



SEMBA NEWS

Volume 18, No 7, Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association
October 2008

OAKLAND BEE CLUB MEETING

When: Tuesday, October 7, 2008, 7:30 p.m.
Where: E.L. Johnson Nature Center, 3325 Franklin Road, Bloomfield Township, MI.
Program: Queen Rearing in Michigan
~ Rich Wieske

SEMBA ANNUAL MEETING

When: Sunday, October 19, 2008
Where: Lower Waterman Center, Schoolcraft College
(Enter through VisTaTech Center)
Potluck: 1:30 p.m. Bring a dish to pass and your own table service. Coffee and tea will be provided by SEMBA.

Program: 2:30 p.m. *Honey bees and Electrostatics*
~Anne Benninghoff

Anne is a botanist by training. Several years ago she developed an interest in airborne biological particles and electrostatics while helping her husband in Antarctica with research.

Business Meeting: 3:30 p.m.
Committee reports
New Business

Election of officers for nominees as listed:
First vice president -- Winn Harless
Treasurer-Membership -- Mary Sutherland
Nominations from the floor will be accepted.

"Swap and Sell"-- Bring beekeeping items to sell, barter or place in the silent auction.

A refractometer will be available to check the moisture content of your newly extracted honey. A color grader will be available also.

SCHOOLCRAFT BEE CLUB MEETING

When: Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.
Where: Schoolcraft College, Lower Waterman Center, 18600 Haggerty Road, Livonia, MI
(Enter through the VisTaTech Center)
Program:
Questions and Answers – Fall Beekeeping
"Insect and Flower Relationships"
~Roger Sutherland

Refreshments are welcome

SECOND NORTH CENTRAL QUEEN ASSEMBLY

When: Sat., October 11, 2008 8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.
Where: Comstock Community Center, 6330 King Highway, Comstock, Michigan 49041
Program: Coordinated by Dr. Larry Connor.
Mike Palmer - "How I Raise My Queens"
Dr. Roger Hoopingarner- "The Importance of a Good Queen Bee For Successful Beekeeping"
Dr. Joe Latshaw - "How I Select and Breed Bees"
Krispn Given, Purdue University - "How to Produce Quality Queens"
Rich Wieske - "Rearing Queens in Detroit"

Other programs on queen rearing will be presented along with an alternative program for new & hobby beekeepers.
The registration fee is \$75 per person.

For a registration form and more information go to:
<http://wicwas.com/page11ncqa.html>

MBA ANNUAL MEETING

Date: October 31 - November 1, 2008
Valley Plaza Resort, 5221 Bay City Rd., Midland, Michigan, 48642.

SEMBA MEMBER FEATURED IN MICHIGAN GARDENER MAGAZINE

Clay Ottoni of Waterford, MI was featured in the August, 2008 *Michigan Gardener* magazine. In addition to his honey bees, Clay has a great variety of fruit and nut trees. The article also details his greenhouse gardening and his work with new beekeepers.

INSURANCE AND BEEKEEPERS

At the September 9th Schoolcraft Bee Club meeting, insurance specialist Keith DeZwaan presented a program entitled "Insurance and Beekeepers".

Mr. DeZwaan informed us that the typical 'Home Owner's Policy' does not cover a beekeeping operation for liability, beekeeping equipment and out buildings like a honey house. However, a 'Farm Owner's Policy' does cover a beekeeping operation.

There are four Michigan insurance companies that do offer a 'Farm Owner's Policy'. These are:

Pioneer State Mutual
Hastings Mutual

Auto-Owners
Farm Bureau

Under a 'Farm Owner's Policy', there are four sections that can be tailored to your individual situation. The sections are as follows:

- Section 1: Home and contents
- Section 2: Liability which would be the normal liability plus liability for your beekeeping operation both on your property and out-yards
- Section 3: Farm personal and equipment
- Section 4: Barns and out buildings

Mr. DeZwaan advised beekeepers to contact a 'Farm Owner's Policy' insurance agent or contact him at 734-480-9946, www.farmbureauinsurance-mi.com

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO BORROW A COLONY OF HONEY BEES?

