



LANE COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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March 2011 NEWSLETTER

<http://www.lcbaor.org>

Bee School 2011



NEXT MEETING:
March 15th, program at 7:30PM

Come early to socialize and share your questions with experienced beekeepers.

Hall opens at 7:00PM

**Swarming — Chuck Hunt
& Questions & Answers**

Learn to control those natural urges!

Get all your questions answered by the pros!

**Trinity United
Methodist Church**
440 Maxwell Road
Turn West off River Road
in Eugene (South of Beltline)

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FEBRUARY Meeting Highlights:
Spring Management
Jonathan Luftin

Announcements:

Judy Scher reminded everyone of Bee School next weekend and snack donations were requested.

The 2011 mentor sign up list was passed around - mentors require 3 years of beekeeping experience to participate.

"Wings to Wine" Festival in May requested a beekeeper booth.

Nancy Ograin stated the club needs one or two people to volunteer to look over **the club's accounting books.**

Ask A Beekeeper box and question forms were available in the back of the room, everyone was encouraged to participate.

LCBA Field day will be held on Saturday, June 18th, 2011 — more to come in a future newsletter.

Judy announced two new mite treatments: Hop Guard - there remains a question as to efficacy as it removes the phoretic mites with a knock down method, ok to use during honey flow, EPA approved it for PNW (OR, WA, ID). Miteaway quick strips, new formic acid treatment, are also ok to use during honey flow, safer than the previous formic acid treatments, kills mites in capped cells with focus on the male mite, may be expensive with \$4 each application and 4 strips per hive, supposed to be available middle of March 2011, has received good reviews from Europe. Ken passed around a signup list to get an idea of how many members are considering using the quick strips.

The club presented Jonathan Loftin a gift certificate to his local feed and seed store as a thank you for 7 years as **LCBA's newsletter editor.**

The evening presentation:

Jonathan Loftin was the featured speaker; Spring Management was the topic. Jonathan exclaimed spring is an **exciting time of year! He said it's such a beautiful feeling to see the bees out bringing in pollen and spring blooms**

everywhere. But this is also a critical time as spring planning is the foundation for the whole year.

What do we do in the spring? What are your goals? Make hive divisions, make more honey, or pollination of fruit trees? What do we look for?

Jonathan said look for a healthy colony of bees and a nice growth curve that will meet all your spring goals. Jonathan remarked the hard trick of it all is **"artful timing." Variable spring weather** makes this difficult but also helps develop beekeeping skills.

Two main timing goals:

- 1) Growing the bee population to a maximum strength at the start of honey flow without swarms.
- 2) Medications and chemicals used to treat for disease and pests need to be managed very carefully. These need to be off the hive before the honey flow.

Jonathan suggested we count the number of weeks backwards from the **beginning of June (that's typically when the honey flow starts)** to plan medication treatments. Always follow **the manufacturer's directions for use.**

When does spring start? Forsythia and **daffodil blooms are Jonathan's gauge** for the start of spring. When to do spring inspections and what lets you know you need to inspect? Look for a warm day (60°F+), no wind, and no rain. If you have a reason to believe there needs to be intervention - **don't wait for the perfect day.** Go into your hives to fix the situation. When looking for information, make it quick. Brood is very susceptible to dying if chilled. What should you look for?

- 1) Honey stores/adequate food - 3 deep or 5 westerns full of honey in general.
- 2) A healthy population of bees - 5 to 7 frames covered with bees.
- 3) A queen and/or eggs or capped brood - evidence that she is there.

When you inspect your hive, you will likely see one of three things: a dead hive, a weak hive, or a booming hive. If

dead, ask yourself why. Were there lots of bees and no honey - they probably starved. If lots of drones, maybe a poor queen. Other factors for a weak or dead hive include tracheal mites or foulbrood. Foulbrood looks gloppy and if this is suspected, best to call an experienced beekeeper to verify and burn the hive. If weak with only two or three frames, consider combining the hive with others. If you add brood, leave the attached bees on the frame. If all your hives are weak, requeen or feed them with carbohydrates (fondant vs sugar syrup). Consider a pollen substitute also. Thin 1:1 sugar syrup stimulates brood production. The weather needs to be 60°F or greater for the bees to take syrup. You can feed fondant candy any time of the year.

If your hive is very strong - be prepared to make a split. When you split the hive, get one new queen or produce one. Jonathan recommended every beekeeper have a good beekeeping handbook as a reference for nuc building recipes (how many frames of honey, pollen, brood).

