

The Buzzzz

The Monthly Newsletter of the Gilroy Beekeepers Association

Volume 6

June 2013

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Getting to Know Each Other!

by Vicki Basham

This month, we'll get to know Kathie MacKenzie. Kathie lives on a beautiful hilltop property in Royal Oaks, overlooking the rolling farmlands between Prunedale and Watsonville. As of April this year, she is the proud keeper of her first two colonies.



Kathie MacKenzie on her first day as a beekeeper!

Even though this is Kathie's first year as a beekeeper, she has been fascinated with these creatures ever since she saw the movie *Ulee's Gold* in 1997. The main character in the movie is a beekeeper who harvested Tupelo honey. A close friend who knew of her interest in the film gave Kathie a large jug of Tupelo honey, which she still has to this day.

Years later, Kathie met someone who would become her "significant other", and he too, kept bees. About three years ago, Kathie thought it might be fun to have a few hives of her own. In preparation for becoming a beekeeper, she met with the Monterey County beekeepers club at their Saturday breakfast get-togethers. She also visited a beekeeper in Prunedale, who told her about the Gilroy guild. She joined the guild and attended meetings, getting to know several other Prunedale beekeepers. Finally, this year, she decided to make the jump. She traveled to Vacaville's Honey Bee Genetics and bought a Russian and an Italian package. She installed them in late April and is proud to say that both hives are doing quite well!

Kathie likes to learn about bees by watching the many videos offered on the internet. She especially liked the series offered on Brushy Mountain's website. She has several books on beekeeping. But her favorite way to learn is to help others with their hives, where she can get the most hands-on experience possible.

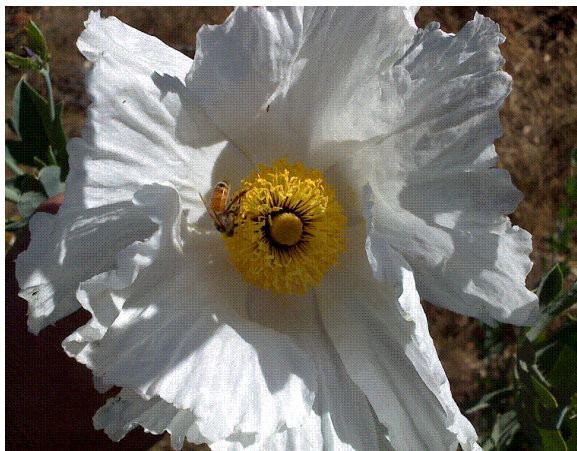
Kathie MacKe

Kathie didn't have to wait long to experience her most memorable moment in beekeeping. The morning after installing her two packages, she was excited to go out and take a look at her new colonies. But as soon as she stepped out her back door, she smelled that unmistakable odor of a skunk. Apparently, the skunk made her new bees so angry that one of the bees zoomed straight to Kathie's throat and stung her. "It swelled up so badly that I looked like I had a turkey wattle!" she laughed. Luckily, the experience hasn't diminished her enthusiasm in the least.

"It's a wonderful thing, keeping bees!" she says. "It's a whole other world!"

Message From The President

I hope all is well in your bee yard. One way we can make the bee yard a better place is to plant bee friendly plants. Lavender springs to mind almost immediately as a bee friendly plant. And for us a bonus is that lavender requires very little water. If we can plant bee friendly flowers that are also drought tolerant, it is even better. The [California Native Plant Society](#) web site contains a wealth of information about native plants that are also loved by our bees.



My favorite bee plant is the Fried Egg Poppy (Matilija Poppy)

Other web sites are:

[UC Berkley](#)

The [Melissa Garden](#) (Healdsburg)

The [Arboretum](#) at UC Davis

Drippings From The Extractor (Notes From The Editor)

This month we're trying a new format for the newsletter. Hopefully it will make it easier to read and more enjoyable! On a related note, the "Guest Column" is on a one month hiatus and will return in July.

It seems that our favorite insect does more than pollinate and give us honey. A recent article appeared in the *San Jose Mercury News* about the use of honey bees to detect land mines in Croatia. During the Balkan Wars of the 1990's over 90,000 land mines were randomly placed throughout the country. Many remain and are responsible for a growing number of injuries and deaths. Researcher Nikola Kezic of Zagreb University has trained individual bees to identify their food with the scent of dynamite. Results have been very encouraging. The biggest problem so far is how to train the whole hive.

