

President's Message

I hope we have received our annual snowfall in the January blizzard and our bees will be flying soon. So far, they seem to be having a good winter but, the warmer temperatures in December and early January brought activity and consumption of winter stores. Make sure you check your hives for adequate stores and put on emergency feed if needed.

There are several ways to winter feed. Using fondant is convenient but, not readily available to everyone. I prepare sugar cake for feeding. Bob Crouse provides a sugar cake recipe in the Notes From The Apiary on page 2. For added convenience I wrap the cake in paper, slit the top and bottom and place on the frames above the cluster.

If you need bees this spring the SBA Bee Supplier List will be available for SBA members. The list includes suppliers of packages, nucs, and queens. As usual, it is best to reserve your purchase as-soon-as-possible.

The winter months are a good time to attend beekeeping meetings and conferences. The Maryland State Beekeepers Association (MSBA) is holding their winter meeting on 13 February at the Howard County

Fairgrounds. In addition to several speakers, beekeeping supply vendors will be attending <http://www.mdbeekeepers.org/index.html>

The Chester County Beekeepers Association (CCBA) is holding their 2016 Beekeeping Conference at West Chester University on 12 March. For information and registration see <http://www.chescobees.org/>

The Beekeeping Short Course is being offered through Harford Community College (HCC). The 6 week long course starts 4 March. If you had previously taken the course through HCC and are a current SBA member you can attend session(s) as a refresher without charge. For additional information see http://ww2.harford.edu/CMS/schedule/U_noncrweb_search.asp (search for "beekeeping").

The SBA 2016 membership drive is open. Our goal is to get members joined by April. See the SBA Treasurer, Pat Endres, at the meetings to pay dues.

If you have a few seasons of beekeeping under your veil please consider being a mentor to a new beekeeper. Being a mentor can involve a few phone calls to answer questions or regular hive checks. It is up to the mentor-mentee to decide the level of help needed. To assist in identifying mentors a Google map will be provided with location and contact information.

The SBA Board of Directors has approved establishing and funding several new projects for 2016. A budget overview and details on some of the projects will be provided at the 10 February meeting.

See you at the meetings!

Harry

Upcoming Events

10 Feb 2016 SBA Meeting, new SBA projects for 2016

13 Feb 2016 MSBA Winter Meeting, Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD

March-April 2016 Beekeeping Short Course at Harford Comm College

9 March 2016 SBA Meeting speaker- Dennis vanEnglesdorp

12 March 2016 2016 Beekeeping Conference at West Chester University, PA



**NOTES FROM THE
APIARY**

FEBRUARY

by Robert Crouse

I usually open the Hives and look around in January but with so many mild temperature days I felt that the bees could break cluster enough to get to the stores. I plan of making some sugar cake to place on to the Hives as soon as I can dig out the snow to get to the Hives. This is just to be on the safe side as I knew that with the cold weather it was unlikely that the bees would be out and about. My bees got through last winter with stores left over so the feeding I had done in January had been unnecessary.

I went on line to find out what was used to make Fondant and I don't believe I will try using it again. The recipe for Fondant starts with marshmallows and corn syrup. I believe eggs whites are used to make marshmallows and flour is used as a coating. Anyway, I found a recipe for sugar cake that is even easier than the sugar candy especially as there is no cooking involved.

You could use a sugar cake recipe provided by Pristine Valley Farms. It is 8 pounds of sugar, 1 ½ cups of hot water, 1/2 tablespoon white vinegar, mix well and pat into the feeder frames. I added about 4 oz. of honey before filling the measure cup with water to encourage the bees to feed.

I hope that you will take advantage of any nice warm days we may have in February to check out your bees. If it is below 50 degrees I would not go down into the Hives. This was a good time to replenish the sugar in the top feeders. Also, as my feeders are already on the hives I will carry the sugar out to the hives on cookie sheets. Of course the soft cakes may break up a bit as when placed into the feeders but I am sure that those small bits of sugar cake that fell down into the hive will be consumed.

As our central Maryland major nectar flow occurs in May and June, this means that responsible beekeeping begins in late January or early February. Now is the time to do your equipment inventory and order the foundation etc. that you need for the new season that will start in 3 months. By April you should be concentrating on cleaning out the hives, reversing brood boxes,

feeding and doing early season medications as needed.

Check out the Bee sources and prices for this spring I believe you will be seeing some shocking price increases. I would advise if you plan on bee purchases this year that you get your orders in NOW.



Seed program updates

by Jane Kuhl

Susquehanna Beekeepers Association now has two seed initiatives in process – “free seed swap” and “bulk purchase and resale of mixed annuals seeds”.

