

May2013

OLYMPIA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION



NEWS AND INTEREST FROM THE MAY 13, 2013 MEETING

Secretary and Treasurer Report, President's Message, Up-coming Program

President's Message

Hi everyone. We have one more beekeeper's meeting coming up on June 10th until we resume again in the fall on September 10th. There's been a whirlwind of activity in the weather patterns, the hives, and at the state and local levels regarding neonicotinoids. Swarm season has begun in earnest, but we have not yet seen the peak and by all accounts it looks to be a very active one at that. The summer picnic will be on July 13th at Burfoot Park in Olympia and we'll be announcing a few dates for hands-on workshops at the next meeting.

Mark Emrich reported that there have been several conversations with the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) ahead of their decision to be rendered on June 8th regarding the ornamental use of neonicotinoids [as previously reported]. We will be certain to inform everyone of

any decisions from the WSDA and what they might mean. Mark also noted that the Washington State Beekeepers Association is updating and compiling a list of studies pertaining to neonicotinoid use and will be providing that list to our club in the near future for reference.

The mission of the OBA is to support fellow beekeepers and provide and share information. Part of our mission is also advocating for pollinators and informing the public on the bees' vital role in our food supply, our economy and our lives. To stand up and pay attention to what's happening to them is to do the same for us as human beings. We're all connected.

Having participated with other club members in two tabling events representing the OBA in the last several months has really demonstrated the need for public education. There is a lot of misinformation out there and I can't wait to create a display that includes the various stinging insects

that regularly get misidentified as honeybees. That said, there are a lot of people really interested in what they can do to help bees; they simply need information. We've developed the first version of handouts with information for folks to take with them when they visit our OBA booth at various events to help address this.

At the Columbus Park event, a small child was as delighted to watch the bees in our observation hive as he was to consume the sweet contents of his complimentary honey stick. At his young age, he was able to connect the dots and unprompted, turned before he left to say "Thank you, bees". Made my day.

Happy beekeeping between the raindrops,

Laurie

[SWARM List:

We didn't have that many folks sign up on the new SWARM list so if you are interested, please email us or add yourself at the June meeting. It appears this is going to be a significant year for swarming, based on early calls for help, so we need more beekeepers interested in collecting. Efforts are under way to publish the new list on the website and the plan is to have Regional Coordinators who will call members on the list to collect swarms. The goal being to insure that everyone has the opportunity to gather a swarm. One key need will be a Lead Coordinator who will have the published telephone number required by the state. The Lead will call the Regional who will go down the list until a member is found who wants the swarm.

This is just a brief of the plan which still needs to be finalized, but with your help we can get this finished and published by mid-June.

So - we need a Lead Swarm Coordinator and more members on the SWARM list.

Contact the Officers of the Association as needed or to provide additional input

Meeting Minutes

Olympia Beekeepers Association Meeting

May 13, 2013

Estimated members in attendance: 140

Thank you to all members who completed the membership survey. Surveys are still available for those who have not yet had a chance to complete one.

A new meeting structure is being implemented, with the intention of making meetings more interactive and to reduce administrative time. There will be a question and answer session before the break, and the raffle will now take place during the break.

New members

4 new members introduced themselves.

Treasurer's report

Checking \$2531.34

Savings \$4128.53

The treasurer's report and minutes from the April 8, 2013 meeting were approved.

New Business

The Board of Directors and Chair people now wear nametags with ribbons for identification. As of the next meeting, all members will wear nametags. These will be available at the door at the start of the meeting and gathered upon exit at the end of the meeting.

The annual club picnic has been confirmed to take place on Saturday, July 13, 9.30am – 2pm, in Burfoot Park, Olympia. More details to follow.

Please note that June 10th will be last meeting date prior to the summer break.

Volunteers are still needed for the club booth at the Mother Earth News Fair, June 1 – 2 in Puyallup, Washington.

OBA tote bags are available for order - \$18.00 each.

Summer workshops are currently being organized. Topics will include hive inspections, how to work your bees, extraction, etc. Watch the newsletter for workshop date announcements. Please note that you must be a member in good standing to attend workshops.

Report from Chairs

Dana Smith, Membership Chair:

If you are a member but you have not received club emails over the past couple of weeks, please see Dana to confirm your email address.

