



Susquehanna Beekeepers



<http://susquehannabeekeepers.com>

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President's Ramblings: The SBA is plunging head first into a new endeavor that should be lots of fun! *We are submitting an application to enter a float in Bel Air's 4th of July parade!!* If grandparents, husbands, wives, kids or grandkids would like to dress up as honeybees, our SBA parade committee has the resources. We just need additional bodies. Come and join us!! ...More on pg 4.

You may find some useful and timely information in this month's "Odds and Ends" section. Many thanks to Ted Moran, Joe Lewis, Jolene Muckerman, Claudia, my friend, Pete and others for submitting these links!

Whether it's the cooler, temperatures or additional factors, my hives seem to be building up slower this spring ...or maybe I'm just remembering last year's early season. Nonetheless, it's time to add honey supers. If you have strong colonies, consider making splits as we cannot assume our hives will overwinter and come out strong every spring. To that thought, our June SBA meeting topic is "Raising Queens". But we'll also see you next week on May 8 for the latest on small hive beetle. ...Dennis

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****SBA May Meeting****

Wednesday, May 8 at 7:00 pm

Forest Hill Extension Office

Speaker: Bart Smith (ARS Bee Lab)

Topic - Small Hive Beetle

****SBA June Meeting****

Wednesday, June 12 at 7:00 pm

Forest Hill Extension Office

Speaker: William Sprenkle

Topic: Raising Queens

SBA-Related Meetings and Events

- **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**
Speaker: William Sprenkle from Log Cabin Bee Farm - Raising Queens
- **July 4 - (Thursday) SBA Float: 4th of July Parade - Volunteers needed!**
- **July 8-13 - Mason Dixon Fair - Volunteers needed!**
- **July 25-28 - Harford County Farm Fair - Volunteers needed!**
- **Aug 14 - (Wednesday) SBA Picnic - Details to follow!**
- **Sept 8 - Hayes House - Volunteers needed!**
- **Sept 28-29 - Steppingstone Fall Harvest and Craft Festival - Volunteers needed!**
- **Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec - General SBA Meetings - Dates and agendas TBA**



NOTES From The Apiary *by Robert Crouse* **Part 1**

Now let's discuss a problem I have in my Apiary. A tower hive is where two hives are placed together with a single super centered over the top with a queen excluder under the super so the two queens remain separated. This allows bees from two hives to store honey in one area, a good strategy for comb honey production. Last fall one of my tower hive queens failed in Oct. so of course the hive collapsed. Because it was a tower hive with bees from both hives mingling, I did not notice until it was too late. I have volunteered to participate in a tower hive study for 2013 so now I need to quickly produce another hive. I could use one of the nucs that I overwintered but these are promised to other folks. I could use one of my other two hives but to do that, I would have to move a hive at least 2 miles away for a week before bring it back and placing it in the new location. I have two new queens on order but don't expect them until sometime in June. *How would you solve this dilemma?* I will outline my plan in Part 3.

Part 2

By now you should have been into your hives checking on their overall condition and have reversed hive bodies so the brood is in the bottom deep and the honey frames are above so that the bees can easily get to them. As pollen is abundantly available now, you have been feeding 1 to 1 syrup to promote early brood build up. At least this year has not been unseasonably warm like the last two years. All five of my hives are doing well to date. You do have all of your equipment ready and repaired/painted. Right?

A reminder to folks that have stored your drawn comb over the winter: Remember the wax moth crystals that you put with the frames? Those frames should be aired out for 2 or 3 weeks before you put them back on to the hives. The odor of the crystals probably won't harm your bees but they will be slow about getting to work in those frames. How would you like to spend a week in a closet containing mothballs?

If any of you are planning to do chunk or round section comb honey this year and would like suggestions on what works, you are welcome to ask me. Believe me, everything is not always explained in the bee books.

Notes continued...

