

March 2015

OLYMPIA BEEKEEPERS



REPORTS, NEWS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

April Program

**Bee package introduction and
Questions**

President's Message

We are in the throes of bee season with the first Italian packages already arrived and sunny weather to install them. I also got word today that the swarm season is also upon us with a member capturing two, so be prepared. If you would like to be on the swarm list, please contact Gail Booth at gail30@msn.com with your contact info and address, availability and where you'd be willing to travel in the county to retrieve swarms.

We anticipate delivery of Carniolan packages and all extra queens on April 20th. As we learned, all is subject to change and driven by the status of the bees and operations coming out of California. Nucs will also be ready later this week from Harvard Robbins and Mechele and Duane have been working really hard and contacting people that reserved to make sure they've been notified. They've done a fabulous job coordinating all the moving parts for getting bees to members this year.

Elections will be held at our next meeting. We will be taking nominations that evening, if you are interested in running for a position. We're still working on a location for summer meetings and will be updating as soon as we have any additional information. There are a lot of things happening concurrently and I will be sharing some opportunities and other announcements at the meeting on Monday. Also, if you didn't get a chance to fill out and report your overwinter colony status, please do so. That information is critically important to assessing and compiling the WA state report. We will have a clipboard and will circulate.

Thanks to all who bring treats, raffle items and your wonderful selves for sharing to our meetings! See you Monday.

Laurie

Bee behaviour mapped by tiny trackers



The tiny trackers measure have a range of up to 2.5m (8.2ft)

A tiny new tracker designed to monitor bee behaviour is being tested by ecologists at Kew Gardens in London.

It is made from off-the-shelf technology and is based on equipment used to track pallets in warehouses, said its creator Mark O'Neill.

Readers, used to pick up a signal from the kit, are connected to Raspberry Pi computers, which log the readings.

The device has a reach of up to 2.5m (8.2ft). Previously used models were restricted to 1cm (0.4in).

The tracker consists of a standard RFID (radio frequency identification) chip and a specially designed aerial,

which Mr O'Neill has created to be thinner and lighter than other models used to track small insects, allowing him to boost the range.

The engineer, who is technical director at the Newcastle-based tech firm Tumbling Dice, is currently trying to patent the invention.

"The first stage was to make very raw pre-production tags using components I could easily buy", he said.

"I want to make optimised aerial components which would be a lot smaller."

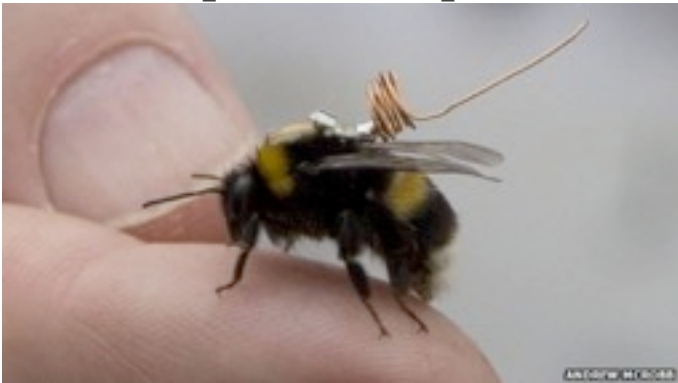
"I've made about 50 so far. I've soldered them all on my desk - it feels like surgery."

The average "forage time" for a worker bee is around 20 minutes, suggesting they have a forage range of around 1km (0.6 miles), Mr O'Neill explained.

The idea is to have readers dotted around a hive and flower patch in order to track the signals as the bees move around freely in the wild.

Chilled bees

The tiny trackers, which are just 8mm (0.3in) high and 4.8mm (1.9in) wide, are stuck to the bees with superglue in a process which takes five to 10 minutes. The bees are chilled first to make them more docile. "They make a hell of a noise," acknowledged Mr O'Neill. He told the BBC he hoped that the trackers - which weigh less than a bee and are attached at their centre of gravity so as not to affect their flight - would remain attached for their three-month expected lifespan.



The bees are chilled before the trackers are attached.

They have only been fitted to worker bees, which do not mate.

"If an animal ate one, I guess it would have a tracker in its stomach," Mr O'Neill said.

"But the attrition rate for field worker bees is very low. Most

die of old age - they are very competent, and good at getting out of the way."

Dr Sarah Barlow, a restoration ecologist from Kew Gardens, was involved in testing the as-yet unnamed trackers.

"These tags are a big step forward in radio technology and no one has a decent medium to long range tag yet that is suitable for flying on small insects," she said.

"This new technology will open up possibilities for scientists to track bees in the landscape.

"This piece of the puzzle, of bee behaviour, is absolutely vital if we are to understand better why our bees are struggling and how we can reverse their decline."

Invitation: To All who attend the OBA meetings:

Please consider presenting a short (about 5 minute) show-and-tell topic at an OBA meeting. For example, you may:

- * review a piece of beekeeping equipment you either constructed or purchased
- * recommend a book or video from the club library, or elsewhere
- * describe a new twist on an old process for doing something related to bees
- * show something you, or someone else, made from a hive product (wax, honey, propolis, royal jelly)
- * introduce us to an educational web-resource related to beekeeping
- * talk about something else bee-related that our members would find interesting--Bee Creative! Share your Knowledge, Help make our meetings interesting and useful.

Please contact David to get on the agenda (Davidbruun98@hotmail.com)

Reminder:

Plants, books, seeds, and other artifacts are always appreciated for the meeting raffle.

And, if you have a tasty snack to share, everyone enjoys something sweet.

January: Jason Long, WSU, speaking on cold winter storage.

August: TBA

February: Megan Taylor, WSU speaking on Old World Bee Genetics

September: Time to renew membership.

March: Tim Lawrence, WSU

October: TBA

April: Package Introduction

November: TBA

May: Preventing Swarms and Splits

December: Christmas Party

June: Pests and Treatments

July: TBA

Monthly Meetings: held the second Monday of each month.

Place: Chinook Middle School, 4301 6th Ave NE, Lacey, WA

Time: 6:00 pm for Beginning Beekeeper's Certification Program, 7:00 pm for the association meeting. Meetings are held in the Cafeteria. Beekeeping class meets in the central hall Science Room.

Agenda: Each meeting is conducted with old and new business, and a program related to beekeeping. Attendees, if they choose, donate a gift for the raffle table. The Treasurer and Membership Chair sell tickets for \$1.00 and at the break there is refreshments available.