The House Agriculture Committee heard testimony on June 26 about the toll Colony Collapse Disorder was taking on beehives nationwide. Growers complained that the skyrocketing cost of renting bees was forcing them to raise prices on crops. Just how expensive is it to rent a colony of bees? Between \$10 and \$180, depending on the season. When you rent a colony of bees, you aren't just shelling out for the insects—the per-colony rental fee typically covers the cost of transporting the bees, setting up the hive and collecting the colony at the end of the contract.

Colony rental prices are highest from early February to mid- March, during the pollination season for almonds. The almond crops in California are entirely dependent on honey bees, and every spring they require more than half the commercial bee colonies in the nation. This year, California almond farmers paid up to \$180 a colony, and their appetite for the insects pushed up prices for growers all over the country. Rental fees can drop by more than a factor of 10 later in the spring, as beekeepers look for a place to leave their bees until a more lucrative season. The price of a colony also depends on what you plan to do with it. In the Northeast, pumpkin and cucumber farmers pay more for hives because pollinating their patches isn't quite as nutritious for the bees and may limit the hive's growth. Apple producers in PA are reporting prices around \$65 per colony this year, compared with \$100 for pumpkin farmers. The exact number of colonies needed to pollinate a field varies, but it's between one and two hives per acre for most crops. Depending on the time of year, the population of a colony will ebb and flow. A high quality rental colony often has eight frames, each holding a sheet of honeycomb; each frame might have only 1,500 or 2,000 bees at the beginning

of the almond season. Later in the year, however, the populations might triple in size.

~Source: The Piping Queen, July 2008.

<http://www.hivetool.com/naba/>

Thanks to SEMBA member John Wrosch (now living in Nashville, TN) for contributing this article.

SWARMING TO ARREST HONEY IMPORTERS

By [Cindy Skrzycki](#) *Washington Post*

Tuesday, July 29, 2008;

How's this for the plot of a suspense thriller to take to the beach? Contraband worth millions is shipped through Russia to disguise its origin. Federal agents, tipped by an informant, move in for an arrest. A German executive is apprehended as she is leaving the country.

Except this tale is real, a sting, if you will, involving the alleged laundering of Chinese honey through Russia to avoid high U.S. tariffs, some of it possibly contaminated with banned antibiotics.

The case is part of a crackdown on importers trying to get honey into the U.S. market at prices that undercut domestic producers. Over the past 15 years, U.S. honey producers have complained to the [International Trade Commission](#) in Washington repeatedly to try to stem such imports from China. A year ago, 221 percent anti-dumping tariffs were slapped on some shipments. Similar skirmishes with Chinese exporters over U.S. trade laws have occurred with garlic and mushrooms. Duties on imports of garlic from China, for example, can be as high as 376 percent of the value of the shipment. For the complete article go to Washingtonpost.com

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

THE BIG ONE GOT AWAY



On August 9, 2008, we received an e-mail from Cory Latocki, the young man at Kolossos in Ann Arbor who prints our SEMBA Newsletter. Attached to the e-mail

was the above picture showing honey bees on the side of his parent's home near Grass Lake, MI. The bees had been there for 6 days and were taking up residence between the storm window and the inside window.

Grass Lake is a distance greater than I would normally travel for bee removal, especially for a swarm in August, but because we were traveling to Kalamazoo that morning, I agreed to stop on the way to see what could be done. Assuming that it might be a nest, I took along my vacuum swarm box, a box with frames, spray bottle, and other gear.

Upon arrival we discussed the situation with Mr. Latocki and set up the vacuum. Evidently, because too much time was spent discussing the logistics, I neglected to spray the cluster. Then, just as I flipped the vacuum switch, a large cluster of bees fell to the ground and within 3 minutes all of the honey bees were in the air circling and departing for parts unknown. The Latocki's problem was solved but the bees may now be a problem for someone else.

My wife Mary believes that a nest had been started because wax was visible between the windows, but when the bees realized that a sunny window was not the most suitable location, they became a swarm once again.

BEEHUNTING.COM

Welcome to BeeHunting.com. Tom Manger has started a Web site to build interest in the sport/hobby of hunting wild bees (for observation purposes only) and to allow the exchange of ideas, techniques and equipment used for this activity.