Now, more on hive reversing: Regardless of whether you are using two deep bodies or three medium bodies for wintering colonies, the upper half of the colony should have been all capped honey in November and the lower area contained some brood, some capped honey, and the cluster of bees. As the winter progressed, the cluster slowly moved upward (never sideways) and by February/March, the cluster should be in the upper box and leaving the bottom hive body totally empty of anything except possibly the frames on the outside edges.

In April, brood rearing is well underway, honey stores are being rapidly used, dandelion nectar is appearing, pollen is available, winter bees are dying, and young bees are becoming more numerous. Yet in spite of all this activity, if you haven't reversed your boxes you will have empty cell space in the bottom brood box because the bees *refuse* to go down during those chilly months. And if they run out of queen laying space in that upper brood box, they will swarm.

How often or when do you reverse? Reversing is dependent on colony strength, location, the queen's fecundity, race, average temperature, and possibly other variables. When you find the upper brood box well filled with brood, bees, queen, and food, and the lower brood box mostly empty or only *old capped brood*, it is time to reverse! *Be careful* not to split the brood if open brood cells are present in both upper and lower boxes. Sometimes you may need to reverse more than once, as it is possible that reversing may be started as early as late January. You could just place an empty brood box on top of the existing brood box rather than doing the reverse but then the bees will have to travel through the empty box below to access the active portion of the hive.

Part 3

It's now almost May and the bees are expanding the brood area and consuming the leftover stores. I used 1 to 1 syrup to make sure that the queen was laying at the end of March

and have now removed the feeders. Light syrup is a substitute for a nectar flow and that, along with warmer weather, gets the queens busy.

For you *New Bees* out there, here are some thoughts: You want to feed your bees as long as they will take the sugar syrup. When the nectar flow starts the bees will stop taking syrup. You should then remove the syrup as warm weather can cause the syrup to grow mold or go bad. Start feeding again when the nectar flow has stopped. This is usually after the tulip poplar bloom is over. Hey, you didn't know that as a beekeeper you would have to learn about tree cycles too!

If you have been lucky enough to get both of your brood boxes foundation drawn and have started on a super using syrup, that is good. But to get honey and only honey in your super, you will need to set out the super away from the hive so that the bees can rob out any stored syrup in the comb. Then when the nectar flow starts, return the super to the hive with the queen excluder under it to keep "Her Majesty" out. You don't want larva in your honey super as it makes quite a mess at extraction time. If you don't have a queen excluder yet, give Pristine Valley Farms (our own Rosealee Miller) a call. She can help with your hardware needs (nilsplat@verizon.net, 410-679-9235).

Now did any of you try to answer the question I presented in Part 1? How am I going to get another hive started without a cash outlay or wait for bees from 'down south' to get here? Well, one of my hives is increasing very well and the queen has been laying drones. So now I know that I will soon be able to raise my own queens if I choose. Therefore, I will remove frames of brood with nurse bees, open cells of brood and eggs and place them into a hive box where I want the new hive to be. I will be sure that a frame of pollen and stores are placed on each side of the brood frames. These new queens will likely not be ready until the first of June. I will do this split by the first of May if the weather and the buildup of the bees continues to improve. ...*Bob*

“ODDS and ENDS”

- [Nanoparticles Loaded with Bee Venom Kill HIV](#)
- [Plants Give Bees a Caffeine Buzz](#)
- [Bee Deaths from CCD on the Rise as Researchers Point to Pesticides](#)
- [Bee-ing Smart - Activist's Distinguishing Bad Dreams from Good Evidence](#)
- [Dennis vanEngelsdorp: A Plea for Bees](#)
- [Honeybees at Risk of Extinction? Or, a Lot of Buzz About Nothing?](#)
- [What Happened to the Bees this Spring?](#)
- [The Future: Pesticides and Fungicides](#)

Susquehanna Beekeepers 4TH of July Parade Float

The club's effort to enter a float in the Bel Air 4th of July parade is progressing nicely. A committee meeting to pull together a plan was hosted by Dennis and Claudia on April 23. While a complete design of the float has not been finalized, the committee's plan currently includes having someone dressed as a "queen bee", various items related to beekeeping (honey extractor, a hive and honey containers), large flowers, large bees and a stuffed bear next to a bee hive on the float. Walking next to the float would be various folks dressed up in bee costumes (we already have access to costumes!) and two people in actual bee suits with smokers. "Flight of the Bumble Bee" will be our theme music to be broadcast from the float. Preceding the float will be a club banner carried by two people. Just envision how much fun this can be!!

