



Susquehanna Beekeepers



<http://susquehannabeekeepers.com>

March-April, 2013, Volume 42

In This Issue:

- SBA Contact Information Pg. 1***
- President's Ramblings***
- Meetings and Events Pg. 2***
- Notes From The Apiary***
- Odds and Ends PG. 3***
- Packages, Nucs, Queens***
- Claudia's Corner Pg. 5***
- In Support of Plastic Pg. 6***
- Membership and Mentors Pg. 7***
- Newsletter Contributors***

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President's Ramblings: Last year, some of our local maples were blooming as early as the second week in February yielding both new pollen and nectar for our bees. This year, the same trees were just beginning to flower on Feb 25 (third pic above). A few more warmer days will be necessary for these trees to reach full bloom. This, however, is a good sign that the cold weather may finally be retreating.

We continue to have some excellent and timely presentations at our monthly meetings. New speakers are scheduled for March, May and June. April will feature our "Town Hall Forum", a great opportunity to network, ask questions and get answers from some of our most experienced beekeepers. As usual, page 2 has a list of upcoming meetings, speakers, dates and times.

As our "Short Course" commences, we welcome all area beekeepers as well as friends to become active SBA members. Also, congratulations to our two SBA "Young Beekeeper" grant recipients, Micayla and Laura! But we wish all of our new beekeepers many years of success!

John Kovac has compiled a list of local bee suppliers. Many thanks, John! Lastly, I will be putting together the 2013 SBA Membership Directory and Mentor list soon. If you have not yet renewed your membership or have a question regarding your current status, email: johnkovac@verizon.net. ...Cheers all!!

****SBA March Meeting**
Wednesday, March 13 at 7:00 pm
Forest Hill Extension Office
Speaker: Oliver Collins
Topic: Commercial Beekeeping**

Meetings and Events

- Mar 1, 8, 15, 22, Apr 5, 12, 13 - "SBA Short Course" - 7-9 pm except the Saturday session
Register through [Harford Community College](#).
- 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" - Ask questions/get answers from some of our most experienced local beekeepers.
- May 8 - **(Wednesday)** General SBA Meeting - 7:00 pm - Forest Hill Extension Office
Speaker: Bart Smith, ARS Bee Lab - Small Hive Beetle
- June 12 - **(Wednesday)** General SBA Meeting - 7:00 pm - Forest Hill Extension Office
Tentative Speaker: William Sprenkle from Log Cabin Bee Farm - Raising Queens



NOTES From The Apiary March - by Robert Crouse

Do you remember the really cold week we had back in late January? Well, when the nighttime temps are in the teens and the daytime temps don't get out of the 20s, it is really hard on the bees. That is when I remember being asked by a beekeeper if they should insulate their hives and I responded by saying it was usually not needed here in Maryland. Oh well, and then it did not help that the weeks before the freeze had been in the 50s which probably stimulated the Queen's to start laying. So of course it was a relief to see bees flying from all of my hives two weeks later when it again got back into the 50s.

Help your bees by clearing the entrance of dead bees (even if you don't take the time to lift the brood box like I do). I suggest reaching into the entrance opening with a small stick or the end of a hive tool to pull out the dead bees. I had one nuc that had an abundance of dead bees on the bottom board. Cleaning them out helps prevent disease and conserves energy that the bees would have had to expend doing the job.

If you get into your hives and find the bees have moved up into the top box, plan to do hive manipulations to get the bees back into the bottom box (by mid-March) with food frames back over the top of the cluster. Don't split the cluster by reversing with half of the bees in each box!!! You could move the frames with bees down from the top box to the sides of the frames with the cluster on them in the bottom box. Do this only if there is no brood or eggs in the comb. Replace these frames with full frames over the top of the cluster and leave the empty frames on the outside edges of the box. Of course you have to wait for the temps to be in the 60's for this kind of work. Until the weather breaks, just feed at the top with fondant sugar.

Now is the time to do your equipment inventory, order hardware, foundation, etc. for the new season. February and March are the "get ready" months in the beekeepers year. By April you should be concentrating on cleaning out the hives, reversing brood boxes, feeding and doing early season medications as needed. You don't want any medications in the hives for at least 3 weeks before the main nectar flow if you want to consume honey.

(Continued next page)

(Notes continued...)

