaller colonies? Here at Old Sol we started out with a base format of 10-frame double deeps like so many do. After over a decade of doing this, the appeal of the 8-frame medium box as the base unit of operations became irresistible due to so many efficiencies gained by our operation. For starters, by just moving to 8-frame gear we get 20 percent more bees on every load and an 8-frame western packed with honey will never weigh more than 48 pounds so your chiropractor may end up missing you. Two 8-frame mediums have a volume of about 48.88 liters, which is much more closely aligned with the honey bee’s natural nest volume preference. I can already hear a number of commercial beekeepers warming up their scoff muscles and thinking, “. . . this won’t work for pollination and it is not enough room.” To that end, I would acknowledge that not every operation’s needs are the same, but I would also point out that we have averaged a 10–13 frame count in the almonds for the last 6 years as

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graded by Merced County Department of Agriculture. About 75 percent of our bees go into almonds with three 8-frame mediums and they grade well. Please note that 3 mediums is about equivalent to a double deep in total volume, but gives us 33 percent more pieces to make nucs from and the option to add space very incrementally as the colony's needs grow. The 8-frame medium nuc is a thing of beauty! We have had success wintering in both double and triple mediums.

In closing, I would like to circle back to group decisions. As a group, the OSBA has some big decisions coming up very soon regarding our Centennial Conference and fundraising efforts. Just like with honey bees, we will make the best decisions based on the best information we can gather and share. The future is hard to predict and the landscape constantly changing, but one thing for certain is that we would all prefer to gather the cluster together and celebrate in person. We are, after all, social animals much like our bees, and much like our bees we get the most done when we work together and aggregate our efforts, even the most tiny ones. As we move into the launch phase for the fundraiser, it will be the aggregation of many efforts, both large and small, that gets us across the finish line no matter how we end up meeting. Remember, a single honey bee by itself only contributes a tiny micro fraction to the success of the colony, and it is the aggregate of these individual efforts inspired by good information that really add up to a formidable, respected, and long-lived group as a whole.

I hope this message finds you and your bees well, and I look forward to hearing from you all. Stay safe out there and be careful with that smoker. Fire season is early this year.

*John Jacob*

## Keeping Bees in May

*Lynn Royce*

It is still spring in May, and Oregon spring weather is known for changing quickly. The old saying, "If you do not like the weather, wait a minute" applies. Honey bees are ready for good weather; they want to forage and gather lots of nectar and pollen for their colony. Colonies grow quickly when foraging is good. This can lead to swarming, something that beekeepers like to control so that they do not lose production and/or colonies.

This time of year, colonies can also be more susceptible to robbing. Larger colonies will use up stores more quickly and can find it easier to take from smaller colonies that may have few defenders to protect food supplies.

If several bad weather days occur in a row, colonies may run out of food. As bees die and fall to the bottom board, the entrance can become blocked. When this happens, the bees may be confined to the hive even when the weather improves. If the beekeeper does not intervene soon enough, the colony will starve. After I lost one of my largest spring colonies to this problem, I now make sure my bees have an upper entrance. I also check and clean entrances often.

Entrances can become busy in spring as colonies grow. A busy entrance may also be caused by invaders from other colonies, robber bees. Look closely at the behavior of the

bees at the entrance. Are bees coming and going normally, or is there fighting at the entrance? You can also see dead bees at the entrance or in front of the hive when the activity is created by robber bees. If you suspect robbing, you can reduce the entrance of the colony being invaded. However, the best solution may be to move the colony under attack. Remember, a new location must be at least 3 miles away.

Contact with other beekeepers can be very helpful when new locations are needed for whatever reason. A good place to meet other beekeepers can be beekeeping classes, bee lectures, and association meetings. Bee problems are not restricted to new beekeepers. Having contacts and talking with others is good for all of us. So, join associations and go to meetings (both local and state); also read your newsletters.

Where you locate a colony is a good question to solve before your bees arrive. Bees like a sunny location, floral and water sources nearby.

If you will have the bees where neighbors are close, it is best to discuss with your neighbor before the bees arrive. Respect the fear that they may have of bees. Also remember that bee dropping can be a problem for neighbors close by.

