



SEMBA NEWS

Volume 16 Number 2

Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association
February 2006

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 18
68th SEMBA Beekeepers' Conference

February 28 Seven Ponds Bee Club

March 10-11 ANR Beekeeping Program

68TH SEMBA BEEKEEPERS' CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, February 18, 2006
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

SCHOOLCRAFT COLLEGE
VisTaTech CENTER
18600 HAGGERTY ROAD (between 6 & 7 Mile Rd.)
LIVONIA, MICHIGAN

Please enter through the VisTaTech Center entrance

Parking is available in the North Campus Parking Lot

You are invited to attend the 68th Annual SEMBA Beekeepers' Conference. This one-day event is designed for all beekeepers as well as those who are considering keeping honey bees for the first time. There is no registration fee for SEMBA members. Registration fee at the door for non-members is \$10.00 for individuals and \$15.00 for families. No pre-registration is necessary.

Major speakers are Larry Connor, PhD, apiculturalist and writer for *Bee Culture* and Katie Wharton, Michigan State University student. Workshop sessions, featuring a variety of beekeeping topics, will be conducted by Master Beekeepers and others who have kept bees for many years.

Specially featured again this year is a series of beginning workshops, each dealing with a different aspect of beekeeping, to help the new beekeeper get started.

BEEKEEPERS' CONFERENCE

PROGRAM

8:00-9:00 a.m. -----Registration
9:00 a.m.-----Beekeeping Video
9:20 a.m.---Welcome by Keith Lazar, Roger Sutherland

9:30 a.m. "What You Should Know About Drones and Queens"
Larry Connor, PhD, keynote speaker

10:25 a.m. Introduction to sessions – Roger Sutherland

10:30 a.m. First Concurrent Session

1. Follow-up with keynote speaker
2. Beginner's Seminar Session I – Seven Ponds Club
3. Identifying a Healthy Hive – Sue Yates
4. What's New in Equipment – Dadant and Sons

11:25 a.m. "How SEMBA Members Got Started"

Noon: SEMBA Potluck or lunch on your own at local restaurants

1:10 p.m. "Decision Making by Egg-Laying Queens"
Katie Wharton, MSU, keynote speaker

2:15 p.m. Introduction to concurrent sessions -Ted Hysen

2:20 p.m. Second Concurrent Session

1. Follow-up discussion with keynote speaker
2. Beginner's Seminar Session II – Ed Nowak
3. Spring Management – Larry Connor
4. Creams, lotions and lip balms using beeswax --
Judy Schmaltz

3:15 p.m. Third Concurrent Session

1. Beginner's Seminar Session III – Winn Harless
2. Wax, From Frame to Candle – Larry Yates
3. Honey, From Frame to Package – Mike
Siarkowski
4. Making Your Own Equipment – Fritz Sanders

4:10 p.m. Concluding Session

Questions and Answers and Hive-Raffle Award

SPECIAL FEATURES OF CONFERENCE

DOOR PRIZES

All bee-conference attendees will receive a door-prize ticket when they register.

BEE HIVE & PACKAGE BEE RAFFLE

A complete hive, donated by Dadant & Sons of Albion, Michigan, will be raffled. Tickets for the raffle, at \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00, may be purchased at the beekeeping conference.

POTLUCK LUNCH INFORMATION

A potluck lunch will be held at noon. If you wish to participate, bring a food item (with serving utensils), which will serve six to eight persons. Also, bring your own table service including plates, silverware, and cups. SEMBA will provide tea and coffee. Please label any utensils that you bring with your name so that they may be easily identified.

BEEKEEPING SALES, DISPLAYS AND CRAFTS

If you have displays or crafts that you wish to display or sell, we encourage you to bring them. Please call Roger Sutherland, 734-668-8568, to reserve table space (no charge). Dadant & Sons will have a beekeeping supply sales table.

