



# SEMBA NEWS

Volume 19 Number 1 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association

February 2009

## SEMBA WINTER MEETING

When: Sunday, February 8, 2009

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. -- "The Honey Bee and Other Pollinators" ~ Theresa McCurdy

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

Punch Queen Rearing" at the annual Michigan Beekeepers' Association conference.

**Dennis and Donna Holly** maintain an observation hive at the Moose Tree Nature Center in the Lake Orion School District. Additionally, they hold question and answer sessions and interact with the students.

## IT'S NONE OF YOUR BEESWAX

Today some of our commonly used expressions stem from the early uses of beeswax. In the 1800s, many men and women developed acne scars because of poor hygiene. To smooth out their complexion, women would spread beeswax over their facial skin. If the woman smiled, the wax would crack; hence the term "crack a smile". If she sat too close to the fire, the wax would melt; hence the expression "losing face". If another woman stared at the face of one using beeswax she was told to "mind your own beeswax".

Early letters were sent without envelopes. A letter was simply folded and sealed with a small amount of melted beeswax. Any curious person who wondered about the contents of the letter was told "it is none of your beeswax".

## AUSTRALIA SCIENTISTS SAY BEES CAN COUNT TO FOUR

October 25, 2008  
SYDNEY (Reuters)--Researchers have now discovered that honey bees can count to four, a report said here on Sunday. A researcher from the University of Queensland put five markers inside a tunnel and placed nectar in one of them, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) radio reported. Honey bees placed in the tunnel flew to the marker with the food, and would still fly to the same marker stripe when the food was removed. "We find that if you train them to the third stripe, they will look subsequently in the third stripe," researcher Mandyam Srinivasan said. "If you train them to the fourth stripe, they will look in the fourth stripe and so on. But their ability to count seems to go only up to four. They can't count beyond four.

"The more we look at these creatures that have a brain the size of a sesame seed, the more astonished we are. They really have a lot of the capacities that we so-called higher human beings possess."

## ECONOMIC VALUE OF INSECT POLLINATION WORLDWIDE ESTIMATED AT U.S. \$217 BILLION

*ScienceDaily (Sept. 15, 2008)* — INRA and CNRS French scientists and a UFZ German scientist found that the worldwide economic value of the pollination service provided by insect pollinators, bees mainly, was €153 billion\* in 2005 for the main crops that feed the world. This figure amounted to 9.5% of the total value of the world agricultural food production. The study also determined that pollinator disappearance would translate into a consumer surplus loss estimated between €190 to €310 billion. The results of this study on the economic valuation of the vulnerability of world agriculture confronted with pollinator decline are published in the journal *Ecological Economics*. According to the study, the decline of pollinators would have main effects on three main crop categories (following FAO terminology); fruits and vegetable were especially affected with a loss estimated at €50 billion each, followed by edible oilseed crops with €39 billion. For the complete article go to

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/09/080915122725.htm>

\*Euros

## MORE PRESENTATIONS BY SEMBA MEMBERS

**Winn Harless:** Plymouth Garden Club, Plymouth Christian Academy (two presentations), Elders Garden Club in Ann Arbor, "Building Bee Equipment" at the Heartland Apicultural Society Conference, "Cell

The research was carried out jointly with Swedish researcher Marie Dacke.

### **USA--FUNGUS CONTROL TO FIGHT AGAINST VARROA**

Sioux Honey, the world's largest honey marketing organization, has partnered with researchers at the USDA Agricultural Research Center in Weslaco, Texas, and a Pennsylvania manufacturer, Sylvan Bioproducts, to develop a fungus control to fight off the parasitic bees. Researchers discovered that the fungus *Metarhizium anisopliae* is pathogenic to the reddish-brown mites, which suck the life out of bees. "It basically attacks the mite, but not the bee," Mammen said. Field tests on the fungus control started last fall, and are scheduled to resume this spring, Mammen said.

#### **Sioux Honey By the Numbers**

300 -- Approximate number of beekeepers who market honey with Sioux Honey Association  
40 -- Millions of pounds of honey that Sioux Honey's membership annually produces  
2.5 -- Millions of managed colonies in the United States  
15 -- Billions of dollars of U.S. crops annually pollinated by honey bees

### **KALAMAZOO BEE CLUB ORGANIZED**

Eighteen beekeepers met November 12 to discuss the formation of a new Kalamazoo Bee Club. The meeting was held at the Comstock Community Center. Here is a summary of planned meetings:

~On Tuesday, 7 pm, January 27, 2009, Larry Connor will discuss Bee Biology Essentials.  
~ On Saturday, February 21, 2009, the club is organizing a bee school program. The event will feature speakers, vendors and a potluck.  
~ Other programs are being considered. In the Spring, they hope to have their hands into a live hive installing a package and nucs. Dr. Connor says that they plan to do all the things a beekeeper needs to do out in the field.

If you want notification about club meetings contact Larry Connor at [LJconnor@aol.com](mailto:LJconnor@aol.com).

