



SEMBA NEWS

Volume 20 Number 9 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association
December 2010

DECEMBER OAKLAND CHAPTER MEETING

When: Tuesday, December 7, 2010 at 7:30 pm

Where: E.L. Johnson Nature Center, 3325 Franklin Rd., Bloomfield Township, MI.

Program: "FEEDING BEES AND OTHER WINTERING TIPS"

"HOBBY BEEKEEPING IN AUSTRALIA"

Refreshments are welcome

JANUARY OAKLAND CHAPTER MEETING

When: Tuesday, January 4, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.

Where: E.L. Johnson Nature Center, 3325 Franklin Rd., Bloomfield Township, MI

Program: TO BE DETERMINED

SEMBA ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

More than 70 SEMBA members and guests attended the SEMBA Annual Meeting. Following Dr. Zachary Huang's presentation, "Varroa mite Reproductive Biology", the SEMBA business meeting was convened. Minutes of previous meetings were read and approved. The SEMBA Treasurer presented a financial report for the fiscal year October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010. Balance forwarded, \$10,630.13; income, \$9,607.50; total, \$20,237.63; expenses, \$7,991.05; balance, \$12,246.58. Any SEMBA member who wishes to have the complete report, contact Mary Sutherland by e-mailing rsuther@hotmail.com

Winn Harless was re-elected 1st Vice President and Mary Sutherland re-elected Treasurer. Roger Sutherland announced that this would be his last year as SEMBA President and urged the members present to suggest names of potential candidates.

Ruth and Jack Turner, 25 year SEMBA members and great supporters of beekeeping (despite never having any bees) were awarded with SEMBA Life Membership. The SEMBA Constitution and By-laws were approved .

Members of the SEMBA Beekeeping class were introduced and presented Certificates of Completion. A motion was made to have the SEMBA President write a letter to Michigan's new Governor urging reestablishment of the Michigan State Fair.

SEMBA BOARD MEETING

When: Thursday, Jan. 6, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

Where: Schoolcraft College, Lower Waterman,

18600 Haggerty Rd., Livonia, MI

Agenda:

- SEMBA's March 19, 2011 73rd Beekeeping Conference planning
- 2011 Bee class
- 2011 SEMBA meetings

All SEMBA members are welcome to attend

NEWS FROM MIKE HANSEN, MICHIGAN STATE APIARIST

Beekeepers wanting to know more about the condition of their honey bee colonies and (for that matter) whether adulterants for contamination have been introduced into their honey and wax products would be interested to know that there is a lab directory for beekeepers.

If you go to this website: <http://projectapism.org> and check under downloads, you will find:

A list of laboratories where beekeepers can send honey bee samples. Diagnosis of varroa, nosema, pesticides, etc. available. Also wax, pollen and related honey bee analyses.

DISEASE DOOMING NATIVE BUMBLE BEES?



By Lynda Mapes,

The Seattle Times
January 13, 2010

They work in the cold when honeybees are still snug in their hives, and cloudy days don't stop them either. Bumblebees are workhorse pollinators, depended on to pollinate everything from cranberries and blueberries to hothouse tomatoes. But native bumblebees are in trouble, victims of diseases some scientists say are spread by commercial bumblebees shipped around North America to pollinate crops.

While much attention has been given to the plight of European honeybees, dying in droves in so-called colony collapse disorder, the sharp decline of some species of native bumblebees has been largely overlooked.

The Xerces Society, based in Portland, several other environment groups and prominent entomologists joined together this week in supporting a citizen petition asking the U.S. Department of Agriculture to regulate the commercial bumblebee industry. The petition asks the department to ban shipments of bumblebees outside their native range, and to require that bumblebees shipped within their native habitat be certified as disease free.

Scott Hoffman Black, executive director of the Xerces Society, said the rules are needed to prevent further decline of native bumblebees already in deep trouble. "The western bumblebee was one of the most common", Black said. "Today it is gone from pretty much the entire Puget Sound area, as well as east of the Cascades."

He partly blames the escape of East Coast bumblebees, buzzing out of the vents of commercial greenhouses around the country where the bees have been shipped to pollinate crops. They can carry diseases to which native bees — there are about 30 species on the Pacific Coast — have no resistance.

The Department of Agriculture had no immediate comment on the proposal, said Larry Hawkins, a spokesman for the agency. States take a varied approach to bumblebee regulation.

Oregon bans all importation of commercial bumblebees to protect native stocks, said Dan Hilburn, administrator of the plant division for the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Washington doesn't regulate bumblebee shipments at all.

Rene Ruiter, general manager for Koppert Biological Systems in Romulus, Mich., one of two companies commercially growing and shipping bumblebees in North America, said his company already has to certify its bees as disease free for its exports to Canada and Mexico. Doing so for domestic shipments might not be a burden, depending on how a rule was written, he said. In business since 1994, his company serves growers using bumblebees to pollinate greenhouse tomatoes, including about 800 acres in the United States. Only bumblebees can execute the deft maneuver required to pollinate a hothouse tomato, vibrating their entire fuzzy body to shake pollen loose.

