



SEMBA NEWS

Vol. 14 No. 3

Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association

March/April 2004

Upcoming Events

April 6

Oakland Bee Club Meeting, EL Johnson Nature Center, (see below for details).

May 4

Schoolcraft Bee Club Meeting, Lower Waterman Center (see below for details).

(“See article “Michigan State Fair Dates Set”)

“Preparing for Queen Rearing in June”
Earl Hoffman: Master Beekeeper,
Bee Class Coordinator

Refreshments are welcome

Important Notice: Please mark meeting dates on your calendar now. The next newsletter won't be published until mid May.

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MICHIGAN STATE FAIR DATES SET

The dates for the 2004 Michigan State Fair are Wednesday, August 11 through Sunday August 22, announced John C. Hertel, general manager of the Michigan State Fair and Exposition Center. (Ed. Note: Anyone using the 2004 MBA calendar should correct the dates listed therein.)

The decision to start the fair earlier was a unanimous one made by the Michigan State Fair Advisory Board in recognition of the early back-to-school dates that have impacted family attendance in recent years. “We decided that by opening the fair earlier, before school begins, families will be able to come and enjoy the fair during the day and stay later in the evening,” Hertel said. “We believe the earlier start will grant us warm, dry, sunny days for our 12-day run in 2004.”

The Miracle of Life exhibit will continue to entertain visitors at the 2004 fair.

-- Michigan Farm News, February 29, 2004

OAKLAND BEE CLUB MEETING

When: Tuesday, April 6, 2004 at 7:30 p.m.

Where: E.L. Johnson Nature Center, 3325 Franklin Rd., Bloomfield Township

Program: “Spring Management”
Ed Nowak: Master Beekeeper,
SEMBA past president

Refreshments are welcome!

SCHOOLCRAFT BEE CLUB MEETING

When: Tuesday, May 4, 2004 at 7:30 p.m.

Where: Lower Waterman Center, Schoolcraft College, 18600 Haggerty Rd., Livonia

Program: “Preparing Your Entries For the State Fair”
SEMBA State Fair Committee

SEMBA MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

An application renewal form is enclosed in this newsletter for those whose address labels denote **A04**. Membership costs are the same as last year-- \$10.00 for an individual, \$15.00 for a family. Anyone who pays SEMBA membership may join MBA (the State organization) for a reduced fee of \$25.00 for an individual, \$30.00 for a family, (a family includes individuals under 18 years of age living in the same household).

HONEY HOUSE REGULATION UPDATE

Since the last SEMBA Newsletter was published, there have been further developments in working with the MDA Food and Dairy Division to establish guidelines for honey house regulation.

SEMBA members Dick Miller, Ed Nowak and Bill Sirr met in Ed Nowak's honey house with Susan Trombley from the MDA Food and Dairy Division. The SEMBA committee reviewed the honey extraction procedures with Ms. Trombley. Following this meeting, Roger Sutherland had telephone conversations regarding possible honey-house exemptions with Karen Butler, Susan Trombley's supervisor.

Recently, Ed Nowak composed a set of proposed honey- house guidelines that have been distributed to the SEMBA committee members. Since then, these proposed honey-house guidelines have been revised by Roger and Mary Sutherland using input from other beekeepers.

Attached to this newsletter is the resultant draft proposal for all beekeepers to scrutinize (correct, make suggestions, etc.) before the proposal is submitted to the MDA Food and Dairy Division for further discussion. Please help us develop sound and sensible guidelines that we all can live with.
-- *Roger Sutherland*

CHECK MITE+ AND APILIFE APPROVED

Mike Hansen, Michigan State Apiarist, has been notified that a Section 18, emergency use permit has been approved for use by Michigan Beekeepers.

For Checkmite+ the effective dates for legal use are February 1, 2004 through February 1, 2005. "For use only as authorized in Michigan by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under Section 18 of F.I.F.R.A. This label expires February 1, 2005".

For Apilife, a mixture of Thymol, eucalyptus oil, and L. Menthol, the effective date is February 24, 2004 and will expire on November 8, 2004.

To obtain the complete label, e-mail Mike Hansen at: hansenmg@michigan.gov

NEW BEE CLUB BEING FORMED

SEMBA member Nancy Schliebe of Allenton is forming a new bee club in the Lapeer-Dryden, MI area. The club, known as the Seven Ponds Bee Club, will meet at the Seven Ponds Nature Center in Dryden and hopes to become a chapter of SEMBA.