If you plan on getting packages this year, place your order NOW! My order (placed back on February 1) is for a pair of VSH mated Queens this year. I have not purchased hybrid queens now since 2007 but if anyone else is interested in this type of queen, email me as I am picking them up at Log Cabin Bee Farm in PA when they become available.

See logcabinbeefarm.com.

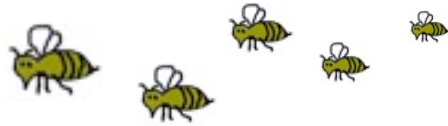
“ODDS and ENDS”

- From Bob Crouse: [Ohio State Beekeepers Association](#) includes an excellent web-based training program (*this beekeeping link has also been posted to our website*).

Congratulations!!

to this year's recipients of the SBA's "Young Beekeeper Grant"!!

As part of this grant, both Micayla and Laura, will receive hardware for a full hive to keep their own bees! Updates to follow...



Packages, Nucs and Queens - compiled by John Kovac

The following pages contain prices of packages, nucs and mated queens. While I am certain I missed some suppliers, I think I included most that are close by. It is highly recommend that folks order early to ensure guaranteed delivery and the best delivery dates. Most suppliers require a deposit well before the order date. The delivery dates are subject to Mother Nature and can change at the last minute. Also note that nucs may be available from some suppliers into July. As always, call for specifics.

In my humble opinion, nucs offer some key advantages over packages. With a package, one has to wait 3 days to release the queen, another 3 to 5 days for her to start laying and another 21 days before new bees begin to emerge. There are reports that the number of bees in packages can dwindle to less than half. Nucs have a laying queen with brood in various stages of development that are better situated to “take off” to catch the honey flow. Of course, the better chance of success with a nuc is offset by a higher price.

Reports are that the quality of the queens in some packages from the South has been less than ideal. A number of local seasoned beekeepers have reported that southern packages come with a high rate of queens that supersede and that these colonies do not overwinter well. These beekeepers are of the opinion that locally raised queens are hardier than southern raised queens. However, no data collection and analysis has been done to verify these observations as far as I know.

To minimize this issue I've heard some beekeepers in PA buy southern packages but re-queen in July with a northern hardy bee. The advantage of this approach is they usually get a limited amount of honey in the summer, the new replacement queen is young and the bees going into winter are proven hardy. Dennis conducted a 'bee loss' survey two years back but it would be interesting for the club to collect some hard data in order to verify these opinions. ...John

2013 Bee Suppliers for Harford County, MD and the Surrounding Area

****Packages:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Italian</u>	<u>Russian</u>	<u>Lbs.</u>	<u>Pick-up</u>	<u>Order by</u>	<u>Comment</u>	<u>Ph#</u>
Bees by the Bay	Essex, MD	76	79	3	4/7	3/21	(running out order early)	410-391-5709
		88.50	91.50	4	4/7			
Bjorn Apiaries	Lewisberry, PA	90		3	3/30	3/29		717-938-0444
MD Honey Inc.	Gaithersburg, MD	90		3	(2nd wk in Apr)	3/19	(Carniolan also available)	301-518-9678
Miller	Baltimore, MD	80	83	3	4/6	4/4		410-335-3424
		92	95	4	4/6			
Snyder	White Hall, MD	82	85	3	3/30 and	(order 10 days before pickup)		410-329-6671
		94.50	97.50	4	4/15			

****Nucs:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Italian</u>	<u>Russian</u>	<u>Pick-up</u>	<u>Order by</u>	<u>Ph#</u>
Bees by the Bay	Essex, MD	125 (medium 5 frame)		5/20	4/30	410-391-5709
		135 (deep 5 frame)		5/20	4/30	
Bjorn Apiaries	Lewisberry, PA		100	(early June)	(call for availability)	717-938-0444
		5 frame deep or medium Russian/Carniolan combo				
Harford Honey	Bel Air, MD	135		May	3/15	410-638-8024
		125		May	3/15	
		(deep 5 fr) (medium 5 fr)				
MD Honey Inc.	Gaithersburg, MD	140		(mid Apr to mid May)	3/19	301-518-9678
		5 frame deep or medium Carniolan queen				
Pristine Valley	Joppa, MD		135	mid May	(call to order)	410-679-9235
		(5 frame deep in cardboard box) 125 - (in buyer's box)				
Snyder	White Hall, MD	110	110	May	4/15	410-329-6671
		(4 frame deep)				

