

Susquehanna Beekeeper's Association

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President's Message

The calendar may tell us that summer is just beginning, but for our honey bees the party is just about over. The major nectar flow is coming to a close. Based on the number and weight of my supers it has been a good year. When the bees finish capping the honey I will be ready for extracting. Now is the time to practice sustainable beekeeping and split the stronger hives into a couple of nucs.

Joe Lewis and I have two months of testing for the University of Maryland Sentinel Hive project under our belt. Bee samples are tested for varroa and nosema, and pollen samples are measured for type and quantity. The first month's data show a range of results for the eight hives tested. The hive scale continuously monitors the weight of one

hive. The results are dramatic during the nectar flow. We will be making the project results available to SBA members.



Although the SBA doesn't have monthly meetings in July and August, there are several events scheduled to keep SBA

members busy. See the SBA Calendar of Events on the SBA website at <http://www.susquehannabeekeepers.com/>. Email reminders with location and details will be sent to members. If you have bee related topics you would like to see offered or host contact me.

Have a great summer!

-Harry

Notes from the Traynor's Talks

SUBMITTED BY JOE LEWIS, RITA KRYGLIK,
AND DENNIS HERTZOG



*“Bees can detoxify
some toxins in their
environment.”*

Michael and Kirsten Traynor spoke at the Susquehanna Beekeepers Association meeting on Wednesday June 10, 2015 and made two very interesting presentations during the evening, one on bee problems (pesticides, fungicides, varroa mites, etc) and one on honey. Much of the information presented was stimulating and thought provoking. They covered lot of material and as a result, we did not get to ask lots of questions. However, a few SBA members collected their notes from the evening and recorded some points summarized below.

The Traynors suggest that each of us should question what we are being told in beekeeping. For example, the original study that said it takes the equivalent of 7 pounds of honey to make one pound of wax may have been flawed, and the actual equivalent amount may be much less. Additional techniques and procedures that could be questioned include the need for multiple sizes of supers (boxes). They keep bees in only one size box (mediums), making all their equipment

interchangeable. They believe multiple sizes of boxes are counterproductive.

Bees can detoxify some toxins (e.g., pesticides) in their environment. One or two chemicals may not harm the bees initially; however, multiple chemicals can form interactions that can impair bees' immune system and allow viruses spread by varroa to further weaken beehives. Lower pesticide levels are correlated with higher winter survival rates. Fungicides are not water-soluble so they do not break down like some pesticides. Fungicides are also linked to bee losses.

Beeswax is porous; this permeable quality allows chemicals and odors to penetrate wax cappings on the comb, which could impair the honey. This is an important reason to not use the mite strips (chemicals) when honey is on the hive. Beeswax in the hive acts as a filter for contaminates. This is a function like that of the liver in the human body. The best way to remove contaminates is to remove the old wax, melt it down and make candles out of it! Brood comb (in particular old black brood comb)



should be replaced regularly. One way to do this would be moving the aged, black brood comb above an excluder until all the brood hatches, then discard the comb. Additionally, drawing comb is a basic need for young bees and is good for them. The Traynors suggested replacing about one-third of the comb every year. If possible, wax for painting on plastic foundation should only come from uncappings. The Traynors are strong believers that no foreign substances should be introduced into the hive. This goes as well for honey harvesting chemicals like Bee Go, Fischer's Bee Quick, etc.

Varroa control needs to be a community effort or a group effort as the lack of attention by neighboring beekeepers will negatively impact your bees. When a colony fails, the mites can transfer over to other hives by hitching a ride with drones or robber bees. Varroa control can be facilitated by breaking the brood cycle; one way to accomplish that is to make nucs. You can practice the removal of drone brood comb to help control varroa, but they do not recommend freezing the drone brood and putting it back in the hive. (Would you want a bunch of dead larva in your house?)

Kristen describes honey as nature's first sweetener. It is a global commodity worth over \$2 billion annually. Honey is a complex supersaturated sugar solution containing enzymes, flavonoids, aromatic esters, minerals, vitamins, and amino acids. Sometimes honey can contain minute amounts of caffeine and the bees really like that. Flavor (taste) and smell (aroma) are completely different components of honey. Honey with glucose sugars higher than 32% will crystallize sooner than others. Honey from tree blossoms tends to have a higher fructose content and therefore are much slower to crystallize.

