



August 5, 2012

August Speaker

Mike Stephanos will be speaking on harvesting & extracting honey at this month's meeting. Mike is an East Bay native, mostly raised in Lafayette. Mike currently lives with his incredibly supportive wife, Michelle, and their daughter, Larkin, in Walnut Creek.

When Mike was young, he spent several years living in Greece and on his grandfather's farm where he first was exposed to honeybees. .

As an adult Mike purchased my first hive from Kurt Billeter for \$50 and joined the MDBA. From then on, he was mentored by many in our club and he wishes to thank all those that were patient in his early endeavors at beekeeping.

Mr. Stephanos's apiary grew rapidly and by the end of the first year, he had six hives. Year two, he went to ten or fifteen and has grown ever since. He is now a proud keeper of around 120 hives spread from Livermore to Martinez, east to Mt. Diablo and over the East Bay hills. Mike has decided to again grow this year and is not sure where it will end.

Mike was elected to MDBA Board this year as the Community Education VP. He has excelled in this position and we are thankful for all his hard work.

HONEY SAMPLING

Please bring honey from your hive to the August 9 meeting. We will arrange tables on the outside deck, with pretzels for dipping and sampling. There are sheets where you will print the beekeeper's name, when harvested, where harvested, and possible flowers. It is an opportunity to taste the different honeys of our incredible nectar area, and you can discuss with other beekeepers and write comments on the sheet for the beekeeper to take home. It is not a competition, just a sampling.

Inside this
issue:

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| MDBA Board | 2 |
| Better Bee-keeping | 3-5 |
| Ag Spray | 6 |
| Zombie Bees | 7 |
| Announcements | 9 |
| Classifieds | 10 |

Board Nominations

NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2013 MDBA BOARD

The following members in good standing have been nominated. At the August meeting, each of them will take a minute or so to say hello and tell why they want to serve on the board. Any others who wish to volunteer, or to name another person to serve, should contact Gary Lawrence or any current Board member, and then nominations will be closed, with the election at the September meeting.

President - Brian Wort

Vice President - Sylvia Goemmel

Secretary - Lois Kail

Treasurer - Stephanie Taube

VP, Community Education - Mike Stephanos

VP, Membership - Jan Spieth

VP, Member Education - Gabrielle Harrel

VP, Newsletter Editor - Deborah Walker

BEEKEEPER OF THE YEAR

Nomination sheets will be available at the August and September meetings. You can nominate up to three beekeepers, and the award will be presented at the October barbecue.

Better Beekeeping

by Terry Holcomb

The Big Picture - seeing the Past, Present and Future all at once

Once a beekeeper has acquired sufficient understanding of bee biology, when they examine a colony, they will be able to see all three tenses at once.

This knowledge is nothing more than what should be acquired to successfully manage your colonies.

It includes an understanding of subjects such as:

- The life cycle of workers, queens and drones
- The role of each caste
- Brood rearing
- Queen rearing
- Queen quality
- Swarming
- Foraging
- Hoarding
- Food sources, both quantity and quality
- Food consumption and Nutrition
- Diseases and Pests
- Weather, Temperature and Seasons

You must first understand how these factors affect each bee individually, then the colony itself. Much like the old adage that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The difference being that chains are a static material, but each individual bee is a living creature that is constantly changing.

After you have mastered the details of the above, it gets even more complicated as you

learn how each affects the other. Then, it becomes extremely complex, as each factor is constantly varying. The primary cause of failure by a beekeeper is not understanding these varying factors, and how to respond to each situation.

Examining a colony.

Before you even arrive at the apiary, you must start inputting and evaluating data mentally. This would include the current date, recent weather, historical performance in that particular location at that time, remembering the colony condition when last examined it and how long ago that was. This evaluation of the recent past gives an idea of what to expect upon examination.

