



Susquehanna Beekeepers



<http://susquehannabeekeepers.com>

Sept-Oct, 2013, Volume 45

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President's Message: The 2013 summer is rapidly slipping by which means we must have been rather busy doing...?? *Hmmm, I had to think about it.* The Bel Air 4th of July Parade was fun; the SBA's float took 1st prize. Claudia and I had a honey harvesting party at our house in mid-July with the SBA's "Young Beekeeper" families. Our three hives yielded about 165 lbs, again very light-colored honey. The SBA's display location at this year's Harford County Farm was a huge success (*Thanks to our volunteers!!*) with almost non-stop visitors during all four days. The August SBA potluck picnic saw an excellent turnout and near perfect weather. People usually bring the best food to these affairs, this year, being no exception. And everyone left feeling *rather full!!* We caught a swarm and started a nuc this summer; both have now expanded into full hives, insurance for the future! I would have liked to start a few more nucs but where did the time go?? Well, maybe next year.

Jeff Maenner has been experimenting with raising queens this summer using principals outlined in Jay Smith's book, "Better Queens". Jeff will speak about this method and his results at our September meeting. The no-grafting approach allowing the bees to do what they do best seems ideal for hobbyists. I'm hoping a fair number of our club members will attempt this method next year as we need to seriously begin shifting our local focus toward making our own bees and queens rather than buying non-locally!! ...*See you on Sept 11!*

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

[Dennis Hertzog](#) - President
[Harry Dutcher](#) - Vice President
[Claudia Hertzog](#) - Secretary
[John Kovac](#) - Treasurer

**[newsletter/website inclusions](#)

Next SBA General Meeting:
Wednesday, September 11 at 7:00 pm
at the Forest Hill Extension Office
Topics: Queens without Grafting - Jeff Maenner
Fall Management - John Knapstein

SBA-Related Meetings and Events

- Sep 8 - SBA Display - Hayes House, 1-4, Contact [Harry Dutcher](#) if you can volunteer!!
- Sep 11 - General SBA Meeting - Agenda: Queens without Grafting - *Jeff Maenner, speaker.*
Fall Management - *John Knapstein, speaker.*
- Sep 21 - Maryland Honey Harvest Festival, 9-3, Patuxent Research Refuge National Wildlife Visitor Center, in Laurel, MD. Contact *John Knapstein* jdk92048@aol.com for more info.
- Sep 28-29 - SBA Display - [Steppingstone fall harvest and Craft Festival](#) - [Volunteers needed!](#)
- Oct 9 - General SBA Meeting - *Speaker: Dr. Phil Nivatpumin, MD - Cancer and Pesticides in the Environment*
- Nov 13 - General SBA Meeting - Election of new SBA Board members - Contact a present Board member if you wish to become more active in the SBA's decision-making process.
- Nov 23 - Beekeeping Introduction - 9-12 am. Register through [HCC Non-Credit](#) - \$10 fee
- Dec 11 - General SBA Meeting (*Pot-Luck Family Dinner*)



NOTES From The Apiary Sept 2013 by Robert Crouse

On July, I went to BJ's and purchased eight 25 lb. bags of sugar for fall feeding. The sugar was \$10.89 per bag. Last year, the price was \$14.19. I don't usually feed quite this early but wanted to get some comb drawn on foundation for my nuc boxes and also replace older comb in my standard hives. I have now been feeding for several weeks just for comb building but not very heavily.

Comparing performance and watching for various problems are two good reasons for having more than a single hive. One of my hives seemed to have fewer bees coming and going. A quick check revealed that they had no stores and the queen had stopped laying. At that point, I had not fed this hive as most of the comb was in good condition but I am now lightly feeding all of my hives to prevent starvation as well as for comb building.

For me, feeding 2 to 1 sugar syrup will start in earnest during late September as the top box of each hive and a good portion of the bottom box should be full of stores going into

winter. However, you should avoid feeding too much too early or the queen might run out of brood space. She needs to be able to produce young bees through early November to have young stock in order to get through January and February. The queen should again start laying in late winter. To be sure my queens have room, I will continue checking hive stores.

It's time to get feeders cleaned and ready. Mold or mildew can be removed with a vinegar and water mix. If you use soap, make sure nothing is left behind that will harm the bees. If you don't have fully drawn out comb in the upper boxes, you may be able to get the bees to draw new comb by feeding heavily. The risk as outlined is displacing the brood area.

I have really had a difficult time producing queens this year. Four attempts have resulted in losing the virgin queens during the mating flight week. In each case I saw the new queens shortly after emergence then nothing 2 weeks later. In one case, the bees had absconded the nuc, queen and all. Sometimes all you can do is try. See you at the September 11 general meeting!!

