



# The Bee Line

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Newsletter of the Oregon State Beekeepers Association



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**Image above:** Best of Wishes to All for Health, Joy, and Peace during this winter season and for the coming year!

## Pollen Trapping: What to Think About Before You Start

*Shelley Hoover, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta.*

Bees need pollen; whereas honey provides bees with the carbohydrate or sugar component of their diet, pollen provides the essential protein, vitamin, mineral, and fat components. The amount of pollen income to a colony directly impacts how much brood it can rear, which is related to population and ultimately colony survival. Bees consume the stored pollen or bee bread very quickly. Because honey bees do not store vast quantities of pollen as they do nectar, they are not well buffered against environmental fluctuations like they are for honey, and, after only a few days of pollen dearth, they will start to cannibalise the young brood. Whereas nectar foraging is largely regulated by external variables (nectar quality and floral availability), bees actively regulate pollen foraging according to internal colony variables (their need to feed brood). Diminishing the amount of pollen in a colony (removing bee bread in comb), reducing the income (via trapping), or increasing need (adding brood), promptly result in adjustments to foraging effort (within the hour).

There are many factors a beekeeper should consider before they trap pollen. To start:

- ❖ Why am I interested in pollen trapping?
- ❖ What traps should I use? What will work with my equipment?
- ❖ How will it affect my bees?
- ❖ How will it affect my other beekeeping goals?
- ❖ When should I trap pollen? Where?
- ❖ If I plan to sell pollen, how will I clean/store/market it? Under what conditions would I make money? What are current (and future) prices? What do my customers want?

There are many styles of trap, but primary considerations should be the cleanliness of the pollen produced, whether it will restrict the entrances, and whether it will work with your equipment. Most styles require you to take apart the hive and place the trap under the brood chambers, but there are front-mounting “porch” style traps. While they restrict the entrance more, and the pollen is more likely to be wet or contain debris, these are easily put on and taken off without much effort. If your hive equipment is old, you may need to tape gaps and holes, or be creative about making sure there are no gaps by which the bees can bypass the trap.

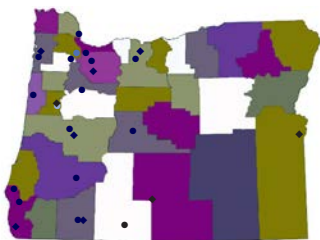


Collecting pollen from traps in canola pollination during a strong pollen flow.

While pollen trapping full time for extended periods can inhibit colony growth and honey production, many studies have shown that short-term trapping during a pollen flow has little negative consequences on the colony. Because colonies with pollen traps in place are not getting as much pollen as they would without the pollen trap, they will recruit more pollen foragers. Studies have shown that colonies with pollen traps have greater numbers

*Continued on page 9*

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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: 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: Noah Clipp—541.254.4052; noahtitus@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

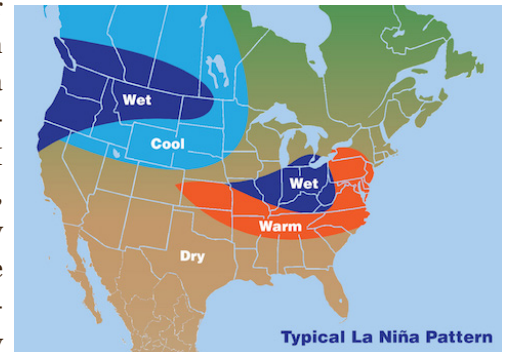
## Message from the President

Greetings, fellow beekeepers.

It is hard to believe this is already the last message for 2021. By all accounts, it has been another tough year with no shortage of fires, a big shortage of rainfall, and seasonal heat records broken all over the West. As we have settled into a steady pattern of hot fiery summers, I have grown to love the slower pace and cooler temperatures of the winter months. It is a great time to assess what went right, what went wrong, and develop plans for the future.

