



# The Bee Line

Volume 46  
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June 2021

Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association

## Nucleus Colonies In My Apiary: Part II

Michael Palmer



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**Image:** The first of swarms from a bee tree in my sister's yard in Kentucky—a busy swarm season everywhere!

In the beginning, nucleus colonies were future production colonies to be used in my apiary. I made them up before the middle of July, using brood and bees from hives that weren't strong enough to make a honey crop. The little colonies would build up, filling their four-frame cavities. When the dog days of August arrived, with hot and humid ninety-degree weather, it was all I could do to keep them in their boxes. The only solution seemed to be to remove frames of brood and bees, replace them with comb or foundation, and start more nuclei. That worked to some extent, but nucleus colonies made up after the beginning of August don't winter well here in Vermont. So, what to do? I chose to add that excess brood to struggling production colonies. This turned out to be a good use of those resources. Imagine placing a deep body of brood on the floor of a colony having difficulty growing enough of a population to survive the coming winter. The results were quick and lasting. The larger cluster created by adding combs of emerging brood not only boosted the colony population in the short term, but also that increased cluster size lasted through the winter and, come spring, those colonies were among the strongest in the apiary. It was as if I had dropped a bomb on each colony, and I jokingly referred to them as "Bee Bombs" in *Bee Culture* magazine. Drop the bomb and the population explodes.

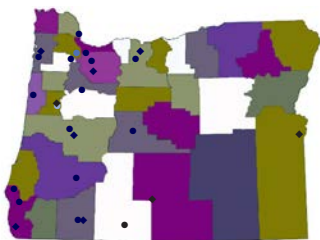
While harvesting brood from strong nucleus colonies slowed swarming, it didn't help much with absconding. Try as I might, too many of these summer nucs would abscond with the arrival of our August weather. Days with 90-degree temperatures and 90 percent humidity levels were just too much for these miniature colonies. They couldn't maintain a suitable temperature within their cavity and objected by what I thought at the time was swarming. This proved to be wrong. The clusters were leaving the hive with no queen cells left behind. Oddly, the "swarm" would fly fast away from the area, never clustering temporarily as traditional swarms do. Upon inspecting the swarmed out colony, there would be a good brood pattern, a handful of very young bees, and a few older field bees that must have been out foraging when the bees left. It took me a couple summers to understand what was happening, and, when I realized that the bees were actually absconding and not swarming, the solution became obvious. Add another story above. This gave the bees needed expansion room, but more importantly a cavity size where they could better control the temperature of their broodnest.

### Brood Factories

In the spring, after the nucleus colonies had been transferred to the production yards, I always had some too weak to be of much use. Because my season is so short, these colonies never really built up in time to be productive. Trying to use what resources they held to benefit my apiary, I combined the weakest, allowing them to grow until strong enough, and sacrificed them for making nucs. While this worked okay, it was far from perfect. Some years, for whatever reasons, they didn't build up properly. This left me without enough brood and bees to make the planned increase, and forced me to sacrifice

*Continued on page 16*

## OREGON STATE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



### OSBA OFFICERS

#### President

John Jacob—541.582.2337; oldsolbees@gmail.com

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#### Columbia Basin

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#### North Willamette Valley

Steven Coffman—503.838.2981

#### South Willamette Valley

Tim Wydronek—541.740.4127; timwydronek@comcast.net

### ● 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: Lorena Corzatt—541.892.8402  
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

Greetings, fellow beekeepers.

It's hard to believe that the longest day of the year is already near. As the solstice approaches, it is very easy to think about planning for winter and the following year. This is no easy task for beekeepers in a normal year considering the fact we have a weather-driven enterprise that involves tiny, fragile livestock that has about an 8,000-acre potential forage zone given a typical two-mile flight radius. It is very easy to see that a lot of surprises can happen under even normal circumstances. Beekeeping is inherently complex and presents many unique challenges in the best of times. Sprinkle in a little bit of economic and health uncertainty and the complexity of our situation grows exponentially.

For example, we are suddenly paying more for diesel, sugar, plastic, and especially lumber. At the time of this writing, depending on whom you ask, lumber prices are up between 350 percent and 400 percent. This has profound implications for us. The cost of creating and maintaining a hive has just increased substantially. The price of pine used for bee boxes has tripled according to Shastina Millwork in Southern Oregon. Will you be able to charge more for pollination and honey to cover these costs? When do we raise prices? Will the market bear these prices? Ironically, the prices currently being offered for pine logs is extremely low. A friend just recently sold full loads of pine to a mill and was able to get only \$3,000–\$4,000 a load, so clearly price increases on finished boards are not a supply side issue and more due to extreme demand in the face of reduced mill capacity.

Definitely more questions than answers, but obviously we beekeepers cannot absorb these price increases without addressing what we charge for our goods and services. A serious challenge is that it appears another massive almond crop is on the way and that nut prices continue to mostly face downward pressure even given recent increases in demand. Too many acres have been planted to maintain a whole lot of long-term upward pressure on nut prices. Ironically, in the short term, the drought in California may be working in our favor in terms of reducing overall crop volume and stemming further nut price reductions. All the almond growers we work with are operating on very tight margins and are very sensitive to price increases. Nut prices have barely begun to recover from recent lows due to last year's bumper crop that growers are still in the process of selling off. Please see the accompanying chart for a picture of what growers are dealing with.