A jar or two of honey can be helpful in many situations.

The 2021 OSBA Swarm Call List is open! For listing, send member name, phone number, whether or not okay to text, any fee (traditionally, this is free, a service), and up to ten locations to [orsbawebmaster@gmail.com](mailto:orsbawebmaster@gmail.com).

# HEALTHY HIVE ESSENTIALS

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## Nucleus Colonies In My Apiary: Part I

Michael Palmer

“Almost every emergency of management can be met forthwith by putting something into or taking something out of a nucleus, while nuclei themselves seldom present emergencies.”

E.B. Wedmore, *A Manual of Beekeeping*

### The Beginnings of a New Plan

I used to buy bees, lots and lots of bees: Singles from South Carolina, nuclei from Florida, and frames of brood from New York. I used to buy queens, lots and lots of queens: Queens from Georgia and queens from Texas and queens from California. Every year it was the same. Pick up the pieces of my apiary in the spring, send a big check to southern queen breeders, split up my best colonies, and hope I made enough of a honey crop to pay the bills. Some years I did, some years I didn't.

In 1982, an apiary management job became available with a New York state orchard located on the west side of Lake Champlain. Chazy Orchards, advertised as the largest contiguous McIntosh orchard in the world, managed something like 800 acres of trees. Whether or not it was the largest then or is today I don't know, but I can say it was huge to me. The new job added 500 additional colonies to my workload. Colonies more or less dumped in my lap with the instructions, “Fix it.” The orchard's apiary had crashed over the years from mismanagement and American Foulbrood Disease. What had been a successful apiary of more than 800 colonies had dwindled to 150 by 1980. The orchard was able to hire a former Vermont bee inspector for a couple years, and he did a great job of cleaning up the disease and starting the buildup of colony numbers to near pollination requirements.

When I took over, the bees were in decent shape but unproductive. There hadn't been a honey crop in years, and the previous beekeeper, while dealing appropriately with the AFB, nearly bankrupted the apiary, costing \$55 a colony for his management when the orchard could rent colonies of bees for \$22. How many times the owner of the orchard threatened to burn the whole lot I can't remember, but it seemed like all the time. While working for an angry man is never much fun, I have a thick skin and persisted with my management. The second year I worked for Chazy Orchards, the bees made almost five tons of honey. The angry man almost smiled. The following year, we made ten tons of nice light honey, and management costs fell to less than rental

prices.

After working for the orchard for several years, I was ready to expand my own apiary. I felt I could do better with my own bees, and in 1986 I gave my notice: Sell me your bees, or I'm off to work for myself. The grumpy old man resisted, but his son saw the wisdom in my offer and the orchard agreed to sell me the bees and all the related equipment. At the time, I thought I had it made. I now owned an apiary of more than 800 colonies, pollinated with 600 colonies, and, if everything worked out as I hoped, the possibility of making many tons of honey seemed entirely possible. Looking back, I now realize the folly of my new path. The best-laid plans often go astray, and boy did I find that to be true.

Beekeeping is just like all other agricultural endeavors. It's a tough way to make a living, and it seems that every year something goes wrong. How many times have you said it will all be better next year? Next year your bees will winter successfully, or they'll make a big honey crop because you'll do this or that or something else. Isn't that the great hope of every farmer everywhere, no matter what they grow or where they farm? Next year will be the year. So I approached my beekeeping with an eye to the future and the belief that next year will be the year.

Over the years that followed, I did the best job I could. I followed the best management practices recommended by beekeeping experts and educators. My honey crops averaged from eighteen to twenty tons a year, and my winter losses averaged ten or fifteen percent. For a few years there, in the late eighties, my apiary did me well. Then came *Acarapis woodii*. Winter mortality skyrocketed. Losses of from thirty to fifty percent became normal. Two years after the arrival of Acarine, I discovered *Varroa destructor* in my bees. On seeing that first mite, I closed the hive, sat down under an ancient sugar maple to think about what I had just seen. I knew this was the end of an era, and of beekeeping as I had known it. I felt a bit like that maple tree that held my back. She had stood on that spot for hundreds of years, watching the passing of the old ways, one by one. She and I were witnessing the passing of another.