What does the future look like for us beekeepers? According to NOAA, we have a 70 percent chance of a La Niña winter weather pattern. What this means for us will vary depending on our location. Fortunately, for Oregon this likely means a cooler wetter winter with closer to normal to above normal precipitation. We may actually get to see some decent nectar flows in 2022. However, for California the forecast is more mixed with substantial areas of below average in the southern half and “equal chances” of above normal or below normal for most of the rest of the state. Translation: It is a coin toss if there will be enough precipitation to fill severely drained reservoirs and recharge depleted aquifers. What happens in this part of California will have profound effects on the commercial beekeeping industry. With the SGMA beginning to come into enforcement in 2022, our almond growers will have to be more reliant on surface water delivered from reservoirs through irrigation canals. The six almond growers I have spoken to in the past week are very nervous. All of these growers are taking their standard 2 hives an acre allotment in 2022; however, they feel that this winter is a make-it-or-break-it situation. Put simply, if this is another dry winter, we should expect some acreage to begin to come out of production in 2023. When and if this happens, expect nut prices to go up as almond demand remains strong and supply possibly dips. This means revenue should be strong for growers with water, and they should be able to afford our services. The other side of the coin

is that demand for bees could begin to drop if there is a significant reduction in acreage. If I know beekeepers, they will quickly ensue a race to the bottom with colony rental prices by



reasoning that something is better than nothing. This would be a fool’s errand. We would all be better served renting a few less bees and maintaining a decent price as our costs continue to climb with feed, fuel, labor, and all the other inputs we rely on to keep our operations running smoothly. Fingers crossed for a wet winter in California. I do not know of many commercial operations that could make it without almond pollination revenue. Maybe we should be researching almond tree varieties that can be grown elsewhere, in regions where ongoing droughts are not as frequent of an issue.

Speaking of research, I hope you all enjoyed the conference. We are off to a good start on our centennial fundraiser. Please remember to share the link on your social media networks. A sharable link is available on our Facebook page and website. Thanks to all who have contributed so far in this effort, and an extra special thank you to GloryBee for getting us off to such a strong early start. We can accomplish the most when we work together and pool our efforts just like the bees do. Nobody knows what challenges the new year will bring, but the world could always use a little more kindness, caring, and cooperation. Thank you all so much for doing what you do. You truly make it a pleasure to be a part of this organization. May your holidays be blessed and your 2022 bee bountiful.

*John Jacob*

## Opportunities to Share the Wonder!

Opportunities to spread the word about the bees and the flowers—and pollinators of all kinds—are many. Everyone we teach, no matter the age, grows in understanding of these phenomenal



Brad York’s grandchildren visiting from San Diego made use of suits the Tillamook Beekeepers Association purchased for loan to children—a first-hand experience with the bees, with extracting, and with good sweet honey!



beings and vital relationships. Some may even decide to start in beekeeping one day! Year’s end may be an awesome time to make plans for reaching out and engaging with others in 2022.

Patti Johnson has presented to folks of ages youth through seniors in assisted living and care facilities. Pictured here, she talks *pollinators* with 2nd–3rd graders during one of three 40-minute sessions at Siuslaw Elementary in Florence. Patti writes that she is “always amazed at how interested they are (sometimes the teachers even more so).”







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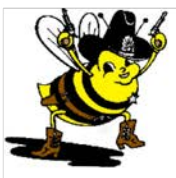
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## Your Bees Don't Have To Die: How Can We Become Treatment Free Without Killing Our Colonies?