The free seed swap initiative

Seeds have been collected and/or donated by club members for free distribution to other club members.

In addition, SBA has approved funds for bulk purchase of borage, mignonette, sweet marjoram, and viper’s bugloss seeds that will be divided into small packets for free distribution to members. These 4 species were chosen because they are easy to grow from seed, have a high nectar and pollination value over an extended blooming period, but are not suitable for inclusion in a seed mix.

We began distributing seeds in baggies with accompanying planting instructions at our November 2015 meeting and plan to have them available at future meetings. See one of the volunteer seed coordinators - Jane Kuhl, Drew Denton or Suzi Walsh set up at a side table at future SBA meetings to obtain your free packets of seeds.

Our current seed stash also includes: common milkweed

sunflower (*Tithonia*), Spider flower (*Cleome hassleriana*), Chaste tree or Vitex (*Vitex agnus castus* and *Vitex negundo*), bee-bee tree (Korean *Evodia*), and vegetable seeds for Amish squash (*Curcubita moschata*), and loofah (*Luffa aegyptiaca*).

If you attended the November 2015 meeting featuring guest speaker Jeremy Barnes you will recall the lively conversation about the importance of avoiding plants and seeds treated with neonicotinoids. After the meeting at the seed sharing table I received a great question from a club member: “Is it a good idea for us to be collecting and sharing seeds from plants which have been treated with neonicotinoids or from plants for which we do not know whether or not they were ever treated with neonicotinoids, as we may be unwittingly spreading the pesticide?”

To get an expert’s answer to this question I contacted Dr. Reed Johnson, Assistant Professor at The Ohio State University Bee Lab via email. Dr. Johnson’s areas of expertise include apiculture, pollinator toxicology and genomics. Dr. Johnson’s reply to the question was reassuring: “I wouldn’t worry about seeds or perennials from parents that were treated .

There is a big dilution effect that occurs over the growth of the plant that will reduce any neonicotinoid in seeds grown from treated plants down to negligible levels. There is decent evidence that plants from big box stores that were treated with neonicotinoids very early in their growth have low levels by the time they are sold. The potential for problems occurs when garden center plants are treated in the greenhouse just before they are shipped for sale – then you can get very high levels in flower.

Remember, “The Dose Makes The Poison”. Low doses can genuinely be safe for bees and produce no effect while high doses can cause toxic effects. What “low” and “high” mean is an area of active research, but I think it is safe to say that levels in plants grown from seed from treated plants will be in the “low” category.

Check out The Ohio State University’s Bee Lab website <http://u.osu.edu/beelab/> . It is an excellent resource and includes some wonderful webinars on many bee-related topics including bee foraging and bee nutrition.



The Fifty-Two Most Important People in Your Bee Club for 2016 by Joe Lewis

The foundation of any great beekeeping club is in getting great support from the volunteer members! With great volunteers, the officers and board of the local club can then guide, support and leverage the enthusiasm of its members rather than assume every task that comes down the pike. Getting each member fired up and excited about doing their part is easy when one is aware of **individual members'** interests and skills. The analogy comes to mind of a pastor who learned each church member's capabilities (by being truly interested in each person) and then asking each one to do something for the group. He leveraged each person's individual passion and natural abilities. If you have a leadership role in your local club or just want to get your club jump-started, figure out what talents your members have as well as what excites them.

Jeremy Barnes from York County Beekeepers has an interesting analogy. He says the President or Chairperson is sort of like the queen bee in a colony. leaves a pheromone to let everyone know she is present and active, and she lays eggs constantly (i.e. providing ideas, motivations, acknowledgements.)

and active, and she lays eggs constantly (i.e. providing ideas, motivations, acknowledgments) and this creates an environment in which each of the worker bees (members) can do their respective tasks!

So remember leadership can come not just from the top but from all levels of an organization. No matter where you are in experience or knowledge, you could spearhead a particular project or find someone who could.

What follows are suggestions and a general outline for 52 possible roles for volunteerism within a beekeeping club, at least one for every week of the beekeeping year, jobs that everybody can find something to get excited about. Note: A chairperson should always be paired with an assistant chairperson because a single point of failure must never exist in any good system! If the chair is sick or too busy, then the assistant or deputy steps up and takes charge.

Here are the **"Fifty-Two Most Important People in Your Bee Club for 2016"**! Feel free to copy this list, add to it, and share it. Then knowing a person's interests, squeeze their elbow gently, look them directly in the eyes and ask them to do one of these jobs. Each of these activities can be seen in action within local bee clubs --- great bee clubs!