The 1990s was a tough time to be a beekeeper. Winter losses were high and spring clusters were small. As an apple pollinator with a contract to fulfill, I found it difficult to maintain the required number of suitable colonies to pollinate the orchard. Some years, with numbers way down and very few colonies strong enough for spring splits, I resorted to buying bees. That's where the singles from South Carolina,

the nuclei from Florida, and the frames of brood from New York came in. It was mandatory that I fulfill my pollination contract. I had no choice but to buy in replacement bees, and pay for them with my pollination check. And it went like that for several years. Buy replacement bees in the spring spending what money I had, and hope a decent honey crop would come my way. You all know how fickle the honey crop can be, so this wasn't a good plan. I felt as if I was slowly losing my apiary. There really had to be a better way.

In 1999, I visited Kirk Webster, another Vermont beekeeper, just before apple bloom. We drove out to one of his apiaries where he showed me some of his over-wintering nucleus colonies. These nucs were wintering on top of production hives, and there were bee beards hanging from the entrances of the nuc boxes. Understand I was a struggling beekeeper trying to keep my bees alive and fulfill my pollination contract. This particular spring was late, and it was all I could do to put together 600 good colonies for the orchard, and Webster had over-wintered nucs that were so populous they were bearding, two weeks before apple bloom.

That really got me thinking. My management meant splitting up all the strong colonies I had to keep my numbers up, and I was spending the money I made on apple pollination to buy bees and queens to help restock my apiaries. Webster had nuclei wintering in his apiaries with bee beards, two weeks before bloom. After seeing those nucs with bearding bees hanging out their little entrances, in the middle of April, I was convinced. It was time for a management change.

I never imagined at the time how nucleus colonies would become the keystone of my apiary. It wasn't until years later that I realized the full potential of having nuclei wintering in my apiaries. All the bee work I do now, as the owner/manager of a large apiary, is centered on the production, wintering, and use of nucleus colonies with locally reared queens.

### Maintaining Honey Producing Apiaries

For the first few years I wintered nucleus colonies, I thought of them as stocks for replacing winter losses and

as stocks for making increase. Dead-outs were cleaned up and new equipment was readied. Nucleus colonies that had successfully wintered were transferred to the empty equipment, and apiaries were filled after the long winter. Nucleus colonies were perfect for both uses, and often built up faster than many of the over-wintered production colonies. In fact, they absolutely exploded on the dandelion flow when hived on drawn comb.

In a commercial honey-producing apiary, the beekeeper must keep colony numbers up and every colony as strong as possible. While increased numbers may seem beneficial to the honey producer, quantity should never trump quality. Weak colonies don't produce. With that thought in mind, I began managing weak spring colonies differently. Formerly I had boosted slow colonies with frames of emerging brood from the best colonies. It was a good plan. The weak colony got a shot of young bees, and the strong colonies got some needed swarm control. But, did that swarm control come at the cost of a reduced honey crop? With my short beekeeping season, I would have to say yes. And did boosting weak colonies with brood do anything to correct the problem? I had to ask myself why were they weak? Was it the fault of the queen? I believed most likely so and re-queened them later in the season.



But why wait? Why not just do it right off when the problem is first discovered? Rather than give a weak colony valuable brood resources only to discover a failing queen later in the summer, why not just kill that old queen and give the colony an over-wintered nuc? Doing so immediately boosts that weakling early in the season, and re-queens it at the same time. It takes a struggling colony with an inferior queen and only three or four frames of brood, and turns it into strong colony with a tested queen and eight or nine frames of brood. The results can be startling.

*To be continued*

**Note:** Michael Palmer, French Hill Apiaries, presented on "The Sustainable Apiary" and raising queens during the 2019 OSBA Fall Conference.