Combine these factors with the commonly bandied about number \$360 a year annual hive maintenance cost (feed, fuel, labor, medications, trucks, etc.), and it is easy to see that current almond pollination prices are not covering as much of our expenses

**BDG**  
**2020 Crop April Progress Payment**  
**April 8, 2021**

	RATE	MAX YTD	2019 Crop Max YTD
NONPAREIL & SONORA INSHELL	\$0.30	\$1.22	\$1.72
NONPAREIL & SUPAREIL MEATS	\$0.30	\$1.14	\$1.64
INDEPENDENCE INSHELL	\$0.25	\$1.07	\$1.60
SONORA MEATS	\$0.30	\$1.04	\$1.54
CARMEL & WINTERS	\$0.25	\$0.94	\$1.49
MONTEREY	\$0.25	\$0.94	\$1.49
INDEPENDENCE MEATS	\$0.25	\$0.94	\$1.49
CALIF, PRICE, FRITZ & WD COLONY	\$0.25	\$0.94	\$1.49
BUTTE/PADRE	\$0.25	\$0.94	\$1.49
MISSION, NEPLUS	\$0.25	\$0.89	\$1.44
MIXED	\$0.25	\$0.75	\$1.30
WEIGHTED AVERAGE	\$0.27	\$1.04	\$1.57

Total Paid-to-Date	Overall Average	Average High Quality	Maximum Possible
Nonpareil & Sonora Inshell	\$1.19	\$1.20	\$1.22
Nonpareil & Supareil Meats	\$1.08	\$1.10	\$1.14
Independence Inshell	\$1.02	\$1.06	\$1.07
Sonora Meats	\$1.00	\$1.02	\$1.04
Independence Meats	\$0.89	\$0.92	\$0.94
Carmel & Winters	\$0.91	\$0.92	\$0.94
Monterey	\$0.90	\$0.91	\$0.94
Cals/Price/Fritz/Wd Colony	\$0.91	\$0.92	\$0.94
Butte/Padre	\$0.90	\$0.92	\$0.94
Mission & Neplus	\$0.85	\$0.87	\$0.89
Mixed	\$0.73	N/A	\$0.75
Weighted Average	\$1.00	\$1.02	\$1.04

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as they used to. This is a precarious situation when one considers colony loss rates and increased costs in creating new hives. How do you plan to make up the difference? Success is not guaranteed even if one manages to keep all their bees alive. Will there be enough profit there to accommodate new equipment to house all the required splits to prevent swarming? After 24 years in this business, I have increasingly come to the conclusion that the only thing I really know is that I don't know. One thing I do feel fairly certain about is that our industry has changed little over the last 30 years and is ripe for some technological advances, including things like analytics, automation, and many other research-driven advances.

On a lighter note, at our last fundraising committee meeting it came to light that we already have a \$100,000 donor and several other large donors lined up to kick start our campaign. At this point we are planning on launching in July, and when this happens we will call on you to reach out to your regional groups and nonmembers in your social networks to participate. Anybody who eats food is a stakeholder in honey bee research, and we are planning a nice suite of thank you gifts for our participants. In addition, at our regular board meeting it came up that there still is considerable uncertainty around our ability to meet in person for the fall conference due to our group size, so to that end I would strongly urge you to fill out Joe's survey [see page 7] to help us facilitate planning the conference and a late-summer outdoor picnic. We really look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. May your bees be as ample as the days are long, and enjoy your summer.

*John Jacob*

## Centennial Fundraising

The year 2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association and, in honor of this significant milestone, we wanted to raise some funds to support the phenomenal work being done by Dr. Ramesh Sagili and his team at the OSU Honey Bee Lab. Currently Dr. Sagili has to spend a significant portion of his time writing grants to support his lab and the graduate students and research assistants who are working every day to enhance the health and safety of our honey bees. As a result, he has less time available to engage in the research he loves and spends more and more time attracting the half a million dollars of operating expenses necessary to run the lab each year. Our plan is to raise \$500,000 to support the lab and its work for a year, and we need your help.

Our efforts will have two parts: A major gifts campaign and an online crowdfunding platform. We are starting with the major gifts campaign and have already had significant success, but we need your assistance in identifying businesses/corporations as well as individuals, who care about and value honey bees and whom you can connect us with and help us make the ask. These could be relatives, customers, suppliers, friends, or acquaintances who we could ask for a gift of \$10,000 or more. We hope to raise approximately \$300,000 of our goal from this part of the campaign.

Any assistance you can supply will be greatly appreciated. Contact me at rfain18@gmail.com with leads or questions, and I will be glad to call you for clarification or to arrange contact with your lead.

Our second push will begin with the roll out of our online platform in July. We will send each of you a link when the page goes live and ask that you share it with your network and your social media portals in hopes that we can attract the final \$200,000 by September. We would also appreciate any gift that you would like to make to the campaign personally and hope that you will consider honoring Dr. Sagili and his work along with us.

