



bc  
ba



Barnstable County  
Beekeepers Association

## buzzwords

<http://www.barnstablebeekeepers.org>

March 2020

### Upcoming Meetings

**7:30 pm at the West Barnstable Community Building on Route 149.**

**Refreshments are back!!!**

**We'd love to have some holiday nibbles!! Bring goodies to share!**

New beekeepers and 2020 bee school attendees welcome to attend!!

**March 10**

Souvik Mandal, Ph.D.  
Harvard Univ.



Understanding the bees for a sustainable future

Honeybees are fascinating! Not just for producing the prized and delicious honey or being one of the most important pollinators, they also tell us an incredible story about

cooperation, division of labor, and personal sacrifices for the sake of a bigger cause. There are several other species of bees that are also crucial pollinators in their respective ecosystem and make honey. Evidently, the health of bees and their ecological landscape have a circular interdependence. Can we bridge our existing knowledge on bees and modern technologies like artificial intelligence to optimize their role as the producer of honey and other bee-products, pollinator, and the promoter of a healthier ecological landscape? In the first half of the talk, I will give a brief overview of the economy revolving around different species of bees. Then I will discuss some interesting findings based on recent research, and how these findings can improve the overall condition of the bees and the production of honey. Finally, I will end by proposing a meta-model and future researches to achieve an optimized and therefore, sustainable coexistence of economy and ecology.

### Bee School

**West Barnstable Community Building  
2377 Route 149, West Barnstable (large room)  
7:30 to 9 pm**

Wednesday, March 4th, 2019  
Pests & Diseases w/Handouts

### Going Back to School



As a retired teacher, I love going back to school. My mission however, has changed a bit since teaching reading to elementary aged children. My goal now is to educate our youth on the importance of honeybees and the role they play in our environment.

When I arrive in a classroom, I am bombarded with stories about the infamous "stinger" and the havoc it has wreaked on family

### Newsletter Submissions

Please send Buzzwords submissions to [David Whalley](mailto:david.a.whalley@gmail.com)  
david.a.whalley@gmail.com.

We are looking for good stories, photos, links, news about talks and presentations you've done or seen, book and movie reviews, and items for sale or free to good home! PDF, scanned document files, and hard copy submissions are not acceptable. You can create files in Word, Pages, Notepad, TextEdit, etc. for articles.



members. They are reminded by their teacher to ask questions, not tell stories. I usually start my presentation by reading a short colorful book about bees. I read about what types of foods would disappear if it were not for honeybees. We discuss pollination and what that means to plants and bees. We look at beautiful pictures of bees at work, collecting pollen and extending their proboscis to collect nectar to make honey. We talk about what happens in the hive after pollen and nectar are brought home. This leads to the discussion of raising baby bees. We turn our focus to the queen of the hive. We talk about her role and importance to the life of the colony. We look at pictures and notice how large she is compared to the worker bees. The children are amazed that she can lay 1500 to 2000 eggs per day!

We continue by viewing pictures of eggs, larvae, brood and capped brood. Everyone loves a picture of a brand new bee chewing his way into the world. I hear a few “awww, so cute” comments coming from the group. We cover some of the important jobs the bees must do to keep their home alive and healthy. I briefly discuss the “stinger” only as a means of self defense.

I am asked questions such as “How does pollen stay on their legs when they fly?” “where does the queen sleep?” “Why cant bees live longer?” These are real questions I have been asked and I am happy they are listening and thinking.

As my allotted time is coming to a close, I put on my bee suit, veil and gloves. I show the smoker discussing the ‘hows’ ‘whys’ of smoke. I open the nuc and show the inside, then pass around frames of drawn and undrawn comb. I like to leave a copy of the book I read for the classroom library to encourage reading.

I feel I have achieved my goal as the conversation has changed from the “stinger” to how can we help bees survive? What can we do to live together without harming each other? EDUCATION!!! Its all about education. I truly believe that educating our youth may very well be one of the determining factors in the future of our honeybees.

As I pack up to leave one 1st grade classroom, I am stopped at the door and told one last stinger story...but that’s okay, I have a few of my own.