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## Apiary Registration with ODA

Every person who owns, or is in charge of, five or more colonies of bees located within the state or Oregon, must register each year with the Oregon Department of Agriculture. The form needed to register colonies is located at: [apps.oregon.gov/SOS/LicenseDirectory/LicenseDetail/606](https://apps.oregon.gov/SOS/LicenseDirectory/LicenseDetail/606) or obtained in person by visiting: 635 Capitol Street NE, Salem, OR, 97301

The current cost of apiary registration is \$10 with an additional charge of \$0.50 per colony for five or more hives. After July 1, the registration fee will increase to \$20. The fee per hive remains at \$0.50 per colony for five or more hives. The number of colonies that must be registered is equal to the highest number of full strength colonies managed within the state at any point during the previous year, prior to the **registration deadline of June 1**.

All money collected from apiary registration shall be spent on research at the OSU Honey Bee Lab predominantly focused on honey bees ([honeybeelab.oregonstate.edu](http://honeybeelab.oregonstate.edu)).



# PROTECT BEES - READ PESTICIDE LABELS

Five steps to reading a pesticide label to determine how risky a treatment is to bees.



**1. OPEN THE LABEL** and look for the **ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS** section.

**2. BEE TOXIC PESTICIDES** will be indicated by the phrase **“TOXIC”** or **“HIGHLY TOXIC TO BEES”**. If toxic:



don't spray when in bloom → wait until all petals fall

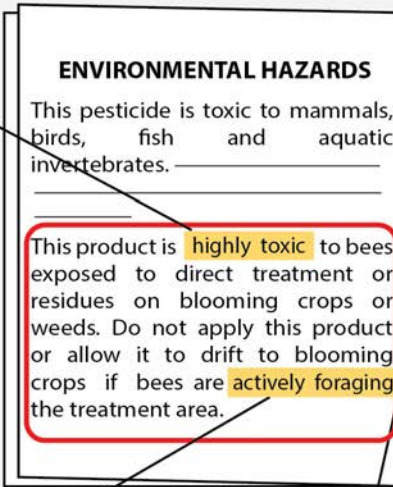
**3. Some bee-toxic pesticides BREAK DOWN IN A FEW HOURS.** Look out for the words:



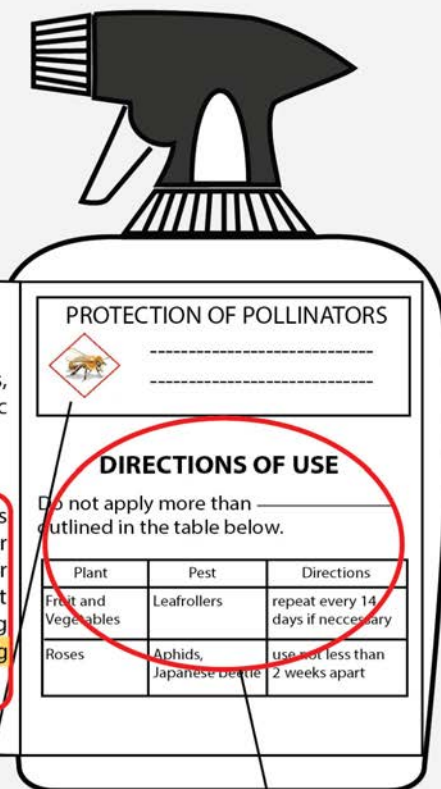
**1. “FORAGING”** or **“VISITING”** = remains toxic for more than 8 h. **DON'T APPLY TO FLOWERING PLANTS!**



**2. “ACTIVELY FORAGING”** or **“ACTIVELY VISITING”** = remains toxic for less than 8 h **ONLY APPLY IN THE EVENING WHEN BEES ARE NOT ACTIVE!**



**4. BEE ADVISORY BOX**  
Newer products may have a Bee Advisory Box, which is clearly marked by a **SYMBOL OF A BEE IN A RED DIAMOND**. Carefully read these additional instructions on how to use the product safely around bees.



PROTECTION OF POLLINATORS



**DIRECTIONS OF USE**

Do not apply more than \_\_\_\_\_ outlined in the table below.

