



The Buzzz

Monthly Newsletter of the Gilroy Beekeepers Association

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Jim Novak's beautiful Apiary

Editors Note: A big thanks to those of you who have submitted pictures. Keep them coming and I will feature your apiary in the order that I receive them.

GBA News

Got Honey? Need to rent the club extractor? Contact Pete Garcia to schedule a time. (408) 310-4000

If you would like to be added to the swarm list on our gilroybees.com website please contact me with the areas you are interested in covering.

Presidents Message

by Dave Stocks

I feel we have a lot of fun and interesting things planned for the next couple of months. At our November meeting (11/1/16) we will be hosting Dr Elina Niño from UC Davis. In addition to bringing us up to date on her work at Davis, she will answer as many questions from the audience as time will allow. At our December meeting (12/6/16) it will be time to eat again! Our annual Christmas party will be held at the Old City Hall. Additional information and menu choices is forth coming. Please watch for it.

Along with all the fun things that go along with being a member of the GBA come some of those task that need to be done, whether we want to or not. It is the goal of your current board members to remain as transparent as possible. In doing so, I want to provide a brief update on some things we have in the works.

1. Randy Fox continues to work on our tax status. This is important for a couple of reasons. First, and most obvious, we don't want to get on the bad side of the IRS! Secondly, depending on the level of insurance we need for the association, we need to have a tax status.
2. I have been in discussions with an insurance broker. If the Association wants to sponsor field days and classes, we need to be insured. The discussions are still in the initial phases. As mentioned above, the level of insurance we can obtain is dependent on our tax status.
3. We have obtained an on-line banking program and Vicki Basham is diligently working on getting all our past bank information entered. This will be a great tool in planning what we can and can't do over the next year(s).
4. We still are looking for ideas for upcoming classes. We need ideas! Please contact me with any ideas you have.

I hope to see you all at the next meeting, Dave

News from the Bee World

The follow items come courtesy of Western Apiculture Society, Bee Culture Magazine and Social Media

HAWAIIAN NATIVE BEES ADDED TO ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST FOR THE FIRST TIME

Seven species of bees native to Hawaii were declared endangered on Friday in what The Associated Press said was the first time any bee in the U.S. has received the protection.

Hawaii's various species of yellow-faced bees will be protected by the Endangered Species Act effective Oct. 31. But one of the most effective safeguards — controls on bee habitats — won't be part of the new declaration.

The Xerces Society, which advocates for protecting pollinators, pushed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to intervene on behalf of bees in 2009.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/bees-endangered-species_us_57eeeb0be4b024a52d2f2791

REQUEST FOR ABF-INFESTED HIVE SAMPLES

I am a student at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. I am part of a research course in BYU's department of Molecular and Microbiology, and we are studying the bacterium responsible for American Foulbrood (*Paenibacillus larvae*). We seek to isolate and identify bacteriophages effective in eliminating *P. larvae*.

We would like to provide our research as a resource for beekeepers in the California State Beekeepers Association and invite them to send us samples from hives infected with AFB so we may continue to find these phages, which may later be used to effectively treat infected hives. We may cover the costs of shipping and handling for these samples and provide shipping labels when necessary.

Thank you for your efforts to help beekeepers in the United States. Please contact us if you have further questions on this topic.

Best regards,

Jacob M. Withers, Molecular Biology major

You may contact Jacob at jacobwithers250@yahoo.com or [509-863-5148](tel:509-863-5148)

ALMOND INDUSTRY SLAMS LAND USE STUDY FOR INACCURACIES

A new study by an Eastern Kentucky University researcher, used questionable spatial imagery to analyze almond plantings between 2007 and 2014 and has identified distinctly inaccurate trends about almond acreage, according to the Almond Board of California (ABC).

A poster associated with the project articulates that almonds are grown in the Salinas Valley, which is known for lettuce and other cool-climate vegetable production.