What's the biggest swarm you've ever caught? Recently, a beekeeper in Eden, Utah removed a swarm from the attic of a cabin. He estimated the comb measured 12 feet by 4 feet. I betcha they had some mite resistance!! At the July meeting Art Hall will be our guest speaker. Art is an expert at removing bees from enclosed spaces. I'm sure he will have some similar stories to tell.

As we lament the continuing problems being experienced by the honey bee, it's reassuring to see the increasing number of native pollinators



A carpenter bee at work

I have never had so many carpenter bees in my yard, all covered with pollen. Even our bee yards above Croy Road have hundreds nearby, working the native plants. However, I was disturbed while doing an Internet search to discover the number of sights on how to control and/or kill them!

As is typical with each edition of the newsletter, I encourage everyone to submit articles or classified ads. Also, let's not miss the opportunity to "Stump Wayne.". Questions for **Stump Wayne** can be sent to Wayne Pitts at kingbee@uvasgold.com

June In The Beeyard

June generally marks the transition from the spring nectar flow to the summer nectar flow, especially for those beekeepers in rural areas. In the city it may not be quite as noticeable. Perhaps the most important thing to remember about this transition period is to not let the bees starve. After a strong spring nectar flow, there may be a temptation to harvest all the honey possible. It is extremely important to leave enough honey for the bees survival, especially if the summer flow turns out to be less than expected. If too much honey is extracted, it will be necessary to begin feeding syrup much earlier than anticipated. Not only is this expensive, it's just not good for the bees.

June is probably the last good month to do splits and still have time to sufficiently build up

prior to winter. Jeremy Rose in his book *Beekeeping in Central California* recommends using one or two additional frames of brood for each month after May. For example, if you did a split in May with three frames of brood, your June split would have four or five.

While it may seem that June is a bit of a respite after the busy spring, we must still be vigilant for hive problems, including mites, nosema and ants

Calendar of Events

June 1, 2013

Monterey Bay Beekeepers - 8 am
2450 N. Fremont St.
Monterey, Ca

<http://www.montereybaybeekeepers.org/>

June 3, 2013

Santa Clara Valley Beekeepers Guild - 6:15 pm
1292 Minnesota Ave.
San Jose, Ca

<http://beeguild.org/>

Topics:

Bee Friendly Gardening

June 5, 2013

Santa Cruz Beekeepers Guild - 6:30 pm
El Rio Mobile Home Park
N. Pacific Ave
Santa Cruz, Ca

<http://santacruzbees.com>

Topic:

Harvesting Honey and Other Hive Products

June 6, 2013

Beekeepers Guild of San Mateo County- 7 pm
1106 Alameda de Pulgas
Belmont, Ca

<http://www.sanmateobeeguild.org/>

Topic:

Honey Extracting and Wax Melting

June 11, 2013

Gilroy Beekeepers Association - 7 pm
8191 Swanston Ln.
Gilroy , Ca

<http://www.uvasgold.com/gba/>

Topic:

Bee Removal with Art Hall

June 11, 2013

Alameda County Beekeepers Association - 7:30
600 Bellevue Ave.
Oakland, Ca

<http://site.alamedabees.org>

Classes

San Mateo County

<http://www.sanmateobeeguild.org/>

Advanced Beekeeping

June 22, 2013

Randy Oliver will lead a day long class

Check online to register

Santa Clara Valley Bee Guild

<http://beeguild.org/>

Beekeeping Workshop

July 6, 2013

All day workshop with Randy Oliver

Check on line to register

Meetings

**Pacific Northwest Treatment-free
Beekeeping Conference**

Portland, Oregon

July 26-28,2013

Information on-line at

<http://www.blisshoneybees.org/Events.html>

Western Apiculture Society (WAS)

WAS 2013 Annual Conference

[http://ucanr.edu/sites/was2/Conference Information/](http://ucanr.edu/sites/was2/Conference%20Information/)

Santa Fe, New Mexico

October 16-19, 2013

California State Beekeepers Association

2013 CSBA Annual Convention

Harrah's, South Lake Tahoe, CA

November 18-22, 2013