Plant	Pest	Directions
Fruit and Vegetables	Leafrollers	repeat every 14 days if necessary
Roses	Aphids, Japanese beetle	use not less than 2 weeks apart

**5. USE DIRECTIONS**  
Newer labels can also have additional precautions for using a products around honey bees **RENTED FOR POLLINATION**.

applying insecticides or fungicides to blooming bee-attractive crops. Communicate with local beekeepers during the off-season to help reduce conflict during the busy season. Your state may have a program that maps bee colonies; contact your state Department of Agriculture to learn how to access it.

**4. Maintain a buffer around bee colonies and into bee habitat.** Avoid placing bees in a crop; set them outside the spray drift zone (20–100 feet, depending on sprayer technology). Avoid pesticide drift onto bee habitat bordering the crop. Reduce drift by using coarser droplet sizes, a drift-reducing agent, or intelligent sprayer technology.

**5. Mow blooming weeds.** If there are bee-attractive blooming weeds (e.g., mustard, clover, dandelion), mow them before spraying.

**6. Review State Pollinator Protection Plans and use IPM.**

Many states provide information on how to protect bees and other pollinators. Contact your Department of Agriculture to obtain this plan. Integrated Pest Management can also help reduce bee pesticide exposure. Integrated Pest Management starts with proactive pest or disease management: Scout the crop for pest levels; plant disease-resistant cultivars; when damage occurs, determine the cause and decide if you can accept low levels of damage; consider all the control measures and choose the best-suited tool for the pest or disease.

**Note:** Andony Melathopoulos is Pollinator Health Extension Specialist, Oregon State University.

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## BEEKEEPER EVENTS

— 2021 —

May 20: World Bee Day. *Information:* [www.worldbeeday.org/en](http://www.worldbeeday.org/en).

June 21–27: National Pollinator Week 2021. *Information:* [www.pollinator.org/pollinator-week](http://www.pollinator.org/pollinator-week).

July 26–30: Eastern Apicultural Society 66th Annual Short Course and Conference, University of Massachusetts, Amherst MA. *Information:* [www.easternapiculture.org](http://www.easternapiculture.org).

August 7: Oregon Coast Honey Lovers Festival. Yachats Commons. *Information:* [www.facebook.com/Oregon-Coast-Honey-Lovers-Festival-107547000840233](http://www.facebook.com/Oregon-Coast-Honey-Lovers-Festival-107547000840233).

August 21: National Honey Bee Day.

August 23–27: Oregon Bee Atlas 2021 Beginner Bee School. Oregon State University. Corvallis. *Information:* [extension.oregonstate.edu/program/all/bee-atlas/events](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/program/all/bee-atlas/events).

October 1–2: Washington State Beekeepers Association 2021 Conference. *Information:* [wasba.org/events/conference-info](http://wasba.org/events/conference-info).

October 22–24. OSBA 2021 Fall Conference, when we hope again to meet in Florence. *Updates:* [orsba.org/osba-fall-conference](http://orsba.org/osba-fall-conference).

November 16–18: California State Beekeepers Association Convention 2021. *Information:* [www.californiastatebeekeepers.com/annual-convention](http://www.californiastatebeekeepers.com/annual-convention).

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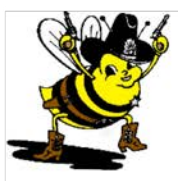
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**REGIONAL NEWS**

**Regional Representative**

**North Coast**

The coast has enjoyed its usual combination of spring rain, wind, fog and sun (usually in the same day), which makes things a little challenging for our bees. And challenging for the beekeepers as well who are anxious to get into their hives, only to find that the one sunny day of the week is also the windiest day of the week. Beekeepers will be picking up new packages and nucs soon, introducing themselves to their new queens, and watching their apiaries move into high gear for another beekeeping season. Because of a jump in Covid infections, our associations are continuing to meet on Zoom. Both associations have done a great job providing pertinent speakers and informational videos for members during these meetings, but everyone is looking forward to a time when we will be able to meet together in person again. *Kathy Cope*

**Regional Associations**

**Central Coast Beekeepers**

What seemed like a warm winter has turned into a cool spring along the central Oregon coast. Finally we are getting some warmer weather again, which is good for not only us but our bees as well. The workers are bringing in pollen and hopefully finding the early nectar flows. Many of our members' hives made it through the winter, and all four of the hives on our property survived—a first in a long time. We set out our swarm boxes this week in anticipation of some

wonderful spring activity.

