



The Diablo Bee

Newsletter of the Mount Diablo Beekeepers Association

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AUGUST 9, 2011

August Speaker

Our August guest Speaker will be Doug Vincent . He will be teaching the club how to make bees wax candles. Mr. Vincent owns Beekind. Beekind will be bringing props for demonstration and may have additional products for sale .

Mr. Vincent grew up in Marin. He worked with Safeway, owned a gas station for 5yrs and ended up at Mellow Motors for 19yrs. Mr Vincent says he moved to Sonoma to be with the love of his life, Katia, in 1998. Mr Vincent stated that he was introduced to bees in an effort to increase production of his garden in 1999. In 2004 he opened Beekind and began making candles for sale in 2006.

For more information on Beekind please see their website.

<http://www.beekind.com/>



MDBA Elections

It's time to start thinking about who will lead us next year. Please get to know the nominees listed below as each you will have the chance to vote for our new board at the September meeting.

If you would like to nominate someone, or volunteer to serve yourself, please contact Gary Lawrence who will filter names and suggestions,

Here is the August status of current board members:

Nominees for 2012 Board

For First Vice President (replacing Corey Wood)

Terry Holcomb

Dan Goemmel

Dylan Wort

For Treasurer (replacing Jay Todesco)

Stephanie Taube

Terry Holcomb

Seth Tator

For Vice President, Community Education (replacing Judy Casale)

Annie Bisbee

Nominations will remain open until the September general meeting. Contact Gary Lawrence with suggestions or questions.

MDBA Honey Extractors

Usage and Care of MDBA Extraction Equipment by Lois Kail

How exciting! You have gotten your first hive, the first sighting of the queen, the first brood frame and now – the first honey harvest. What do I do now?

An extractor (spinner) is basically a centrifuge that spins out the honey after the wax caps have been removed.

Because the extractor and associated tools are expensive, a lot of hobby beekeepers can't afford and/or justify the expense to own them for their 'honey house'. So MDBA has three extractors for member rentals. But also because it is expensive equipment some rules and guidelines are necessary for the continued smooth operation for the next member usage.

When transporting the extractor make certain that it doesn't 'roll around'. Damage to the motor mounts and honey gate valve will occur. It is best if the extractor can be moved in an upright position and strapped in. If laid on its side, be sure to have the gate valve 'on top' so that it isn't broken.

These extractors were not designed to be 'mobile' – but rather to be bolted to a cement floor in the honey house. Consequently compromises have been made – primarily one of stability. Although they are mounted on a wooden platform, it would be helpful if you have some cement block or heavy stones to put on the plywood. During extraction, leaning on the extractor is also beneficial (be careful of the plastic lid – it can't support much weight!).

Prepare each extractor to accommodate your size honey frames. The 6 medium frame radial extractor can be adapted to accept 3 deep frames while the 8 frame extractor needs to be adapted for medium frames (otherwise, it will take 4 deep frames). Connect the rheostats (speed controls) to the motors and you are ready to concentrate on preparing the honey frames.

The hot uncapping knife blade is used to slice off the wax caps that the bees have put over each individual honey cell. The blade is long enough to span the distance between the sides of the frame so let the blade 'ride' on the frame's sides as you remove the caps. Be aware that the hot uncapping knife doesn't have an 'off' switch other than to be unplugged. When plugged in, the blade is HOT and will uncap the honey beautifully but also can burn fingers that get in the way. It can also melt through the plastic uncapping tubs. So be cautious.

The uncapping tubs come with a wooden bar to fit across the top to balance a honey frame on so that you have your hands free to operate the hot knife and hold the frame. Let the cappings fall into the tub where the honey can drain to be added to your har-

Extractors Cont..

Let the cappings fall into the tub where the honey can drain to be added to your harvest. For the areas that the uncapping knife can't 'reach', use the scratcher fork to do that manually. Now you are ready to place the uncapped frame into the extractor.

It is best to have the 'top' of each frame placed towards the outside of the extractor. Please be aware of each frame and try frames opposite one the extractor basket the extraction will be better. When the extractor is full, closing the basket at a want to start at full out' the foundation of the force and honey spins out of crease the rotation warm, it should spin



the individual weight of to place like weight another. The better that is balanced, the better happen. When the extractor lid and begin spin-slow speed – you don't speed, you might 'blow from the frame because weight of the honey. As the frames, you can in-speeds. If your honey is out in 5 -8 minutes. A

quick way to check if honey is still spinning out is to take a flashlight and shine down the outside edge of the extractor interior (after returning to a low speed). If you see droplets of honey moving to the sides of the extractor, you need to have more extracting time. You will also know from the light weight of the frames when you take them out – if they are empty or not.