Such an assumption “is proven incorrect by the visual observation of anyone in, or anyone who has traveled to, this region,” states a news release from the ABC.

<http://www.beeeculture.com/catch-buzz-almond-industry-slams-land-use-study-inaccuracies>

INTERNATIONAL SURVEY ABOUT BEEKEEPING

A group of Slovenian Students is seeking information to assist in their research. Please participate!

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfZK05USGqy56LEfCEydg4U6TRS1McpT0-EuTcvURcrAWbr1A/viewform?c=0&w=1>

UC DAVIS HONEY AND POLLINATION CENTER OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

<http://us3.campaign-archive1.com/?u=9d89a5a216486d5b19f45aaeb&id=dee49e5b32&e=f1b54d79e0>

Drippings from the Extractor

by Dave Stocks

With the increased use of screen bottom boards and monitoring trays, beekeepers are becoming more aware of varroa mite levels in their colonies. It is always interesting to hear beekeepers talk about a colony collapsing with a very low mite load while another survives with a high mite load. I recently heard Dr. Stephen Martin address the issue. Dr. Martin is a researcher at the University of Salford in the United Kingdom. He has recently been doing research in Hawaii. Of late, his research has dealt with the relationship between the varroa mite and viral infections. Dr. Martin has found that it is not the mite directly that kills the bee but rather its transmission of diseases like deformed wing virus (DWV). A colony can have a very high mite load and survive because the mites in that colony are not vectors of the virus.

It appears that the transmission of the disease occurs in hive, bee to bee, not from infected pollen or nectar. So what is the solution? There are no antibiotics for viruses. I asked Dr. Martin his thoughts on control. This is my interpretation of his response. He referenced feral bees and the work of Dr. Thom

Seeley. Unlike our bee yards, bees in the wild are not located immediately adjacent to each other but rather at distances of a quarter mile or so. Among many other factors, this greatly reduces the instances of drifting. Drifting occurs when a returning worker or drone mistakenly enters the wrong hive. In doing so, it either introduces a virus or is itself infected. Either way, the virus is spread. So how can we apply this to our own bees. Most of us can't spread our bees out over a quarter of a mile. We can reduce the number of bees in each yard and space them as far apart as possible. For example, I have bees at four different locations. At only one of those do I keep more than two colonies. At the fourth yard, I keep sets of two hives isolated by about thirty yards. All hives are kept at least two feet apart and painted a variety of colors to differentiate one from another. Does it work? I would like to think so. I've only observed DWV at one location.

Speaking of mites, Randy Oliver has begun a new series of articles entitled The Varroa Problem. Part 1 appeared in the November 2016 issue of the *American Bee Journal*. Mr. Oliver addresses the increasing failure of synthetic miticides like Amitraz. I won't spoil his thoughts for those of you who have yet to read the article. To me, it was eye opening and confirmed some beliefs I've had for awhile. For those of you who do not subscribe to either the *American Bee Journal* or *Bee Culture Magazine*, I recommend them highly. They are both great sources of current information.

This month in the Beeyard

By
Serge Labesque

My November Beekeeping To-Do List

[The hive entrance](#)



Much can be said about the strength and health condition of a colony by simply paying attention to what is happening at the entrance of the hive. Scores of video and audio recordings illustrate this point, and at least one book has been written on this subject (*At the Hive Entrance*, by Heinrich Storch).

Although the hive entrance is mainly used by foragers, it is also the place where the colony confronts its surroundings. Guard bees stand there, forming its first line of defense. They can act to

protect the colony when necessary, that is, as long as the beekeeper does not impose an overwhelmingly large entrance to the colony, or drown the bees with smoke!

All sorts of predators occasionally stalk at the entrance or try to enter the hive: yellowjackets; robber bees; skunks; mice; lizards; and many more. The weather, hot or cold, dry or wet, windy at times, can also destabilize the precisely controlled environment of the brood chambers when this gateway is poorly dimensioned or oriented.