Meghan Milbrath, Michigan State University Extension

Keeping bees with my dad was fun when I was a kid in northern Wisconsin. It was in the golden era of beekeeping—it was easy, the bees all lived, and I hadn't even heard about the Varroa mite. Fifteen years later, while in school in Michigan, beekeeping didn't seem as fun or as easy. Every conversation that I had with beekeepers centered on figuring out why their bees were dying. Beekeepers were sick of losing bees, and sick of treating for Varroa. They wanted treatment-free strong, northern bees. So I started rearing queens with the goal of raising these strong, northern bees that could thrive without treatment. I had been collecting swarms for years, getting the best queens from local beekeepers, and trying out fancy stock like Canadian Buckfast and Minnesota Hygienic. I had been reading up online, and I wanted to find the best bees that could survive Varroa. At that time, there was a lot of support for the "Live and Let Die" method—where you let your bees go with no care, and whichever ones "survive naturally" are your new, better stock. I had some colonies that I thought had a lot of potential, so I let them go, hoping to find out which hives held my new, hardy, treatment-free bees. The outcome that spring was horrible, and really made me rethink why and how I want to keep bees. In this article, I am going to explain why the "Live and Let Die" system doesn't work for my beekeeping (and probably yours, too), and to give you a new method that can help you find your best bees while keeping you happy and your bees healthy.

Issues with the "Live and Let Die" treatment-free beekeeping:

- ❖ My animals suffered.
- ❖ I put the bees around me at risk.
- ❖ It was really expensive.
- ❖ It made me miss good genetics; it didn't work for getting better bees.

### Suffering Bees

My treatment-free colonies looked great all year, but when I opened the hives for a late final inspection before winter, I felt sick by what I saw. Spotty brood, melted larvae, and small, demoralized looking bees—colonies deep in the throes of parasitic mite syndrome. My thriving, booming colonies had been reduced to small clusters, working desperately to raise the few larvae that were left after the viruses had devastated most of the young. Full supers of honey for winter looked ridiculous now, sitting optimistically on top of colonies that were mere shells of what had gathered that nectar all summer. It didn't take a diagnostic expert to know that my bees were profoundly sick and didn't have a chance that winter.

My husband and I have raised all sorts of animals on our little farm—pigs, chickens, rabbits, cattle, sheep, goats, ducks, dogs, horses—you name it. We have the same philosophy for all our animals: If it is under our care, we will keep it in good health. Every animal gets good food, clean bedding, and the attention they need. We would never let a sick ewe suffer and slowly die, or let a pig walk around with a devastating injury. I care for my bees, and it didn't make any sense to me to let them suffer and die slowly. This is especially true now that I know it is unnecessary.

We know that colonies with high levels of Varroa have all sorts of viruses, poor nutrition, and very little chance at living through any sort of winter, let alone having the energy to raise brood in the spring. Part of the problem is that most beekeepers who lose bees to Varroa-associated viruses never see it happen—they wrap up their big booming colony in the fall, and then clean up the deadout in the spring. It literally happens inside a dark box, and beekeepers can skip the sad suffering part. If you are thinking about not managing Varroa mites in your colonies as a way to keep bees, I urge you to open the colony while they are in the dying process. Look those suffering girls right in their compound eyes, and reflect on how you want to provide for the animals under your care. It just doesn't feel right to call yourself a *beekeeper* while letting your bees die a slow, preventable death.



A brood frame from colony with parasitic mite syndrome. If you look close you can see a bee with a mite on her thorax, a bee with K-wing, mites in cells, and melted-looking sick larvae. This colony was once thriving with lots of nurse bees and healthy brood.

### Save the Bees?

Like a lot of beekeepers, I take pride in knowing that I am providing pollination services to gardens and plants, and I like to think that I am doing some good by keeping bees. When I had sick colonies, however, I realized that my beekeeping was probably doing more harm than good to my environment. I was putting the pollinators around me at risk. When a colony is sick—like my bees with mites and viruses—it becomes weak. Weak colonies get robbed by bees from all the nearby colonies.