Of times, the first thing I check on a colony is to observe the activity at the entrance, then lift the back of the hive to feel the weight. I can tell by feel what to expect when I open it up. In the spring, heavy means plentiful honey stored, maybe needing another super, maybe prepping to swarm, hopefully not already swarmed. Too heavy means I'm late and hopefully not "too late." A light weight always indicates that the situation will be poor, bad, ugly or beyond hope. I always hope it won't be worse than "poor."

The big picture finally comes into view when

Better Beekeeping by Terry Holcomb

you open the hive and enter the brood nest. I keep my colonies well organized with the queen in a single 10 frame deep box. As I remove supers, the number of bees in each gives me an idea of what the brood nest should look like. Boxes full of bees is a beautiful thing! In the brood nest I always first remove a frame from the side, being extremely careful to not crush or roll bees. Chances are best that the queen won't be on a side frame and killing your queen is the worst screw up there is. After removing a frame, I then break the frames and pull one out near the center. I look for eggs, give it a shake and look at nectar and pollen fall. While holding the frame, I then break the frames apart here and there, look down between and see how many have brood. Often, if there are queen cells, they will be seen too. This is the time when you will see Past, Present and Future.

The Past is seen by noting the following and comparing to what you saw at the last exam. Are there changes, or is it the same?

- Colony population
- Number of frames with brood, hatched/sealed queen cells (if any)
- Stored honey in supers, tops of brood frames and end frames of brood nest
- Stored pollen throughout the brood combs and in the side frames

The Present is shown by:

- Nectar and pollen shake out
- Activity at the entrance
- New eggs and/or queen cells
- Brood pattern
- Queen cell (if any) age and location on the combs - young, unsealed, sealed, hatching, hatched
- Diseased larvae, deformed adults, mites on brood or adults, or hopefully "lack of"!

The Future is revealed by the beekeeper's ability to factor observations of the past and present and knowing what is going to happen based thereon. The existing brood will hatch out into a known population size. If it was well nourished it will live a certain number of weeks at a certain time of year.

Brood patterns indicate the current quality of the queen and how she will perform in the future. The rate and quality of food coming into the colony will determine future rate of egg laying by the queen. Lack of a queen or a failing queen will be a huge setback to colony population and the future could be grim. Disease or pest populations will be observed and that will indicate the affect they will soon have. Weather and season will indicate future food supply, foraging activity, individual bee lifespan and brood rearing.

Better Beekeeping by Terry Holcomb

Altogether, these factors allow a beekeeper to see colony growth in Spring, honey hoarding in Summer, honeybee health in Fall and survival thru Winter.

A beekeeper must be constantly evaluating the past and present, and looking at the future. If you can see the Big Picture, the future will never be a surprise, you will always have the best chance at surviving whatever nature

throws at you and success will follow.
Terry Holcomb
T-H Apiaries



Bee Hives Attacked in Australia

From ABC News

Beekeepers on New South Wales' far south coast Australia say a poison attack has caused a major blow to their livelihoods. Police say 750 hives worth an estimated \$150,000 were sprayed with an unknown poison on three properties at Batemans Bay.

Police say most of the bees in the hives died in the attack, and the honey was also rendered inedible.

Beekeeper John Casey says more than 200 hives were destroyed on his land and the attack is a major blow to his livelihood.

"You have to start again. You have to make up new material and start from scratch again, or buy bees in," he said.

Mr Casey says the loss will affect production for at least a year.

"Heaps of dead bees out the front of the hives and all over the ground, and there's about nine bee farmers that have had bees destroyed by it," he said.

"We'll start in about five weeks time to go to Mildura and the almonds, which means a loss of income, and you've got to suffer the loss of income off the honey production then."

He says it appears a pesticide was used, but the state's Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) is carrying out tests on the land to confirm what poison was used.

