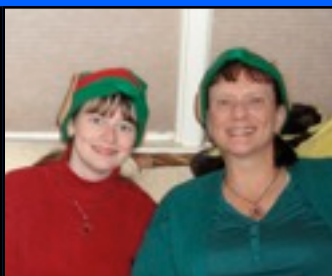




Susquehanna Beekeepers



<http://susquehannabeekeepers.com>

Jan-Feb, 2013, Volume 41

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Odds and Ends

**Susquehanna Beekeepers Association
C/O Md Co-op Extension Office
PO BOX 663, Forest Hill, MD. 21050**

Dennis Hertzog - President

dhzog@verizon.net

Harry Dutcher - Vice President

Claudia Hertzog - Secretary

Bob Crouse - Treasurer

Mike DeWald - Past President

John Knapstein - Past President

Jane Ports - Past Vice President

****Send newsletter and website**

inclusions to:

dhzog@verizon.net

President's Message: A number of important references to winter management and feeding practices are included in this issue! David Papke's excellent article on page 3 has some great practical information for insuring our bees will make it through the upcoming cold months. I'm not sure how soon 'old man winter' will lower the boom but be sure to check your bees if we get a few warmer days here and there.

If you missed the SBA holiday party, it was a good one!! Please note: Our Winter and Spring meetings are now scheduled for **the second Wednesday** of the month. The next three months will feature some excellent speakers so check your personal calendars against the listings on page 2. Finally, if you have not renewed your membership, please take a moment to send it in. The renewal form is on page 5 (as well as the SBA website).

In looking back, 2012 has been a pretty good year for the club, *mostly because of the willingness of our members to help each other.* I also cannot complain about my own bees, this past year's honey yield or the wealth of knowledge that I've absorbed from those willing to share. Let's hope that 2013 is as kind!!

- Dennis -

****SBA January Meeting****

Wednesday, January 9 at 7:00 pm

Forest Hill Extension Office

Speaker: Elizabeth Tracey

Topic: Apitherapy

Meetings and Events

- Jan 9 - **(Wednesday)** General SBA Meeting - 7:00 pm - Forest Hill Extension Office
Speaker: Elizabeth Tracey, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine - Apitherapy
- Feb 13 - **(Wednesday)** General SBA Meeting - 7:00 pm - Forest Hill Extension Office
Speaker: Cybil Preston, MD State Bee Inspector
- Mar 1, 8, 15, 22, Apr 5, 12, 13 - "SBA Short Course" - 7-9 pm except the Saturday session
Register through [HCC](#).
- Mar 13 - **(Wednesday)** General SBA Meeting - 7:00 pm - Forest Hill Extension Office
Speaker: Oliver Collins of Vienna, MD - Commercial Beekeeping
- Apr 10 - **(Wednesday)** General SBA Meeting - 7:00 pm - Forest Hill Extension Office
Agenda: "Town Hall Forum"
- May 8 - **(Wednesday)** General SBA Meeting - 7:00 pm - Forest Hill Extension Office
- June 12 - **(Wednesday)** General SBA Meeting - 7:00 pm - Forest Hill Extension Office
(*SBA Board of Directors meetings are scheduled for the first Wednesday of each month.)



NOTES From The Apiary January - by Robert Crouse

I took advantage of the 60 plus degree weather the first week of December and went through my hives. One of my four standard hives had died due to lack of stores. This was surprising because all of my bees were fed as much as they would take during November. This was a case of an experienced beekeeper not taking the time to check *inside* the hive and instead allowing the bees take care of themselves. For some reason they stopped taking sugar syrup and are now dead. All of my other hives are in great shape. Even my double high nucs have plenty of bees and the top box is full of stores.

Get into the hive and move the bees down to the bottom deep if necessary. This is usually done by switching the boxes with the most bees downward and rearranging the frames with stores back over the top of the cluster and leaving the empty frames from the bottom on each side of

the cluster. In my case the bees are fine and nothing needs moving.

Because our major central Maryland nectar flow occurs in May and June, responsible beekeeping begins in January or no later than February 1. Check your hives now to see if they need feeding. Thanks to the mild weather, you should be in good shape (unless like me, you have a hive that did not take early feed as expected). You may need to begin feeding 1:1 syrup by the end of February or early March for early build up of the colonies. If the bees are at the top of the hive now and it is too cold to open the hive, put a hive top feeder on now and feed 2:1 (that's 2 parts sugar to 1 part water by weight).