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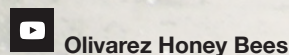
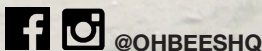
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We also know that bees are more likely to leave or abscond from a dying colony. Ever had a colony up and leave in the fall? Think about if you had Varroa populations under control in those hives. Through drifting and robbing, sick colonies can act as disease reservoirs, with your bees spreading disease throughout your area. Honey bee colonies are everywhere now days, and it is impossible to know every hive hidden in a back yard, or wild colony that was living happily in a tree until you came along and threatened them with your sick bees. Even worse, it isn't just honey bees that are at risk—we even see deformed wing virus spreading to bumble bees and some of our other native bees. Our native pollinators are already facing huge problems with habitat loss and pesticide exposure, and I don't want to be the one with the “Save the Bees” bumper sticker who is quietly infecting my native pollinator population with new diseases. I'd really like my effect on the environment around me to be positive. I don't want my role to be the person who maintains disease and infection and makes it worse for nearby bees and beekeepers by perpetuating an epidemic in my area.

### A Bass Boat Would Have Been Cheaper

Even if you have an icy, shriveled little prune heart and it doesn't bother you to let your bees die or to put the bees around you at risk, it shouldn't take long to figure out that the economics just don't work. Of the 24 treatment-free colonies I put into winter, about 6 made it through alive. This result isn't unusual for treatment-free beekeeping, and many people I talk to lose 50–100 percent of their colonies every year. Others using the “Live and Let Die” method record losses of 95 percent. If I had kept my losses to my normal 15 percent, I would have come out of winter with about 20 hives of the original 24. I usually split my colonies in the spring, and make an average of 75 pounds of honey from each split. From my 6 hives, that would be 900 pounds of honey. From 20 overwintered hives, I could expect 3,000 pounds. My little experiment literally cost me one ton of honey. Let's say I didn't care about the honey, but was interested in bees. I can usually make 3 nucs from every overwintered hive. Now I have just lost over 40 nucs that I could have made available to beekeepers in my area looking for local bees (at a price of \$150 per nuc, I could have made a lot of money that I could have donated to honey bee research at Michigan State University, or I could have gotten a new fishing boat. We to try practice sustainable farming, and there is nothing sustainable about losses that high.

### What Kind of Bees Am I Left With?

The reason we let our bees die without treatment is to find bees that can survive Varroa. We think that it will work like textbook natural selection: We put in a pressure, the weak die, and the strong survive. Unfortunately, it is much more complex that that with bees. This process may not lead us to the end that we want, and we may not actually improve our bees. There are a few reasons why.

❖ Most of us don't live in isolated environments. Either we or someone else is bringing in new genetics. If I replace my losses with bees from outside my apiary (packages or nucs), I am completely negating the bottleneck effect of the losses of the year before, and I am replacing the susceptible population. If I make splits and raise queens from my survivor stock, but I don't have an isolated mating yard, then those daughters are going to breed with whatever is out there, and I will have no idea if these new combinations can survive Varroa. I'll have to let them die again to find out, getting me into a perpetual cycle of bee death.

❖ You aren't controlling how your bees manage Varroa. Maybe your colony didn't have problems with Varroa because it swarmed four times, so it constantly broke the brood cycle. This is one way to keep Varroa populations from getting high, but now your neighbors have to pay thousands to get the colonies out from behind their siding and your township is putting up an anti-beekeeping regulation. You want bees that manage Varroa in a way that is good for your future beekeeping—not just staying alive by any means possible.

❖ If you only select for a single trait, you lose a lot of other good things. Let's say you live in an isolated forest and don't bring in any new genetics to your area, and you breed only off of your survivors and control their mating. There is a chance that you can get bees that are highly hygienic and can handle Varroa. But what if they are jerks, and are so highly defensive that you can't work with them, or they are susceptible to chalkbrood? It is really hard to breed other good traits back in once they are lost.

❖ You can kill colonies that you actually want by putting them under too much pressure. Natural selection results in a balance between parasites and their hosts. If a parasite is so bad that it kills all the hosts, then the parasite dies, too. In a parasite-host balance, the parasites don't kill as much, and the hosts are able to tolerate some level of parasitism. In the long view, we are looking for bees that can live at this balance. We may have some great bees in our yards that can live with some Varroa, and would thrive once we reach a balance with this pest. We would lose those hives, though, if we let 12 hives crash around them. The disease pressure may be too high for them to handle, and we would lose the very bees that we want to keep.