In addition to being a place where we can observe the bees, the hive entrance is also a powerful hive management tool. By deftly adjusting the size and configuration of this opening, a beekeeper can facilitate the movement of the foragers, minimize environmental stresses on the colony, and make the entrance more defensible. Finding the right balance between too large or too small an opening can result in increased colony development, productivity and safety.

It is not necessary to modify the hive entrance very frequently though, but it is good to do it whenever the strength of the colony relative to the foraging opportunities or the dangers presented by its surroundings is changing significantly. For example, during an intense spring honey flow, there is little risk of robbing and there are no yellowjackets preying on colonies. Under such conditions the entrances of fully developed colonies may be wide open, so they can dispatch large numbers of foragers that need to fly freely in and out the hives. With no obstruction in their way, these bees will be as productive as possible. As the honey flow ends, foragers may turn to robbing in order to bring supplies back to the hives. Reducing the entrances before this happens will make them more easily defensible. This is vital for all colonies, but particularly for the small and developing ones, which simply do not need and cannot defend large hive openings.

At the end of summer and during any period of dearth, when the threats of yellowjackets or robber bees are increasing, and in winter, the entrances may need to be further reduced. However, adequate air circulation through the hives has to be maintained. From the end of winter through early spring, the entrances will be gradually opened as the colony populations gain strength and as the honey flow intensifies.

Hives that have multiple entrances, whether this is by design or because the equipment may be aging or defective, can be problematic. Not only do they expose the colonies to greater risk of robbing, but the beekeeper may also find it challenging to train foragers to use a different entrance when it is desirable to close the one they are accustomed to.

Many entrance reducers that are on the market provide only a few size options, and they shift the location of the opening sideways as the beekeeper exposes a different notch. They can be advantageously replaced by blocks of wood or concrete board that will provide greater flexibility in the adjustment of the size of the hive entrances while keeping these openings at the same locations. My preference, however, goes to sliding shutters combined with mouse guard screens.

Hive entrances are in plain sight and easily reached. As they are both a place where we can assess the wellbeing of colonies and an important means of influencing the productivity and safety of the bees, they certainly deserve more than passing attention.

November in the apiaries

The hive tops are secured against the wind; the entrances are reduced; clean monitoring trays are in place. With the possible exception of a few minor details to complete the preparation of the hives for winter, the colonies are on their own. Barring any unforeseen emergencies or possible colony deaths, the hives will not be opened before the end-of-winter cursory inspections. Breaking the propolis joints and manipulating combs during the next three months would stir up the bees and could do irreparable damage that will hurt the colonies. Now, the bees need to remain unperturbed.

In spite of the occasional flurry of bee activity in front of the hives on mild days, the bees spend most of the time clustered inside their brood chambers. While the last of the summer bees gradually disappear, young bees produced in mid-fall are emerging from the dwindling brood nests. Soon, with no brood cells to protect them, all the varroa mites will be unprotected. The bees will then have a chance to eliminate these parasites by grooming, which is probably one of their most effective defenses. Evidence of this desirable trait and activity will be found on the monitoring trays.

We can turn our attention to the equipment we brought back from the apiaries in recent weeks. Some may have to be repaired or discarded. Anything that will be used next spring should be cleaned: The bent end of a hive tool works well to scrape wax and propolis off the wood; then the flame of a propane torch can be used to sanitize its surfaces, hive tools and the screens of hive bottoms. And let's not forget to remove the ashes and the tar build-up from the smoker. Being positive, we may also start to assemble new frames for next spring. All these tools and equipment will be ready when we need them.

Meanwhile, the call of the bees still draws us to the apiaries for occasional and peaceful fall walks. Somehow, it's a welcome change of pace. We make sure that the hives are safe and that branches cannot hit them when it's windy, as this would keep the bees agitated.

It's time to put a little honey on the Thanksgivings dinner table and to have a grateful thought for the bees and for all the good they accomplish.