I ordered some frames and foundation from Pristine Valley Farms in mid-December to get ready for nuc replacement when I sell my current nucs and frames in the spring. Have you done an inventory of needed equipment? Winter is the time to assemble bee paraphernalia before the spring rush arrives and time suddenly gets scarce. (- *Continued on pg 3.*)

Notes continued -

Have a good holiday and I will see you at the January meeting. Remember that now is the time to renew your Susquehanna Beekeepers membership. The new membership form is in this newsletter and on the SBA website. Just fill it out and turn it in at the Jan. meeting or mail it with your check. Many thanks!! - Bob

2013 New Years "beekeeping" Resolutions

- *Don't lick honey from the uncapping knife when it's plugged in!*
- *Sample the mead only a few times/ day instead of all day long (remember to save for guests!)*
- *Stand up to the bees rather than allowing them to chase you back into the house!*
- *Always wear a veil!*
- *Switch from deeps to mediums (to save on chiropractor bills)*
- *Catching a "buzz" has nothing to do with capturing a "swarm".*
- *Avoid climbing higher than that top rung.*
- *Be sure the smoker is extinguished before placing in the back seat.*
- *Make sure bees are outside the veil before zipping.*
- *Always carry Benadryl, epipen and cell phone.*



Winter Insight - by David Papke

By the end of the bee season, I'm pretty well bee'd out. I've closely watched, worried, and wondered over 80 or so colonies since early March and by the time the first frost shuts down the flowering plants I'm ready for a little shut down time too. From mid-October to mid-February I turn my attention to other interests (and the many tasks I've neglected or put off while attending to the bees). But a beekeeper with colonies in the field never really stops being a beekeeper and anytime the winter weather allows, I want to be out checking colonies.

So it was on December 3rd and 4th – two days in the mid-60's, mostly sunny and calm and the bees were flying. Since early October I hadn't done much more than occasionally take a quick look at the entrances of the colonies in my homeyard (I also keep 5 or 6 outyards on farms where the winter access is good). Entrance observations can give beekeepers some useful information in the wintertime; first concern: Is the colony still alive! Are there bees coming and going? With a little experience it's not hard to recognize the behavior of the guard bees. There are usually many more guard bees at the entrance in the winter. They quickly move, surround and check out any bee coming in and will fight off any intruders, sometimes to their death. Notice the bees testing the defenses of a colony over and over. Be suspicious of colonies where there are no guard bees (or only a few) and bees seem to be freely and actively coming and going and the testing behavior seems to go unchallenged. This colony may be in the process of being robbed out. If it's not too late, reducing the entrance to a minimum and taping up any cracks in the boxes may suffice but the bees will remember this colony is vulnerable. Another sign of robbing at the entrance is unusual amounts of cappings or bits of wax (torn open by robbers inside), though a mouse chewing out a nest site in a quiet back corner may also look like this (mouse droppings usually give this away). On our warm days in December, I also observed at the entrance a few bees bringing in heavy loads of bright orange pollen – now where did that come from??? Here's a bee truism: If it's out there, they'll find it.

(Winter Insight continued...) Winter entrance observations are useful and it always lifts a beekeeper's spirit to see bees flying, but I'd also like to know how much honey is in the hive. Again, with a little experience, one can make a pretty good guess by lifting the back of the hive from the bottom board. It's obvious when the hive is full of honey - it's dead weight. It's also obvious when the hive has little or no honey - it's surprisingly light. If you keep several colonies, comparing and contrasting helps. I mark the light ones by turning the brick I have on top of each hive to help hold the lid down and to use as a kind of primitive notation system (lots of beekeepers do this). I did all this on the first of the two warm days we had; now I knew how many colonies needed emergency feeding and how many fondant patties I needed to make up. Any additional closer inspection I put off until tomorrow when I would be opening the outer cover and feeding them.