“ODDS and ENDS”

- Time Magazine cover article for Aug 19 - [A World Without Bees](#)
- [Mystery Solved, Here's What's Killing Bees](#)
- [Bill Seeks to Halt Bee-Killing Pesticides in US](#)
- [Honeycomb's Surprising Secret Revealed](#)
- [The Ultraviolet Vision of Bees](#)
- [Bee-Friendly Plant that could Kill Bees](#)
- [Cool Temps Hamper Dakota Bees' Honey Production](#)
- A location to keep bees is being offered in Street, MD. Contact [your editor](#) for more info.
- [Bob Crouse](#) is collecting Redners 'Pump Perks' register tapes to earn funds for Maryland State Beekeepers Assoc.. If you shop at Redners and use a Pump Perks card please collect and give your old register tapes to Robert the next time you see him. This is the Redners Save-A-Tape program.

(Many thanks to all who contribute to our newsletter!!)

2013 Harford County Farm Fair Apiary Report - by John Knapstein

More entries could have been submitted to the “Apiary Products” department. Entries were down from 32 in 2012 to 15 this year. Now is the time to start getting ready for next year by setting aside your *best jar of honey*. Look at the various classes and prepare a different entry each month. That way all you need to do is pack them up and bring those wonderfully prepared displays to the 2014 fairs. This is also a great way to have the quality of your honey evaluated. One entry, a very nice-looking jar of honey was immaculately prepared and received almost perfect scores in all areas except for moisture content. Unfortunately, this entry registered 18% and only took third place. Ideal moisture content for honey is 16.5%. Do you know the moisture content of your honey? Submit a jar next year and find out!

If you are not aware, the SBA sponsors a “Baking with Honey” class at both the Harford County and Mason Dixon Fairs, yet another possible way for winning that coveted “*Blue Ribbon*”!!

A few statistics: There were just six entrants who submitted fifteen entries. Three classes had only one entry. Several classes had no entries at all.

Congratulations to Doug Shuman who won “Champion” for his honey and “Reserve Champion” for his block of wax.

Maryland State Fair Addendum: Several members of the SBA entered items in the Maryland State Fair this year. Doug Shuman took the “Blue Ribbon” in the “White Honey” category. Your reporter, John Knapstein won “Blue Ribbons” for his “Dark Honey” entry, “Educational Display” and his “Leather Treatment”.

**SUSQUEHANNA BEEKEEPERS
OFFICIAL BUSINESS NOTICE:**

Proposed New Membership Classification

Your SBA Board has discussed the addition of a yearly "Family" SBA membership option for \$15. A "Family" membership would include all persons living at a single residence. At our June general SBA Meeting, a motion was introduced and passed to vote on the following membership structure change at our upcoming September General SBA Meeting:



For 2014, single yearly SBA memberships would remain at \$8. A yearly family membership option would also be available for \$15.

*****A vote on the above resolution will take place on Wed, Sept 11 at our General SBA Meeting. Please email your SBA Board members if you have a comment or question.***

**SBA Board of Directors
Nominations and Election for 2014:**

Nominations of new SBA Board members will open at our Oct 9 meeting and remain open until Nov 13. Elections will take place at our Nov 13 General Meeting. If you are interested in becoming more active in the SBA's decision-making process, please contact one of our current Board members.

Positions include:

- *President*
- *Vice President*
- *Secretary*
- *Treasurer*



Other positions include:

- *Webmaster*
- *Newsletter editor*

The annual salary for these last two positions pays twice as much as the SBA Presidency!!

Step up and make a difference!!

Congratulations!!

SBA member and MD Apiary Inspector, Cybil Preston studied for, stressed over, completed and passed all four **Master Beekeeper exams**. She is the newest addition to the Maryland Master Beekeepers and is still grinning ear to ear over this major accomplishment!! *Good job!!*

The passing of William Clark:

The Susquehanna Beekeepers Association would like to express their heartfelt condolences on the passing of Bill Clark. It was known to all he had a special place in his heart for bees. His drive and initiative lead him to be one of the founding fathers of our beekeeping club. From a humble beginning it has grown to well over 100 members from Baltimore, Harford, Cecil and southern PA. His energy and drive lives on in this organization. The number of lives he touched as a result of this effort alone is significant. His service to the community in this endeavor and others is appreciated and will be missed.