Greeters- Two people are always at the front door before each meeting to welcome attendees, introduce new folks, and show them the coffee pot, snacks & the name tag table (very important!)

Membership Committee Chairperson - Encouraging new members as well as searching out past members. Most clubs have a fairly high turnover rate. Keeping members past three years is a challenge so going back over old member lists and reaching out to past members is an idea.

Party Planner – Chairperson Hospitality and Social Committee. I was once in a flying club where the leaders believed the club was about the three Fs: Flying, Food and Fellowship. Food and Fellowship are important factors in any volunteer club. Members want to learn and be entertained, but they also enjoy eating and seeing their friends!

Club Librarian and Periodicals Coordinator (with books & hard copies of monthly journals) – Books are loaned out for one month with the understanding (and signed acknowledgement) that they will be returned at the next meeting. Members who pass on or who lose interest can donate their books to the library. Amazon Used Books has great deals on beek books ... sometimes at a lot less cost.

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52 Most Important People continued Education:

NuBees Group Leader – for absolute beginners. Makes themselves available 30 minutes before each monthly meeting in a sidebar session to answer all questions.

Beeginers Group Leader/Mentor (“The BeeGees”) – One club has over 80 members in this group and within their sub-group they regularly trade emails, hints and tips. The group arranges its own lectures and Beginner ‘Hive Crawls’ to visit apiaries and inspect hives.

Introduction to Beekeeping Teacher - A Half-Day Fall Introduction Course offered through the local county extension agent or community college for a small fee.

Short Course Instructor - The Local Beekeeping Short Course could be re-named Beekeeping 101 especially when offered through the local community college as a non-credit course.

Intermediate Beekeeping 201 Instructor – A course for folks that have kept bees for 1 to 3 years – includes a review of material in the short course material, but geared to beekeepers that have more experience and want to dig deeper. Many beekeepers want more than what is offered in the beginners short course, but don’t know where or how to get it.

Master Beekeeper Program Coordinator - in the absence of a statewide beekeeper program, a club could develop their own Master Program for advanced bee studies.

Training and Education Coordinator – To lead a statewide effort like the standardized beekeepers training program developed by Billy Davis, Pat Haskell and the Northern Virginia Beekeeping Teaching Consortium.

Beekeeping Annual Conference Coordinator - To plan a full day conference a year in advance with a top name speaker or two.

Grants:

Young Beekeeper Grant – Scholarship Committee - One Maryland club has been quite successful in offering grants, education and mentorship to potential young beekeepers to help get each started. A hidden benefit is in also getting parents to become active members!

Legislative:

Legislative Affairs Coordinator – To organize support for bee and pollinator friendly legislation.

Beekeepers Association Coordinator – Liaison officer to county, state, regional and national beekeeping associations to help support their activities, publicize and take advantage of their opportunities (including Beek Associations

associations like EAS,HAS, & WAS). The club may need to provide minimal funds to join to regional and national organizations. (What is the purpose of your club? If it is to support beekeeping, and the club has the money, why not spend some of it?) Some clubs have tens of thousands of dollars sitting in CDs and bank deposits. Get this money to work instead of sitting on it! Make a donation to your state or regional association.

Hive Production:

Queen Cell Production Coordinator - To help people re-queen their hives with queen cells using some brood in an upper box above the queen excluder. Select lines of survivor stock are used to graft queen larvae and the queen cells are delivered to members for \$5 each. Chester County Beekeepers created and distributed over 150 cells to their members in 2015!

Nucleus Colony Production Committee Chairperson – Many clubs are gravitating toward the promotion of local nucs over packages.

Bee Friendly Plants:

Plant and Tree Nursery Coordinator – The green thumb guy for bee friendly plants and trees - The Greeks had a saying, “It is a wise society whose members plant trees under whose shade they may never rest.” We should say, “It is a wise bee club

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52 Most Important People

continued

whose members plant bee friendly trees --- that may be enjoyed by the bees of future beekeepers.”

Some clubs make volume purchases of trees and provide them to members either for free or for a small fee. One club received a grant from a local agency and purchased linden trees. Some (SBA) provide bee bee (Korean evodia) trees to members for free.

Seed Sharing Coordinator - One club makes bulk (10 lb.) purchases of seeds from Applewood Seeds for distribution to its members. Another has seed exchange nights at club meetings.