Why do we feed fondant and not sugar syrup in the late fall and winter and then switch back to sugar syrup in the early spring? To prepare colonies for winter, in the fall we feed a heavy sugar syrup which simulates honey (I mix a 25 pound bag of white sugar with two and a half gallons of hot tap water in a five-gallon bucket). The bees will store this in the comb like honey but they must first, like nectar, ingest the syrup to convert the sugar sucrose to glucose and to evaporate much of the water (remember true honey is 18% water). This takes time and the energy of an active colony to accomplish and once the cold weather sets in it's nearly impossible for a colony to do so. That's why it's best to feed sugar syrup to colonies in the late summer or early fall; that's the best time to build them up if you must feed your colonies. In the early spring colonies can be fed a thin/weak sugar syrup which simulates a nectar flow and stimulates the colony to raise brood. Fondant on the other hand is a dense sugar paste (actually commercial cake icing - do not use colored or flavored fondant!) and in an emergency the colony will use the sucrose directly to stave off starvation. I don't like to feed it to colonies except when I'm convinced the colony will starve without it. Honey is obviously the best feed at any time if you can spare it. I roll out a two pound blob of fondant between two pieces of wax paper along with a little honey, Honey-B-Healthy, and Nozevit into a flat patty about 12-14 inches in diameter. I feed it to colonies by cutting the patty in half down the middle and placing the halves on either side of the hole on the top of the inner cover. In most cases a colony low on stores will cluster just below this hole; otherwise, I put it on the top bars touching the cluster. I leave the wax paper on. The bees have no trouble chewing it up and it helps keep the fondant from running down between the combs or from drying out.

Out of 80 colonies, I fed 13 on December 4. I wish it had been fewer. It's still early in the winter and I will need to keep a close eye on these colonies in particular (that's when the bricks help), continuing to emergency feed as need be until the first early nectars become abundant. December 5 was cloudy and 45 degrees - back to winter. Who knows when the next break in the cold weather will come. Meanwhile, I'll check the 10-day forecasts. I have a dozen or so fondant patties ready to go. I can now get back to all that other stuff I'm supposed to be doing. Maybe I'll get around to cleaning up some old equipment and honey supers - in February! - *David*

Susquehanna Beekeepers Association Membership Form 2013

(Please print plainly)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

**Newsletters and SBA updates are sent via email.

Partner's Name (optional): _____

I am a new member.

Please list my contact information in the SBA membership directory.
(Directory is available to SBA members ONLY).

or

I do not want my information listed in the SBA membership directory.

1. How many colonies do you have? _____

2. How many years have you had bees? _____

3. Are you interested in mentoring a new beekeeper? _____

Comments/Suggestions:

**Membership for 2013 is still \$8.00/ person payable to:

Susquehanna Beekeepers Association.

Please mail completed form and check to:

**John Kovac, SBA Treasurer
2425 Dixie Lane
Forest Hill, MD 21050-1616**

Sorry, we are not set up for
online submissions,
PayPal or credit cards.

Claudia's Corner

*Therefore doth heaven divide
The state of man in divers functions,
Setting endeavor in continual motion;
To which is fixed as an aim or butt
Obedience; for so work the honeybees,
Creatures that by a rule in nature teach
The act of order to a peopled kingdom.
They have a king, and officers of sorts,
Where some like magistrates correct at home,
Others like merchants venture trade abroad,
Others like soldiers armed in their stings
Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds,
Which pillage they with merry march bring home
To the tent-royal of their emperor,
Who, busied in his majesties, surveys
The singing masons building roofs of gold,
The civil citizens kneading up the honey,
The poor mechanic porters crowding in
Their heavy burdens at his narrow gate,
The sad-eyed justice with his surly hum
Delivering o'er to executors pale
The lazy yawning drone.*

~ William Shakespeare, The Life of King Henry the Fifth (Canterbury at 1, ii)

"ODDS and ENDS"

- [Bee Stings Could Be New Botox](#)
- [Bee Concern over Hive Havoc](#)
- [Insecticide Regulators Ignoring Risk to Bees, say MPs](#)

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

- **Bob Crouse:**
Notes From The Apiary
- **David Papke**
Winter Insight
- **Claudia Hertzog:**
Claudia's Corner, Colors
- **Dennis Hertzog:**
the usual stuff...
- **Thanks to all for the**
New Years resolutions!