Hivetop Feeders, a Timely Tune-up - by Dennis Hertzog

When fall feeding season rolls around, a hivetop feeder can play a crucial roll in preparing the bees for winter. As advantageous as hivetops are, one difficulty can be in keeping other insects out of the sugar syrup reservoir. I have yet to completely figure out how to keep ants out. But yellow jackets and other critters can easily enter a reservoir if the outer cover is not reasonably snug. Honeybees can also work through screen openings and drown if gaps are present. When purchasing a new feeder or breaking one out from storage, a bit of fine-tuning is sometimes necessary to insure minimal problems. Below are a few places to check before filling that hivetop with syrup.



This feeder (on the left) is brand new but notice the gap between the screen and wood. Bees will easily crawl into the main reservoir and drown. *This space has to be plugged!!* A simple fix is to use a small piece of screen folded a few times and simply wedge it into this opening with a flathead screwdriver. The lower corner (right) needs similar attention.



Keeping yellow jackets and ants out can be problematic. Be sure the screen on top is as flush as possible with the rest of the feeder. Use a light hammer to tap down staples or any other high spots. Also check the inside of your telescoping cover for excess propolis buildup, pieces of wood, or anything else that might provide an opening. I am always amazed at how insects can wiggle through what seems to be an inconsequential space for a taste of sugar syrup.



A final reminder or two: The inner cover is unnecessary when using a hivetop feeder so remove it when feeding. And of course, remember to take out any wedges, blocks or other devices that one would normally use to prop up the outer cover for ventilation as this additional space will without a doubt broadcast an open invitation to the entire insect world. I have unfortunately learned the hard way. Now is the time for fall feeding of our honeybees. So give your hivetop feeder a simple "tune-up" to keep the other insects out!!

Neonicotinoids in the News - Compiled by John Kovac

Most folks have a soft spot in their hearts for bees. They want to do something to help their plight. One way a lot of folks have tried to help is to plant “bee-friendly” plants. It sounds like a reasonable thing to do but a new study issued by Friends of the Earth states that many “bee-friendly” plants being sold at garden centers have been pretreated with toxic pesticides that have been shown to harm bees. The pilot study found that 7 of 13 garden plants samples purchased at top retailers like Home Depot, Lowe’s and Target in major cities contained nervous system toxins that hurt or can kill bees. The study found over half of the garden plants contained neonicotinoids. Studies indicate that neonicotinoids are a key factor in the reason for the high rate of bees dying.

Research has indicated that neonicotinoids do not outright kill the bees, they weaken their immune system and brain functions. It impacts some bees’ ability to forage for nectar, learn and remember where flowers are located, and possibly impair their ability to find their way home to the nest or hive.

Neonicotinoids are big business in the US. The USDA projects this year's corn crop will cover 94 million acres. Nearly all of that immense stand of corn will be planted with seeds treated with neonicotinoid pesticides produced by the German chemical giant Bayer. In addition, most soybean seeds are also treated with a neonicotinoid insecticide. Imidacloprid, one of many neonicotinoids, is the most widely used insecticide in the world. It is now applied against soil, seed, timber and animal pests as well as foliar treatments for crops including: cereals, cotton, grain, legumes, potatoes, some fruits, rice, turf and vegetables.

The European Food Safety Authority concluded that the industry-sponsored studies were flawed and that this class of pesticides posed an unacceptably high risk to bees. As a result on April 29, 2013, the European Union passed a two-year ban on neonicotinoid insecticides.

Where is the FDA in all of this controversy? The EPA green-lighted Bayer's products based largely on a study funded by the chemical giant itself—which was later discredited by the EPA's own scientists. The EPA is “re-evaluating” the safety of neonicotinoids. The EPA has stated that the registration review process will take several years. At the earliest, the new verdict for imidacloprid will be in 2016 and 2017 for clothianidin and thiamethoxam. Bottom line; don’t expect much bee-friendly action from the EPA anytime soon.

Here is what YOU can do to make a difference:

- Don’t buy at retailers that are selling neonicotinoid pesticide-containing plants.
- Stop using the above list of neonicotinoids containing pesticides at home or in your garden. Some common ones are Acetamiprid, Clothianidin, Dinotefuran, Imidacloprid, Nitenpyram, Thiacloprid, Thiamethoxam.
- If you are using any of the above neonicotinoids containing pesticides, properly dispose of them at hazardous waste disposal centers. Do NOT flush them or pour them out in your yard.

- Claudia's Corner -
On Halloween, the parents
sent their kids out
looking like me.
Rodney Dangerfield.

**NEWSLETTER
CONTRIBUTORS**

- **Bob Crouse:**
Notes From The Apiary
- **John Knapstein:**
HC Farm Fair Report
- **John Kovac:**
Neonicotinoids in the News
- **Claudia Hertzog:**
Claudia's Corner, Colorist
- **Dennis Hertzog:**
the semi-usual stuff...




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