Donna Tompkins

## Bee Aggression

Interesting article in the March-April American Scientist on the relationship of aggression in bees and their health. Clare Rittschof at the U of Kentucky has been looking at honeybee aggression for 10 years and has found a molecular profile associated with infection and stress in low aggression hives. Low aggression hives are more susceptible to disease and parasites and have a higher mortality than aggressive hives. This study

### Forage

[Medicine For Honey Bees?](#)

[Help Pass H.R.2854 to Stop Bee-killing Neonics On National Wildlife Refuges | Help Wildlife, Protect the Environment, Support Nature Conservation, Save the Planet](#)

### Did You Know?

Our best queens have stored between 5 to 7 million sperm after mating. But would you believe this represents but 3 to 5% of the sperm she acquires? According to Alison McAfee, PhD (ABJ, February 2020) queens are highly selective and act as a “quality control filter” after mating releasing millions of sperm. And we know that the mating of the queen honey bee is “a suicidal act for the poor drone” but –“somewhat deviously, the drones seminal fluid manipulates queens to halt their promiscuous mating habits by making the queen to go partially blind”.(Alison McAfee, PhD, ABJ February 2020)

What? Is this the reason why some virgins do not make it back to the hive?

Check out the BCBA Facebook page for shared links, photos, and questions/answers! Join the conversation!  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BarnstableCountyBeeA/>

didn't talk about the so called "killer bees" but looked at more aggressive strains of European bees. In the past I have occasionally requeened if the bees seemed less friendly. Now I'm thinking maybe by trying to raise friendly bees we are weakening their immune systems.

Leslie Liechstenstein

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## SPRING TUNE-UP

Trying to decide if your comb is too damaged to use? Well according to David MacFawn in Bee Culture, February 2020, if your brood comb frame is less than ¼ damaged, it can be reused. Keep in mind, it will be repaired by the bees with drone cells which can be skewered for varroa counts or removal.

If you have been beekeeping for 3 years or more, it is time to replace some of that brood comb with new foundation. The older the comb, the smaller the cell with more pupal skins lining the inside. And since wax is lipophilic, it will absorb any pesticides the bees have brought in with the pollen. Replacing is an easy and inexpensive task. Foundation is available through the club ([beekeeper@gmail.com](mailto:beekeeper@gmail.com)) 10 sheets for \$12.00 as we buy in bulk. (check to BCBA)

Once our temperatures level off at 50 degrees or better daily, syrup feeding can begin. The bees will need consistently warm days to have cleansing flights when on sugar syrup. Starting with 2:1 is a good idea for a pail or two, then drop to 1:1 while the hive needs to build stores and provide carbs for new foragers.

NEWBEES, GET ALL THAT EQUIPMENT BUILT AND PAINTED! May will be here before we know it!!

Claire

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## AND SOME BEE NUMBERS

Borrowed from Explore, Summer, 2019 Mass Audubon publication

**370** the approximate number of bee species that live in Massachusetts out of roughly 4,000 species found in the U.S. and Canada

**4X** How many more bee species there are than bird species in North America. There are also six times more bee species than butterfly species and 10 times more than mammal species.

**100** The number of species you might find within a mile of your yard, depending on how many and what kinds of flowers you have growing there.

**70%** The percentage of bees that nest in the ground. Bees nest either in existing cavities like hollow stems, in the ground, or in cavities they dig themselves.

**90+** The number of species of native bees that can occur in an apple orchard during fruit bloom.

**35% -50%** The percentage of wild bee species that specialize in pollen from a single family of plants.

**400%** How much more pollen native bees can deposit on apple flowers than honeybees.

**Up to 85%** The percentage of bees that are solitary and do not form colonies.

## RESOURCES

The following officers and directors are a great resource to answer questions and requests for assistance.

<b>Officers</b>		
<b>President</b>	Michael D. Smith	<a href="mailto:michaeldgetsmail@gmail.com">michaeldgetsmail@gmail.com</a>
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<b>Corresponding Secretary</b>	Claire Desilets	<a href="mailto:beekeeper@gmail.com">beekeeper@gmail.com</a>
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