I don't live in a completely isolated area, and, since I use splits as a main part of my management, I am constantly creating new genetic combinations—colonies that are going to have different behaviors and different abilities to handle disease. I also want to sell queens to beekeepers and to have high-quality queens for myself, so I know I need to have gentle, productive colonies as well. Just leaving the bees alone wouldn't likely give me the strong northern stock that I was looking for. Instead . . .

*To be continued!*



# Let's All BeeWhere!

## REGISTERING YOUR HIVES IS THE LAW IN CALIFORNIA

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## Attention: Beekeepers Headed to California for Pollination Season

All beekeepers operating in California this coming pollination season are required to register their hives with the Agriculture Commissioner in their home county or the first county hives are placed. This must be done annually and is a law in California.

Fortunately, a system called *BeeWhere* makes this process simple and works to effectively safeguard bees from pesticide incidents. Last year, some 2,900 beekeepers registered with the BeeWhere system, which represents nearly 1.5 million bee colonies at 17,000 locations.

The goal of BeeWhere is to improve communications among beekeepers, farmers, and pesticide businesses. Using GIS mapping technology, BeeWhere works in conjunction with the CalAgPermits system to track the location of beehives throughout the state. Applicators are required to check for nearby bees before they apply any pesticide that may be harmful to bees. Through the bee checks, the BeeWhere system informs applicators if registered beehives are within a one-mile radius of a planned pesticide application site.

Beekeepers can do their part by registering their hives and then notifying the Ag Commissioner whenever their hives are relocated. It's important when registering to provide contact

information so you can be notified if a pesticide application is planned near your hives. All information on the location of hives is confidential and is available only to Ag Commissioners.

Beekeepers can register their hives in person at the Ag Commissioner's office, but the beauty of BeeWhere is that beekeepers can register directly with BeeWhere via computer, tablet, or smartphone at one of the following two websites: [BeeWhere.calagpermits.org](http://BeeWhere.calagpermits.org) or [www.beecheck.org](http://www.beecheck.org).

A BeeCheck App for smartphones has also been developed by a company called *Fieldwatch*. The App makes tracking your beehives as simple as dropping a pin. You can find BeeCheck for iOS operation systems on the App Store at the following URL: [apps.apple.com/us/app/beecheck/id1347318866](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/beecheck/id1347318866). And for Android, in the Google Play Store at: [google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.fieldwatch.beecheck](https://google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.fieldwatch.beecheck).

The cost of registering through BeeWhere is \$10 per year per beekeeper regardless of the size of the operation or number of hives. Beekeepers who have registered in previous years can use their BeeWhere State Beekeeper ID to access and manage their information. More information about BeeWhere is available on their website or on Facebook at BeeWhere CA.

### Pollen Trapping—Continued from page 1

of pollen foragers. If you are pollinating a crop for which the most effective pollinator is pollen foragers (as opposed to nectar foragers, which is most nonhybrid crops), pollen trapping may increase the pollination service your bees are performing, and may fit well with a pollination contract. In canola pollination, we found no effect of pollen trapping on brood production after 24 days of continuous trapping. We did, however, see a decrease in honey production from 40 pounds to 27 pounds (this was a low-production year due to smoke from wildfires).

Beekeepers trap pollen primarily for two reasons—to consume (by them or their bees!) or to sell. If you plan to feed the pollen to your bees, your primary consideration should be biosecurity—do not feed pollen from colonies with any sign of disease to another colony. In general, beekeepers can generate more revenue from a mix of pollen and honey sales, but it depends on the prices of the two commodities. In addition, beekeepers must incorporate the cost of pollen trapping into their profit calculations. If you sell hive products, how do you sell? Do you sell barrels of honey in bulk to honey packers that want consistent product, or do you sell at local markets where your customers want a variety of seasonal products? Overall, the profitability of pollen trapping depends on many factors that include: The price of honey, the price of pollen, the cost to collect honey, the cost to collect/clean/store pollen, and the amount of pollen/honey collected.