Although we are a small association, we have a number of outstanding beekeepers who have contributed to our monthly Zoom meetings. Last month, Rick Olson gave a great talk about queens. He went over the basic queen biology and finished up with a synopsis of the complex process of queen rearing. Rick is starting to raise queens in the Florence area, so hopefully he will have locally raised “coastal queens” this summer. Another member, our master beekeeper Max Kuhn, will be presenting at our next Zoom meeting on spring and early summer hive inspections and what to look for in your hives. Max always has a wealth of great bee information and practical beekeeping knowledge to share. We are also doing a member hive survey and will share successes and opportunities for improvement. Special thanks to Judy Irving, our newsletter guru, for her extraordinary assistance in keeping us all informed. She has initiated a fun “Member Spotlight” article in our monthly newsletter to keep us all connected and entertained.

As the weather warms and more of us get vaccinated, we are hoping to have outdoor in-person meetings. Although Zoom meetings have been a lifesaver for associations throughout the state, we are all itching to meet again face to face. Last summer we had a small, outdoor gathering (with masks) in a local apiary, combining an educational meeting with a social event. It worked great and we plan on having at least one more outdoor meeting again this summer. Until next month, here's wishing all of you a successful and fun spring Swarm Season!

*Stu Willason*

**Central Oregon Beekeepers**

Spring has sprung and is in full swing. The fruit trees are close to finishing, and the hardier, or perhaps more adventuresome and hopeful gardeners have taken a chance and planted some

of the more tender plants. It's not rare to have a frost later in May, so many folks will just wait until late May for those plantings.

It's nice that several of our local nuc producers and sources seem to have stepped up production and availability this year as it seems the losses last winter were




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higher than expected. Most of the available nucs are available later in the month, although there are a few which are earlier. It's also great to see that apparently their businesses are going well also (they work hard to get them ready for us all).

We learned about the new regulations and research on efficacy of oxalic acid treatments last month. This is of great interest to our membership. In the future, we're planning to hear about how honey bees interact with native pollinators and how to minimize conflicts as well as causes and resolutions for defensive hives, and a primer on photography techniques to use while photographing honey bees, other insects, and flowers.

We are really looking forward to the results of the two winter loss surveys. Last year there was some useful information to be gleaned from the data.

We'll be kicking off our annual photo contest this month. As always, please feel invited to attend any of our meetings, the 4th Tuesday of the month.

*Allen Engle*

### Lane County Beekeepers

As usual, April was a fun-filled and busy month for Lane County beekeepers. New bees were welcomed into hives by many in the association, and the association was able to reengage with the public by staffing a booth at GloryBee during the annual bee weekend. This gave members a chance to offer advice to folks who were picking up bee packages. This type of public engagement was largely lost during the pandemic year of 2020 and sorely missed.

While monthly meetings are still being offered virtually, participation by members continues to be strong. Approximately 80 folks virtually joined our April meeting to discuss hive splits and swarm capture/ prevention, and we are expecting a larger number of folks to tune into the May presentations. The association has completed updates to its swarm contact list for 2021, and we are expecting the usual volume of calls in May.

The association is not expecting to reengage in most large public venues (i.e., county fair, home and garden shows) until 2022, so we will focus our energies on offering technical assistance (when contacted) in a one-on-one format as well as taking care of bees on our home fronts.

*Brian McGinley*

### Portland Metro Beekeepers

Portland Metro Beekeepers Association continues holding virtual meetings, and will likely be that way for the summer or into fall. Attendance at our meetings has been robust, with a lot of new beekeepers joining the association and getting prepared for installing and caring for recently purchased nucs or packages. Our presentations have been geared to help our new beekeepers be successful caring for their

colonies. Building woodenware, cleaning up old gear, getting tools, and installing nucs are some of the topics covered. Our April presentation was on several ways to do splits. The April meeting was streamed using our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/groups/359550560772463/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/359550560772463/)). The recording is available to view for members of the PMBA Facebook group.