An extremely heavy nectar flow may result in a lower enzyme content in the honey. This is due to the bees rushing to fill the cells as quickly as possible and the amount of enzymes they are able to produce is spread into larger volumes of nectar. Bees store nectar in a honey sac which has a one-way valves to prevent stomach contents from entering the nectar. The term "honey stomach" may be incorrect for this nectar-collecting reservoir. A worker honeybee can pass some nectar into the actual stomach if needed for energy and nourishment, but this would be a very small amount. Mainly, the nectar is passed back out to receiver/processor bees that continue to add enzymes and evaporate the moisture.

Unfortunately we Americans have become a "clover intolerant" and "weed intolerant" society. This has resulted in less forage for our bees. Supplementing the hive with food throughout the slow pollen and nectar periods helps keep bees healthy and strong.



Bee by-products such as propolis are being used to kill HIV and flu viruses. There are many medicinal uses for honey. When doctors encounter anti-biotic resistant organisms, sometimes the only solution is to apply honey. Some honeys have increased medical value due to their stronger properties. One of these honeys is Manuka honey. "Medically certified" honey commands a very high price. Details of the properties and uses of honeys are outlined in Kirsten's 2011 book, "Two Million Blossoms, Discovering the Medicinal Benefits of Honey".



“The opportunities to improve our beekeeping skills are out there.”

Educational Opportunities

I generally put little value into mission statements because talk seldom results in measurable results. However, in looking at opportunities to improve personal beekeeping skills, our organization has been doing a pretty terrific job in promoting education! Here’s the short list of what has or is about to take place just this spring and summer.

BY DENNIS HERTZOG

Hertzog, Suzette Jackson and others

Honey Extraction Workshop with Harry Dutcher and John Kovac

Fair Entry Preparation and Working with Wax with John Knapstein and Suzette Jackson

Apiary Management with Bob Crouse

SBA Summer Picnic - The perfect opportunity to talk bees with those who know

Intro to Beekeeping (this Fall) – John Knapstien

Beekeeping Short Course – Cybil Preston, State Apiary Inspector

Working Our Hives - Hands-On with David Papke

Two full-day Nuc-Making workshops - Joe Lewis and Dennis Hertzog

Queen Grafting Workshop with Steve Repasky (see pg. 777 in the July 2015 *American Bee Journal* for more background on Steve)– full day

Excellent regional speakers at SBA meetings

Many Honeybee and Pollination talks at local schools, libraries, etc. – Dennis and Claudia

It is quite satisfying as Past-President to see these things happening. But if you are wondering when and where all these events are taking place, the simple answer is to come to meetings, check the website, read newsletters, and make sure you are getting regular SBA email updates. The opportunities to improve our beekeeping skills are out there. We only need to take advantage.

Alan's Bees: An Update from a Young Beekeeper Grant Winner

My mom and I are working together keeping the beehive. We received our bee package on April 11. Mr. Hertzog came over and helped us put our bees in the hive. We kept the queen in her box for three days to make sure the bees took to the queen, which they did take to her.

The queen is very busy at work laying brood increasing the bee numbers. We put the second box on the hive the third week in May and we have spotted the queen at work several

BY ALAN QUINN

times. We had a bit of an ant problem but we used a simple, everyday solution: Vaseline on the base of the hive stand.

We will continue to observe the bees' behavior to ensure that the bees are having no problems and growing in numbers. I enjoy going into the hive and seeing their progress.

I look forward to many years of beekeeping.

Shout-out to Sparks Elementary 2nd Grade!

Thanks to everyone in Sparks Elementary 2nd grade for being such wonderful listeners and asking great questions about honey bees! I'm so glad you all enjoyed the observation hive. I hope you all have a *bee*-utiful summer!



Cheers,
Rita

Looking for a place to keep bees?

A small farm in Northern Harford County is being offered as a possible place to keep bees. There are fruit trees and a kitchen garden on the property. If interested, please contact joanna.dallam@hcps.org.

