



# SEMBA NEWS

Volume 18 Number 6 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association  
September 2008

## SEMBA PLANNING MEETING

When: Wednesday, September 3, at **7:00 p.m.**  
Where: Schoolcraft College, Lower Waterman Center, 18600 Haggerty Rd., Livonia, MI.  
Agenda: Planning for the October 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, setting meeting dates for 2008 events, review of the 2008 Michigan State Fair, budget decisions. **All SEMBA members are invited to attend.**

## SCHOOLCRAFT BEE CLUB MEETING

When: Tuesday, September 9, at **7:30 p.m.**  
Where: Schoolcraft College, Lower Waterman Center, 18600 Haggerty Road, Livonia, MI.  
Program:  
"Beekeepers and Insurance"  
Keith DeZwann,  
Insurance specialist  
"Beekeepers can earn \$ selling Carbon Credits"  
Judy Durfy  
"A Monthly Honey Bee Podcast"  
Randall Durfy

Note! See the articles on Carbon Credits and the Honey Bee Podcast in this newsletter.

A refractometer will be available to check the moisture content of your newly extracted honey. Also, your honey can be color graded using the Spectronic 20.

*Refreshments are welcome*

## OAKLAND BEE CLUB MEETING

When: Tuesday, October 7, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.  
Where: E.L. Johnson Nature Center, 3325 Franklin Rd., Bloomfield Township, MI.  
Program: Queen Rearing in Michigan  
Rich Wieske - graduate of the SEMBA-sponsored Queen-Rearing class taught by Dr. Larry Connor.

*Refreshments are welcome*

## SUMMER 2008 SEMBA PICNIC REPORT

More than 80 SEMBA members and their

families attended the SEMBA Summer Picnic on July 19 at Groeb Farms in Onsted, MI. The following letter of appreciation was sent to Groeb Farms President, Ernest Groeb Jr.:

Dear Ernie,

Many thanks for providing such a wonderful summer picnic for the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association. All the planning and effort accomplished by you, Sue, Donna and Jeanne is greatly appreciated.

Many of those attending were new SEMBA members so it was good that they were able to hear you tell the history of Groeb Farms and to see firsthand the many facets of your operation. You made a superb presentation.

Groeb Farms has been very supportive of our events and activities throughout the years and we look forward to maintaining a good relationship in the future.

### A NEW PRODUCT OF THE HIVE

Are bees the new Silkworms? They produce 'High Performance Silk'. We all know that moths and butterflies, particularly silkworms, are well known producers of silk. And we all know spiders use it for their webs. But what about bees? Surely this most advanced of social insects wouldn't be found wanting when other insects are aware of the versatility of silk? Well bees produce it too. Australian researcher Dr. Tara Sutherland and her group from CSIRO Entomology are looking at silks produced by other insects and the results of their recent work have been published in *Molecular Biology and Evolution*, Vol. 24, pg. 2424.

"Most people are unaware that bees and ants produce silk but they do and its molecular structure is very different to that of the large protein, sheet structure of moth and spider silk. The cocoon and nest silks we looked at consist of coiled coils - a protein structural arrangement where multiple helices wind around each other. This structure produces a light weight, very tough silk," she says. "We had already identified the honey bee silk genes," says Dr Sutherland, "and now we have identified and sequenced the silk genes of bumblebees, bulldog ants and weaver ants, and compared

these to honey bee silk genes. This let us identify the essential design elements for the assembly and function of coiled coil silks". "To do this, we identified and compared the coiled coil proteins from cocoon and nest silks from the social Hymenoptera (bees, ants and wasps)," she says. Bees and ants produce high-performance silk and, although the silks in all these species are produced by the larvae and by the same glands, they use them differently. Honey bee larvae produce silk to reinforce the wax cells in which they pupate, bulldog ant larvae spin solitary cocoons for protection during pupation, bumble bee larvae spin cocoons within wax hives (the cocoons are reused to store pollen and honey), and weaver ants use their larvae as 'tools' to fasten fresh plant leaves together to form large communal nests. These groups of insects have evolved silks that are very tough and stable in comparison to the classical sheet silks and it is probable that the evolution of this remarkable material has underpinned the success of the social Hymenoptera.

~Source: Apis-UK, January, 2008

### **MICHIGAN BEEKEEPERS WITH ACREAGE MAY EARN \$ SELLING CARBON CREDITS**

If there are any beekeepers that have planted grasses or trees on acreage they own, they may qualify for Carbon Credits that can be sold on the Chicago Climate Exchange. In most cases, alfalfa and clovers (great nectar plants) are counted as "grasses", and wind break tree plantings meet "soil offset" requirements.