****Queens:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Variety</u>	<u>Available</u>	<u>Comment</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Bees by the Bay	Essex, MD	25	Italian	late May	mated	410-391-5709
		25	Russian		open-mated	
Bjorn Apiaries	Lewisberry, PA	25	Russian/ Carniolan combo	early June	local stock	717-938-0444
Harford Honey	Bel Air, MD	30	Buckfast Italian Carniolan Russian	April-June		410-638-8024
Log Cabin	Hellam, PA	35	Italian	end of June		717-668-2488
	Pol-Line' Hygienic Queens w/ VSH (Varroa sensitive hygienic behavior)					
Snyder	White Hall, MD	20	Italian	3/30 and 4/15		410-329-6671
		22	Russian	3/30 and 4/15		

Your editor does not guarantee typing accuracy...

Claudia's Corner

Give and Take...

For to the bee a flower is a fountain
of life

And to the flower a bee is a
messenger of love

And to both, bee and flower,

the giving and the receiving is a
need and an ecstasy.

Kahil Gibran (1883-1931)



*Local Maple bloom and new pollen...
Both pics taken by your editor on
2/27/13*



In Support of Plastic – by Dennis Hertzog

Much has been written the past few years about the negatives of using plastic in beehives. So it is with considerable risk of ridicule and becoming ostracized by some of my old school beekeeping colleagues that I offer a different perspective and outline just a few merits and tips associated with the use of solid plastic frames.



First, there is one absolute “must” when using this product. Solid plastic frames just do not come with enough of a wax coating for the bees to want to draw comb directly on the frames. I discovered this during my first year, my first month, *my first week* of having bees. It seemed I spent more time scraping burr and brace than my bees did in building good comb. But since those early days, I’ve developed a very easy frame preparation system. My recommendation is to have a few blocks of beeswax on hand. Melt some wax (over low heat using a double broiler pan) until liquid. Using a 3-inch foam brush, paint a few swipes of wax on both sides of each frame. Be liberal in applying a complete coating. I have found that the bees will readily take to these wax-painted frames without hesitation and build beautiful comb!! In subsequent honey harvest years, wax cappings can be melted and used to paint additional frames.



Burr on Unpainted frame

Speaking of the honey harvest, we are typical hobbyists and only own a small two-frame extractor with grandchildren and the neighborhood youngsters serving as our essential hand-crank laborers. With plastic frames, these eager kids can crank as fast as they want without fear of damaging those heavy honey-laden combs. Natural wax frames would surely collapse under this amount of pressure. After a few seasons, plastic frames can simply be scraped, cleaned, recoated with wax and used again. That might be pretty hard to do with natural wax frames.

Here’s a useful technique for getting bees to build fresh comb on wax painted frames in a new honey super. During the early nectar flow, move a frame or two of brood above the queen excluder but make sure the queen is not on one of those frames!! Bees will immediately move into the honey super to tend the brood and subsequently begin combing out and filling adjacent frames. Once the brood has emerged, those original frames will also be filled with nectar.

I can only reiterate that I’ve had excellent success with plastic frames by first painting each frame with beeswax. Frame choice is certainly personal as there are pros and cons to using wood, plastic or in combination. And the argument concerning the use of any product that does not get reused/recycled is absolutely valid. But there may also be some logic in being able to use the same group of frames indefinitely. The reader can be the judge.

Bottom line: Bees will build beautiful comb on plastic frames if the frames first have a good coating of wax.



Membership/ Mentor Notice

If you have not done so, please renew your membership by April 1. Your editor will be putting together the 2013 SBA directory to be emailed to all members in good standing. If you wish to be a mentor for a newer beekeeper or need a mentor, please email dhzog@verizon.net. Your membership must be up to date to have a directory listing or request a mentor. Membership renewal forms can be found at: <http://susquehannabeekeepers.com/styled-6/files/page6-2013-membership-application.pdf>

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

- *Bob Crouse:*
Notes From The Apiary
- *John Kovac:*
Bee Suppliers 2013
- *Claudia Hertzog:*
Claudia's Corner, Colors
- *Dennis Hertzog:*
the usual stuff...
- *All the best to our new beekeepers!!*