*Becca Fain*

OSBA Fundraising Chair

This lovely spring has sprung an abundance of swarms from the confines of hives and bee trees. Thank you for contacting orsbawebmaster@gmail.com when your apiary is filled and you want your name removed from the OSBA Swarm Call List!

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# 12 BIG ISSUES

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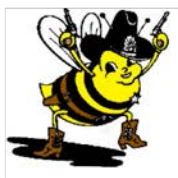
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## OSBA Conference Planning Survey

Greetings, fellow beekeepers.

For all of us this past year has been a challenge not being able to meet in person, and it looks like we are not out of the Covid-19 woods yet. At this year's fall conference we plan to have Juliana Rangel of Texas A&M, Jennifer Berry of University of Georgia, Samuel Ramsey, Ellen Topitzhofer, OSU, Ramesh Sagili, OSU, and more. We are also planning on having a discussion by selected successful beekeepers in Oregon on how queen rearing helps your operation. At this time, it is anybody's guess if we will be able to meet at the Florence Events Center. I have consulted with an epidemiologist, and she says that late October would be the best possible time to meet. But she did caution that there would be a very good chance that we would not be able to meet in person because of the size of our group. If that is the case, then we would have to have an online conference again. This brings up the question: Even if the Oregon Health Authority does allow us to meet, would enough of our membership want to attend our conference in person? Please let me know:

If the state would allow us to have our conference at the Florence Events Center on October 22, 23, & 24, would you be interested? Yes\_\_ No\_\_.

If we are not able to meet in person, would you be interested in an online conference? Yes\_\_ No\_\_.

Beyond the OHA recommendations, what precautions would you want the OSBA to take to ensure your safety and what precautions are you planning or willing to take in order to be comfortable in attending the OSBA Fall Conference?

In addition, it was suggested at the OSBA board meeting that we could resume the practice of having an OSBA picnic in late August at a state park in the Willamette Valley.

Would you attend an outdoor picnic in late August at a state park in the Willamette Valley? Yes\_\_ No\_\_.

If you attended the picnic, would you be willing to pay for a catered meal? Yes\_\_ No\_\_.

Beyond the OHA recommendations, what precautions would you want the OSBA to take to ensure your safety and what precautions are you planning or willing to take in order to be comfortable in attending an August picnic?

Please email me your responses by the 1st of July so that I can make plans: joemaresh@bctonline.com. Be safe and take care of yourselves. Thank You.

*Joe Maresh*  
OSBA Vice President

## Understanding Honey Bee Swarm Biology

### Opportunity to Participate

This is an opportunity for you to help in understanding honey bee swarm biology via participatory research/citizen science.

Honey bee swarms are fascinating. Have you ever wondered what percentage of worker bees leave the parental hive during a swarm? You have probably read in bee books or a couple of journal articles that about 50 percent of the worker bees will swarm along with the old queen to establish a new nest. One study published in 2012 (Rangel and Seeley, *Insectes Sociaux* 59, 453–462), suggests that 75 percent of worker bees leave in a swarm. The percentage of worker bees leaving in a swarm could vary depending on the time of the year (April, May, June, or July) and a few other factors. We (OSU Honey Bee Lab) are interested in exploring this interesting aspect of swarm biology with the help of citizen scientists (our beekeepers) by examining as many swarms as possible.

If you would like to be a part of this research, then please let us know as soon as possible as the swarming season might end early given the unusually warm weather we have witnessed so far this spring. The following contains a brief description of the study/process of data collection.

### Study Process/Method

If you witness a low-hanging swarm that can be easily accessed and captured without any risk/hazard, and you also know for sure the source of that swarm (parental hive), then you can be a part of this study. Once the swarm is settled on a branch or other substrate, that swarm needs to be hived carefully in a single story hive with eight or ten frames (frames can be empty or with some honey and pollen). Then the worker bee population should be estimated in both the captured swarm (in the nucleus hive) and the parental hive (original hive that swarmed).

We can help you estimate the worker population by providing step-by-step instructions. Please call us (Ramesh Sagili: 979 739-9347 or 541 737-5460; Carolyn Breece: 541 224-3589; Heike Williams: 541 740-7877) if you happen to successfully capture a swarm and know the parental hive from which the swarm was issued.

We appreciate your help in increasing the body of knowledge regarding swarming.

*Ramesh Sagili*  
Oregon State University Honey Bee Lab

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## OSBA Executive Committee Meeting

April 29, 2021 ❖ primarily via Zoom

Attending we had Karen Finley, Charlie Vanden Heuvel, Tim Wydronek, Joe Maresh, Joe Hansen, Marjie Ehry, Linda Zahl, Becca Fain, Harry Vanderpool, Kathy Cope, Mureen Walker, and Rosanna Mattingly.

Prior to the meeting and as people came on, there was much discussion of the crazy spring! Many of us were kind of running on fumes: It has been a very busy and compressed spring weather pattern fueling bees and beekeepers all over the state. Your trusty leaders were, like you, readers, very busy moving bees, handling nucs, supering bees, splitting bees, and watching them swarm! All were talking about the early dry spring, crops blooming early, and a remarkable year for maple honey.

John Jacob called the meeting to order once we settled down.