Anyone with information is asked to call Batemans Bay Police Station or Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

Learning Impairment in Honey Bees Caused by Agricultural Spray Adjuvants

Published in PLoS ONE

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Background

Spray adjuvants are often applied to crops in conjunction with agricultural pesticides in order to boost the efficacy of the active ingredient(s). The adjuvants themselves are largely assumed to be biologically inert and are therefore subject to minimal scrutiny and toxicological testing by regulatory agencies. Honey bees are exposed to a wide array of pesticides as they conduct normal foraging operations, meaning that they are likely exposed to spray adjuvants as well. It was previously unknown whether these agrochemicals have any deleterious effects on honey bee behavior.

Methodology/Principal Findings

An improved, automated version of the proboscis extension reflex (PER) assay with a high degree of trial-to-trial reproducibility was used to measure the olfactory learning ability of honey bees treated orally with sublethal doses of the most widely used spray adjuvants on almonds in the Central Valley of California. Three different adjuvant classes (nonionic surfactants, crop oil concentrates, and organosilicone surfactants) were investigated in this study. Learning was impaired after ingestion of 20 μ g organosilicone surfactant, indicating harmful effects on honey bees caused by agrochemicals previously believed to be innocuous. Organosilicones were more active than the nonionic adjuvants, while the crop oil concentrates were inactive. Ingestion was required for the tested adjuvant to have an effect on learning, as exposure via antennal contact only induced no level of impairment.

Conclusions/Significance

A decrease in percent conditioned response after ingestion of organosilicone surfactants has been demonstrated here for the first time. Olfactory learning is important for foraging honey bees because it allows them to exploit the most productive floral resources in an area at any given time. Impairment of this learning ability may have serious implications for foraging efficiency at the colony level, as well as potentially many social interactions. Organosilicone spray adjuvants may therefore contribute to the ongoing global decline in honey bee health.

Read the entire paper at

<http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0040848>

Zombie Bee Hunters

By Megan Taros

For years, researchers and scientists have buzzed about trying to learn what has caused a sudden drop in the number of honeybees in many regions around the world.

After an accidental discovery of bees being “possessed” in a zombie-like way by a native fly species, professor John Hafernik of SF State and his team are launching a new website to look deeper into this discovery.

The “zombie fly,” known in latin as Apocephalus borealis fly, latches on to the bees and lays eggs in its abdomen.

Once the bee becomes parasitized, it lives for about a week before the fleshy little larvae push their way out of the creature’s thorax and head.

Before it goes out like a bad horror movie, however, the bee starts exhibiting strange behavior and acts, well, like a zombie. It moves in increasingly erratic circles and becomes drawn to bright lights.

To better understand just how widespread the zombie bee problem may be, zombeewatch.org calls for residents across the U.S. to keep a close eye out for bees surrounding lights and dead bees near such lights.

By collecting this data, Hafernik hopes to find out more about this potentially new phenomenon:

“We’re hoping to find out how widespread it is. We’ve done most of our work in the Bay Area, but this fly is common throughout North America. We want to figure out if it’s only happening here or throughout the nation.”

The website is being launched now because this is the time of year when many bees become parasitized. Bees are much more commonly infected around July and August in most places in the U.S., according to Hafernik.

In the Bay Area, peak parasitization season starts in September and runs until January.

ZomBee Watch is being launched now with an eye toward expanding the observations that the public could help contribute, according to Hafernik:

“We hope to expand the website for more specific purposes later. We want to encourage the people involved to become more specific with the information they are looking for and giving us. This is a project that will have legs and extend over a long period of time.”

Right now, ZomBee Watch hosts tutorials on how to identify so-called “zombees.” The site is seeking residents of the U.S. and Canada to participate in the project.

Honeybees are suspected of being increasingly targeted by the egg-laying fly due to dwindling numbers of bumblebees, a more common host for the fly, Hafernik said.

Hafernik said that by starting the project during peak seasons, it will boost the chances of finding infected bees and cultivate a group of dedicated individuals to keep sending in information:

“This is a pretty good time to start because people will have a good chance of finding (the bees), and if they find it, they will keep looking and become more involved in the project.”