"What is bee hunting?" you ask. "Bee hunting" is synonymous with "bee lining". It is also known as "bee tracking", "coursing bees" and "lining bees". It is a way of tracking foraging honey bees back to their nest.

After a foraging bee fills its stomach with nectar, it returns to its colony to unload the nectar. When it heads off to its nest, that bee will fly in a roughly straight line back to its nest. (This is how the term "bee line" came into being.) So, bee lining is a series of techniques used to exploit this behavior and track down feral bee colonies. This activity doesn't require a rifle or binoculars. Rather it requires an understanding of bee behavior and bit of tenacity. In days of old, honey was the only available sweetener and bees wax was a prized commodity.

So, bee hunting was a commercial endeavor that usually ended with the removal of all honey and wax comb and the destruction of a feral bee colony.

Nowadays, it's difficult to find food that *isn't* sweetened! And, modern beekeeping techniques have made it possible to harvest both wax and honey without harming the bee colony or their nest. So, bee hunting is largely a lost art.

We've used the traditional methods of bee lining which involve the use of "bee boxes" and basic tracking skills. These techniques are documented on this Web site. But, I'd like to see bee hunting techniques updated to include modern world capabilities. To this end, we are interested in using a GPS unit, a compass and Google Earth (or other mapping system) to create and document multiple bee line vectors for triangulation.

I ask that anyone wanting to help build a body of knowledge related to bee lining contact me. Anyone wishing to add content (pictures, advice, articles) related to bee lining should contact me as well. I will gladly include personal stories and photos from other enthusiasts.

~Tom Manger
tom@beehunting.com

MICHIGAN STATE FAIR FOLLOW-UP

At the September 3rd SEMBA Planning meeting, it was agreed that more advance planning is necessary for smooth operation of SEMBA's educational booth. For next year's fair, a special State Fair planning meeting will be held in June 2009. Also, more educational props for both the state fair and for members making presentations are needed. If you have photos, charts or other items which can be used, please contact John Kates 313-273-8214. agingwell@hotmail.com

NOVEMBER DUES ARE NOW PAYABLE

The SEMBA treasurer is now accepting membership renewals from November-paying members. If your address label denotes N08, your dues are now payable. Enclosed is a renewal form for your convenience. Please note that dues for the Michigan Beekeepers' Association (MBA) can also be paid when paying SEMBA dues.

STICKY TREATMENTS FOR STAPH INFECTIONS

Honey made by bees pollinating a New Zealand bush can gum up bacteria, offering a potential new therapy for difficult-to-treat infections. A scourge of hospitals, the pathogen called methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* defies most antibiotics. But a handful of case reports notes that slathering manuka-bush honey on wound dressings seems to reverse staph infection. The edible honey failed to sell in New Zealand because of its bitter taste, but for hospitals, it may be just what the doctor ordered. Rose Cooper of the University of Wales Institute at Cardiff turned an electron microscope on *S. aureus* growing in petri dishes and saw that many of the bacteria got stuck after encountering manuka honey. The cells began to divide but then stopped. "It looks like they can't complete the cell cycle," she says. Cooper also studied the bug's reaction to syrup that contained only the honey's sugars. This fake honey didn't prevent *S. aureus* cells from dividing normally. "Something in the honey besides the sugars" stops the cells, says Cooper. Her team is now trying to identify this component. Ancient Egyptian physicians famously treated wounds with honey, but modern doctors "are a bit reticent" about doing the same, says Cooper. However, sterile manuka honey has been available by prescription in the United Kingdom since 2004, and a hospital in Liverpool will soon launch a trial of the sticky stuff. If the study goes well, manuka honey "could have a key role to play in controlling hospital-borne infections," says Cooper.

By Brian Vastag, June 5th, 2007

BARGAIN CORNER

- ~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
- ~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@greentoegardens.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.
- ~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.
- ~Wanted: Light amber honey, in 60# pails. Contact Ron Colf, 734-654-8316.
- ~Wanted: Michigan honey in 60# pails. Contact Richard Raynor (734) 663-4338.

Seven Ponds Beekeepers' Club meets the 4th Tuesday of each month (except December) 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

SEMBA Membership
5488 Warren Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105-9425

Oakland Beekeepers' Club



Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club



Seven Ponds Beekeepers' Club

