



THE BEELINE

Olympia Beekeeper's Association Newsletter
March 2010

Next Meeting:

Monday, March 8, 2010

**Roosevelt Elementary School
1417 San Francisco Ave. NE**

Class at 6:00 p.m., Meeting at 7:00p.m.

President's Note!

At our next meeting on Monday, March 8 we will assemble our order for package bees and queens. You need to pay for the bees you are ordering at this time (see Gail, our trusty treasurer). There will be some limited opportunity to make adjustment to the order by the April meeting.

The current plan is to bring the bees from California to Olympia for pick-up by club members on Saturday, April 24. So, put that date on your calendar if you are planning to order bees this year. The apiary from which we purchase bees (Can Am) relayed the cost would be the same as last year. Assuming that remains the case, the price for three pound packages with a marked queen will be \$56 (not including a \$6 charge for the package in which the bees are shipped). You are credited for the package if you give me an empty one to return. If you have an empty package you want to return for this credit **BRING YOUR EMPTY BEE PACKAGE(S) TO THE CLUB MEETING**. Individual marked queens (Italian or carniolian) cost \$16.

Reminder, we are only getting bees for OBA club members who are up to date with their annual membership dues. Gail will be so happy to take your money and note for the record that you have paid the \$20 membership dues. That is a great deal! When renewing your membership I also recommend you verify that your address, phone number and email information is correct on the membership list.

As mentioned in our last newsletter, our program this month will be a presentation by a California beekeeper about controlling bee pests via treatment with powdered sugar. These beekeepers also manufacture their own screened bottom boards which are used when treating with powdered sugar. They will bring some of these bottom boards to the club meeting which will be available for sale.

The weblink below is for story about bee declines in the UK and consideration of returning to use of the "black honeybees" which are native to the English Island. Although black bees may be less productive and more aggressive than European honeybees, they are suspected of being more resistant to the current plague of honey bee pests.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/nature/bees-take-flight-to-the-city-after-fall-in-rural-hive-numbers-1913666.html>

Club member who have signed up to help beekeepers as MENTORS are listed below. Consult your membership list for contact information.

Harold Nydigger -	Lacey
Kathy Miles	
Sommerset Fetter	
Bruce Longmire	Yelm/Rainier
Mark Savage -	East Olympia
Yvonne Detlaff -	Lacey
Ron Scholzen -	Elma
Jack Ayers-	Lacey
Jack Robertson -	South Olympia
Ivan Rogers -	Olympia
Kim Knust -	Lacey, South Bay
Gail Booth -	Olympia, South Bay
David Ragsdale -	Lacey, South Bay

Our queen rearing workgroup met at my house last Saturday. About a half dozen members attending and our group is planning to begin grafting eggs to start queens in late May. We hope to produce mature laying queens by July which we can make available to club members. At the April meeting our group will discuss this topic with you to get an idea of how many queens we might want to produce. At the April meeting we also hope to fit in presentations about mead making, using bait hives (for attracting swarms) and introducing package bees to hives.

I look forward to seeing you next Monday. Dave.

Introduction to Bee Keeping Equipment

Please Note: Change from March 10 to March 17

When: 6:30 – 8:30 Wednesday March 17

Where: Heated Barn, Mudgee Tree Farm, Mark Savage 8440 Ayer Street Se Olympia 98501

Home - 923-5358 Work 360-902-1774 kbarale@comcast.net

Members and Friends of the Olympia Bee Club are welcome to attend a two+ hour introductory course designed to cover bee keeping supplies, bee hive equipment assembly and a short presentation and tasting for big leaf maple sap collecting and syrup making.

A complete range of bee keeping equipment will be on display with a short discussion about each item. Everything from queen excluders, hive tools, smokers, entrance reducers, feeders to westerns and deeps will acquaint you the range of equipment you necessary to raise bees.

One display will demonstrate how to assemble frames and hive equipment with a variety of frames: waxed plastic foundation wired and unwired. You will also become acquainted with all of the equipment necessary to successfully “hive” your new package in April.

Or, if you have equipment to assemble, and do not have space or tools bring it along as I have lots of table space and plenty of tools and helpful hands. For those coming early, if it is warm out, we can look at several hives. if you wish to do so, bring a suit and veil, I have a blizzard of feisty bees ready to make honey and lots of baby bees.

And, if that were not enough, I will introduce you to tapping, collecting and boiling down big leaf maple syrup. For the skeptics of the group, there will be samples of fresh syrup.

A suggestion was made at the meeting that a dessert potluck would be in order, and I agree. Just the thing for a cold March evening. I look forward to sampling your favorite recipes. I can boil water for tea on the stove. If you wish to bring a bottle of wine or mead or spirits to share, that would be quite alright.