Update from Mark Emrich

The letter to the Director of the WSDA developed by the OBA with the Thurston County Board of County Commissioners requesting a restriction on neonicotinoids has received considerable press. Mark received a call from Mr. Robert Miller, Head of one of the pesticide divisions for the Environmental Protection Agency, on the issue. They have agreed to collaborate on next steps for investigation into the harmful effects of neonicotinoids on honeybees.

Mark has participated in a documentary by students of the Evergreen State College regarding the neonicotinoid issue. The film will be shown at the Olympia film society.

A reminder that bee samples may be sent to the WSU diagnostic lab for free testing of Nosema, Varroa and Tracheal Mites. The lab does not test for pesticides. Details can be found at: <http://entomology.wsu.edu/apis/diagnostic-lab/>

Announcements

Laurie Pyne:

The March Against Monsanto contacted the OBA to request club participation in their event on May 25th, starting at 11am. If anyone would like to attend and man a booth on behalf of the club at this event, please contact Laurie.

Si Thacker:

Si will lead a topbar class throughout the summer, from late June to August. If you are interested, see Si for more information.

Si, Gail and Dixon are venturing into queen rearing for more locally adapted bees.

Yvonne Detlaff:

Yvonne received a call from a beekeeper in Rainier who has a swarm that is so aggressive he cannot move it and has offered the swarm to whomever can capture it. See Yvonne if you would like contact information.

Dave Ragsdale:

2013 is Dave's last year of picking up and transporting the club's bee packages. The club needs to look into insurance for transporting member bee packages in the future.

Interactive question and answer session

Question: A member reports having lost 5 Carniolan queens after hiving their packages.

Answer: It is possible that the queens were not mated, or that they are out mating now and will return.

Question: A member has bees that beard on the front of the hive in hot weather.

Answer: This is normal bee behavior in warm temperatures. It was recommended that the beekeeper provide more room, and ventilate the hive.

Program: All About Swarms

Rich Kalman: *What is a swarm?*

Dave Hudson: *Swarm Prevention*

Harold Nydigger: *Trapping Swarms*

Various Participants: *What to say when you get the phone call*

Gerald Christoffersen: *Equipment*

Thomas Mani: *Swiss Swarm Catcher Box*

Brian Hollander: *Procedure*

Kellie Schinke & Si Thacker: *Cut-outs*

Dana Smith: *The OBA Swarm List*

Bob Smith: *Swarm-Stories*





A beekeeper pulls a section of honeycomb from a hive.

Photograph by Gianluca Colla, National Geographic

Jennifer S. Holland
for [National Geographic News](#)
Published May 10, 2013

Bees are back in the news this spring, if not back in fields pollinating this summer's crops. The European Union (EU) [has announced that it will ban](#) for two years, the use of neonicotinoids, the much-maligned pesticide group often fingered in honeybee declines. The U.S. hasn't followed suit, though this year a group of [beekeepers](#) and environmental and consumer groups sued the EPA for not doing enough to protect bees from the pesticide onslaught.

For the last several years scientists have fretted over the future of bees, and although research has shed much light on the crisis, those in the bee business—from hive keepers to commercial farmers—say the insects remain in deep trouble as their colonies continue to struggle.

The current crisis arose during the fall of 2006 as beekeepers around the country reported massive losses—more than a third of hives on average and up to 90 percent in some cases. Bees were flying away and simply not coming back; keepers would find boxes empty of adult bees except for a live queen. No bee corpses remained to tell the tale. The losses were unprecedented and fast.

Now it's five years later, and though [colony collapse disorder](#) (CCD)—the name given to the mysterious killer condition—has dwindled in the manner of cyclical diseases, bees are still battling for their lives and their colonies are weaker than ever. The [latest data](#), from the 2012-2013 winter, indicate an average loss of 45.1 percent of hives

across all U.S. beekeepers, up 78.2 percent from the previous winter, and a total loss of 31.1 percent of commercial hives, on par with the last six years. (Most keepers now consider a 15 percent loss "acceptable.")

