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Barnstable County
Beekeepers Association



buzzwords

<http://www.barnstablebeekeepers.org>

March 2019

Upcoming Meetings

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

And keep those snacks and nibbles coming!!

**Tuesday, March 12
Dr. Robert Gegear**

Our March speaker will be, Dr. Robert J. Gegear . His discussion will be on what you can do to help preserve our native pollinator diversity and assess the ecological 'friendliness' of pollinator habitat at any spatial scale. Because without these 'keystone' wild pollinator species, we would lose most of our native flowering plants and the animals that use them for food, shelter and nesting sites, eventually causing ecosystems to collapse.

Dr. Robert J. Gegear is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biology and Biotechnology at Worcester Polytechnic Institute and the Director of the New England Bee-cology Project. Dr. Gegear's current research focuses on pollinator neuroecology and conservation, with particular focus on bumblebees native to Massachusetts.

**Tuesday, April 9
Dr. James Crall from Harvard**

Dr. Crall has done research on the [effects of neonicotinoids on bumblebees](#).

**Tuesday, May 8
Mary Beers**

Mary is an educator who will present on native pollinators.

**Tuesday, June 11
Cape Bee**

The Cape Bee team will be presenting on varroa destructor.

Bee School

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

Thursday, March 7th - Swarming and Prevention

Thursday, March 21st - Pests and Diseases

FROM THE BOARD

The Winter Wait

I hate to say it, in fear of jinxing things, but it's been a pretty mild winter. The cold season is a tough one for us beekeepers, as we find ourselves waiting and wondering. On those days when the temps soar into the low 50s, we rush to our hives in hopes of catching a glimpse of cleansing flights, verifying that the girls have made it so far. If the wind is cooperating, we might crack the hive open just a bit, take a peek, and treat the ladies to some extra sugar.

Sometimes, we are met with heartbreak as we discover that there is no one there, or worse yet, the girls are there, but they've all met their demise. And thus, the next wait begins...the arrival of spring and the bee packages. In the meantime, we busy ourselves with making frames, painting boxes, and reading beekeeping books. At points when we miss our bees most, we pull up a couple of YouTube videos to hold us over. In the winter months, I catch up on my Facebook beekeeper groups and find myself grateful, though somewhat envious, of our Australian comrades, as they post images of their bustling hives and busy bees.

As of the last warm day, I'm happy to report that our bees have made it thus far. We're remaining optimistic, hoping for the best, and saying a couple of extra prayers. Spring is just around the corner. Hang in there everyone. The wait is almost over.

Maria Cashdollar

The Mentoring Program - Thank You

Each year we have excited new beekeepers taking our winter course through BCBA and each year we scramble to find mentors for their first year of beekeeping. This year we have 35 or the of the 48 who signed up for the course purchasing bees. It's a smaller number than past years, but Claire and I still want to thank those members who came forward as volunteers for our program. It's never a quick task matching as close as possible the areas and neighborhoods within easy travel of each. We

do our best with the area our club covers and sometimes we have to stretch the traveling further to find a mentor. So we want to thank each of you for volunteering your time and sharing your knowledge of beekeeping once again this year. Some of you have been volunteering yearly and we appreciate your commitment. The “newbees” should all have received their mentor information by the time this newsletter is printed. If there is someone who has not received an email from me with the information, please contact me. Again many thanks for coming forward once again. It’s how we spread our love for beekeeping and all that encompasses it. We wish you all a happy and fulfilling season of joy.

Marte Ayer

Let’s Get Serious!!

If you do any amount of reading of bee literature these days, you know that reasons for our bee losses are classified in the following manner: Pathogens, Parasites, Pesticides and Poor nutrition. (the four “Ps”). Or if you happen to read ABJ and follow Jerry Hayes, he lists varroa, varroa, varroa as the reasons for our losses. I prefer to follow the reasoning of varroa, poor queens, and lack of foraging and starvation. It is hard to diagnose why we lose a hive as there are so many variables among each and every hive. And, of course, there is a huge learning curve. Beekeeping is not easy but yet so fascinating a hobby.