Nosema is often seen this time of year as streaks on the hive - you may want to treat with Fumigilin B in sugar syrup - follow medication directions.

Swarms are always a big concern in spring. There are many ways to decrease the number of swarms such as reversing hive bodies, providing more space, and **"checker boarding" (Walt Wright method).** However, one of the most effective ways to stop swarms is splitting the hive.

The end of spring is marked by the honey flow - blackberry blooms signal the start of the honey flow in the Willamette Valley.

Morris Says—

"Be sure to check honey reserves. I had a couple hives that went into winter with plenty of honey. Upon checking them recently, I found them very low in reserves.



If you haven't done so, check them and give them syrup if above 50°F or dry feed if below 50°F."

BEEKEEPING TIPS

March 2011

Chuck Hunt, LCBA Member



1. March is the month to treat your **bees if you haven't already.** Grease patties and miticide strips should be in the hive, usually by the first week in March. Pick a time that is relatively warm (about 55°F) and quickly apply your medications.
2. Bees will be increasing their buildup during this month. Make sure that **adequate stores are in place.** Don't count on any early spring honey flow since the bees often cannot fly due to poor weather. A hive should never have less than 15 pounds of honey or stores. This is about five western frames or three deep frames of solid honey.
3. You can feed your bees at this time since it is beginning to warm enough that they can handle nectar or syrup. A mixture of one part sugar to two parts water fed to the bees at this time will stimulate increased brood rearing and help your hives survive the winter and build up in the months to come. Be careful of swarming when you stimulate your hives this way. Also, remember that feeding stimulating syrup will increase brood rearing and subsequent need for stores. Watch such hives carefully.

4. Entrance reducers can probably be removed at this time. You might want to clean the bottom board of any debris or dead bees and make sure that it is dry.
5. If weather permits, it is advisable to even up or balance your hives. This means that those hives that are overflowing with bees and brood should have some brood removed. These removed bees and brood should be given to hives that are weak to boost their strength. **MAKE SURE THAT YOU DO NOT TAKE THE QUEEN FROM THE STRONG HIVE ALONG WITH THE TRANSFERRED FRAMES.** Don't take more than 20% of the bees and brood from the strong hive.
6. Also, if your hives are bursting at the seams, you can reverse your brood boxes. Usually, the lower box will be empty of brood. Take this empty box and place it on top of the second box. The second box, with all its brood, bees and queen will become the bottom or first box as a result. The queen will then move up into the new, and now empty, second box.
7. Watch out for swarm cells as the month progresses and moves into early April. Swarm cells look like peanuts that have not been shelled and are placed at the edges of the frames (usually). Various swarm control techniques can be used including splitting your hives.

Splitting simply involves dividing the brood and boxes in the strong hive and starting a new hive. In the queenless half of these two hives, you may let the bees raise a new queen. Make sure that queenless half has eggs from which to raise this queen. This process will take about four weeks. You can also order a queen for the queenless half from a queen breeder.

8. If a hive is very weak, queenless and not worth saving, unite it with another hive that needs a boost. Place a newspaper between the two hives and let the bees chew the obstruction away. They will unite peacefully.
9. Think about re-queening any hives that are chronically weak or unproductive. A new and healthy queen will help the buildup and now is the time to order that queen. Look for disease resistance and hygienic queens.
10. Watch out for yellow jacket queens and use pheromone traps for them. Any queens you capture in the spring will greatly reduce the problems with yellow jackets in the late summer and fall.
11. March is the month that many think is the most critical month for beekeeping of the entire year. Do your job right in this month and you go a long way towards having a successful year of beekeeping.

C.
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President's Message

Judy Scher, LCBA President

To new members - Welcome! By the time you get this newsletter the 2011 LCBA Bee School will have happened. I know it will be a totally successful event and there will be more members joining our organization.

Despite the cold gloomy weather, there seems to be much activity in the beehives. The blooms and buds in my neighborhood herald that busy time of year and indeed my bees are starting to build up brood. I see them bring in big **wads of pollen. I can't wait to do the first real inspection of the year; reversing boxes, seeing which hives need** splitting, and taking in that wonderful aroma of propolis which will be in great supply this first inspection.

This month Chuck Hunt will speak about swarming. Our bees are certainly thinking about it and we need to be ready!