In summary, this month:

- Complete the preparation of the colonies for winter early in the month.
- Raise hives off the ground, if they are not already on stands.
- Ensure that the hives are adequately ventilated (upper ventilation slot open).
- Reduce the hive entrances.
- Install mouse guards.
- Secure the hive tops against high winds.
- Install clean monitoring trays. From them, we will obtain important information about what is happening inside the hives during the next months without disturbing the bees.
- Inspect the exterior of the hives.
- Observe the flight paths.
- Clean and scorch tools and equipment.
- Store unused equipment to protect it from damage caused by wax moths, mice and the weather.
- Start building frames and other pieces of equipment for the next season.
- Review notes from the year.
- Look forward to next season.
- Enjoy some honey and be thankful for the bees.

Plant of the Month

by Randy Fox

Mexican sage (*Salvia Leucantha*)



Ornamental Mexican sage (*Salvia Leucantha*) produces tall spikes of brilliant purple flowers in late summer and Fall. The gray-green foliage remains evergreen in areas that don't experience frost, providing year-round interest. Mexican Sage is hardy to 15 degrees F and tolerates sun, light shade and little water equally well. Mexican sage grows in U.S. Department of Agriculture plant hardiness zones 8 through 10. Like most sage varieties, Mexican sage requires minimal care once established. It grows in well-drained soil and prefers all-day full sun, although it will tolerate some light afternoon shade.

Water Mexican sage about once weekly during dry weather, or when the top 2 inches of soil feels dry. Although drought tolerant, Mexican sage flowers best with regular irrigation that keeps the soil moist but not soggy.

Cut back the flower spikes after most of the blooms have wilted. Remove the spikes at their base where they emerge from the main plant. Frequent dead flower removal encourages continued flowering.

Trim back any overgrown stems throughout the summer growing season. Cut back these stems to the desired height. Shear back the entire plant by up to a third of its height if it becomes leggy.

Spread a 2 inch layer of mulch around the sage in late fall. Mulch protects the roots from winter chill.

Prune out any winter-killed stems in spring when growth resumes. The old dead stems protect the crown of the plant through winter. Mexican sage rarely experiences disease or insect problems in outdoor gardens. Powdery mildew can occur if the plants receives too much shade and poor air circulation. Mexican sage has low nutrient needs and doesn't require regular fertilization.

Calendar of Events

Meetings

Monday November 8, 2016

Santa Clara Valley Beekeepers Guild

6:15 pm

Dwell Christian Church San Jose

1292 Minnesota Ave San Jose CA 95125

<http://beeguild.org/>

Tuesday November 1, 2016

Gilroy Beekeepers Association

7:00 pm

Old City Hall, 7400 Monterey Rd.

Gilroy, Ca

<http://www.gilroybees.com>

Wednesday November 2, 2016

Santa Cruz Beekeepers Guild

6:30 pm

El Rio Mobile Home Park, 2120 N. Pacific Ave.

Santa Cruz, CA

<http://santacruzbees.com>

Thursday November 3, 2016

Beekeepers Guild of San Mateo

7:00 pm

Trinity Presbyterian Church

1106 Alameda de Pulgas

San Carlos, CA

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

Saturday November 5, 2016

Monterey Bay Beekeepers

8:00 am

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

Classes and Conferences

November 15-17: California State Beekeepers Association annual conference, San Diego, CA

<http://www.californiastatebeekeepers.com/events.html>

Jan 12: Mead Making Bootcamp. Info <http://honey.ucdavis.edu/events>

Jan 13 - 14: Beginner's Introduction to Mead Making. Info <http://honey.ucdavis.edu/events>

Jan 25: World of Honey - Honey Tasting (North America). Info <http://honey.ucdavis.edu/events>

May 5 - 6: California Honey Festival (Woodland, CA). Info <http://honey.ucdavis.edu/events>

May 7: 2017 Bee Symposium. Info <http://honey.ucdavis.edu/events>
