SEMBA NEWS

Volume 19 Number 8 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association
November 2009

SEMBA LATE FALL MEETING

When: Sunday, November 22, 2009
Where: Lower Waterman Center, Schoolcraft College, 18600 Haggerty Road Rd., Livonia

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.
Skeps: History, Making and Use"
Roger Sutherland
Viewing and judging of skeps made by SEMBA members (See program notes)*

* Program notes
For thousands of years many types of skeps were used by beekeepers before beekeepers began using the Langstroth Hive. Honey bees were introduced to the colonies in the 1600s in straw skeps; they are still used in Europe. The construction and use of the common skep, depriving skep, cloamed skep and the Greek skep will be demonstrated and discussed.

This past spring several SEMBA members participated in a skep-making workshop. In May, they cut the rye, dried and prepared the stems and began construction of their skeps. We hope to have several of the finished products to display for judging. The winning skep will be awarded a prize of $25.

``````````````````

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

## OAKLAND BEE CLUB MEETING

When: Tuesday, December 1, 2009 at 7:30 p.m.
Where: E.L. Johnson Nature Center, 3325 Franklin Rd., Bloomfield Township, MI.
Program:. Make and bring your favorite Holiday recipe made with honey. (Bring the recipe to exchange.) Where your bees should be now? Emergency feeding? How to make sugar boards.

Success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it – *Henry David Thoreau*

## NEW BEE CLUB INITIATED IN ANN ARBOR

On Tuesday, October 13, 2009, beekeepers in the Ann Arbor area met at the UM Matthaei Botanical Gardens to organize a new beekeeping club. The club plans to meet the second Tuesday of each month. For information contact Richard Mendel, 734-761-7861. rimendel@sbcglobal.net

## NEW LIFE MEMBERS

At the October 18, 2009 SEMBA Annual meeting, Ann and Mike Kerwin were honored by awarding them a SEMBA Life Membership. This award is given to SEMBA members who have made significant contributions to our beekeeping organization.

Ann has served as SEMBA secretary, continues to serve as a contributing Board member and has worked tirelessly each year with Bill Sirr to make certain that SEMBA's educational booth at the Michigan State Fair is staffed. She is ably assisted by her husband Mike. The Newsletter Editors asked Ann to provide some background and history of their beekeeping activities, and the following is her response:

"My start in beekeeping goes back to 1984. Our son, Jim, came back to live at home while he took pre-med science classes at nearby University of Detroit Mercy (UDM) for two years. He asked me if I minded if he kept bees in our back yard. I considered it carefully and neither Mike nor I found any reason to object, so I said O.K. I should have remembered that any time a child brings home a stray puppy any mother knows who will end up with the care of that puppy. Sure enough, when Jim went off to Med school, the bees became my responsibility. 'You could let them die', Jim said.

"We still had State Bee Inspectors then, and when the inspector checked my hives, I told her I could use advice and help. She told me about SEMBA and Roger Sutherland.
``````````````````

" I have two hives in our backyard. Some years ago, I stopped using deep supers and use only medium and shallows. We share extracting equipment with a neighbor. Mike is very important in our apiary, especially at extracting time. And we both enjoy giving our honey to friends and neighbors.

"When I'm not dealing with bees, I work with the Irish Cultural Forum, The Task Force on Zoning and Land Use, Michigan Catholics for the Common Good, 14th District Democratic Party, Michigan Sierra Club-Political Committee, Gesu Peace & Justice Committee and I dabble in quilting and gardening".

SEMBA BEEKEEPERS TO BE AWARDED PRIZES FOR INNOVATIONS AND INVENTIONS

At the September 8, 2009 SEMBA Executive Board meeting, the board voted to hold a contest that would encourage SEMBA member beekeepers to submit new beekeeping ideas and inventions. Prizes of $75 for 1st place, $50 for 2nd place, and $25 for 3rd place winners were approved. A committee will be appointed to determine contest criteria. Entries will be judged at the SEMBA Beekeeping Conference on March 20, 2009.

SEMBA MEMBERS ATTEND GAAMP TRAINING

SEMBA members Ann Kerwin, Fritz Sanders, Richard Mendel, Bill Sirr, Clay Ottoni, Diane Zimmerman, Don Schram, Mike Siarkowski and Roger Sutherland recently attended a training session to learn more about the Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMP) contained in the Michigan Right to Farm Act.