There are a number of details that need to be reviewed and they can be obtained by visiting the link for the Michigan Conservation & Climate Initiative:

<http://www.michiganclimate.org/>

New Pool Open for Carbon Credits (the fifth) is tentatively scheduled to close on September 15th, 2008. The following is the link to the enrollment form:

<http://michiganclimate.org/enrollment.php>

SEMBA member Judy Durfy is enrolled in the program and is encouraging other beekeepers to consider enrolling. She will be presenting a program on the "Carbon Credits" at the September 9<sup>th</sup> Schoolcraft Bee Club meeting. Judy can be contacted at 734-671-1208, or e-mail [durfyj@dteenergy.com](mailto:durfyj@dteenergy.com)

### **DEALING WITH THOSE PESKY ANTS**

I'm sure somewhere, someone has an effective treatment for dealing with those pesky tiny ants that get into the hives. One of my two hives had an abundance of ants congregating at the top of the inner cover. A couple times I removed the inner cover and brushed the ants off a few yards from the hive. But in a couple of days, they of course found their way back. A few days later, I found the ants were laying thousands of tiny white eggs on the inner cover. Once again I cleaned the cover off.

Then, not to be outfoxed by those pesky ants, I found a product called "Terro." I'm sure most hardware stores carry it. I got mine at an ACO. \$2.99 for a one ounce bottle. Two applications of the drops at the rear base of the hives on a piece of foil has done the job. No sign of any on the inner cover after a few days. Like most products of this type for ants, they carry it back to their nest, feed it to others and if not wipe out the colony, reduce it. I'll be interested to hear any of your or other beekeepers spin on dealing with the problem.

~Lyn Wellhausen  
[Lynhausen@aol.com](mailto:Lynhausen@aol.com)

### **FUNGUS COULD SAVE BEES IF APPLICATION TECHNIQUE WORKS...**

Researchers at the University of Warwick are examining naturally occurring fungi that kill the Varroa mite. They are also exploring a range of ways to deliver the killer fungus throughout the hives from bee fungal foot baths to powder sprays.

It well known that bees world wide are suffering serious declines and one of the causes of that decline is the Varroa mite, Varroa destructor. Varroa mites feed on the circulatory fluid of honey bee pupae and adult bees, and in so doing they activate and transmit diseases which reduce the life expectancy of the bees and cause the colony to decline.

Varroa has had a major impact in all countries where it has become established; for example, it has caused losses of 30–50% of honey bee colonies when it first arrived in the UK and is now endemic. The loss of honey bees on this scale is affecting the pollination of commercial crops and wild plants. It originates in Asia, but has extended its range world-wide.

At present, the management of Varroa is based on the use of chemical pesticides, but the mites are developing resistance. Biological control

technologies (the use of one organism to control another) could offer a way of moving pest management strategies away from a reliance on these synthetic pesticides but no natural insect or other enemies of Varroa species have been identified on the Varroa or on their bee hosts.

Now Defra-funded studies by researchers at the University of Warwick's plant research group Warwick HRI, and Rothamsted Research has found some new natural enemies of Varroa from other hosts. University of Warwick researcher Dr. Dave Chandler said:

"We examined 50 different types of fungi that afflict other insects (known as entomopathogenic fungi) to see if they would kill Varroa. We needed to find fungi that were effective killers of Varroa, had a low impact on the bees, and worked in the warm and dry conditions typically found in bee hives. Of the original 50 fungi we are now focusing on, four that best match those three requirements."

~Source: "Catch the Buzz", Bee Culture Newsletter, July 28, 2008.

#### **A MONTHLY HONEY BEE PODCAST**

Are you a beekeeper that has something to say? Do you want to share your beekeeping experience and knowledge? Well here is your chance.—

SEMBA member and new beekeeper Randall Durfy is planning to host a monthly honey bee podcast. He is looking for individuals that would be interested in filling out the podcast team called "The Hive Body".

Randall currently maintains a blog at [www.beeyards.net](http://www.beeyards.net) that covers honey bee news from around the world and maintains links to important honey bee sites and beekeeper resources. He would like to share what he has learned and encourages others to learn more about becoming better beekeepers.

He is working on the monthly podcast structure, but here are a few examples of ideas and reoccurring podcast topics:

- ~Education - How To
- ~Its that time of the year
- ~Announcements of upcoming major events
- ~Discussion of current events and topics in the
- ~Honey bee world
- ~Beekeeping gadgets
- ~Answering emailed in questions from other beekeepers
- ~Interviewing beekeeping experts
- ~Podcasting from special events

Randall will be presenting this in more detail during the SEMBA meeting on September 9<sup>th</sup>. If

you have any questions or are interested in sharing your honey bee knowledge in a podcast, please send him an email at [randall@beeyards.net](mailto:randall@beeyards.net).

#### **PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**

After many years of essentially no wild swarms from feral bee colonies, swarming appears to be slowly returning to the natural environment. It is an indication that bees are trying to recover from more than 20 years of Varroa mite predation and other problems.

I have been collecting swarms for more than 40 years. Before the Internet, swarm calls were primarily referrals from Humane Societies, MSU Cooperative Extension, or Police and Fire stations. Now nearly all calls are from people visiting the [sembabees.org](http://sembabees.org) Web site.

Currently, 18 SEMBA members are listed on the 'Swarm Removal' page. A survey of those members (with 16 responding) revealed the following numbers:

Total number of swarm calls -- 99.  
Internet swarm calls -- 76.