“Oh, but it’s fine for you to grade papers?”

So yes, let’s get serious here on Cape Cod. Many of you buy packages every year and make little effort to control your varroa as it is easier to just buy a new package with little pay back to the club. Maybe sooner than later, the club will not be offering this spring event but more importantly, you are infesting your neighborhood and spreading this dreaded critter if not under control.

We here on the board try to support our new folks mentoring and attempting to provide up to date information in our newsletters and at the monthly meetings. Miticides will be made available come early summer if the board so votes and we will have monthly hive openings to assist and share information on hive management. Please take advantage of these events to help keep your hives healthy. But the rest remains in your hands. There is still a bit of winter left (sigh) and time to read up on varroa and how you might keep it under control. As I see it, currently, the very best resource is the honeybeehealthcoalition.org/varroa. This site is updated on a regular basis and supplies you with some very easily understood tools to combat varroa.

So, do I have losses this year? Yes, I do as it is very rare that any of us come through the winter unscathed but I hope to learn from my errors. Receiving a recent report from Beltsville showed 30.1 varroa per 100 bees. Shame on Claire but I treated twice so what went wrong? Perhaps the treatment was too late in the season? Perhaps the miticide should have been added in July and not August? More alcohol washes might be in order but this number is really horrendous and certainly hope is not repeated.

Learn from your dead outs as sad as it is to pull a hive apart. Attached is a handout from our state MDAR and is pretty useful as to how to diagnose that lost. Use it as a tool for a better outcome in 2019-2020!!!

So, let’s get serious and all be better beekeepers!!

Claire Desilets

Medical Uses Of Honey

Honey has long been touted as an all-purpose panacea, able to sooth sore throats, nourish convalescents, prevent infections, and give instant energy. In the days before widespread refrigeration, honey’s antibacterial properties made it indispensable as both a preservative and an infection fighter.

Different honeys have various levels of antibacterial agents; some are reputed to be effective against virulent bacteria such as staphylococcus. With its high density and acidity, honey presents a very unfriendly medium for bacterial growth. Hydrogen peroxide,

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BarnstableCountyBeeA/>

occurs naturally in low concentrations in honey, further contributing to its purifying abilities. Honey mixed with vinegar or lemon juice n tea or hot water has often been used as a home remedy for sore throats. Dressing a wound or burn with honey can promote healing, fight infection, and help prevent scarring by keeping the skin moist and preventing bandages from sticking to raw skin. Propolis, a sticky substance made by been from the tree sap and resin, is also naturally high in antibacterial properties. Propolis tinctures have a long history of use in Europe as a folk remedy.

SATISFACTION

Satisfaction is not a goal,
nor a place to be;
You search, you look, you find . . .
when the universe is in harmony.

Harmony is a general word,
meaning lots of things;
When music flows in beauty
and green grass grows in spring.

With harmony of two humans,
the universe . . . it sings!
It puts out great vibrations;
to be satisfied, it brings.

When satisfaction is not found,
the grass is dead and brown;
So the music's not around,
and ugliness, it brings.

Recreate your birth
and harmony will be found.
Show others you are satisfied
and satisfied you'll be!

* * *

RAYMOND D. AYERS

RDA 12/83

Historically, the usefulness of honey continued even after death. In the ancient world, a general killed in battle far from home would be submerged in a coffin filled with honey. Sealed, the coffin could then be transported back for burial without fear of putrefaction along the way. Supposedly, Alexander the Great was buried in a gold coffin filled with the purest white honey. In England in the

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a certain aristocratic family revived this tradition by burying each newly deceased earl in a lead coffin filled with honey.

The potency of honey as an antibacterial agent is significantly decreased by heat. Therefore, honey used for topical purposes should always be raw, minimally processed honey. Naturally, severe burns, cuts and abrasions should always be treated by a trained medical professional. But minor burns or shallow cuts can be soothed with a dab of honey.