Notes and Thank You's

- ◆ Bee school thank yous to Ken and Nancy Ograin for all their work organizing this event, to Anita and Arthur Jones for organizing the wonderful snacks, to Mary Wisegarver for obtaining the use of the Life Technology facility, to all the speakers and folks doing the practical demonstrations, and to all the volunteers who helped with the set up.
- ◆ **Once again the LCBA will host a booth at the KLCC Garden Tour. This year's tour will be on Sunday, June 26th** in the Whiteaker neighborhood. As the time approaches, we will ask for volunteers to staff the booth.
- ◆ **Remember the "Ask A Beekeeper" box at the LCBA meetings!**

Ken Ograin's Notes and IPM Update

Ken Ograin, LCBA Member



IPM Update: Well the weatherman said that spring was definitely here; one thing for sure, he does not live out here. The bees have had some good days making cleansing flights, but on a whole have not been collecting a lot of food. Now for you that live in town I understand that several members have been able to do some hive inspections and brood rearing is well underway with reports of drone production. Could see our first swarms in a few weeks.

Do you keep a journal or log book? One thing you may be missing is keeping track of bloom, plant bloom that is, for me I know that when the Redbud and Plums are in bloom the native bees will be out, another member has noted that drone production has coincided with the

bloom of Forsythia for several years **while Redbud signals' another** member. If you would like to keep a log and you are tech inclined check out Hive Tracks, this is a free online and secure site that you can keep track of one hive or a hundred in multiple yards. Check it out at www.hivetracks.com.

If you get some good days with temps up in the **60°F's do some minor inspections** (still too early to be doing complete hive take down or frame replacements), look for brood and check food stores Be sure to get any dead outs out of the apiary and get them cleaned up and ready for that swarm or package. Be sure to check for waxmoth, I was cleaning up a hive that had died in the fall and to my surprise there was a waxmoth larva crawling on the top bar of a frame. I have been told



that waxmoths were not a problem **until temps got up into the 60°F's, well it was in the 30°F's that day and** the hive had been out in all that cold weather we have had.

It may be too cold to open your hive, but you can still put that sample board in, leave it for a couple of days check for mites but also look for some other clues to tell you what is going on inside. Look for wax patterns, this can tell you if the brood area is being expanded, look for different color of debris, honey stores capping will be light in color and brood cappings **dark. But don't forget to count the** mites.

Things will be getting busy in the next few weeks so do not put off any of those bee chores, equipment, yards, new frames you will be needing them soon.

NEW Varroa Mite Products

Dewey M. Caron

Last months LCBA had the NEWS FLASH about two new mite control products. Mite Away Quick Strips™ (MAQS™) are now officially registered by EPA as a Section 3 (general) registration. Although not a new biopesticide, this new formulation and packaging of formic acid will be much easier to use. Formic acid is common in honey and is used by plants such as nettles and ants to combat enemies.

MAQS™ is a plant-based gel strip product. Two strips are placed on the top bars in the brood area of the hive. The new strips are thin and fit beneath the inner cover, a nice convenience compared to the bulky, smelly pads of Mite Away II or the danger from do-it-yourself applications. The treatment period is seven days. The strips can be used during the honey flow at temperatures up to 93°F. Cost of 2 strip treatment is about \$10.

The new formulation targets male mites within capped cells. New phoretic female mites, offspring of the female mite that enters a capped worker or drone cell, must mate to produce fertile offspring. No mating means no new female generation. NOD, the manufacturer of formic acid Mite Away II and

now Mite Away Quick Strips, claims up to 95% kill of male mites (who lack the hard exoskeleton of the females making acid vapor penetration easier) and immature female mites within capped cells. It also kills phoretic female mites on the adult bees. For more information, visit the website at www.miteaway.com.

The second mite biopesticide is a Section 18 Emergency registration of HopGuard. HopGuard is being developed by Beta Tec Hop Products, a Division of John I. Haas, Inc., an Arizona company, seeking to find uses for hop acids for control of plant pests. It is projected to be available this season and will be comparatively priced.

HopGuard will be applied to a cardboard strip designed to hang between frames. It is a contact pesticide meaning bees with mites have to contact the liquid and spread it within the colony. It will not be killing mites within brood cells. It has tested negative for leaving a residue in honey and can be used when honey supers are on. Tests so far have only been against controls, not in comparison tests of HopGuard with other biopesticides like formic acid or essential oils. Several commercial beekeepers have used it in tests and report favorable knockdown of mites. It seems unlikely that it might be used alone for season-long mite control.