Each has advantages and disadvantages, depending on your goals and equipment.

To make the most of your effort, only trap high-yielding colonies. Our research has shown that colonies that are high yielding tend to stay that way over the season, and the same for low-yielding colonies.

This makes sense, Total pollen income per 1 week in Burnaby, BC. as other research has shown a strong genetic component to the propensity to forage for pollen. In addition, only trap when there is a pollen flow. This is best for the health of the colony, but it also ensures you do not spend your time emptying empty pollen traps. Maximise your efficiency by considering trap design, number of traps, number of apiary visits, and how you will clean and dry your pollen. Target your pollen trapping to your biggest colonies with the best pollen flow.



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## Keeping Bees in November–December

*Morris Ostrofsky*

As we approach late fall and early winter, there are a number of management tasks we should consider. By this time you have done your fall inspection and the bees are settling in for the winter. Combining weak colonies is preferable to trying to keep each one going through winter. Joining two weak colonies versus adding a weak colony to strong is preferred. My suggestion is to use the newspaper method to do this. Don't forget both colonies need ventilation while being combined.

If you have not already done so, remove queen excluders and add mouse guards.

While counterintuitive, it is not the cold but moisture that should concern us. As Rusty Burlaw of Honey Bee Suite ([honeybeesuite.com](http://honeybeesuite.com)) says, there is a big difference experiencing a cold day with dry gloves versus wet. Wet gloves can lead to frostbite while dry gloves keep you comfortable. The air temperature is the same but the moisture is the difference.

With that being said, think about this as you prepare your hives for winter. There are various ways to absorb excess moisture from the hive. I have found the use of an insulated/moisture box containing burlap or other absorbent material, such as old towels, to be very effective. The insulated/moisture box serves a dual purpose: It absorbs moisture and keeps the bees dry.

Start with a box that has the same footprint as a standard box. Then add 1/8-inch screened ventilation holes on the sides and cover the bottom with 1/8-inch hardware cloth to keep the absorbent materials in place. Drill a 1-inch diameter hole in each of the four sides of the box. The holes allow some air flow.

Position the box just under the outer cover. Check the absorbent materials once or twice over the winter, and replace them as needed. It is fun to see what you find in the insulation box in spring. I have found mushrooms, worms, and even a frog. Early spring is when I remove the insulation box.

There is not a 100 percent agreement on the value of an upper winter entrance. However, I no longer recommend an upper entrance due to the chimney effect and heat loss. Warm air is lost through the upper entrance and is replaced by cooler air coming in from below. The sticky board can also be used for additional moisture control. The objective is to provide ventilation while at the same time helping to block cold winter winds. Push it in roughly half way under the screened bottom board. This position is similar to what would be done for a mite count except it is pushed in half way rather than all the way.

By November the bees should have stored approximately 80–100 pounds of honey. Less than this amount signals that continued feeding is necessary. According to Ann Harman,

when day time temperatures are consistently lower than 57 degrees F, we should switch from a liquid to a solid feed. At this temperature, the bees have a more difficult time metabolizing sugar water and evaporating off excess moisture in the syrup. This is the time for solid feed. I like to use no-cook candy. Rusty's Honey Bee Suite site has a recipe for no-cook candy. I find it a simple and effective way to feed the bees during winter.

During fall/winter, the temperature occasionally reaches 50 degrees F or more. You should see your bees out doing cleansing flights. On these days, if you notice that a hive is inactive, it warrants closer examination. Lightly tap the side of hive and listen for a response. If you find the hive is a deadout, a necropsy is in order. Try to determine why it failed. If you have any doubts, see if you can get a more experienced beekeeper to help. Bee Labs such as OSU and Beltsville, Maryland, can also be used to diagnose American foulbrood and other diseases.