Claudia's Corner

"We are drawn to honeybees for many reasons, but their social behavior is particularly riveting. We, and honeybees, represent two pinnacles of sociality among the earth's creatures, and we can learn much about ourselves by observing them."

Mark L. Winston- Bee Time

Notes from the Apiary: April



"I should get several good queen cells on those frames."

BY ROBERT CROUSE

April, May, and June have been quite the months for swarming and queen rearing. My drone laying hive righted itself and I made several splits. I made several more splits off of the splits as the bees started making numerous queen cells. Not a bad problem to have, lots of queen cells when you are trying for hive increases. I will just have to keep a check and remove extra cells to prevent swarming. I may even be able to provide queen cells to other beekeepers.

I was able to provide queen cells and brood frame to Ed Yoder to help with nuc building. I also purchased several Varroa Sensitive Hygienic (VSH) queens from Log Cabin Bee Farm in Hellam, PA. I usually like to requeen after the nectar flow but problems like I have this spring changes things. So now I have two \$35 each queens in introduction frames purchased from Pristine Valley Farms inserted in Hive #1 and #4. I removed the virgin queens from those hives as well as two frames with bees and placed them into Nucs and set them aside on another hive stand. If all goes well the virgin queens will take their mating flights next week and my new VSH queens will be released in two or three days and start laying. Nice when things go according to plans for a change!

I had been asked by local

beekeepers if I could supply them with my VSH queen cells for their own hive increases. I went into my most populous hive and removed the queen and 4 frames of bees and brood making up another nuc. Now I have what is called a "Cell Builder Hive" or swarm hive. Lots of bees, no queen. I placed three frames that had eggs in them, from my other hives, right in the middle of the top box. I should get several good queen cells on those frames. I will be able to complete the nuc that I want and have queens available by the end of this month.

Just in case I have left over queens I purchased a "Baby Nuc" from Pristine Valley. I will be able to store 3 separate queens in it as well using it as a mating Nuc. Opened the Cell Builder Hive on the 27th in the rain to get Queen Cells. Just beekeepers luck, all of the queens' cells were destroyed. I suspect that the bees made a queen cell from the parent queen that emerged earlier and that new queen killed all of the queens I was trying to produce.

Give Pristine Valley Farms, our own Mike DeWald, a call and he can help with your needs (www.PristineValleyFarms.com, 410-679-9235).

Reminders, Odds and Ends

- Contact Pam or Rita Kryglik if you have any interest in volunteering to decorate a bee-themed float for the Bel Air 4th of July Parade (susquehannabeekeepers@gmail.com).
- Submit your Apiary Products and Baking with Honey entries on 5 Jul for judging at the Mason-Dixon Fair.
- Volunteer at the Mason-Dixon Fair! The fair is held in Delta, PA 6-11 July 15. The SBA will be staffing a beekeeping display in the home and garden tent. Volunteers are needed nightly and on Saturday; no experience is needed and fair passes are provided. Please email susquehannabeekeepers@gmail.com if interested.
- Complete the “Maryland Honeybee Health Survey” at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MDBeeSurvey>.
- Attend Bob Crouse’s Apiary Demonstration at 10 am on 18 Jul.
- The Cecil County Fair is having a Children's Day on 27 July, 2015. The children will be given a goodie bag filled with fun agriculture facts. The SBA is donating an educational handout and honey stick for each bag.
- Attend the honey extraction demonstration at 10 am on 8 Aug.
- Volunteer at the Harford County Farm Fair! The fair is held in BelAir, MD 30 July - 2 Aug 15. The SBA will be staffing a beekeeping display and giving demonstrations in the Artisan Village tent. Volunteers are needed each day. Fair passes are provided. Please email susquehannabee-keepers@gmail.com if interested.
- Join us at 6.30 pm 12 Aug at Friends Park Pavilion, Forest Hill for good food and good company at SBA’s annual picnic!
- Volunteer at the Steppingstone Farm Museum Fall Harvest and Craft Festival 26-27 Sep.

SBA Logo for Clothing

Did you know SBA has a logo and you can get it embroidered on hats, t-shirts, polo-shirts, and sweat-shirts? The logo is on file with Marywood Embroidery, Bel Air. Call Ben at 410-838-3160 to place an order.



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