### Minutes/Treasurer's Report

We approved the minutes of the last first quarter meeting, as printed in the recent *Bee Line*. Then Joe Hansen delivered the treasurer's report. In short, our first quarter major income items are dues, *Bee Line* ads, affiliation fees, and donations. Expenses are primarily *Bee Line*, Rosanna's stipend, printing, and the (\$500) match for associations' October conference donations to the OSU Honey Bee Lab. OSBA's bank balance is solid and pretty normal, despite the pandemic's toll.

### Virtual or Live Conference/Possible Picnic

A main topic of the meeting was to address the possibility of having a physical conference. A reliable epidemiologist has said that chances are less than 50 percent that it will be allowed to happen, though the late fall date makes it potentially possible. We may do better to make a decision early to skip a physical conference and celebrate our OSBA centennial over 2 years.

Making a decision sooner rather than later would enable focused planning for an online conference. We risk losing money and lots of people's time if we hold a meeting that is poorly attended. Sam Ramsey, Jennifer Berry, and Julia Rangel will be some of our speakers. Adjustments to the schedule/program can be made based on what was learned from feedback on the 2020 virtual conference program.

We also talked about arranging an OSBA outdoor summer/fall picnic in order to convene with other beekeepers and enjoy the conviviality of an OSBA event. All agreed, this option may be a good one, in late August or September at a state park picnic place (Champoeg or Silver Falls or Willamette Mission); stay tuned. Champoeg has several picnic areas

with 150 max. Need some idea of how many people to expect. Joe M. will poll the membership in June to find out where people stand on attending a fall conference in Florence. And about how they might participate in contingencies: A virtual meeting and a possible picnic.

### Regional Representatives and Association Presidents' Reports

Kathy Cope: Oregon Coast beekeepers have had great weather, but little contact.

Tim Wydronek: Linn Benton association has had regular Zoom meetings. They are automatically extending memberships from 2020 to 2021, and have roughly 95 members in their group.

Joe Maresh: Portland Metro beekeepers had a nuc pick-up day at Foothills Honey in Colton in mid-April. The group bought 350 nucs, and the spring honey flow has been phenomenal for those who were prepared to take advantage of it. They are all dreading another fire season.

Linda Zahl: Columbia County beekeepers haven't seen a maple flow like this in 20 years; there are some maples still blooming. Apples are now blooming as well. Everyone's hives swarmed almost simultaneously. The Columbia County group is coordinating with the Cowlitz, Washington, beekeepers association. This doubles the content available with more meetings and shared speakers. For example, the Columbia group is sharing the cost of an honorarium for Sam Ramsey, who is coming to speak to Cowlitz in June, and Columbia County will have Anna Heck presenting later in the summer. The Vedanta Retreat Center apiary has been a successful and fun project.

Charlie Vanden Heuval: The Columbia Gorge beekeepers are meeting monthly over Zoom. They have 3 hives at the Hood River extension service building where they meet. They lost one over the winter but split one of the survivors so they are back up to 3. The group has about 65 members, still going strong.

### Archiving Presentations

Karen would like to see association and state conference talks collectively archived by OSBA if possible. Our newsletter is useful for sharing what is going on, but now we can branch out and form a library of some of the talks being recorded. They could be archived/annotated so that they can be viewed by individual OSBA members or other associations. Linda Zahl brought up the need for guidance: For how to put together an archive and what and how to post to the OSBA Facebook page.

She will put some effort into drawing up a form for potential speakers to choose what kind of permission they want to allow for recording/posting their talks. Annotating talks, posting/revenue on YouTube, and forms for permissions from speakers are needed to be explored.

### **State Legislative Liaisons**

Harry Vanderpool, met us on Zoom while also working bees. He let us know that Dr. Jessica Renden has confirmed that Oregon Department of Ag will be doing some sampling for invasive wasps, and will be focusing on the northwest corner of Oregon. Linda Zahl mentioned that her Columbia County association extends all the way out to Astoria. She would like to be put in contact with the ODA monitoring team.

Klamath County beekeepers had Mike Rodia step in with his steel toed cowboy boots to defend a Klamath Falls area beekeeper who was asked to remove his beehives from his property. Mike Rodia was able to review the various ordinances of Klamath County and found nothing on the books that limits beekeeping in the county.

### **Research Funding**

Our centennial fundraising campaign is happening under the skilled guidance and tutelage of Becca Fain and the already emerging generosity and connections of some of our members. We are now a Facebook page organization and connecting not only to beekeepers but also to Oregonians who appreciate and support bees, agriculture, and flowers without having hives of their own (yet). We clarified that money coming in the form of donations can be tracked without needing to create new accounts/suffix accounts.

### **Funds**

Jan Lohman supplied the balances of 3 funds managed at OSU Foundation. They are as follows:

Northwest Apiculture Fund for Honey Bee Research, Extension, and Education: Expendable \$2,099.11; Endowment \$103,398.57.

OSU Apiculture Fund created by COSI: Expendable \$4,253.31; Endowment \$77,156.64.

Herman A. Scullen Memorial Fellowship Fund: Expendable \$5,109.70; Endowment \$75,416.76.