Unprecedented Pollinator Crisis

Why keep worrying over the fate of a bunch of pesky stinging insects? Bees in their crucial role as pollinators are paramount. Western nations rely heavily on managed honeybees—the "moveable force" of bees that ride in trucks from farm to farm—to keep commercial agriculture productive. About a third of our foods (some 100 key crops) rely on these insects, including apples, nuts, all the favorite summer fruits (like blueberries and strawberries), alfalfa (which cows eat), and guar bean (used in all kinds of products). In total, bees contribute more than \$15 billion to U.S. crop production, hardly small potatoes.

No, we wouldn't starve without their services—much of the world lives without managed pollinators. But we'd lose an awful lot of good, healthy food, from cherries and broccoli to onions and almonds. Or we'd pay exorbitant costs for farmers to use some other, less efficient pollination technique to supplement the work that healthy natural pollinators could do. Plus, bee health can tell us a lot about environmental health, and thus about our own well-being.

Problems Piling Up

[Zac Browning](#) is a fourth-generation beekeeper based in North Dakota. His mostly migratory commercial operation runs about 22,000 hives in three states—meaning he trucks his bees to different locations at different times of year, renting out their pollination



Queens are dying in unusual numbers.

services to big farms like those producing almonds in California and canola in Idaho.

CCD devastated his hives a few years back, but "we've seen losses more recently from everything imaginable," he says. "Pests, parasites, pesticide exposure, starvation, queen failures, you name it."

In addition to these problems piling up, "our inputs have gone up one-and-a-half times in the last decade," he says. "We now have to try to sustain bees [with extra food] when natural food is scarce, dearth periods that didn't exist before."

Part of the problem is keepers have to boost hive numbers to meet demand, "but the carrying capacity of the environment hasn't changed." In fact, it's gone down. The amount of undeveloped land with good bee forage just isn't enough to sustain the masses, he says.

Meanwhile, studies have shown that colonies with access to the best pollens (with more than 25 percent protein plus essential amino acids), which occur in diverse plant habitats once common across the landscape, are more robust and more resistant to disease than those in pollen-poor environments.

(The balance of this article can be read at

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/13/130510-honeybee-bee-science-european-union-pesticides-colony-collapse-epa-science/>

Here's the Sting

Bee venom has become the most buzzed-about anti-aging ingredient

THERE'S NOTHING B-LIST about the new swarm of bee-venom beauty products.

The toxic ingredient appears in a growing number of high-end anti-aging serums, masks and moisturizers from various companies. Manuka Doctor, a line from New Zealand, boasts a purifying process that removes extraneous elements such as pollen dust or bee bits. The U.K. brand Heaven Skincare claims to use a secret ingredient that activates the bee venom.

The key ingredient is said to improve skin by setting off an elaborate chain reaction. "Your brain thinks that [you've been] bitten and it sends back a signal that the skin needs to heal itself," said Maria Hatzistefanis, founder of Rodial, a London-based skin care line known for its use of exotic ingredients, which recently debuted bee venom products. Once this brain signal has been sent, as the theory goes, blood rushes to the area, triggering an increase in the production of wrinkle-smoothing collagen. Deborah Mitchell, maker of Heaven, describes venom products as a topical, natural alternative to Botox. "Straight away, the skin tightens and firms," she said, noting that many users report a slight tingling—a sign the product is working.

The venom rage originated in Britain, where many of these products are produced (perhaps coincidentally, Alexander McQueen designer Sarah Burton, whose studio is in London, based her spring collection on bees and their human keepers). The mania grew buzzy in 2011, when a press leak revealed that Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, tried a venom mask before the royal wedding—on the recommendation of Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall. The U.K.-based line Lacrème Beauté has a waiting list for its bee venom creams. "My customers use it

like addicts," said Victoria Galbraith Wachtel, a company director. Still, while some of her clients use it daily, both morning and night, others find that a few times a week will suffice.

The difficulty of collecting venom largely explains the high cost of the products. When a bee stings a person, the venom-containing stinger is left behind and the bee usually dies, explained Alex Fras, a beekeeper in British Columbia who makes the Bee U Organics line of cosmetic products. To gather venom for commercial purposes, beekeepers place a sheet of glass embedded with low-voltage electrical wires at the hive entrance. After the bees receive a small jolt, they release some venom but retain their stingers. The keepers scrape the venom off the glass once it has dried.