My 2009 and 2010 surveys of Lane Co beekeepers, **and Jonathan Loftin's earlier survey, all showed** little use of formic acid (3 of 43 respondents in 2009 and 2 of 56 in 2010 reported using it - the thick pads were messy, smelly and you needed gloves to apply) but more use of powdered sugar (nearly 40% in 2010) and essential oils (Apiguard and Api-Life-Var - 21% in 2010). The quick strips are much easier to use than previous formic acid products and they would likely compete best against the essential oil products while Hopguard would appear to be similar to powdered sugar with quick knockdown of mites from adults but no effect on mites within brood cells.

It is likely that a couple of seasons will be needed before we know how these products might be integrated into season-long mite control. The first step - BEFORE ANY CONTROL method is used - is to assess the mite level of a colony. This means sugar roll or mite sampling board. Threshold numbers for OR suggest, 10 or more mites on sugar roll in August or 50/day or more mites on full bottom board sticky boards in August, means numbers present some risk to colony survival. If you have had problems with heavy losses (suggesting mite transmission of viruses) then half that number (5 sugar roll, 25+/day on sticky board) might be a better threshold to utilize.

Warré Bee-Friendly Beehives

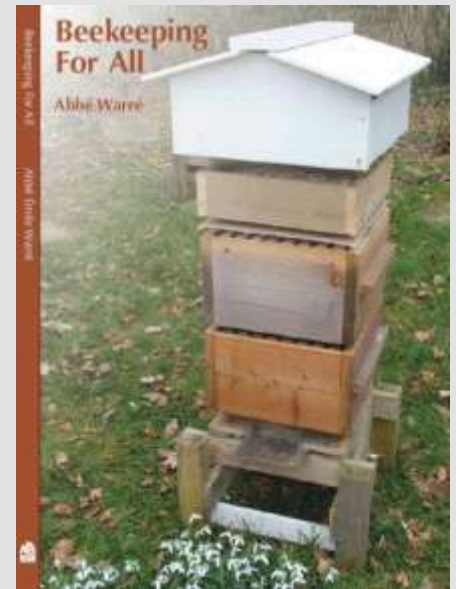
Warré hives, meant for hands-off, minimalist and sustainable beekeeping practices, are used extensively by backyard beekeepers and also by commercial operations running hundreds of hives. Warré experimented with some 350 hives of various designs with the aim of producing a hive that was simple, economical, bee-friendly and which assured a surplus of honey for the beekeeper. The result was a hive whose construction and operation is described in his book "Beekeeping For All". Rather than "supering," or adding empty boxes to the top of the hive, Warré hives are "nadired," meaning that empty boxes are added to the bottom. This mimics the environment of a wild colony, as bees prefer building downwards from the top of their cavity.

A Warré hive is a vertical top bar hive having 8 foundationless top bars in each box. As these hives were designed most specifically for overwintering of bees in the cold French climate they work very well in the Pacific Northwest.

Our Warré hive walls have the full one-inch thickness, determined to be most appropriate thickness for hiving bees in our area. All of our bee boxes are assembled with locking double rabbit joints. Each box has a closeable "port hole" window for easy monitoring of the bee situation within. In using the Warré Hive, one provides the most pleasant and logical home for your dear bees. You may find a free e-book (PDF) of Abbé Warré's book: "Beekeeping For All" at <http://warre.biobees.com/bfa.htm>

Beeologique® has been building, selling and installing Warré beehives in the Willamette Valley since 2008. Both retail and wholesale pricing for our kits or assembled units is available.

Bill Wood woodbillr@q.com (541) 687-8211 www.beeologique.com





ASK A BEEKEEPER

Q I have a hive that's in its first winter. I haven't picked it up to know how heavy it was before the cold weather. How do I know if I need to provide supplemental food?

A This is a timely question. It's important that the bees have a minimum of 15-20 pounds of honey now. As we approach the end of winter, they are consuming their resources quickly without the resources available to replace them. Other than hefting the hive from the back to determine weight, You can simply open the hive and take a look at the stored honey. A full depth frame holds roughly 5 pounds of honey, and a western sized frame holds about 3 pounds of honey. Remember to make your visit into the hive quickly, and **the bees should be flying (around 50°F.)** when you make that inspection.

Q How do mites winter over? On the bee? Do they eat off the bees? Do they breed during winter or just hang out?