Collective Purchasing Coordinator – Getting buyers together to make discounted group purchases – Sometimes this job is delegated to the Vice President but anybody can take charge of this simple committee and pass around a clipboard with a sign up list --- “I want to buy **X**, quantity **Y**, and I need it by **Z**”. Volume buying gets cheaper prices & lower shipping costs. Sometimes shipping is free when the order is over \$100 (Mann-Lake) or \$150 (Kelley).

Woodworking and Equipment:

Woodshop Construction and Build Coordinator – Woodworking hobbyists could set up their table saws to create a production line to create a production line to cut wood purchased in bulk.

Woodenware Dipping and Preservation Chair - An Annual Dipping Party at someone’s farm. Dipping woodenware in a 50-50 mix of boiled linseed oil and paint thinner is a great way to preserve bee boxes, tops and bottom boards. One Pennsylvania club sponsors a late summer dipping party for members to soak wooden parts in its heated liquid beeswax & paraffin.

Loaner Equipment Coordinator - To keep track of the club extractor, electric hot knife, etc. and schedule their use during peak season.

Varroa Control and Other Activities:

Oxalic Acid Dribble Blast Leader – An annual December liquid treatment. About the middle of December one club mixes up a batch solution of pure 3.2 % Oxalic Acid. Then they go from apiary to apiary demonstrating this easy procedure of the dribble. Members contribute \$1 for their share of OA and this amount can treat up to 30 hives!

Varroa Coordinator - Someone to coordinate all of results of the alcohol and sugar roll tests done by local beekeepers, plot the growth (or otherwise) of varroa, and encourage everyone to keep on testing. Chester County designates the “Varroa Czar” to lead this.

Sentinel Apiary Coordinator (and Bee Informed Partnership BIP - Liaison) -

The Sentinel Apiary project was started in 2015 at the Van Engelsdorp Bee Lab at the University of Maryland and enrolls clubs to monitor, sample and report on eight colonies. An electronic hive scale monitors the weight & data is transferred to a smart phone by Bluetooth, then uploaded to a central server by cell phone data transfer. You can see SBA’s own hive scale data at: <http://bipscaleportal.herokuapp.com/hives/132>. The main nectar flow in Aberdeen in 2015 was from May 7th to June 2nd. The major fall flow was from August 24th until September 12th.

Public Outreach:

Fairs, Festivals, First Fridays & Parades (F4P) Outreach and Honey Sales Committee - First prize in the 4th of July Parade rewarded one bee club with \$500!

Fair Entry Training Committee Chairperson – For training and information sharing to help people understand honey and hive products judging standards and fair entry procedures. Also to coordinate club member’s fair submissions. A good person is a current or past honey judge.

Beekeeping Flea Market Coordinator – To sell or trade that extra beekeeping equipment.

Small Groups Coordinator – To organize groups based on special interests & common goals - Mead making is one example.

Schools Coordinator - Someone to coordinate and promote presentations to schools.

Presentations Coordinator - to receive requests for talks/demos about bees and make certain everyone in the club who wants to gets a chance to participate.

Miscellaneous:

Hive Crawl Leader – To organize a day of visits to several apiary sites and check hives. Members convoy from site to site. Practical demonstrations are arranged for queen rearing, marking queens, Demaree swarm control methods, etc.

Field Studies Director (weekend field trips) – A convoy of vehicles with members sharing rides head off to a bee destination, then have lunch or dinner at a restaurant or diner (or McDonalds) before returning home.

Bees-On-Vacation (BOV) Coordinator – To organize a truck or trailer load of bees to be moved to Florida, South Texas, or Arizona for the winter and bring them back in the spring. This task is perfect for a snowbird beekeeper who is going south for the winter anyway and can watch over the bees for a few months.

Communications Leader - someone who is constantly in communication with all of the members via e-mail, circulating new ideas, new achievements, projects, etc.

Program Coordinator - to coordinate the monthly meetings. (This could be an officer, but anyone could do this.)

Finally: The Yet-to-Be-Named Committee that **YOU** want to Lead.

(just write your proposed project name here)

Note to Club President: One of your most important jobs is to recognize these many fine volunteers, sing their praises for their work, and give them an opportunity to advertise their activities.

Author' Note: The actual number of people on the "Most Important" list might not be 52, in fact with assistant chairpersons, the number could be much higher. So do your part and get involved! Special thanks to Roger Williams at Central Maryland Beekeepers (Baltimore County, MD), Harry Dutcher and Dennis Hertzog at Susquehanna Beekeepers (Harford and Cecil Counties, MD), Coral Glosser and Jeremy Barnes at York County Beekeepers (PA), Keith Jardine and Walt Talunas at Chester County Beekeepers (PA), and Jim Pinkerton at Lancaster County Beekeepers Society (PA).