SILENT AUCTION

Any beekeeping-related item may be placed in the Silent Auction. Bidding takes place throughout the day during the beekeeping conference. You may keep the profits or you may consider sharing the proceeds with SEMBA to benefit the association.

THE 2006 BEEKEEPING CLASS

The hands-on beekeeping class, initiated in 1997 by Master Beekeeper Ed Nowak, will be offered again by him this year. In preparation for this class, participants are encouraged to attend the three Beginner's Seminar workshops conducted during the Beekeepers' Conference at Schoolcraft College on February 18, 2006. Details will be available at the conference or you may contact Ed Nowak at 734-422-0508, epnowak@earthlink.net. The complete syllabus is available online at <http://www.sembabees.org>

SEMBA LOSES VALUED MEMBER

We were saddened to learn of the death of long-time SEMBA member Richard Miller who died at home on December 22, 2005. In the next newsletter, we will include more details in memoriam to Dick who has served not only as SEMBA president but also in many other ways.

A memorial service is planned for 11 a.m., Saturday, January 28, 2006 at the First Methodist Church, 23 East Adams (corner of Woodard Ave.) in Detroit, MI.

FREMONT AREA FOUNDATION CONTRIBUTIONS

Memorial contributions to the Fremont Area Community Foundation provide funds to aid in beekeeping research in Michigan.

The Fremont Area Community Foundation currently matches memorial gifts made to endowment funds at the Foundation within one year of a decedent's death \$1 for \$1 up to \$500 per donor household per year.

Memorial contribution checks to the Foundation should be made payable to the Fremont Area Community Foundation, 4428 W. 48th Street, P.O. Box B, Fremont, MI 49412, with a note specifying the decedent's name, date of death and that the gift is to be earmarked for the Michigan Beekeepers' Association Fund. Also, include the name and address of the person or family to be notified of the contribution.

SEMBA will be making memorial donations in memory of SEMBA members Billy Miller who died last June and Richard Miller who died in December.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY KELLOGG CENTER – MARCH 10-11, 2006

The Michigan Beekeepers' Association (MBA) invites beginner or experienced beekeepers to attend their Beekeeping Symposium and Spring Meeting, to be held in the Kellogg Center, MSU, on March 10 and 11.

NEW SEMBA MENTOR

SEMBA member Rich Wieske of Royal Oak has agreed to be a mentor for beginning beekeepers in the Royal Oak and Detroit area. Contact Rich at 248-705-5181 or e-mail rtv2@wowway.com. Please let SEMBA know if you, too, would like to be a mentor.

ARE HONEY BEES NATIVE TO THE U.S.?

We are always told that Honey Bees are not native to the U.S. and were first introduced to Jamestown, VA in 1607 and Plymouth, MA in the 1620s. But the following information from "*The Pueblo Revolt*" by Robert Silverberg published by the University of Nebraska Press seems to refute this belief:

"On March 2, 1599, Onate sent an optimistic report on the colony's prospects to the viceroy in Mexico City. He describes New Mexico as a land abounding in flesh of buffalo, goats with hideous horns, and turkeys; and in the Hopi District there is game of all kinds."

Onate goes on to describe many other animals that he sees including bees, so beekeepers will be interested in what he said: "Towards the west there are bees and very white honey, of which I am sending a sample".

Submitted by Ann Kerwin

150 YEARS AGO: DARN TOOTIN'

Massachusetts beekeeper J.C. Stoddard patents the calliope, October 9, 1855. Fond of the sound of locomotive whistles, Stoddard affixes 15 of them of varying sizes on a steam chest, with a music box cylinder to open the valves. Though his hometown quickly bans it, the calliope becomes the signature sound of riverboats and circus parades. Stoddard also patents a hay rake in 1879 and a fire escape in 1884. He died in 1902.

Submitted by Roger Hoopingarner

URBAN APICULTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Report #1

Kent Stiles' report # 2 will be printed in the next issue of the SEMBA News.

(Please see Nov/Dec 2005 SEMBA Newsletter article titled "Letter from a Beekeeper Wannabee" for background information concerning this program.)