Taken from Honey : from flower to table by Stephanie Rosenbaum

To Start – March To Do's

**** EQUIPMENT:** ALL equipment should be built and painted! Single deep box with covers and bottom board should be placed on location by the end of the March to insure all traces of paint fumes are gone. Face your hive to the east/south for morning sun. Remember, once the new bees are installed, the hive cannot be moved as the bees have oriented to their new home

**** FEEDING:** make your sugar syrup in a 1:1 concentration. A ten pound bag of sugar mixed with ten pints of hot water (boiling not needed) should be ready with a clean spray bottle.

**** WATER SOURCE:** plan a source of water regardless of your location. A bird bath with floats works best and should never dry out.

**** WARDROBE:** light weight , light colored nylon jacket or shirt (NO fleece!) under your veil and vest. Jeans or khakis are best but stay away from dark colors or black shades. No black socks!! Garden boots are ideal as you are also protected from deer ticks.

**** CONTACT** your mentor for an informal introduction if needed and stay tuned to your email for confirmation of date and time of the bees' arrival.

Claire Desilets

Almond Growers Are Nuts about Bees

Next time your snacking on a few almonds, consider the following:

- All almond blossoms are pollinated by honey bees
- About 3/4 of all bee hives, about 1.6 million hives, in the nation move to central valley California for the almond bloom beginning at the end of January or early February. They pollinate a whopping 130,000,000 almond trees.
- There are approximately one million acres of almond trees in California yielding 2,270 pounds of almonds per acre for a total of 2.27 billion pounds of almonds per year.
- Nearly 75% of California almond farms are 100 acres or less.
- After pollinating almonds honey bee colonies move throughout the United States, pollinating over 90 other crops.
- Each worker bee that is sent to pollinate almonds will account for the development of about 20 almonds in her life.
- It takes approximately 1 gallon of water to produce a single almond.
- Almond milk sales grew by 250% between 2011 - 2015
- Almonds are the #1 US specialty export crop.
- Almonds are shipped to 90 countries, Spain being the #1 export market
- 80% of all almonds in the world come from California and there are only 5 places around the world that satisfy the necessary climate to grow almonds.
- The production of almonds adds \$11 billion annually to California's economy.
- Almond trees are growing three crops - the kernel which we eat is a high protein food, hulls are used for livestock feed for dairy cows and shells which go to alternative farming uses such as livestock bedding, so nothing goes to waste.

Information from the Almond Board of California, Bee Informed Partnership



WOULD YOU LIKE A FREE COPY OF THIS BEE YARD SIGN?

Take a few minutes and respond to the state survey and it will be sent to you free of charge. Sign is 12" x 12" on corrugated plastic

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdvXoaUgz1JS2LelfkNndf_gleq82TW03bXxGQuT_SaGrQ09Q/viewform

Book Review

Splits and Varroa
by William Hesbach
Peacock Press 2016

Without a doubt the topic of conversation I hear most about when talking with other beekeepers are questions about what actions, remedies or efforts I am using to combat the Varroa problem. I picked up a book recently that I would like to recommend. It's available on Amazon and the title is **Splits**

and Varroa an Introduction to Splitting Hives as Part of Varroa Control" by William Hesbach. At only 39 pages it's more of a pamphlet than a book. The author talks about the life cycle of Varroa, the option of caging the queen, and critical dates for using the splitting method in order to control the exponential growth of Varroa. The author does not give any new information about the subject, its value is in the organized and concise outline of the subject in an easy to read and reference format.

Lynn Heslinga

Tips For March Management Madness

EQUIPMENT: Last chance to build new frames/foundation before packages arrive to replace those over 4 years old. Paint new frames with a splash of green as this is the queen color for 2019. You can keep track of how old the frames are into the future.

CLEANING: Dead out should be scraped clean of burr comb. Do not forget to completely scrape clean the bottom board and brush and wash the bottom screen. Keep front door blocked with entrance reducer or mouse guard to prevent robbing before the new package arrives. Leaving a frame of honey on each outer side is a bonus for the new girls.