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF Dr. LARRY CONNOR'S VISIT WITH FRENCH QUEEN PRODUCERS AND BEE BREEDERS.**

During the first part of November, Dr. Connor was able to visit with a number of French beekeepers and researchers. He provided the SEMBA Newsletter editors a summary of several of the concerns, new innovations and developments:

~ There is a huge concern over the role of systemic insecticides and their impact on honey bees. Considerable research has been conducted. Some of the most fascinating is the impact of these compounds on the functioning of the bee's brain.

~ Many beekeepers have used thymol as an example of a 'soft' or 'natural' miticide. However, following one of my presentations, a talk was given showing extremely high levels of thymol in beeswax, much higher than compounds like fluvalinate. I must say that I was listening to and watching the presentation in French with a few questions to a translator. The role of miticides on beeswax is long term and complicated, and something we must all watch very carefully. If beeswax is a source of contamination of young bees, including developing queen and drone larvae, it may require drastic changes in some practices.

~ One speciality industry that has developed in France is lot-based processing of wax. The beekeepers wax is loaded into separate bins and processed separately and molded into foundation. Many French beekeepers feel this is a much better way to minimize exposure to someone else's chemicals. Smaller beekeepers drop off the wax in the morning, visit local sites, and pick up the wax at the end of the day.

~ Pollen: One successful pollen processor is packaging frozen pollen sealed with nitrogen. This provides for several thawing-freezing cycles that pollen is subjected to during shipping and while being taken home by the consumer. The wide scale use of frozen pollen in the United States is long overdue. This producer buys pollen from a small group of well-trained, cooperating pollen producers and will reject lots containing certain pollens to avoid the human exposure to additional pesticides.

### **RENT YOUR BEES TO A GARDNER?**

OPELIKA, AL-- (Marketwire - November 19, 2008) - As American families tighten their purse strings in unstable economic conditions, many folks are turning to cost-saving measures, including following a new trend called 'Grow It Yourself.'

Statistics show that more than one in four of all U.S. households grow vegetable plants, one of the fastest growing pastimes, and one that is becoming more of a necessity rather than a hobby.

"This 'Grow It Yourself' trend is something similar to what you found fifty years ago, when families grew vegetables in their own backyards as a way to reduce household expenses," says Bob Bartels, of Alabama-based b2 ideas, a public relations consultant who has worked with companies such as Bonnie Plant Farm, The Quikrete Companies, and The Home Depot.

"Consumers are being thrifty with their dollars, but there are several other benefits to growing your own herbs and vegetables. Gardening is a great family activity-- it helps to reduce stress, it helps to maintain

healthy eating habits, and it can be accomplished in small spaces," says Bartels. "Container vegetable gardening is a \$1.3 billion industry, and Bartels expects more brands to enter the category, with an emphasis on green products, gardening start-up kits and high-yield vegetable plants. Additionally, companies understand that gardening has few socio-economic boundaries, and more urbanites and suburbanites are also entering the category, thus opening up new sales channels for opportunistic brands.

Mini-gardens are growing in popularity as consumers develop balconies and patios into gardens utilizing containers. "Gardening is easy, plants are readily available at home improvement retailers, new biodegradable containers make plant care simple, and vegetables can be grown year-round." Bartels cited some additional statistics that back a new 'Grow It Yourself' trend: Perhaps you can rent gardeners a colony this summer. Their gardens get pollinated, you split the honey, and keep the money. Advertise now for Summer rentals.

## **A GOOD WEB SITE TO VISIT**

SEMBA member Fritz Sanders advises beekeepers who have questions and want to share beekeeping

information, to visit the address shown below:

<http://www.beesource.com/forums/index.php?s=5f3b53d841bd5ed0d914af126a1169fc>

## **HELPING NEW BEEKEEPERS IN MISSISSIPPI**

JACKSON, MS., November 2009 -- Mississippi Agriculture Commissioner Lester Spell says his agency will begin offering financial assistance to beekeepers in an effort to reverse the recent decline in the state's honey bee population. Spell recently announced that financial assistance will be made available to eligible beginning beekeepers who establish up to four colonies of honey bees. By showing proof-of-purchase for two hives, Spell says, a new beekeeper may receive a reimbursement of up to \$180 for one of the two hives and bees. Qualifying applicants can receive a maximum reimbursement of \$360. The program is administered through the Mississippi Beekeepers Association and is being funded through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. Applicants must apply by April 1, 2009.

## **NEWS FROM THE MICHIGAN STATE APIARIST**

Pfizer's Tm 25 was hard to get in feed supply stores in the Fall of 2007 and 2008. The Terramycin-343 has been more common for 2 years and is sold in the Trademark white and yellow bags that can be mistaken for the old TM-25 Soluble Powder by individuals who don't read the label. The bag of Terramycin-343 contains 4.78 oz (102.4 grams) oxytetracycline HCL.