The following is the first of many regular articles that I hope to write over the coming months related to my "Urban Apiculture Development Program". These articles will not be formally organized nor contain a full set of program management type information. Rather, my intention is to provide as much useful information for new beekeepers as possible and to encourage related questions, and other feedback, from all SEMBA members. Since I would like to have these reports be a feature of the newsletter that you can expect to see in every newsletter, and I would like to make it as easy as possible for the editor to fit them into the newsletter, it will be a while before I am able to discuss all aspects of this program. However, I will put the same short summary of the program and my personal contact information at the end of every article. (See below.)

As I indicated in last month's newsletter, I presented an overview of the program to the 2005 SEMBA Annual meeting and, not surprisingly, one of the first points of discussion was what I meant by "urban". My hope is to deal with the impact of practicing beekeeping in all types of local geographical environments, but with the focus on the impact of the trend toward increasing urbanization. However, for practical reasons, I will be focusing initially on "suburban" environments, because I live in this kind of environment and, I believe, it is the kind of environment where most other new SEMBA beekeepers live who would be interested in this program.

For instance, one of the first things that I researched was whether there were any ordinances in Rochester against beekeeping. I found that there weren't. However, I am aware that it might only take a few complaints from my neighbors for city council to pass an ordinance against beekeeping in order to "solve the problem" quickly. I also discussed my intention with my two closest neighbors, and my wife, of course, and found that they would all be concerned, for the usual reasons.

I believe that some of the ways that beekeepers could deal with this possibility ahead of time is for them to form an informally organized (similar to Schoolcraft, Oakland and Seven Ponds) city-wide beekeepers' group as soon as possible. This group would make itself known to the city government and other residents of the city and indicate its desire to respond to any concerns that may arise involving the beekeeping practices of any individual member.

Of course, the first problem that I ran into is how to find out who in Rochester is practicing beekeeping within the city and also who might be interested in doing so in the future. I expect to be able to recommend other ways of doing this in a future report, but I already have what I think is an ideal way to do so available to me. I was recently asked by my local (Rochester Eccentric) newspaper to write regular articles of a kind that will allow me to include an invitation to city residents to contact me about starting a local beekeepers' group.

Much more to come!

The purpose of the Urban Apiculture Development Program is to advance the practice of beekeeping by examining the impact of changes in the context within which beekeeping is practiced, which have occurred over the last several decades, particularly that of urbanization, and develop and recommend appropriate changes that beekeepers might make to improve their own beekeeping activities. If you would like to contribute to this program or have questions, or other feedback, in response to these articles, please call me at (248) 652-4031 or send me an email at kstiles@exphysica.com.

CREAMED HONEY—A BIT OF HISTORY AND THE HOW TO MAKE IT

Anyone who likes honey knows how quickly it can become crystallized. This crystallization occurs because most honeys are supersaturated solutions containing more dissolved material than can remain in solution. This natural aging process is evident in honey left on the shelf until it granulates into the consistency of building sand. In 1928, a man by the name of E.J. Dyce developed a system of producing finely granulated honey by grinding crystallized honey. (The smaller the crystals or granules formed, the smoother the texture of honey.) Mr. Dyce took advantage of honey's aging process to make spun (creamed) honey - the key factor being fine grinding. You can take advantage of the Dyce process to make your own creamed honey.

The first step in making spun honey is to obtain a container of commercially-produced creamed honey from the store. This is the starter or seed honey. If you're converting a three-pound container of liquid honey, you will need about five ounces of starter. The starter should be about 10 percent of the total weight of liquid honey. The starter is essential because it is fine grained. (In regular crystallization, the liquid honey would crystallize into coarse crystals; the starter keeps the crystals fine.)

Pour the honey you wish to convert into an ovenproof container. Place the container in a pan of hot water and heat. When the honey has reached about 140 degrees F, strain it through fine nylon cloth to remove any material that might affect the crystallization process, then refrigerate and cool to about 75 degrees F.