Hive entrances should be reduced this time of year to prevent robbing. You can either purchase a mouse guard or make your own with 1/2-inch hardware cloth. The spacing allows the bees to pass through but stops mice. The entrance should also be periodically checked to make sure it is not plugged with dead bees. The undertaker bees don't carry bodies out very far when it is cold; they can pile up at the entrance. A mouse guard will prevent mice from using your hive as a warm, winter hide out.

November and December provide a late-season window of opportunity to deal with Varroa mites. After Thanksgiving, the colony should be broodless. If your mite counts are still above 1 percent, this is when you can use oxalic acid because there is no brood that it can harm. This can be your final safety net for the year. For the last several years, I have used oxalic acid resulting in mite counts at almost zero percent the following spring. Please keep in mind that while oxalic acid is a great tool, it must be used at the appropriate time of year and safely. I suggest visiting Randy Oliver's website [www.scientificbeekeeping.com](http://www.scientificbeekeeping.com) for the latest application updates. Whatever method you choose, follow the directions exactly.

Once the bees are tucked in for the winter, it is a good time to evaluate what you learned this year and make plans for next. Winter is also the time to build bee equipment and gizmos/gadgets. It is also a great time to read about bees and beekeeping. A great source of winter reading is Tom Seeley's newest book, *The Lives of Bees: The Untold Story of the Honey Bee in the Wild*. I have also found *Beekeeping Your First Three Years*, a newer publication from A.I. Root, to include valuable information even for someone like me with 50-plus years of beekeeping experience.

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## BEEKEEPER EVENTS

### 2021

November 16–18 (8:30 am–noon): 2021 Indoor Storage of Honey Bees Virtual Conference. *Information:* www.projectapism.org/indoor-storage-conference-2021.

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

### 2022

August 26–September 5: Oregon State Fair. Salem.  
October 1–2: Washington State Beekeepers Association JamborBEE Conference. Othello, Washington.

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## 1 Beekeeping Calendar

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## REGIONAL NEWS

## Regional Associations

## Columbia Gorge Beekeepers

Fall has blessed the Columbia Gorge region early this year. Funny how our springs evolve from the winter into intermittent moisture, winds, and cold temperatures. Yet, this past spring found an absence of moisture coupled with warmth. Fall colors were creeping into the foliage as early as August. If only there were a sign of the impending winter. Will it be another snowy one with a month or two of continuous falling of crystals? Comprehension of the interworkings of nature befuddle us all. How do the bees plan for their future? Beekeepers lament on the state of the mite: "A tough mite year!" Well, here in the Columbia Gorge it was a tough mite year. Many a beekeeper blasted their colonies with Formic Pro in hopes of dampening the pest population only to sample post application finding the numbers exceeding 5 percent. One hive, sampled the first of October, after treating with two pads of Formic Pro the beginning of September, sampled 16 percent. Have we succumbed to the Battle of Normandy? In terms of the association, our meetings continue via Zoom with a meager attendance. The past two years of Covid have taken a toll on us all. No longer are we able to gather sharing our stories. The three hives at the Hood River Extension are without visitors. Their only joy is to please the researchers viewing them through the windows of the adjacent building. Our membership has remained constant, but the involvement is surely diminished. Yet, hope prevails as our board continues in eagerness planning for a better 2022. *Jerry Frazier*

## Portland Urban Beekeepers

Well, we know it's officially it's fall in the Portland area because we've had more wet days than dry in the past month. Thankfully, we still have a few things in bloom for the days that are warm and dry: Asters, poppies, sunflowers, and sedum are all making the scene. Most people are feeding now and have been for a while. We're just about at the time where our boxes will be buttoned up for winter and we'll all hope for the best. I'm sure you're all waiting with bated breath to hear an update about my queen. I ended up requeening and found an additional third hive's queen had stopped laying, too. Speaking with another beekeeping friend recently, we were both aware of many folks whose queens just didn't hold out for the season. Hope you're not one of them, dear reader.