### **Bee Line Membership**

Rosanna thanked the regional reps and association spokespeople for sending in written reports to *The Bee Line*. She is almost out of printed directories, which is a measure of interested new members. Most new members have asked to be on the swarm list. And some people are asking to come back off the list because they've caught all the swarms they can handle. She suggested that people who want to charge money for swarm collecting be listed in the

classified ads (ads free to members) while the main swarm list remain exclusively a free service, as has been the tradition. Board agreed with this plan. She is still asking reps for names of veterinarians who can work with beekeepers for obtaining a prescription for antibiotics when needed. Just under 200 members are receiving the print version of the newsletter, but 200 is the cutoff for the mailing discount. She asked if we had a preference for a couple of complimentary copies to help promote education. Marjie Ehry and Mureen Walker suggested sending print newsletters to senior citizen mags, extension offices, and newspapers such as the *Capital Press*. Rosanna suggested asking conference speakers early on for an article for *The Bee Line*, which is always a welcome follow-up for their presentations.

### **Outreach**

Marjie Ehry said Ag Fest happened as a drive-up event, and it was too short of notice; OSBA didn't participate. It's still unknown when we will have another state fair.

### **Fundraising**

Rebecca Fain is putting together a newsletter blurb and an email to association presidents discussing the direction and momentum of the fundraising effort for the OSU Honey Bee Lab. We have some commitments now and are aiming to raise almost 300k from some significantly large gifts before kicking off a campaign from membership for raising the balance of 500k! We have a commitment from OSU/Ramesh's department head that if we can get 500k then they will kick in additional funds to update the Oak Creek facility to make a state of the art lab for honey bee research at OSU. She and others are asking the membership to identify any connections they may have to ask for some substantial financial gifts for this campaign. President John thanked Rebecca for her work on this effort with OSBA: We are so lucky to have her talents and excited to discover those of others out there in the membership. Rosanna, Rebecca, Debby Garman, Linda Zahl, and Cheryl Wright are all czarinas working on moderating the OSBA Facebook page.

### **Hats and Tees for Centennial**

We have our logo. John is going to match the prize money we sent to our winning designer. We still need to make plans for centennial celebration, though this is a hard time to plan anything. Anyone with thoughts and skills and stories or interest in putting together histories about beekeeping in Oregon, please speak up! Harry is interested in facilitating a break out session/ pep rally at our conference for OSBA regional reps to share "job descriptions," tasks, and ideas for leadership.

Board adjourned and the next meeting date was set for June 24, 2021, at 4 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen Finley*

## Keeping Bees in June

Jan Lohman

Where does the time go, can it already be June!

I was looking back at previous articles for June in the bee yard and realized that in beekeeping every year seems like the exception . . . Temperatures can be high or low, it can be windy for a week or not, and in Eastern Oregon we can have honey flows from Russian Olive and Black Locust trees, or like this year . . . they are just beginning . . . almost a week to ten days later than what we think as usual. So, the constant here is that nothing is consistent in June. Of course, every geographic area of Oregon is different. We saw 26-degree mornings in May, the cold took out the fruit trees' new blossoms in some cases, but we have seen 80-degree days as well.

So let's look at things we do have control over . . . like your queen and her performance. When you are checking your hives, have you assessed the queen? Is it time for a replacement? Does she have spotty brood? Do you see superseded cells in the hive? Is European foulbrood present? It is so important to the hive to have a queen that is up to the tasks at hand.

Do you keep records? After the fact, I can not remember where I have been a week later and certainly can not remember what I did to my hives. It is great to keep a record of when you are in the hives. Did you see eggs? Did you see the queen? What was the temperature when you examined the hive and what was blooming that will help to keep them fed? It can be written on your hive, or you can have an elaborate book that shows pictures with loads of information.

Dr. Lynn Royce covered swarming in her May in the bee yard

article, but it is important to know that, if you were lucky enough to overwinter your colonies, you might be faced with early swarming tendencies by your hive. Those robust, overwintered colonies want to head out for a new adventure; so, if you see swarm cells in your hives, you can pull a frame of swarm cells with a capped brood frame and a frame of honey and pollen and about three good shakes of bees and place in a nuc box to raise a queen on their own. It is an amazing process to experience. If you are successful, it leaves you with a queen to use in replacing a failing queen in your hive.

Honey flows have already begun by June, or are just starting in some areas. Do you plan to use excluders to prevent the queen from moving into your honey supers? Are you seeing white wax in your hives? That is a sign that the honey flow is on. What you need is robust populations for honey bees to put the honey into supers; otherwise, they tend to put the honey around them in the brood nest.

Finally, Varroa mites begin to increase as brood and bees increase in size. Do not be fooled by not seeing them. They are there, and you need to be aware of your mite levels. It is easy to do mite tests, either with alcohol wash or sugar shake to test your levels. YouTube has an abundance of videos that will show you how to do the test. Timely treatment is the most important factor in keeping strong, healthy colonies. You must be aware that, while honey supers are on, there are only two approved methods of treating Varroa mites: Hop Guard II and Formic Pro (or the original Mite Away Quick Strips). Make certain that your Varroa treatment products are not exp-

pired when you are depending on them.

It is all about the Hive.