Don't let the level of honey in the extractor floor reach the bottom of the basket. It causes the motor to work 'too hard' and slows everything down. Open the gate valve at the bottom of the extractor and have it draining into your harvest container (usually a food grade five gallon bucket) as soon as the first frames are spinning.

When you are finished, clean all of the extraction equipment. Honey is very water soluble so rinsing with warm or cool water works nicely. You might have to scrap a bit of wax from the extractor basket but it won't take much effort. There is no need to take the extractor apart to clean it. In fact, please don't take the extractor apart – too many pieces get lost and broken that way.

Congratulations – your first honey harvest is done. Enjoy the sweetness and labor of your 'ladies'

Please see this [youtube vdeo](#) for a demonstration of extracting.

Rent an MDBA Spinner by calling either
Lois Kail at (925) 356-2602 or
Leo at 925-838-5600

Welcome to Bee Camp

By [Jessie Moniz](#)

<http://www.royalgazette.com/article/20110704/ISLAND/707049943>

If you are looking for a summer camp this summer with more of a buzz, have you thought of beekeeping?

This summer children between the ages of nine and 14 will have the opportunity to combine science, and the great outdoors while learning a traditional Bermuda skill, beekeeping. The camp, probably the first of its kind in Bermuda will be led by beekeeper and agriculturalist, Quincy Burgess at Randolph Furbert's Honey House in Bailey's Bay, on Fractious Street. This specialised one week summer beekeeping programme will feature a variety of beekeeping activities and outings to introduce and enhance children's knowledge of Bermuda beekeeping and their knowledge of bees.

"In addition to the myriad of support that the camp has received from the public, Greenrock supports the Bermuda Beekeeping Summer Camp as a sustainable project," said organiser Joanne Ball-Burgess. "Through interactive discovery opportunities the campers will learn the life cycle of a queen bee, which bees live in a colony and the structure of the hive. Children will also quickly learn that bees can land on you with no interest in stinging you."

Together campers will participate in building a hive, collecting honey from the beehive and learning how to keep a hive healthy in addition to other enjoyable learning opportunities. This one-of-a-kind summer experience will be an interactive one in which students become the beekeeping experts and will be equipped to start and manage their own hive upon completion of the camp.

"Sounds like fun?" said Mrs Ball-Burgess.

"Perhaps many adults will also want to sign yourselves up for camp. In addition to all of the fun experiences that will take place during the

camp week there are also life lessons that the bee can teach us.

"The practice of beekeeping also teaches children and teenagers the value of community and teamwork. When learning about the bee we quickly learn that a seemingly insignificant insect that has no apparent function in our busy schedules is responsible for almost all of the food that we eat and the flowers that we enjoy. Beekeeping teaches children and teens more than just how to be good beekeepers. It teaches all of us that no one is insignificant and that we all need each other."

She said that beekeeping teaches us so much more than just how to be good beekeepers. She thought it might be a benefit to all children from those who do well in the classroom to those who struggle, because it teaches science in real time.

"All of the senses are engaged when campers partake in the beekeeping experience," said Ms Burgess-Ball. "The sound of the bees buzzing, the sight of the geometric shape of the honey comb, the smell of the wax and the taste of the honey all combine to enhance learning and to nurture a child's love for the world around them."

The camp is being held from July 18 to 22 from 9am to 12.30pm. Drop off is between 8.30am and 8.45am. The cost is \$185 for non-members of the Bermuda Beekeeping Association and \$175 for members. For an application or for more information, contact Quincy Burgess at 537-7244 or send an e-mail to mangobonsai@yahoo.com.

About bee stings...

n Bee stings happen when bees feel that their hive is threatened.

n Only female bees sting.

n A bee sting can be annoying or painful but not dangerous if the person stung is not allergic to bees.

n In the event that a child is stung the parent will be contacted so that parents will be prepared to treat the sting area at home.

n Bee stings have been used for centuries to treat a number of ailments.

Bees Have Feelings Too!

by Eyder Peralta

www.npr.org

We all know that some animals seem to display emotions. If you've ever had a dog, for example, you can tell when they're feeling down and scientists have found that mammals and birds can exhibit pessimism.