The workshop, organized by Tim Fischer and Roger Sutherland, was conducted by Wayne Whitman and Kristin Linderman of the Michigan Department of Agriculture Right to Farm Act. Michigan State Apiarist Mike Hansen assisted with the training session. Following a classroom presentation outlining the details of the Right To Farm Act and GAAMP provisions, the group of 20 participants visited the backyard apiary of Dr. Roger Hoopingarner Using the three hives in his backyard, he reviewed hive placement, water supply, honey bee flight patterns, fencing, neighbor relations and other considerations in establishing a backyard apiary.

The goal of the training was: 1) To educate experienced beekeepers regarding the Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMP) for beekeeping; 2) To encourage the GAAMP-trained beekeepers to educate other beekeepers individually or in club and group settings; 3) To train and encourage beekeepers to provide GAAMP advice to beginning beekeepers before they establish their apiaries, especially in the urban setting.

LEAVING THE BEES BE---WHY VEGANS WON'T EAT HONEY
CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS??

Most non-vegans seem to get why some people won't eat meat. It gets a little less clear when the topics are eggs and dairy products, but the reasons can be provided and debated. When things turn to bees and honey, however, the reactions range from incredulity to sheer mockery. In other words, a good explanation of why vegans eschew honey is needed.
It starts with a core understanding of what it means for most people to be a vegan.

"Veganism is a way of living which excludes all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, the animal kingdom, and includes a reverence for life," writes Jo Stepaniak. As detailed by PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), "Like other factory farmed animals, honey bees are victims of unnatural living conditions, genetic manipulation, and stressful transportation. Profiting from honey requires the manipulation and exploitation of the insect's desire to live and protect their hive. Even the most careful keeper cannot help but squash or otherwise kill many of the bees in the process. During unproductive months, some beekeepers may starve their bees to death or burn the hive to avoid complex maintenance."

To read the entire article go to the link shown below:

Pacific Free Press, Saturday, September 19. 2009.
http://www.pacificfreepress.com/news/1/4731-leaving-the-bees-be-why-vegans-wonteathoney.html

HONEY BEES STERILIZE THEIR HIVES WITH ANTIMICROBIAL RESIN, SCIENTISTS HAVE DISCOVERED

In doing so, they give the whole colony a form of 'social immunity'. This lessens the need for each individual bee to have a strong immune system. Although honey bee resin is known to kill a range of

pathogens, this is the first time that bees themselves have been shown to utilize its properties. The team published details of their discovery in the journal *Evolution*. Honey bees in the wild often nest in tree cavities. When founding a new colony, they line the entire nest interior with a thin layer of the resins that they mix with wax. This mixture is known as propolis. They also use propolis to smooth surfaces in the hive, close holes or cracks in the nest, reduce the size of the entrances to keep out intruders, and to embalm intruders that they've killed in the hive that are too big to remove.

A number of studies have shown that propolis has a range of antimicrobial properties, but mostly in relation to human health. For example, numerous publications cite its effectiveness against viruses, bacteria and even cancer cells. That is how Mike Simone, a PhD student from the University of Minnesota in St Paul, and his supervisor Professor Marla Spivak became interested. Spivak and her colleagues had tested the effectiveness of honey bee propolis against the HIV-1 virus. They then progressed to see how it impacted bee pathogens, such as American foulbrood. "This led us to wonder what other things propolis might be doing for the bees," said Simone. In experiments funded by the National Science Foundation, Simone's team painted the inside walls of hives with an extract of propolis collected from Brazil or Minnesota. This inside layer mimicked how propolis or resins would be distributed in a feral colony nesting in a tree cavity. They then created colonies of honey bees housed either in hives enriched with resin, or hives without the resin layer - to act as a control. After one week of exposure they collected bees that had been born in each colony. Genetic tests on these 7-day-old bees showed that those growing in the resin-rich colonies had less active immune systems. "The resins likely inhibited bacterial growth. Therefore, the bees did not have to activate their immune systems as much," said Simone. "Our finding that propolis in the nest allows bees to invest less in their immune systems after such a short exposure was surprising. Resins in the hive have been thought of as a potential benefit to a honey bee colony, but this has never been tested directly."

Using resins to help sterilize the colony can be thought of as a type of 'social immunity' said the researchers. And it may partly explain why bees and other social insects, such as ants, collect resins to build their nests in the first place. "Honey bees can use wax, which they produce themselves, to do all the things that they use resin for in the nest. So it is interesting to think about why they might go and collect resins," said Simone. "Especially since resins, being sticky, are hard to manipulate and take a lot of energy for individual bees to gather in very small quantities." There is also some *evidence that some mammals and birds* coat themselves in naturally-occurring plant resin in a bid to reduce infestations with parasites.