At their organizational meeting on January 27, 2004, twenty-three beekeepers attended including several SEMBA members. At the first bee club meeting, two attendees joined SEMBA. They are:

Michael Mercier—Dryden, MI
Joe Pekala—Imlay City, MI

If you live in the Lapeer-Dryden area and wish to know more about the club, please contact Nancy Schliebe at 810-395-7379.

HIGHLIGHTS OF SEMBA WINTER MEETING MINUTES from SECRETARY ANN KERWIN

The meeting held on Sunday, February 8, 2004. Forty-three members attended.

The business meeting conducted by President Ron Forfinski began with the reading of the October 19, 2003 SEMBA minutes and the treasurer's report. Other business items covered included:

Motion: Moved and passed to spend up to \$500 on bee- school publicity for 2005.

Motion: Moved and passed to form a State Fair Committee with Dick Miller and Bill Sirr as co-chairs. Dyanne Tracy, Ann Kerwin, Earl Hoffman and Jim Goodrich will also serve on the committee.

Motion: Moved and passed to put the SEMBA owned public address system into the bee school silent auction.

Motion: Moved and passed to set the bee-class tuition at \$175 per student. An advance payment of \$700 to cover bee-class expenses will be made by SEMBA.

Motion: Moved and passed to change the name of the annual bee school to the SEMBA Annual Beekeepers' Conference. The bee class will meet to choose their own title.

Reports: Keith Larzar reported on the Bee School and asked for volunteers to help. It was suggested that people bring in photos of extracting and other bee operations to be posted on a bulletin board.

Bill Sirr reported on a bill in the Michigan State Legislature regarding control of bears. He urged all of us to call our state representatives and senators to support the bill.

Ron Forfinski reported that the SEMBA Summer Picnic would be held at Island Lake Park on July 18, 2004.

Several people reported on the new Bioterrorism rules published in 2003. A booklet entitled "Keeping Food Safe" and a Food Facility Registration Form were distributed.

COMBINING HIVES – FALL MANAGEMENT

The other day was nice, some sun and cold. I thought I would take a look at the bees. So I drove out to the property to check on the girl's. Found out real quick why I have a 4x4 I made it to the barn. Common sense or was it 18" of snow, told me to forget the out yard. So I checked a late swarm I had been trying to get through the winter. Okay why was it dead? Not enough bees or honey maybe both or something else. Last fall I added a feeder jar of syrup. Gone! Good when I picked up the inner cover there was a small Cluster very dead. I took the hive into the barn to see what had gone wrong and the feeder jar had leaked; the bottom board was covered with dead bees and syrup. The cluster was in the front top of the hive. They had starved. Not 3/4" from the cluster was, yes honey lots of it. It was just to darn cold for the bee's to move over to it. Could this hive have been saved, maybe? All I needed to do was to have united it with another weak colony. Now I have 2 dead hives rather than 1 strong one. If we don't learn from our past mistakes we are bound to repeat them....

Yours for better beekeeping

-- Bill Sirr

FERAL COLONIES

If you are a Beekeeper, sooner or later, someone will ask you to help him or her remove a feral colony of bees. My best advice is to try and discourage them from doing it. I grew up in eastern Kentucky helping my dad do this. He loved to hunt bee trees. He always cut the tree, spilt it open, took out the bees and brood, and took them home. That is how he acquired new beehives. I never knew him to buy any bees. He did put up lots of swarms from his hives. Looking back I know it would have been cheaper and a whole lot safer to buy package bees.

I have had two requests to remove or help remove two feral hives in the last two years. One was under a friend's father's deck. This one I removed fairly easy. I knew it was the wrong time of year, but I did it anyway. The queen was killed when I dropped them all in the hive. I later combined them with a weak hive. The weak hive came through the winter in good shape, so I split it in the spring. Any time you are giving bees a new home it should be done early in the year, at least before swarm season is over. This gives the bees time to build up and hopefully store

food to live through the winter. This is where the old saying comes in:

A swarm in May is worth a load of Hay.

A swarm in June is worth a silver spoon.

A swarm in July is not worth a blue tailed fly.

The other swarm I helped with was in a tree. They were using a hole about eight feet above the ground. This high up they shouldn't be a threat to anyone. I tried to talk the tree owner out of removing them and I failed. I loaned him a bow hunting tree stand, one that straps to the tree. He set his hive on this. He put a funnel made from screen over the hole. The bees went out through the small funnel end. When they couldn't find their way back they went into the hive. This trapping process takes about six weeks. You always lose the queen because she is going to stay in the tree. Carrying a hive down a ladder can be a little tricky, especially when they are all old worker bees with no queen. He took them home and combined them with a weak queen-right hive. He may have gotten \$40.00 worth of bees for his effort. All the time, effort, and risk involved far exceeded the price of a pack of bees.