Next, add the starter (the seed honey) to the cooled liquid honey, and mix it in thoroughly. Allow this mixed honey to sit for several hours, then skim off any material that rises to the surface. Pour into containers and store at 57 degrees F until the honey has crystallized. At this temperature, it should take three to seven days to set up. The faster it sets up, the smoother the final product will be. The creamed honey can then be stored at room temperature.

The combination of the smooth granulated seed and the cool temperature causes the honey to granulate quickly. The temperature causes rapid granulation and the small-sized seed causes a smooth granulation to occur. Once the honey has granulated, if it is too hard, the honey can be conditioned by placing it at a temperature of 85 degrees for a week or 10 days. This causes the granulated honey to become much softer and once it has reached this state it can be kept at room temperature and will maintain its soft characteristics. However, if the moisture content of the honey that you mix with the starter is about 17 ½ percent, you won't have hard granulated honey.

Source: *MBA Newsletter, Summer 1988.*

Judy Schmaltz contributed to this article.

2004-05 MICHIGAN WINTER COLONY- LOSS SURVEY

An e-mail winter colony-loss survey of Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association (SEMBA) members was conducted November 30 to December 10, 2005. Forty-six beekeepers responded. The combined number of colonies alive in the fall of 2004, for the forty-six individuals, was 682. The reported number of colonies lost during the winter and early spring was 319. This represents a 47% loss for S. E. Michigan. The majority of beekeepers surveyed are hobby beekeepers.

2005 HONEY-YIELD SURVEY

An e-mail honey-yield survey of SEMBA members was conducted October 17, 2005 to November 1, 2005. Fifty-one individuals responded. Also, a honey-yield survey was conducted during the Michigan Beekeepers' Association (MBA) annual conference on August 28th. The results of the two surveys are combined in the summary below:

Number of beekeepers surveyed.....78
Total number of colonies maintained.....2726
Total honey yield for 2726 colonies.....148,106 pounds
State average honey yield per colony.....54.33 pounds

YIELD BY MBA Region
Region 1 (southwest Michigan).....26 pound average
Region 2 (south central Michigan)..... 46 pound average
Region 3 (southeast Michigan).....50 pound average
Region 4 (west central Michigan).....46 pound average
Region 5 (northern lower peninsula)...100 pound average
Region 6 (east central Michigan).....29 pound average
Region 7 (upper peninsula).....no report

BARGAIN CORNER

For Sale:

- Bottom boards, inner covers, also new design bottom boards with screens for Varroa mite separation and inspection. Other equipment also available. Competitive prices. CLOSING OUT. **Call or e-mail Michael Kolodziej at 734-425-1396, Mziejwood@aol.com.**
- Bee blower and package bees from Wilbank's Apiary, April 2006. **Call Blanche Barber, 248-634-7017.**
- Package Bees arriving in April 2006 this year from California. Source is Koehnen and Sons in Glenn California. Their web Site is "koehnen.com". If interested **contact Jerry Dunbar, ASAP, 586-770-9953.**
- **Shawn Shubel** will be delivering package bees from Georgia. Tentative arrival April 24. SEMBA members will receive a \$5 discount. Call Mike Siarkowski 517-545-0824 for details.
- **Keith Lazar** has a complete line of new hive construction items. Call C 248-361-1710, H 248-815-5522

Wanted:

- Electric uncapping knives that no longer work - **Call Larry Yates at 248-649-5078.**
- Beekeeper from Peru, South America, with experience in maintaining 200 hives is seeking beekeeping employment in Michigan. Contact **Roger Sutherland, 734-668-8568** for more information.
- Extracting equipment. Contact **Dan Bartley, 248-505-8166.**

Note: ads in the Bargain Corner are free to SEMBA members. To place an ad, contact Susanne at souxsieq2@msn.com, or phone 248-476-4991 or Roger Sutherland rsuther@hotmail.com.