Be a beekeeper. Always know your Varroa levels, make sure you have a strong queen, keep records so you know from visit to visit how your hive is progressing, and enjoy your bees.



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## BEEKEEPER EVENTS

— 2021 —

June 1. Deadline for registering apiary with ODA ([www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/IPPM/InsectsSpiders/Pages/BeesApiaries.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/IPPM/InsectsSpiders/Pages/BeesApiaries.aspx))!

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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[savethebee.org](http://savethebee.org)



## REGIONAL NEWS

### Regional Representative

#### North Coast

In the last couple of weeks, the coast has really gone all out to welcome and impress summer. Everywhere you look there are blossoms. Blackberries, huckleberries, blueberries, and strawberries are in flower. Meadowfoam, forget-me-nots, and sweet woodruff provide carpets of blooms, and lilacs, azaleas, and rhodies are putting on quite a show. The weather has been drier than usual, which is nice unless you're hoping for some rain to water all those plants. There has been a lot of wind, which makes things a little challenging for beekeepers . . . and for the bees.

Both the associations, Central Coast and Tillamook, have been cautiously experimenting with socially distanced meetings or are making plans to do so. Yachats is preparing for its tremendously popular Honey Lovers' Festival, first held in 2018. Here's hoping this summer is a lot different than last summer!

*Kathy Cope*

### Regional Associations

#### Central Oregon Beekeepers

In Central Oregon our last hard frost averages on May 8 with our last light frost averaging June 24. That means in June we have a good chance of planting the delicate plants only twice. The local nurseries thrive on folks just itching to get going early with their flowers and vegetables. Finally, the hardier plants and trees are all in full bloom and in the countryside, the bitterbrush is still available. To paraphrase John Paul Young, "Nectar's in the air."

This year, our swarm season started quite early. There were a couple of reported swarms in late April, although they were probably caused by not reversing hive bodies. In May they slowly but steadily ramped up. Now in June, with all the forage available, we're wondering if there's even an end in sight. There was an interesting discussion recently within OSBA as to possible liability issues with respect to having swarm response lists for local associations. We're not making any changes; however, we may be adding a disclaimer both for the swarm reporter as well as the swarm responder on our website.

As was mentioned last month, we're excited to now have several local suppliers of local bees and queens, in addition to the long-term suppliers providing bees from other areas. We seem to be moving a bit closer toward self-sustainability.

Using a grant from a local nonprofit, COBKA has purchased some education aids (posters, observation hive, training hive) for use when giving talks to school and adult groups, gotten

packets of pollinator-attracting plant seeds to give out at these talks, to other organizations and association members, and to anyone who will plant and raise them, and finally supported the Oregon Bee Project.

We'll also be kicking off our annual photo contest this month. In May, we had an expert give us tips on how to photograph honey bees and flowers to kick off the competition. Our June meeting will have a discussion on "Defensive Colonies: Causes, mitigations, and issues."

*Allen Engle*

#### Columbia Gorge Beekeepers

Spring has sprung! The 2021 season blessed the Columbia Gorge with mild temperatures and less moisture. In past years, the bees have been frustrated in their efforts to forage and of course build a healthy colony. Especially as their desire is focused on winter survival. Yet, the joy of one aspect is the downside of the other. The lack of moisture will dampen our agricultural efforts. The good news comes in the form of the snow pack on Mount Hood, which resulted in 108 percent of the average. Snow, of course, translates into water as the season progresses.

Blackberries are preparing to break out in their floral essence, which for the western half of the Gorge is the dominant nectar source. The eastern half of the Gorge is abundantly displaying their blankets of color. The past year has been tough in many ways for us all. The inability to meet, share our joys and dismays, is evident in the Zoom meetings. Beekeepers everywhere long for the moment face-to-face interactions will once again resume. Those in the Columbia Gorge are fortunate to have the opportunity to take a few steps immersing in the symbiotic environment of our nature. Dr. Dewey Caron, our tireless beekeeper extraordinaire, blessed our association once again with his knowledge in May.

*Jerry Frazier*

#### Linn Benton Beekeepers

Hello, everyone. I wanted to share my method of installing a package of bees that I have not seen online. Maybe it is out there; I could have missed it.

Method #1 - Some people like to install the package by just removing the queen and syrup can and just shaking the bees into their new home. Sounds a little rough.

Method #2 - Others like to remove enough frames to fit the package down inside the hive minus the syrup can and the queen. They are supposed to come out on their own and go find the queen sandwiched in between 2 frames somewhere. Hopefully it is not too cool a night leaving the queen to chill. Of course, the next day you have to go back in with smoke, open the hive, remove the hopefully empty package and reinstall the frames you took out to make room for the package of bees. Put the hive back together.

Or Method #3 - Put the package in an empty hive box under the box with the queen in her hive box above sandwiched between 2 frames. Then the next day you have to disturb and remove the empty box under the hive body below the queen, trying to keep everyone calm with a little smoke.