Portland Urban Beekeepers did have some success in its apiary this summer, and we ended up harvesting about 70 pounds of honey. Our board members had a fun afternoon extracting, washing jars, and eating lunch together. We bottled it up and ended up donating 55 pounds to Stone Soup PDX (stonesouppdx.com), an organization which provides workforce development and culinary training to those at risk for homelessness. We also donated about 15 pounds to Blanchet House (www.blanchethouse.org), which, among other services, has a transitional house for men. One of our PUB members is teaching the group beekeeping, but they've not yet been able to harvest honey. Our apiary is now tucked in for the season and will re-open in March for work parties.

Our October speaker was Dr. Andony Melathopoulos, who talked



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to us about pesticides. The focus of the discussion was about how to read labels, how to understand if something is harmful to bees, and how to understand label lingo. It was a fun, interactive presentation about an important topic we don't often cover at meetings.

Jessica Anderson

### Tillamook Beekeepers

We are enjoying our Saturday afternoon meetings. The most recent meeting was in person and on Zoom with 20 in-person attendees. The honey house is busy these days. One of our beekeepers took 40 gallons, another 25. The honey has been plentiful this year. With some of the proceeds from our hive raffles, we decided to start a Tree Planting Project. We've committed \$2,500 to planting bee-friendly trees in five areas around Tillamook with the help of the City Council. We are also doing two smaller areas in Manzanita. It's our hope to continue with the tree planting throughout the county over the coming years.

We had five visitors to our meeting, want-to-be beekeepers. So we will be offering an informal "Intro to Beekeeping" class next Saturday. The education part of the meeting introduced some plantings for larger areas that can still be seeded in our area. They included meadowfoam, crimson clover, and dwarf rape (winter canola). We spent the rest of the meeting discussing what to do in the apiary in Tillamook in October: Feeding, mite treating, ventilation options, reducing hive boxes, combining weak colonies with strong, mouse guards, and so forth.

Bees are busy moving honey down. One member shared a great idea he got on YouTube that worked for him. When reducing the boxes, he had a few frames of nectar left over. He put them in a hive box ABOVE the inner cover, and the bees moved all that nectar down in just a few hours! We are always learning and amazed by the awesomeness of honey bees! *Claire Moody*

### Tualatin Valley Beekeepers

Tualatin Valley members will vote in their 2022 Board of Directors in November, and there is no member meeting in December. Our new membership year begins on January 1. The group is looking forward to a presentation from staff from the Tualatin Soil and



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Water Conservation District in November—info will include work the SWCD is doing to help folks develop and improve pollinator habitat, discussion of other kinds of conservation practices the SWCD helps with, and an overview of applicable programs and how to apply for individual landowners.

Happy holidays to one and all!

Debby Garman

### Swarm Call

Thank you to beekeepers who collected swarms during 2022 and spread good bee information throughout Oregon communities!



And thank you to all beekeepers who asked to be removed from the list when they had met their quota.

Among the latter beekeepers was Mike Shaw, who wrote last April that he

then had 16 deeps full of bees from three swarms—and felt the need to add, "Yes I know what a deep is." The first swarm, in Gladstone, filled two deeps. The second, in Oregon City, filled six (upper photo). The third on that same day filled eight (lower photo). Mike said he sent the photos because he "knew noboby would believe . . ."

The Swarm Call List will be emptied soon. I will send a notice to all members when it opens again in 2022!





## 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

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



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Thank you OSBA members for your support and enthusiasm throughout 2021.

The link for our centennial fundraising campaign for the OSU Honey Bee Lab is: [gofund.me/0f667099](https://gofund.me/0f667099).

*Please share!*

## ***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 **January-February** issue, 2022. The deadline for submitting copy is **December 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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