Directions: As you drive along Yelm Highway south of Olympia, turn at Rich Road and head approximately 2.8 miles and turn right at 83rd. Follow 83rd, over the tracks and on about a half mile until you come to a "T" intersection. Turn left, and go about 400 yards until you see your first, and only paved road to your right. Turn right and our farm is the first house and barn on the right, off the road a bit. We have a two story blue metal roof barn, with Christmas lights on inside the barn, and visible from the road. Park in the driveway, on the paved road or in the gate and up to the barn.

The entrance to the barn is below a lighted door.

You will not need anything other than a notepad, sweater and gloves if the barn is not quite warm when you arrive.

Mark Savage

Mudgee Tree Farm

Membership DUES ARE DUE NOW!

If you haven't already done so, please fill out the form and pay either Gail Booth at the meeting or send payment to her address (bottom of form). Dues not been received by April will no longer receive the newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

OLYMPIA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Membership Fees \$20.00 a year 2010___ 2011___ Total_____

Membership Name

First_____ Last_____

Phone Number (_____)--____--_____

Mailing Address _____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

EMAIL_____

If you do not wish to have your contact information made available to OBA members please check here. _____

Discount subscription coupons to AMERICAN BEE JOURNAL and BEE CULTURE are available to members.

Bring dues to meeting or mail to treasurer:

Gail Booth
4526 Pleasant Glade Rd NE
Olympia, WA 98516

Make Checks to Oly Beekeepers Association (OBA)

HEADLINE NEWS

B.C. apiarists stung by bee deaths

<http://65.55.33.103/att/GetAttachment.aspx?file=871cb4cd-716f-47a4-8ed3->

By BRENNAN CLARKE

VICTORIA — Special to The Globe and Mail Published on Thursday, Mar. 04, 2010 12:00AM EST Last updated on Thursday, Mar. 04, 2010 6:12AM EST

An unprecedented die-off of commercial honeybees on southern Vancouver Island this winter has left beekeepers in the region scrambling to rebuild their devastated stocks in time for spring.

"It's really bad between Nanaimo and Victoria. We're talking in the vicinity of about 90-per-cent losses," said Stan Reist, president of the B.C. Honey Producers Association. "It's hit most of the commercial guys pretty hard."

While many beekeepers blame the high mortality rate on the varroa mite, a parasite that began afflicting the Vancouver Island bee population around 1997, Mr. Reist said researchers have yet to confirm the exact cause of this winter's population collapse.

"The samples have been taken, they're going in for testing, but we still don't have a valid reason for what's going on," said Mr. Reist, who owns the Flying Dutchman apiary in Nanaimo.

Vancouver Island's bee population was also hit hard in 2007, when between 55 and 65 per cent of hives perished. Over the last three years, the number of commercial colonies on the island has dropped to 2,000 from about 12,000.

It's become a familiar story: In 2006, an alarming spike in the number of disappearing bee colonies across North America prompted experts to coin the term "colony collapse disorder," a phenomenon that has since been identified in more than half-a-dozen European countries.

Research into the exact causes of colony collapse disorder has generated much academic debate. In Ontario, biologist Ernesto Guzman at the University of Guelph studied more than 400 colonies throughout three seasons and found that varroa mites were associated with more than 85 per cent of colony deaths. The next most important causes of death, Prof. Guzman said, were too-sparse beehive populations in fall and insufficient food reserves for winter. "We're pretty sure we've solved a great deal of the mystery," he said.

Under a quarantine put in place in the mid-1990s, Vancouver Island beekeepers are prohibited from bringing in replacement bees from the North American mainland, a restriction that has forced island breeders and honey producers to import hives from the southern hemisphere.

At 2:30 a.m. on Monday, Mr. Reist and a colleague picked up 637 packages of New Zealand bees at the Seaspan dock in Nanaimo and spent the next eight hours delivering the live cargo to various apiaries on the south island. Mr. Reist has another 420 hives on order from Chile, but the shipment's arrival has been cast in doubt by the

recent earthquake. "We're just trying to get the job done," he said. "We've got a lot of people waiting and we don't know what's happening with Chile ... When it rains, it pours."

Central Saanich bee breeder Grant Stringer purchased 200 boxes of New Zealand bees from Mr. Reist that he plans to resell to honey producers in the region.

"I can expand these colonies and sell them to the people who got wiped out," said Mr. Stringer, who spent all day Tuesday transferring lunch-box-sized cartons of bees into starter hives called nukes. "This is the first (time) in 10 years I've had to import bees," he said, adding that a full shipment of 760 boxes costs about \$80,000.