More at SFBay: <http://sfbay.ca/2012/07/22/zombie-bee-hunters-needed/#ixzz21szBSsG6>

Bees at Rodgers-Smith Ranch

Jeff Blaney and Kurt Farry recently installed two beehives at Rodgers-Smith Ranch in Pleasant Hill. The MDBA plans to install two additional hives next spring. Jeff and Kurt will give demonstrations and instruction at the ranch from time to time.

INDIO, Calif. -- Killer bees have swarmed a gardener and homeowner in the Southern California desert, stinging them dozens of times.

The man and woman are hospitalized.

The gardener was stung 80 times, and the woman has more than 100 bee stings.

The Desert Sun of Palm Springs reports the gardener was trimming a palm tree outside an Indio home on Tuesday when he disturbed a hive of Africanized honey bees in the tree's trunk.

Firefighters called to the home found the pair on the ground covered with bees.

Bee populations peak in July, with colonies going from about 10,000 bees in the winter to as many as 45,000 bees.

Collage Workshop: Beeswax, Paper and Plaster

What: One day workshop

When: Saturday, September 22 from 10a.m. to 2p.m

Details: Using everything from handmade papers, prints, tissue paper, napkins and more, we will be fusing layers of papers together using beeswax for adhesion onto wood and plaster surfaces. For added flair we will mix in crayon, watercolors and oil pastels. One day workshop. Materials fee of \$45 includes everything you will need. The class fee is \$65 for Danville residents and \$78 for the rest of us.

Registration info at 925-314-3400 or www.danvillerecguide.com

Coming Events

MDBA Events

Next Meeting:

August 9, 2012
7:30 Heather Farms.

Other Events:

August 8, 2012
International Human Bee
In
To submit events, [email](#)
[us.](#)

Human Bee In

By: Jeremy Sharp jez@sonic.net

Did you know the International Human Bee In is scheduled for August 8, 2012? The plan is to have humans dress up like bees, swarm their local zoos, and do the waggle dance. It is a worldwide, self-organized flash mob. I hope you and your group can both participate and get the buzz out.

More information can be found at <http://www.facebook.com/events/219092001544192/> and pictures and videos of the event can be posted to our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/groups/humanbeein/>

We also put together this fun little video: <http://youtu.be/jBk7m1qQD4M>

Bee well, and thanks ever so for your efforts on bee-half of our little buzzing friends.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBk7m1qQD4M&feature=player_embedded

Classifieds

Nucs for Sale

Contact

Dan Goemmel at
kq6ar@astound.net

UNWANTED CAPPINGS?

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

Lois Kail, lois.kail@gmail.com,
(925) 356-2602



Smoker Fuel

5 large burlap bags for \$5
(6# of burlap). Held Starbucks coffee beans, from plant in Seattle. Available at the meeting. Email qty desired to Terry Holcomb at wa6kah@aol.com

Mentors Needed

If you would like to be a beekeeping mentor please contact Dan Goemmel at kq6ar@astound.net

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

Bees and Queens For Sale

2012 Mated and Laying Queens
\$30 picked up in WC
5 frame Nucs
Bees, brood and 2012 laying queens on 5 new frames in your boxes
\$100 picked up in WC
Terry Holcomb
T-H Apiaries
wa6kah@aol.com

G&M Honey

Bees and Bee Supplies
For Sale
text orders to
925-808-1919
or email to
orders@gandmhoney.com

Bee Suit Repairs?

Call or Email
Lois Kail
At
lois.kail@gmail.com
(925) 356-2602



Mount Diablo Beekeepers Association

2012 Board Members

- **President** – Brian Wort
- **First Vice President** – Dylan Wort
- **Secretary** – Lois Kail
- **Treasurer** – Stephanie Taube
- **VP, Community Education** – Mike Stephanos
- **VP, Member Education** – Sylvia Goemmel
- **VP, Membership** – Jan Spieth
- **VP, Newsletter** – Gabrielle Harrel

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.