Beekeepers need to be cautioned about the proper mix since TM-343 is 10+X stronger/bag than TM-25.

According to information Pfizer Animal Health provided to I Barton Smith of USDA's Beltsville Laboratory, TM 343 is their only oxytetracycline product still being produced that is labeled for bee use. Their other Terramycin products including Terramycin Soluble Powder have been discontinued "due to other oxytetracycline products on the market".

Bart checked for availability and pricing of TM 343 on the Internet. A 4.78 oz package of Terramycin-343 Soluble Powder cost \$10.29 and a 9.55 oz package was \$23.40 - available from PetSupplies4Less.com. It's likely that other suppliers have the same product and their pricing may or may not be similar.

There are other manufacturers of Terramycin; however, inspectors that have commented on this issue tell me that those products do not have bee labeling on their packages. Since those products are not labeled for honey bee use, they are not legal for that purpose and I won't distribute information about them.

~For more information contact Mike Hansen HANSENMG@michigan.gov) 269-428-2575

## **ORGANIC MITE CONTROL**

For the past 10 years, the Leslie Strait family, (beekeepers in Brooksville, MS), have kept the mite problem controlled. Leslie informed me that an old-time beekeeper he knew came up with the idea of using oil to kill the mites in the bee hive. After considering the idea, Leslie took paper towel sheets cut into 4 squares and soaked them in olive oil. He then took 2 squares and placed them over the brood chamber. He does this once in the Spring and once in the Fall. His Varroa Mite problem has been reduced to a nuisance. Leslie suggested adding a little Eucalyptus oil to the mix to help control the Tracheal Mite. This is good news for our industry--pass it on.

~Contributed by SEMBA member Gerald Dunbar

## **NEW CLUB PLANNED FOR THE MANCHESTER/CHELSEA, MI AREA**

Bob Jastrzebski is starting a new bee club in the Chelsea/Manchester area to be called Beekeepers of South Central Michigan. The club will meet in his

house in Manchester, 8810 M52, ¼ mile north of Pleasant Lake Road. Call or contact Bob for details. Bob Jastrzebski 734-748-2185 [bob@cimsurf.com](mailto:bob@cimsurf.com)

**71<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL SEMBA BEEKEEPING CONFERENCE  
SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2009  
SCHOOLCRAFT COLLEGE, LIVONIA, MI**

Major speakers include Diana Sammataro, PhD, Adjunct, University of Arizona, Dept. of Entomology, Research Entomologist USDA-ARS Carl Hayden Honey Bee Research Center, Tucson, AZ and Ken Schramm, well-known mead maker and author of *The Compleat Meadmaker*.

Sessions during the day-long program are designed for all beekeepers, both novice and experienced, or anyone interested in honey bees. The March SEMBA Newsletter will include a complete conference program and details of the day's events.

**USA-HONEY INDUSTRY WORKERS WORRY ABOUT STIGMA OF AFRICANIZED BEES**

Workers in the honey industry are concerned that the buzz about Africanized bees in Florida is giving their honey bees a bad reputation. The Africanized honey bee first appeared in South Florida six years ago. As the number of foreign ships traveling to local ports has grown, so has the population of Africanized honey bees. "We find bad bunches of bees in pockets, not vast numbers of the bad bees," said Bud Grant, an apiary inspector with the state of Florida. "It's isolated. When we find them, we destroy them." Grant is the first line of defense in the state's effort to protect people from the killer bees. He canvasses the ports and local honey farms, setting traps and checking hives.

For the complete article go to [Justnews.com](http://Justnews.com) December 11, 2008.

**BARGAIN CORNER**

**For Sale:**

- ~Wanted in good condition: SS extractor, electric uncapping knife, uncapping tank, SS strainer, uncapping fork. Call Mary VandeWalker at 734-483-7330.
- ~Corner stainless steel work surfaces with single deep sink. Make an offer. Call Roger Sutherland 734-668-8568 or E-mail [rsuther@sembabees.org](mailto:rsuther@sembabees.org)
- ~NUCS for spring 09. Includes 5 Medium Frames and 2009 Italian Queen. Contact Bob Jastrzebski, 734-748-2185 or E-mail [bob@cimsurf.com](mailto:bob@cimsurf.com)
- ~Wanted: Propolis. Call Irina Breeder, 248-471-6487
- ~ Package bees from Georgia will arrive April 20, 2009, 2#/\$58, 3#/\$67. SEMBA members will receive a \$5 discount per package. There is a 10 package limit. Call Mike Siarkowski, 517-545-0824 to place orders. Bees can be picked up at Shaun Shubel's home, 345 Chilson Rd., Howell, MI, 517-548-5176.
- ~ Package bees (Italian) from Wilbanks Apiary, Georgia. Pick up date is April 20. Call Blanche Barber, 248- 634-7017 for more details.

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

SEMBA  
5488 Warren Rd.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105-9425

Oakland Beekeepers' Club



Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club



Seven Ponds Beekeepers' Club