Part of the challenge for beekeepers is that the mites have developed a resistance to pesticides. Mr. Stringer limited his losses to about 30 per cent last season by using organic acids to battle mite infestations, but said the treatment must be applied in early August, when honey producers like to keep their hives in mountain meadows and other nectar-rich locations to maximize production.

Sol Nowitz, owner of Jinglepot Apiaries in Nanaimo, said bees imported from the southern hemisphere lack the genetic resistance to cold and disease they need for long-term survival in Canada. Mr. Nowitz, who has lost close to 260 of his 275 hives since 2007, called on the province to allow island apiaries to import "breeder queens" from elsewhere in Canada.

Island bee colonies have also suffered in recent years from cold, wet winters that weaken the bees' resistance to disease, and hot dry summers that limit the amount of nectar blossoms can produce, Mr. Nowitz said. "If there's not a lot of nectar coming in, the queens cut back on their egg-laying because they know they can't feed a large colony," he said.

Bee decline linked to falling biodiversity

Page last updated at 08:40 GMT, Wednesday, 20 January 2010

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/8467746.stm>

By Richard Black
Environment correspondent, BBC News website

The decline of honeybees seen in many countries may be caused by reduced plant diversity, research suggests.

Bees fed pollen from a range of plants showed signs of having a healthier immune system than those eating pollen from a single type, scientists found. Writing in the journal *Biology Letters*, the French team says that bees need a fully functional immune system in order to sterilise food for the colony.

Other research has shown that bees and wild flowers are declining in step.

Two years ago, scientists in the UK and The Netherlands reported that the diversity of bees and other insects was falling alongside the diversity of plants they fed on and pollinated. Now, Cedric Alaux and colleagues from the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA) in Avignon have traced a possible link between the diversity of bee diets and the strength of their immune systems. "We found that bees fed with a mix of five different pollens had higher levels of glucose oxidase compared to bees fed with pollen from one single type of flower, even if that single flower had a higher protein content," he

told BBC News.

Bees make glucose oxidase (GOX) to preserve honey and food for larvae against infestation by microbes - which protects the hive against disease. "So that would mean they have better antiseptic protection compared to other bees, and so would be more resistant to pathogen invasion," said Dr Alaux. Bees fed the five-pollen diet also produced more fat than those eating only a single variety - again possibly indicating a more robust immune

system, as the insects make anti-microbial chemicals in their fat bodies. Other new research, from the University of Reading, suggests that bee numbers are falling twice as fast in the UK as in the rest of Europe.

Forage fall

With the commercial value of bees' pollination estimated at £200m per year in the UK and \$14bn in the US, governments have recently started investing resources in finding out what is behind the decline.

In various countries it has been blamed on diseases such as Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus (IAPV), infestation with varroa mite, pesticide use, loss of genetic diversity among commercial bee populations, and the changing climate.

The most spectacular losses have been seen in the US where entire colonies have been wiped out, leading to the term colony collapse disorder.

However, the exact cause has remained elusive.

A possible conclusion of the new research is that the insects need to eat a variety of proteins in order to synthesise their various chemical defences; without their varied diet, they are more open to disease.

David Aston, who chairs the British Beekeepers' Association technical committee, described the finding as "very interesting" - particularly as the diversity of food available to UK bees has declined.

"If you think about the amount of habitat destruction, the loss of biodiversity, that sort of thing, and the expansion of crops like oilseed rape, you've now got large areas of monoculture; and that's been a fairly major change in what pollinating insects can forage for."

As a consequence, he said, bees often do better in urban areas than in the countryside, because city parks and gardens contain a higher diversity of plant life.

Diverse message

While cautioning that laboratory research alone cannot prove the case, Dr Alaux said the finding tied in well with what is happening in the US.

There, collapse has been seen in hives that are transported around the country to pollinate commercially important crops. "They move them for example to [a plantation of] almond trees, and there's just one pollen," he said. "So it might be possible that the immune system is weakened... compared to wild bees that are much more diverse in what they eat."

In the US, the problem may have been compounded by loss of genetic diversity among the bees themselves.

In the UK, where farmers are already rewarded financially for implementing wildlife-friendly measures, Dr Aston thinks there is some scope for turning the trend and giving some diversity back to the foraging bees.

"I'd like to see much greater awareness among land managers such as farmers about managing hedgerows in a more sympathetic way - hedgerows are a resource that's much neglected," he said.

"That makes landscapes much more attractive as well, so it's a win-win situation."

The French government has just announced a project to sow nectar-bearing flowers by roadsides in an attempt to stem honeybee decline.

<p>Yvonne Dettlaff, Editor Olympia Beekeeper's Association</p> <p>To submit contributions or ideas Email: OlympiaBeekeepers@hotmail.com Call 360-486-9638</p>	<p>The Beeline Olympia Beekeeper's Association</p>
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