But a new [study from the journal *Current Biology*](#) is extending that to invertebrates: It found that honeybees seem to become pessimists when they've been stressed. So, how, you ask, did scientists find this out? It's not like a honeybee could take a survey and pinpoint how it feels on a happiness scale.

The scientists explain that they trained the honeybees to expect good things (something sweet) from one smell and something bad (something bitter) from another smell. They then presented a neutral third scent and found that when they shook the beehives to simulate a predatory attack, those bees displayed "an increased expectation of bad outcomes." The scientists also found the bees had altered levels of "dopamine, octopamine, and serotonin" in the agitated bees.

[Wired explains](#) the study is significant because it's really the first one to find that inverte-

brates have feelings, too. One of the study's authors told them there are two readings of the study: Bees have feelings or pessimism — or cognitive bias — "is not a good measure of emotion."

Wired talked to an independent scientist who had this to say:

"The methodology is sound," said Lori Marino, an Emory University evolutionary neurobiologist who was not involved in the study. "I don't think it's a stretch to say that they are tapping into bee emotions. After all, every animal has to have emotions in order to learn and to make decisions. And we already know from many other studies that bees are really cognitively sophisticated."



Bees Have Feelings Too!

Dear California Beekeeper:

With the hire of a new honey bee scientist, the Laidlaw Bee Biology Facility at UC Davis is looking forward to reestablishing itself as a center for economically vital research on the honey bee. The current crisis in commercial beekeeping, centered on the various types of colony collapse, makes this particularly pressing. We would like to take this opportunity to ask for your participation in achieving our goals.

A poorly appreciated aspect of the problems we are facing is the sheer magnitude of the size of the population we must monitor. The honey bee population in California alone is hundreds of thousands of colonies. Factoring in the colonies that are brought in seasonally for pollination, this number soars well over a million. To date, studies have focused on a small number of colonies over a short time period. These are scientifically insufficient samples for us to really understand the nature of the problems we are facing. With such a large population, we need thousands of samples to get a decent idea of what is going on. Further, because pathogen levels naturally fluctuate with the season, we need several years of baseline data to get an idea of whether a particular pathogen level is high as part of a natural fluctuation, or whether it is indicative of an epidemic. In short, we currently do not have enough baseline data to say what pathogens are the best candidates for being major players in the current crises (either alone or in combination).

Your participation in a long term honey bee health monitoring project will begin to address these problems. In short, unlike some larger programs, this program will be focused on California alone and will therefore be more locally in-depth than a national study. We plan to track pathogen levels in random samples of bees from across the state for several years. We will also conduct additional tracking of samples from beekeepers with a history of high mortality in their bees. Altogether, this will involve two steps. First, we have attached a survey which we will

ask as many beekeepers as possible to fill out each year. Second, we will ask a smaller number of randomly selected participants to send in samples of their bees through the year for testing. This second part will include both the random samples from all beekeepers and those from operations experiencing high mortality in their bees.

Because of the generous support of beekeepers, Häagen-Dazs, and concerned citizens across the state, we currently have funding for this project for several years. We hope the results will lead to increased funding to continue the project. If successful, this will be the best data set yet on what is going on with our bees. Here at UC Davis, we are establishing several research projects (many focused on already known issues) to try to solve the most pressing apicultural problems, but we are hoping this California honey bee health monitoring project will be a center piece of our efforts.

Please signal your willingness to participate in this study by filling in the attached questionnaire and sending it to:

Brian R. Johnson

Assistant Professor of Entomology

Department of Entomology

1 Shields Ave

University of California, Davis

Davis, CA 95616

The survey can also be emailed to Brian Johnson (brnjohanson@ucdavis.edu).

We thank you for your participation and for reading this announcement.

Brian Johnson & Eric Mussen

Please download the questionnaire attached to the original newsletter email and return it to the above addresses.

Bee Spill

[ISLAND PARK, Idaho](#) — Cleanup crews have finished clearing honey and an estimated 14 million bees that got loose after a delivery truck overturned on an Idaho highway.

Authorities say the semi-truck was hauling the bees from California to North Dakota when the driver veered off the shoulder, tipping more than 400 hive boxes and honey.

Authorities [reportedly](#) began receiving 911 calls late Sunday afternoon.

Fremont County Sheriff deputies say several workers were stung during the first few hours of the cleanup Sunday.