Francesca Fusco, a Manhattan dermatologist, calls the venom "a new flavor of the month," much like apple stem cells were a few years back. But she admits bee venom does decrease inflammation. Although some bee-venom creams claim to be safe for people with bee allergies, Dr. Fusco recommends consulting with an internist or allergist before use. There are some kinds of hives you just don't want.

(Note: Prices range from \$85 to \$200 for these products)

[Excerpt from the Wall Street Journal April 26, 2013]

2012-2013 Winter Losses

Summary of BeelInformed survey results:

Preliminary survey results indicate that 31.1% of managed honey bee colonies in the United States were lost during the 2012/2013 winter. This represents an increase in loss of 9.2 points or 42% over the previous 2011/2012 winter's total losses that were estimated at 21.9% (Figure 1). This level of loss is on par with the 6 year average total loss of 30.5%.

On average, U.S. beekeepers lost 45.1% of the colonies in their operation during the winter of 2012/2013. This is a 19.8 point or 78.2% increase in the average operational

loss compared to the previous winter (2011/2012), which was estimated at 25.3%. The difference between average loss and total loss is explained by the respondent pool: while a majority of the respondents (95%) were backyard beekeepers, they managed a small fraction of the colonies represented in the survey (6%). For this reason total loss (which is more heavily influenced by commercial beekeeper losses) is more representative of national losses.

Survey participants indicated that they considered a loss rate of 15% as "acceptable," but 70% of them suffered losses greater than this.

See full results at <http://beeinformed.org>

How to make a simple and easy-to-use Swarm Catcher

From Harold Nydigger

I came up with this from trying to use a fish net with a plastic bag in it.

First make the bucket.

1. Get a 5 gal paint strainer from the hardware store.
2. Next take a 5 gal bucket cut it off just below the last ring under the bale leaving the ring on. The ring is what holds the strainer on.
3. Next remove the bail
4. Drill a 1/4 in hole from the place the bail was fastened to the bucket.
5. Then fasten the strainer net to the bucket.

Next, the bucket holder:

6. You need a piece of flat bar 1 in by 22 to 24 in long. Drill a 1/4 in hole on each end about 1 and a half inches from the end, and in the center of the flat bar.
7. Now in the center of the flat bar drill two 1/4 inch holes. These are to fasten the flat bar to the handle bracket.

Now for the handle bracket:

8. Take a push broom or a scrub brush that will take a screw-in handle. Cut it off so the handle is only about 5 inches long.
9. Next cut the bristles off.
10. Now lay the flat bar across where the bristles were and drill the holes

to fasten the flat bar to the bracket.

11. Bend the flat bar into a U shape with the opening the size of your bucket.
12. Now bolt the U shape flat bar to the bucket.
13. Take another piece of flat bar to make a hook. This needs to fasten to the block. This is to hook over the branch the bees are hanging from so you can shake the bees off.

May Program:

Well, we all should have learned much about swarms on May 13th.

The presentations were insightful and well done. One thing we seem to be learning about beekeepers is how good they are at making gadgets.

Thanks to all who signed up on the new SWARM list. We will be issuing it and posting on the website as soon as we finalize some details about State requirements.

June Program

"Bee-friendly Alternatives to Pesticide Use for Home Lawn and Garden Care".

Monthly Program: Share your Knowledge, Help make our meetings interesting and useful.

Please contact Rich to get on the agenda: rich.beekeeper@gmail.com





Reminder: Apprentice Beekeepers Class is growing so arrive early if you want a seat.

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: Annual Dues (\$25) are payable.

February: Nominations for officers requested.
Plan your bee order.

March: Order bees. Elect officers.

April: Bees arrive.

May: What To Do Now!

June: Last meeting before summer break.

July: Summer break. Picnic (?)

August: Thurston county fair.

September: Meetings resume.

October: TBA

November: TBA

December: Christmas Potluck

Monthly Meetings: held the second Monday of each month, excluding July and August.

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 are refreshments available.

OLYMPIA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION



Officers and Chairs

Laurie Pyne - President
Renzy Davenport - Vice President
Andre's Broyles - Treasurer
Rebbeckah Krebs - Secretary
Dana Smith - Membership Chair
Rich Kalman - Program Chair
Bob Smith - Educational Chair
Jim Reich - Mentor Chair
Roger McMaster - Librarian
Ivor Melmore - Equipment