FEEDING: This is the most critical month for stores in overwintered hives. Strong colonies will have a laying queen with new brood (larva) needing to be fed. Check the weight of the hive by hefting. Solid sugar/bricks/fondant should continue to be fed until the weather warms (.50 degrees) and bees can take cleansing flights on a regular basis. Starting with a 2:1 syrup is a good idea but might have to wait closer to the end of the month. Then switch to 1:1 syrup to encourage the queen to continue to lay. Providing a nibble of a pollen protein substitute is a good plan if available. Keep the piece small (1/4 patty) until consumed making sure to keep any small hive beetles at bay.

WINTER INSULATION: Do not be in a hurry to unwrap your hive but use the weather as a guide. Consistent warm weather above 45 to 50 degrees might be used as a guide to start the process

Claire Desilets



Plant For Your Bees

A few weeks ago, the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension sent out a newsletter to subscribers with information on their annual Native Plant Sale. Last year, Russell Norton, Horticulture & Agriculture Educator at the extension came to talk about native plants. There were many pollinator plants that he discussed. Some of these are available at this year's sale:

Service berry
Viburnum
Winterberry inkberry
Mountain mint
Goldenrod

<https://files.constantcontact.com/f8065433101/81cb354b-46e5-414e-b0b6-97a0d1395ad8.pdf>

Joe McClure

Bee School Grads



As our class attendees embark on their new hobby, we thought it might be helpful to provide a corner of the monthly Buzzwords with a few helpful tasks. Ideally, contributions could come from our volunteer mentors who might encounter valuable information. Suggestions will also come from hints published in the newly acquired Bee Culture "BEEKeeping" magazine. This is a quarterly specifically targeting your first three years of keeping honeybee colonies.

Claire Desilets

Winter Hive Update

I looked into my 2 hives Friday, March 1st. The wind was low so I took a chance at 40 degrees to see if they needed any sugar bricks. They still had about half of the top frames covered but were not very close to the bricks. So I moved the sugar closer to the cluster hoping that it is close enough without squishing them while moving it forward. One hive had a bigger than a softball size cluster and the other one with a little larger. I didn't count the seams as I didn't want to leave the hive open any longer than needed. I had the smoker going, but really didn't need it. However, a couple bees did fly out as I hurriedly replaced the inner cover.

I hope you have had a chance to check your hives on these windless days to make sure they do not starve as the queen should have begun to lay more eggs. As the weather warms up the bees will be eating more so keep an eye on the conditions in your hives. I filled the whole top of the frames in the fall with sugar bricks with a little space in between each. That way no matter where the bees decide to cluster for the winter there will be bricks near them. At this time of the year, though, they have eaten what is close to them, so I needed to move the bricks closer. On a warmer day I will fill in the entire top just for insurance that they don't run out of food as they expand the size of the cluster. I will also add a small piece of pollen the next time I open the hive in a couple weeks as they need pollen at this time of the year to feed the brood. I hope this helps some of you in knowing what to look for in your hives at this time of the year.

Marte Ayers

Recipies

Orange Honey Glazed Cookies

cookie ingredients:

- 2/3 cup salted butter, softened
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 large egg
- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated orange zest
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Frosting Ingredients:

- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 3 to 4 tablespoons freshly squeezed orange juice

Directions:

Heat oven to 350°F.

Combine butter, brown sugar and sugar in bowl. Beat at medium speed until creamy. Add honey and egg; continue beating until well mixed, scraping bowl if necessary. Add all remaining cookie ingredients; beat at low speed until well mixed.

Shape dough into 1 1/4-inch balls. Place 2 inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake 8-10 minutes or until edges start to brown. Cool 1 minute on cookie sheets; remove to cooling rack. Cool completely.

Combine powdered sugar and enough orange juice for desired spreading consistency in bowl; mix until smooth. Spread frosting over cooled cookies.

Original Recipe Source: <https://www.landolakes.com/recipe/18642/honey-orange-cookies/>

RESOURCES

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

Officers		
President	Michael D. Smith	michaeldgetsmail@gmail.com
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