What I prefer is to remove the syrup can and place the queen in between two frames, nice and snug. I run 10-frame deep boxes. Next I just place a deep empty box on top of the hive body where the queen is. I place a couple of short 4-inch wood strips across the top bars above the queen. Now with no syrup can in the package I very slowly invert the package of bees over (so the hole where the syrup can was is now facing down to the queen), and place the package on top of the 2 wood strips, so no bees get squished. Now the package of bees is directly above the queen and I place the syrup can alongside the package inside the deep box, also on top of a couple of short wood strips just in case they get thirsty. If the night is cool, all the girls are all snuggly together.

The next day I simply remove the lid and inner cover, pull out the empty package, the syrup can, and the little wood strips and remove the empty top box. Now no one is upset or disturbed, so I place the lid back on. Done is less than 35 seconds without using any smoke. Go back inside and have another cup of coffee!

*Ray Juhasz*

### Oregon Prison Beekeepers

During April, the Snake River Correctional Institution had 13 who completed the Washington State Beekeepers Association (WASBA) Beginning Beekeeper program and earned WASBA certificates for their efforts. Each student was issued a self-study WASBA beekeeper manual and had to pass chapter tests with 80 percent or better. The students learned about honey bee identification, different types of bees, different roles in the colony, about feeding, installing a package of bees in a hive, how to monitor the hive, pest/disease management, honey flows, and how to prepare the hives for winter. Physical Plant staff member Jim LaCrone also earned his Beginning Beekeeper and Apprentice Beekeeper certificates through WASBA, and provides hands-on experience for the students. Jim and his crew manage the SRCI bee hives that are located on the west side of the perimeter fence, near the shooting range. Many of the students plan to take the Apprentice course next and are making plans for their own bee hives when they are back in the community.



Congrats to all who graduated!

*SRCI Newsletter*

### Portland Metro Beekeepers

The 2021 season of beekeeping has officially begun and seems to be off to a great start. In April, the PMBA sold and distributed close to 300 nucleus hives to members. Also in April, we had a successful sugar sale of nearly 12,000 pounds, and had some amazing giveaways at the monthly virtual meetings. Prizes such as pollen patties, tools, and treatments have been awarded association members. Additionally, we drew random names and 2 lucky winners got to pick up a nucleus hive each. For the 2nd year, our annual Spring “Bee Day” has been canceled due to the ongoing pandemic. We look forward to hosting a association “event” in the fall, perhaps a picnic at the end of the season.

In May, 12 lucky PMBA members were selected to participate in a queen rearing class taught by PMBA Vice President Paul Stromberg and former board member Joe Maresh using the Cloake board method. Participants attended 3 sessions where they practiced grafting, and ultimately grafted into cups and then placed into the “queenless” portion of a colony with the Cloake board installed. Day 1 found 30 queen cells started, and our fingers are crossed for good results.



There are several good resources for raising queens with Cloake boards, including this link from Sue Cobey: [www.delta-business.com/CalgaryBeekeepers/Bee-Club-Library/Queens%20and%20Nucs/Cloake%20Board%20Method%20of%20Queen%20Rearing%20and%20Banking%20Sue%20Cobey.pdf](http://www.delta-business.com/CalgaryBeekeepers/Bee-Club-Library/Queens%20and%20Nucs/Cloake%20Board%20Method%20of%20Queen%20Rearing%20and%20Banking%20Sue%20Cobey.pdf).

Several association members have posted videos and pictures on the PMBA Facebook page showing healthy, growing hives, and most who purchased nucs were adding a 2nd brood box to those nucs 2 or 3 weeks after they installed them. A few members have already put honey supers on and, so far, 2021 looks like it will be a better year for honey production than 2020 was here in the Willamette Valley. Swarm season started on the heels of nuc distribution, and I’ve seen postings on the PMBA website for lucky beekeepers who successfully captured swarms. Thanks to the Swarm List on the OSBA website, I was personally able to snag a healthy swarm 8 feet up in a fir tree. I wish all were that accessible.

Weather conditions have been favorable for resources for our bees so far this year. We look forward to a productive season for all beekeepers in the area and healthy, fruitful honey bees.

*Dave Schwartz*

### Portland Urban Beekeepers

Hard to believe we're halfway through the year and already into peak bee season! The Portland metro area is popping with color and lush green leaves and wonderful floral scents. Wisteria and rosemary are in full bloom, and the horse chestnuts are coming as we say goodbye to pear and apple blossoms. Last year, I planted an area of my apiary with Botanical Interests

brand of a pollinator flower seed mix. It is trying to come back this year, though I noticed it is currently dominated by a fast-spreading euphorbia. Poppies and borage are also making the scene and hopefully won't get too crowded out. Might be time for some "weeding."

The best of the swarm season is closing, and as of this writing PUB has collected 77 swarm reports, up for grabs for our 184 registered users. Our May meeting featured Max Kuhn, who spoke to us about brood breaks for Varroa mite management. Max has 15 years of beekeeping experience, is a master-level student in the Oregon Master Beekeeper Program, and developed a unique method to cage the queen on a frame,

probably familiar to most Oregon associations. The system is a form of hive brood break, which uses a queen excluder screen to restrict the queen to one frame. The queen continues to lay on this frame. After 9 days, when all the other brood in the hive has hatched, her eggs/brood is the only game in town and the mites are drawn to that frame, which is later removed. He has provided most associations with instructions on this technique, and it's more one tool in our toolbox as an effective alternative for mite control.