If you were not removing bees for a friend, I would say to charge about 10 times what a good package would cost. $\$60.00 \times 10 = \600.00 . The higher up you have to work the higher the cost. Did you ever try to tie brood in a frame with gloves on; bees flying in your face; honey dripping off your elbow; all while standing on the top of a 20' ladder? Hey, what happened to my ground helper? No thanks, don't call me! If you do take on such a job, get a written contract stating that you are not responsible for putting the house back together. Good luck!
-- Winn Harless

GENE CHANGES TIED TO BEHAVIOR IN BEES

WASHINGTON (Reuters)—A honeybee turns on and off 40 percent of her genes as she matures from being a "nurse" to a forager in her short, busy life, U.S. researchers said.

The findings suggest that genes and behavior are more closely related than commonly believed—that nature and nurture are closely entwined, the researchers said. "Some of these changes are a result of growing up," said study leader Gene Robinson, a professor of entomology and director of the Neuroscience Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "About 40 percent of the genes change as the bee grows up and changes from taking care of baby bees in the hive to graduating and becoming a forger," Robinson added. "These changes are so consistent from individual to individual that a computer program can look at the expression

profiles and characterize the individual as a nurse bee or a forager.”

Robinson’s graduate student Charles Whitfield and colleague Anne-Marie Cziko analyzed 5,500 different active genes in honeybees for their study, published in the journal Science. They created their own gene chip for the study—a plate on which chemicals react with active genetic products, producing a luminescent glow when exposed to certain lights. They could track the development of 60 different bees as some genes switched off and others switched on.

“The pace at which a bee grows up is based on its needs, its family, its colony,” Robinson said. Honeybees live in colonies dominated by females with males used only for mating with the queen. The bees mature into new roles over a period of two to three weeks. Nurse bees care for the young for their first two to three weeks of

life, then shift to foraging for nectar and pollen. But if a colony is short of foragers, for example, some of the nurse bees will mature more quickly. All of this happens fast. A honeybee typically lives just six weeks. “They pretty much fly themselves to death,” Robinson said. Robinson said it is hard to know how much of this information translates to humans, who of course mature more slowly and in more complex ways than bees. But on the genetic level, humans have plenty in common with bees. Many of the genes they looked at have counterparts in humans and other animals. One example is the MAP kinase kinase gene, which is involved in learning and memory. In bees, this gene becomes more active as they become foragers.

Our thanks to Dyanne Tracy for submitting this article.

SEMBA Bargain Corner

For Sale:

- For Sale: New deep and medium supers, frames, bottom boards, inner and outer covers and New 1 and 5 gallon buckets with lids. Please **call Keith Lazar (H) 248-626-2483 (P) 248-815-5522.**
- For sale: 6-frame motorized extractor, uncapping knife, gates, nylon draining bags, hive carrier, supers (all sizes) w/drawn comb, Queen excluders, bottom boards, covers, hive feeders, hive tools, frame grippers, smoker, bee suits, gloves, new foundation and much, much more. Would like to sell as a package. **Call: Alfred Noall 810-733-0352.**
- Bottom boards, inner covers, hive entrance screens for transport, also new design bottom boards with screens for varroa mite separation and inspection. Varroa mite assembly for converting your present boards. 8 1/4" grid hardware cloth, 36" wide by the foot or 18" x 16 1/4" pieces also for sale. **Please call Michael Kolodziej at 734-425-1396 or e mail Mziejwood@aol.com**

Wanted:

- George Melcher, 4527 7 Mile Rd., South Lyon, MI would like bees placed on his property. **Call George at 248-437-6291.**
- Bee’s wax wanted, **call W. Harless at 734-453-2914 or 734-451-9824.**

Note: Ads in Bargain Corner are free to SEMBA members. To place an ad, contact Susanne at souxiseq2@msn.com or phone 248-476-4991 or Roger Sutherland at rsuther@hotmail.com. * **Ads will be run for two consecutive newsletters.**

Southeastern Michigan
Beekeepers’ Association
Organized April 1, 1934


Oakland Beekeepers’ Club


Schoolcraft Beekeepers’ Club



SEMBA Membership
5488 Warren Road
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