Our next step is to submit an application to the Bel Air Independence Day Committee, Inc. Once we get an "ok" we will need your help to build and of course, man the float. The Eller family has gracefully volunteered the use of their truck and 16-foot flat bed trailer. Please contact me at (410) 879 4401 or johnkovac@verizon.net if you would like to volunteer. This is a great way to advance the agenda of the our Association and have a good time doing it!!

John Kovac



The Economics of CCD and Neonicotinoids - by John Kovac

In the March-Apr edition of VegNews there was an excellent article about the potential of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) to damage the agricultural economy if it continues or accelerates. Independent researchers have calculated that CCD is now accounting for somewhere around 30% of average year losses for beekeepers. The disease has spread to Asia, Europe and South America. Around 90% of the world food supply is derived from just 100 crops and 71 of them are pollinated by honey bees. Native pollinators included bumblebees, bats and hummingbirds are also dying off. Insects and animals pollinate around 1 out of every 3 bites of food people eat. As a result, if CCD is not reversed we can expect to see the availability of many plant based foods decline and prices increase.

Research has indicated that CCD is a complex interaction of multiple factors. Pollution, genetically modified crops, poor nutrition, parasites, monocultures and migratory beekeeping have all been associated with CCD in some way. Lately another factor has been isolated. A new class of agricultural insecticides called neonicotinoids is being used on more than 140 crops. The systemic pesticide is applied directly to the seeds allowing the roots to absorb the chemical to every part of the plant. The chemical residue remains in the soil for years and a dose as small as one part per TRILLION is enough to harm a honeybee. The EPA has not restricted the use of this chemical in any meaningful way. As a result 88 million acres of crops in the US are planted with this pesticide.

CCD has impacted beekeeping to a larger extent than most people realize. There are half as many beekeepers and 25% fewer honeybee colonies than there were in 1990. Driving this reduction is increase loss of bee colonies year after year. It has been reported the total cost to replace a lost colony is now around \$150. The costs of packages and nucs have increased faster than inflation over the last several years. Maintenance cost has almost doubled from \$55 to \$135 per hive since CCD started.

There are some signs of progress being made. France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia have banned all neonicotinoids and saw some honeybee population's increase. Several US senators have urged the EPA to ban these chemicals. The public is becoming aware of the loss of the honeybee and this particular insecticide. Organic beekeepers are reporting their hives are not sustaining as many losses on average. Clearly we must closely monitor the situation and take action to support what is in our best interest as beekeepers, consumers and stewards of the earth.

REDNER'S Save-A-Tape Program

Bob Crouse has a request for anyone that shops at the Redner's Warehouse Markets: If you use a Pump Perks card at Redner's please send to me all of your register tapes from your shopping. Redner's will rebate 1 % for the taped total to qualified non-profit organizations. I am going to submit the tapes to get a rebate sent in for MSBA, and who knows, some day, the SBA may also qualify. Just give them to me at one of the general meetings or mail them to me. Thanks!!Robert Crouse, 1606 Dogwood Lane, Bel Air, MD 21015

Claudia's Corner

What do you suppose?

A bee sat on my nose

Then what do you think?

He gave me a wink

And said, "I beg your pardon

I thought you were a garden."

English Rhyme

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

- *Bob Crouse:*
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- *John Kovac:*
July 4th Parade,
Economics of CCD and
Neonicotinoids
- *Claudia Hertzog:*
Claudia's Corner, Colorist
- *Dennis Hertzog:*
the usual stuff...