A During periods of limited brood rearing varroa do continue to feed on bees and can live for several months, this is the phoretic stage. Varroa can only reproduce after feeding on larva.

E-Mail to the Editor
lcbnewslettereditor@hotmail.com

The idea of a horizontal hive is not a new one. One of my beekeeping friends found an article for me printed around 1918 I believe, discussing the merits of a horizontal hive for those who are handicapped, elderly or have bad backs. Researching Top bar hives as used in Africa and other parts of the world rekindled my excitement about beekeeping. I was about to give it up due to difficulty lifting even westerns and now have four different horizontal hives going and am going out of two regular Langstroths this spring. Since this fun article revealed that even persons in a wheelchair could work their hives I, with help from my mentor, Morris Ostrofsky, have experimented building my own hives. I am not real skillful at woodworking. I found out that these hives are simple to create by myself anyway! So now I have made two horizontal regular Langstroths and two top bar hives. I would be happy to show anyone what this involves if they want to try one for fun.

Please call at (541) 683-3503.

Toni Goldenberg — LCBA member



LCBA

Calendar-at-a-Glance

March 15th, 2011 — 7:30PM-8:30PM
LCBA Monthly Meeting
Trinity United Methodist Church
Swarming — Chuck Hunt
& Questions & Answers

April 19th — 7:30PM-8:30PM
LCBA Monthly Meeting
Trinity United Methodist Church
Packages — Ken Ograin
Queen Introduction —
Morris Ostrofsky

April 22nd — 29th 8:00PM
Queen of the Sun
Bijou Art Cinemas
492 East 13th Avenue, Eugene

June 18th
LCBA Field Trip

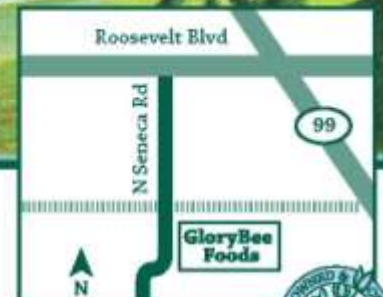
Welcome New LCBA Members

Christopher Allen	Cottage Grove
James Doughan	Eugene
Robert Edmiston	Elmira
Katja & Marshall Gause	Eugene
Virginia Myers	Springfield
Janine Piercey	Eugene

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CLASSIFIED ADS

Bee-related classified ads cost \$5.00 for non-members, and are free to members.

Classified ads run for three issues and may be renewed by contacting the editor. Business ads cost \$35 a year.

To place an ad, contact the editor by the 1st of the month via e-mail (lcbnewslettereditor@hotmail.com) or phone: (541) 767-0761.

T-shirts and Hats!

LCBA t-shirts are available in a variety of sizes and colors. There are also two spiffy designs now! New style shirts are \$20, and the familiar club logo t-shirts are a bargain at \$12.

We also have caps with the club logo.

Club shirts (and hats) are a great way to start conversations about bees and beekeeping.

Show your club spirit!

LCBA MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Lane County Beekeepers Association now costs \$15.00 yearly.

Dues are pro-rated after March for new members ONLY!

Bring your dues to the meeting or remit to LCBA Treasurer Nancy Ograin (address below).

FOR SALE:

Ross Rounds Comb Honey Supers
The best way to make comb honey, 40 Ross Round supers with 8 frames each. Super with eight frames are \$45 each. Call (541) 607-0106 evenings or weekends.

FOR SALE:

Frame feeders \$2,
Full size pollen traps \$10,
Brood Builder (not Bee-Pro) for dry or patties feeding \$1 for 2lbs (with instructions).
Contact Jerry Carter at (541) 689-3320

FOR SALE:

4-gallon buckets \$5
Some 3½-gallon buckets also.
All with lids and are FOOD APPROVED.
See me at the meeting or call.
Fred Cockerline, (541) 747-8822

FOR SALE:

4# packages of honeybees
\$95 plus \$4 cage deposit.
Carniolian/Minnesota Hygenic or Italian queens.
Projected pick-up date April 6th, limited availability.
Call Joe or Jen at (541) 683-4281.



Bijou Art Cinemas: Week Long Run (Earth Day Celebration)

April 22nd, 2011 at 8:00pm

Bijou Art Cinemas
492 East 13th Avenue
Eugene, OR 97401-4268

Screening Times TBA

NEWSLETTER CONTACT INFORMATION

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