As much as we were hoping for a Bee Day this year, it now appears that we won't be able to have one when we normally have the event (April/May). We'll look for a potential opportunity later in the year, when state and county leaders give us the go-ahead.

Meanwhile, we are all hoping that the crazy events of the past year do not repeat. With COVID-19, wildfires, and ice storms, the past 12 months



for the records, and we are hoping for a bit of normal this year. On April 10th, under cloudy skies and cold temperatures, we were greeted with a good day to distribute 359 nucs in under 4 hours. Hats off to everyone at Foothills Honey Company for strong nucs, and for staging and supporting our efforts during our distribution. That, coupled with an energetic group of board and association members, helped the distribution of the nucs go off without a hitch.

Weather in the area has improved and our bees seem to be appreciating it. Daytime temperatures at 55 or 60 degrees have seen bees flying and flowers starting to bud out and bloom. Early bloomers such as heather, borage, and dandelions are providing hives with welcomed pollen and nectar sources. Some of our commercial members have returned from almond pollination and are starting on more local pollination services (peaches, cherries). We collectively are crossing our fingers for a plentiful and bountiful season for all our pollinators, but especially our honey bees.

*Dave Schwartz*

### Portland Urban Beekeepers

It's official, the bee season has begun . . . multiple attempts to procure an extra inner hive cover the other day were met with "out of stock" and "check back next week." By now, many of us have received our new bees. But as I write this, it has not yet happened and I am counting down the days to the weekend when I pick up my packages. Having lost my hives over the winter, I miss the bees. I miss doing spring checks and watching for swarm cells. I miss watching them react to the warm sunny mornings and looking at the different colors



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of pollen coming in. It's a wonderful feeling, really. I see it as an affirmation of what beekeeping means to me and the value I place in being a steward of their species. Until then, I'll watch others do their inspections, tidy my shed, and clean my equipment for their new tenants grateful for the space that will be created when the boxes and supers go back to work.

Our April meeting featured Dr. Dewey Caron, who reviewed Spring management—splits, swarms, feeding—all the classics. So many good reminders and new ideas, he is such a rich source of experience and knowledge. We've decided to keep our meetings directed to more experienced beekeepers and it's worked out well. Our online Beekeeping 101 class is a great way to serve new beekeepers, but keeping more advanced beekeepers engaged via our monthly meetings has remained a priority. One great side benefit of Zoom meetings is the dialogue that happens amongst members in the chat box, don't you think? It's added an unexpected dimension to the meetings for folks to pose questions, links to more resources, explanations of something the speaker said, even jokes. Just one more way for us to connect and share! *Jessica Anderson*

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### Tillamook Beekeepers

At our April meeting, we had the first drawing for our raffle hive. There were 640 tickets sold. The winner was one of our members, Holly Rico. A second hive will be raffled off at the County Fair. Everyone who bought tickets already has a chance at that raffle, too, and tickets are still available through our website. As always, we shared bee stories. We watched two short videos, both by Kamon Reynolds. The first was on lighting a smoker. The second was on reversing hive boxes. Both were informative and generated questions and discussions. *Claire Moody*

### Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

Tualatin Valley Beekeepers Association has been having excellent Zoom sessions with from 40 to 60 members in attendance. We are beginning to see many members being vaccinated, so hope at some point to return to in-person meetings later this year. We had a happy and successful nuc distribution day on April 17, and are doing our best to be supportive mentors for all of our members via educational programs at our monthly meetings, and active online website forum and Facebook group. This is our first year trying out new swarm reporting and swarm capturing software; fingers are crossed for good success! *Debby Garman*



# Oregon State Beekeepers Association Membership Form

The **Oregon State Beekeepers Association** is a 501(c)(3) 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. Members 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:**

**Oregon State Beekeepers Association, Membership**  
4207 SE Woodstock Blvd, Ste 517, Portland, Oregon 97206

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**Membership Directory:** The OSBA respects the privacy of members. Please indicate contact information to be included in a directory mailed to OSBA members only:

Do not include contact information

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

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## ***The Bee Line***

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

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

The next issue to be printed will be the **June** issue, 2021. The deadline for submitting copy is **May 10, 2021**. 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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