[According to KPVI](#), officials had to spray fire foam on the truck and bees before responders could join the effort. The spill, which also unleashed a torrent of honey, [reportedly](#) required crews from numerous agencies.

Some observers told The Post-Register they saw a strange black cloud and heard a roaring noise above the spill area before realizing it was a massive swarm of bees.



BeeKeeper of the Year

Nominations are currently being taken for Beekeeper of the year. The beekeeper of the year is someone that has contributed to the MDBA in a special way.

The MDBA Bylaws state that the MDBA “may name a Member as a Beekeeper of the Year pursuant to procedures adopted from time to time by the Board of Directors. Beekeepers of the year shall be exempt from further payment of dues for their lifetime.”

Nomination forms for Beekeeper of the Year - 2011 will be available at the August and September meetings. Each member may name up to three beekeepers, and total nominations will be counted for the award to be made at the October barbecue, where all those nominated will be introduced.

Previous winners are not eligible:



August 2011 printablecalendars.resources2u.com

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13

Coming Events

MDBA Events

Next Meeting:

August 11, 2011
7:30 Heather Farms.

Other Events:

To submit events, [email us](#).

MINI BEE WORK DAY JULY 16

About 25 beekeepers arrived about 10:00 a.m. to help me work my hives. We located one queen (out of 3 hives) and marked her, and went through 7 other hives. We located no honey to extract. Why not? A wet and cold spring, and apparently my colonies were obsessed with raising brood and swarming. Perhaps I have too many hives? There are 12, including two in oak branches lying on the ground, and three in 5-frame nuc boxes that I use to stock demo hives. I have already extracted 39 frames of honey this year, but no extra production since June 10. However, there was opportunity for more hands-on beekeeping work than is possible at our spring bee work day in April. Rich Beckett described the day as Beekeeping 102, and the April day as Beekeeping 101. I will plan for another work day on Saturday, August 13 (after the August meeting). Perhaps there will even be some honey?

Got something to say?

Do you have an idea for an article? Do you have an article you would like to share? Send an email to:
mdbanews@gmail.com



Classifieds

I am interested in buying your extra wax, unprocessed, scrapings, broken comb. I will purchase your junk wax!

Email Terry

WA6KAH@aol.com

UNWANTED CAPPINGS?

Do you have unwanted cappings? I will melt and clean them for the beeswax.

Lois Kail, lkail@juno.com,
(925) 356-2602



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Hive bodies, frames, queen excluders, hive tools, clothing, smokers, and more...

[We buy used gear.](#)

Mike 925-808-1919

www.gandmhoney.com

Thriving hive split in July, Italian bees with young queen less than 1 year old. Bees and hive with 2 supers. \$150.00. Contact Ric Wright at [707-759-5907](tel:707-759-5907). Will deliver.

To add to the classified section please send an e-mail to mdbanews@gmail.com

Need a Bee Vacuum?
The MDBA has one available for members to rent.
\$5 rental for 2 days; \$10 per day thereafter until returned.
For more info call:
John Shoemaker at 925 808 9379 or

4 deep boxes, assembled and painted. 3 unused, 1 nearly so. Each has 10 new assembled frames WITHOUT foundation. \$30 each, \$110 for all 4

50 deep assembled frames without foundation, new and used. 50c apiece.

Jarl de Boer [\(925\) 934-4248](tel:925-934-4248) We will be away July 22-Aug 20. Several hived swarms will be available after we return.

Bee Suit Repairs?
Call or Email

Lois Kail

At

lkail@juno.com
(925) 356-2602



**Mount Diablo Beekeepers
Association**

2010 Board Members

- **President** - Brian Wort
- **First Vice President** - Corey Wood
- **Secretary** - Lois Kail
- **Treasurer** - Jay Todesco
- **VP, Community Education** - Judy Casale
- **VP, Member Education** - Sylvia Goemmel
- **VP, Membership** - Jan Spieth
- **VP, Newsletter** - Gabrielle Harrel

www.diablobees.org

Mt. Diablo Beekeepers Association (MDBA) is dedicated to [educating communities](#) about honeybees and the historic art of beekeeping.

The MDBA is one of the largest bee associations in the United States with members from around the world. The MDBA meets at 7:30 PM on the second Thursday of every month, except November and December, at Heather Farm Garden Center in Walnut Creek, California.

Each month, the MDBA presents a different speaker on a variety of topics and has an open forum for people to exchange ideas and helpful tips.