EARTH NEWS JULY 23, 2009

Matt Walker Editor, Earth News

USDA ANNOUNCES IMPLEMENTATION OF DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

WASHINGTON, September 14, 2009 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that producers may begin applying for benefits under the provisions of the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) and the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP). These permanent disaster programs, authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, replace previous ad-hoc disaster assistance programs and are funded through the Agricultural Disaster Relief Trust Fund. For more information contact the Michigan State Apiarist Mike Hansen hansenmg@michigan.gov

CHECK LIST FOR FALL MANAGEMENT

1) A large population is most important for wintering success. Combine two weak colonies into one and then split in the spring.
2) Have 60-90 pounds of honey stores or about one full-depth super full of honey. Larger amounts will give more heat buffer.
3) Control nosema disease with Fumidil B in syrup feed.
4) Tracheal and Varroa mite control is necessary for good survival. Get a varroa count before treating.
5) Wrapping colonies will aid in survival. Two and four colony wraps are more economical of material and heat.
6) Upper entrance is important for winter flights and moisture/CO2 escape.
7) Late winter feeding may be necessary. Examine colonies in mid to late January. Cluster at inner cover may be a sign of trouble.

For a good reference on wintering honey bees go to: http://apiculture.ncf.ca/Wintering.htm

Bees Fight Back Against Colony Collapse Disorder: Some Honey Bees Toss Out Varroa Mites

ScienceDaily (Oct. 5, 2009) — Honey bees are now fighting back aggressively against Varroa mites, thanks to Agricultural Research Service (ARS) efforts to develop bees with a genetic trait that allows them to more easily find the mites and toss them out of the broodnest. The parasitic Varroa mite attacks the honey bee, *Apis mellifera L.*, by feeding on its hemolymph, which is the combination of blood and fluid inside a bee. Colonies can be weakened or killed, depending on the severity of the infestation. Most colonies eventually die from varroa infestation if left untreated.

Varroa-sensitive hygiene (VSH) is a genetic trait of the honey bee that allows it to remove mite-infested pupae from the capped brood—developing bees that are sealed inside cells of the comb with a protective layer of wax. The mites are sometimes difficult for the bees to locate, since they attack the bee brood while these developing bees are inside the capped cells.

ARS scientists at the agency's Honey Bee Breeding, Genetics and Physiology Research Unit in Baton Rouge, La., have developed honey bees with high expression of the VSH trait. Honey bees are naturally hygienic, and they often remove diseased brood from their nests. VSH is a specific form of nest cleaning focused on removing varroa-infested pupae. The VSH honey bees are quite aggressive in their pursuit of the mites. The bees gang up, chew and cut through the cap, lift out the infected brood and their mites, and discard them from the broodnest.

This hygiene kills the frail mite offspring, which greatly reduces the lifetime reproductive output of the mother mite. The mother mite may survive the ordeal and try to reproduce in brood again, only to undergo similar treatment by the bees. To test the varroa resistance of VSH bees, the Baton Rouge team conducted field trials using 40 colonies with varying levels of VSH. Mite population growth was significantly lower in VSH and hybrid colonies than in bee colonies without VSH. Hybrid colonies had half the VSH genes normally found in pure VSH bees, but they still retained significant varroa resistance. Simpler ways for bee breeders to measure VSH behavior in colonies were also developed in this study.

This research was published in the *Journal of Apicultural Research* and *Bee World*. (Submitted by David Wells.)

BARGAIN CORNER

For Sale:

~ Plastic Dadant two-frame extractor. Call Jim, (248) 472-4187 or 0226jwa@att.net

~ Hive Covers - inner plus outer; Medium Mann Lake supers with 10 frames and plastic foundation, nearly new; Empty medium and deep supers - box only, old stuff; Home-made escape boards; Cut comb boxes- never used; Queen excluders - never used; External feeder base w/ canning jar lid adapter; Old fashion wiring board; Swarm catcher box - never used. Make an offer. Call Rick in Farmington Hills, (248) 672-2200. rkatterm@yahoo.com

VISIT THE SEMBA WEB SITE -- sembabees.org

NOVEMBER DUES ARE NOW PAYABLE

The SEMBA treasurer is accepting membership renewals from November-paying members. If your address label denotes N09, 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.

Southeastern Michigan
Beekeepers' Association
Organized April 1, 1934

Oakland Beekeepers' Club

Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club

Seven Ponds Beekeepers' Club

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