*Jessica Anderson*

### Tillamook Beekeepers

We had our first in-person bee meeting on Saturday, April 8th. We will be meeting the second Saturday of the month at Claire's apiary for the summer months. We have a large number of new beekeepers this year. The meetings are mostly geared to addressing their questions and needs, and from those discussions we all continue to learn. We went through two hives at the meeting. One needed more space. The other had several frames with queen cells. The new beekeepers got to make their first nucs using the frames with queen cells.

We also had a lesson on applying wax to plastic frames using a four-inch foam paint roller and a frying pan. The foam roller method is so fast and easy. It was a hit.

So many questions; so much enthusiasm; lots of fun. Can't wait for next month's meeting.

*Claire Moody*

### Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

As vaccinations take hold, TVBA has tiptoed into Covid-careful outdoor small in-person field day mentoring efforts. Mentors Miles Seeley, Steve Gomes, Ryan Ridd, and Jeff Clark have

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delivered two very successful training sessions in April and May for new beekeepers to help build skills and confidence.

One more small-group field day is scheduled at the end of July. This is a program we had hoped to get underway in 2020, but we were derailed by the pandemic. Many members participated in Dr. Dewey's annual Pacific Northwest Honey Bee Survey, and we have fingers crossed for improved outcomes thanks to Steve Gomes' active leadership in promoting mite testing and treatment. Thanks to the efforts of board members Mark Gorman and Ed Bunch, TVBA implemented a new swarm report system, which seems to be working well, and, during April and May, our area seems to have had a bonanza spring swarm season.

*Debby Garman*

### **Nucleus Colonies** — *Continued from page 1*

production colonies to make my nucs. Breaking up honey producers worked to provide me with the necessary resources for the work, but resulted in a decrease in the number of colonies in my apiary. As a commercial honey producer, this was unacceptable.

One night while falling asleep, the thought came to me. Why not allow good over-wintered nuclei to build up, use them as my brood/bee resource for making up the new nucleus colonies, and leave the production colonies alone? In the spring, I could expand them onto additional combs, and then harvest combs of brood and bees. What a game changer. The plan worked so well I decided to see how far I could take it.

In the spring 2011, I set up fifty nice over-wintered four over four, two-story nucleus colonies in double nuc boxes. Each nucleus was given a nuc super with four additional combs, for a total of twelve combs each. Beginning in early May, I began removing sealed brood with adhering bees to strengthen my cell-building colonies. Every four days, starting with nuc #1, I removed two or three frames of brood from each nucleus until the day's brood requirement was filled. Four days later, I repeated the process, harvesting brood from the nuclei next in line. My intention was to remove enough brood from each to fill my needs, but not enough to significantly weaken the colonies.

I needed them to be strong enough to fill combs of brood quickly, but not so strong they would swarm before I returned for another harvest. From May 9 until June 19, I harvested 245 combs of brood to set up my thirty-five cell builders, each receiving seven combs of sealed brood and two of honey. Then, after the last cell builders had been set up, I switched the focus of my brood harvest to making the summer's nucleus colonies. Those fifty nuclei gave me enough additional combs of brood and bees to establish 330 more nucleus colonies. Think of it! More than 900 combs of brood and bees harvested from only fifty over-wintered nucs.

Wintering nucleus colonies changed my beekeeping career forever. Back when I used to pollinate and keep bees using my old management, an average honey crop from 800 hives was something like 20 tons. I know that may sound like a lot of honey, but it's only a fifty-pound average. When I started wintering my own nucs and raising my own queens, I had all these nucleus colonies in the springtime and I didn't have to split my bees to replace my losses. I didn't have to buy any more bees and queens. Hey, I didn't have to pollinate Apples anymore!

After only a few years of the new management plan, my average honey crop rose to 40 tons instead of 20, with a big crop being 50+ instead of 30. And that's the difference. My bees are healthier and more productive. I have the resource in my nucleus colonies to build up my honey producers so they have a chance to make a good crop. My bees are stronger going into winter, and stronger coming out of winter. And for those that don't make it? Well, I guess Wedmore had it right. That's what nucs are for.

I never thought I'd look at individual colonies in my apiary as being disposable. They were all sacred cows to be preserved, come what may. I no longer feel the need to preserve every colony, or to give every queen just one more chance to prove herself. With a supply of nucleus colonies on the other side of the apiary, or down the road in an out-apiary, I can afford to be ruthless. Unproductive colonies and poorly performing queens become completely disposable. My bees benefit, my apiaries benefit, and I benefit as well.

While beekeeping is still agriculture, and every year doesn't reward me with a big profit, I'm having so much fun playing with my bees I doubt I'll ever retire.

**Note:** Michael Palmer, French Hill Apiaries, presented on "The Sustainable Apiary" and raising queens during the 2019 OSBA Fall Conference. This is continued from the article in the May 2021 issue of *The Bee Line*.





## 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**  
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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

**Local group, if member:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership dues:** \$40 per person (\$50 per person outside the US) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Voluntary contribution(s):**

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**Total amount enclosed:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** To renew or join online, please visit:  
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**Thank you!**



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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 **July** issue, 2021. The deadline for submitting copy is **June 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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