If you would like your name included on the swarm removal page, please contact Roger Sutherland, 734-668-8568 or e-mail [rsuther@sembabees.org](mailto:rsuther@sembabees.org)

#### **MICHIGAN STATE FAIR WINNERS**

**Observation hive** – 1<sup>st</sup> Joe Jenkins; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tom Jenkins.

**Comb-section honey** – 1<sup>st</sup> Tom Jenkins; 2<sup>nd</sup> Joe Jenkins.

**White extracted honey** – 1<sup>st</sup> Keith Molnar; 2<sup>nd</sup> Dennis Holly; 3<sup>rd</sup> Joe Jenkins; 4<sup>th</sup> Tom Jenkins.

**Amber extracted honey** – 1<sup>st</sup> Dennis Holly; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tom Jenkins; 3<sup>rd</sup> Joe Jenkins; 4<sup>th</sup> Keith Molnar

**Beeswax** – 1<sup>st</sup> Tom Jenkins; 2<sup>nd</sup> Dennis Holly; 3<sup>rd</sup> Bill Sirr; 4<sup>th</sup> Joe Jenkins.

**Creamed honey** – 1<sup>st</sup> Joe Jenkins; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tom Jenkins.

**Langstroth medium frames** – 1<sup>st</sup> Dennis Holly; 2<sup>nd</sup> Keith Molnar; 3<sup>rd</sup> Bill Sirr.

**Cut-comb honey** – 1<sup>st</sup> Dennis Holly

**Chunk honey** – 1<sup>st</sup> Dennis Holly; 2<sup>nd</sup> Ann Kerwin.

## SEMBA VOLUNTEERS AT 2008 MICHIGAN STATE FAIR

Many thanks are due to those individuals who volunteered to work in the SEMBA educational booth at the Michigan State Fair. Special thanks are extended to Bill SIRR, Ann Kerwin, Fritz Sanders, Don Schram, Keith Lazar and Tom Lisk.

Volunteers who worked in the booth are: Keith and Jelinda Molnar\*, Senad Livadic, Florence Reaume, Mike Kolodziej, Paul Lukasiewicz, Brian Frol, Ann and Mike Kerwin, Brian Neumeyer, Dennis and Donna Holly, Mary Hobart, Donna and Howard Laws, Roger and Mary Sutherland, Winn Harless, Archie and Marlese Souvatzidis, Ada and Ed Nowak, Bill SIRR, Steve Burt, Mark Crawford, Tom Jenkins, Becky and Joe Pastorek, John Kates, Elaine and Jim Brazin, Jim Goodrich, Kent Jeppesen, Alfred, Alex and Barbara Lupercio, and Don Schram.

\*Individuals who volunteered for more than one session.

## IN MEMORIAM

We are saddened to learn that SEMBA member Lynn Engelhuber, age 67, of Plymouth, MI passed away on August 5, 2008. Lynn who was retired from General Motors, joined our association in 1992 and kept bees until the time of his death. Lynn is survived by his wife Violet and three children, Timothy, Lori and Daniel, and seven grandchildren.

## BARGAIN CORNER

- ~Have your special honey put into straws called "Honey Sticks". This is done here in Southeastern Michigan. Contact Jerry Dunbar, 586-770-9953.
- ~5 frame nucs, \$75. Call Winn Harless, 734-453-2914.
- ~Hive equipment and systems. Keith Lazar, C 248-361-1710 or P 248-815-5522.
- ~If you have bees wax that you would like to sell, please contact Wendy Harless at 1-734-546-4449 or email [wmharless@wowway.com](mailto:wmharless@wowway.com)
- ~Looking for a location in Ypsilanti to keep bees? Contact Zana at 734-822-0494.
- ~Wanted in good condition: SS extractor, electric uncapping knife, uncapping tank, SS strainer, uncapping fork. Call Mary at 734-483-7330.
- ~ Need better queens? Detroit Survivor Queen cells available. Call Rich at 248-705-5181, [rich@greentogardens.com](mailto:rich@greentogardens.com)
- ~For sale: pallets. 35 Mann Lake treated pallets with "W" clips (<http://windmillhillfarm.com/pallets%20for%20sale.htm>) Three years old, in average condition (we've moved to screened bottom board pallets). Asking price is \$10 each (new from Mann Lake \$22.95 each). 810-378-5972 or email [don@windmillhillfarm.com](mailto:don@windmillhillfarm.com).
- ~For sale: feeders. 450 division board feeders (<http://windmillhillfarm.com/feeders%20for%20sale.htm>). These are Mann Lake number FD-107 two frame medium super feeders. These are listed at \$4.55; we're asking \$1 each in lots of 40 or 50. These are in good condition. Our reason for selling is that we've gone to hive top feeders. 810-378-5972 or email [don@windmillhillfarm.com](mailto:don@windmillhillfarm.com).
- ~Wanted: Light amber honey, in 60# pails. Contact Ron Colf, 734-654-8316.

Seven Ponds Beekeepers' Club meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month at the Seven Ponds Nature Center near Dryden, MI. For club meeting details call Terry Toland at 248 421-6601.

Southeastern Michigan  
Beekeepers' Association  
*Organized April 1, 1934*

Oakland Beekeepers' Club



Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club



Seven Ponds Beekeepers' Club



SEMBA Membership  
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