But under regulations requested in the petition, the company's shipments of *Bombus impatiens*, a bumblebee native of the Eastern United States, would be shut down to the West. "That's life," Ruiter said, "but we disagree with it. Our bees are already certified disease free for export and it's not as if we have one bee for export and another for shipping in the U.S." He bristled at a study published in 2008 documenting much higher disease rates among wild bees collected close to greenhouses in Canada. "Those weren't our bees," he said.

The level of disease around the greenhouses was much greater than he found in wild populations. "It was a nasty shock," Otterstatter said. "I was holding on to the idea that even if the commercial bees are sick, they were isolated enough that they would not be having an effect on the native pollinators, but that turned out not to be the case."

HONEY VISCOSITY

At the October meeting of Oakland Bee Club, Roger Sutherland tested several honey samples for moisture content with a refractometer. Sutherland also demonstrated how inverting the container and watching the movement of the bubble gives some indication of the moisture content. As a follow up, SEMBA member Don Schram did some research investigating the factors that determine the viscosity of honey and influence the movement of the bubble. (Viscosity

is the quality that describes a fluid's resistance to flow.) Don's research findings:

"What I've found is that there are several factors that make up viscosity in honey, or make

up its "body", in addition to moisture.

First is the presence of proteins within the honey itself. Higher protein content honeys, such as some oil seed honeys, will display a higher viscosity level, although moisture content is high. Likewise, honey that has been filtered will display a lower viscosity than the same honey which contains proteins and pollen, although the moisture content is exactly the same as a sample that has not been filtered.

Secondly, the temperature of the honey can play a major part in the speed of the bubble rising and it's viscosity. Once honey is warmed to approximately 86-degrees, it is said to be as viscous as it can be, and the bubble will pass thorough the bottle rather quickly. The same bottle, when tested at room temperature or cooler, will move the bubble more slowly. In this instance, the moisture content hasn't changed. Only the viscosity has changed through temperature.

Lastly is granulation. Honey that has more granulated particles in it will appear to be more viscous than honey without granulation seeds forming. Even though honey may appear to be liquid, unless that honey is viewed through a polariscope, the amount of sugar crystals within the bottle remains unknown, and can give the false impression of a low moisture/high viscosity honey. This is evidenced in the fact that moisture content in granulated (or creamed) honey remains the same as the liquid honey it was made from, although granulated honey is definitely highly viscous or can even display "no flow" properties. (As a side note, honey that is too high in moisture content can "separate" into layers thereby causing moisture content to be variable within the sample bottle, The denser (less moist/more viscous) honey displaces moisture and gathers on the bottom, and the upper layer becomes higher in moisture and more susceptible to fermentation."

NEW PROCEDURE FOR ORDERING BEEKEEPING MAGAZINES

To order beekeeping magazines at bee club discounted prices, call the publishers directly and indicate to them the name of your local club. For *Bee Culture* call: 1-800-289-7668. For *American Bee Journal* call: 1-888-922-1293 or 1-217-847-3324.

SEMBABEES.ORG -- Our Website's Progress

This month marks the eighth anniversary of SEMBA's Website. The last time I wrote about our Website, there were (I think) only about 25

visits per day. We have grown considerably since then as we now have, in the summer months, well over 200 visits per day. Even in the "off-season" we average over 150 visits per day. In a survey of the last six months, 54% of the visitors were drawn to one page – "Bees in the Wall"! That's over 19,000 visitors to that one page alone during that six-month period. This document has become the definitive authority on this topic and is read by people from all over the world. Other popular destinations are the Honey Bee Biology PDF file, the swarm page, the bargain corner page and the latest issue of our newsletter. The most popular photos are the bee tree photos of Winn Harless – a very educational page with great detail.

There are two areas that I feel can be improved upon:

- 1) The Bargain Corner page is a great resource that is not being utilized to its full extent. It still gets a lot of views but is updated infrequently. It is free to members and can be used to sell items, place wanted to buy, hives needed on land, land needed for hives, etc. An email to Roger (rsuther@hotmail.com) or myself (tosk@sembabees.org) will get your ad placed within 48 hours.
- 2) We really need a volunteer to take an interest in taking photographs of our meetings and events. I don't need perfect photos. I can color-correct, cut to size and pretty much fix your photos to make them presentable.

~Sembabees.org Web master Tom Lisk

IN MEMORIAN

SEMBA Member John C. Kates died on November 17, 2010 at 60 years of age. John inaugurated the SEMBA Presentation and Community Outreach Committee and was its chair from 2008 to 2010. He presented many programs on beekeeping in schools and libraries, was active in Boy Scouts and many other community organizations. John is survived by his wife, Patricia and children, Rhonda Nicole Kates and John Edward Kates.

A TIP FROM WINN HARLESS --- FEEDING DRY SUGAR

There have been many recommended ways to feed our honey bees to help them through a long winter or during periods of low nectar flow. Recently, Winn Harless reviewed an article by Brother Frederick published in the April 1947 *American Bee Journal*, Vol. LXXXVII, No. 4. The following is a short summary of Brother Frederick's instructions for feeding dry sugar:

Construct a wooden rim to fit a standard Langstroth hive body. The height should be at least 3/4" but could be deeper. Winn uses a 2" rim. Remove the telescoping and inner cover. Place two thicknesses of newspaper on top of the brood frames leaving an opening on one end for the bees to enter. This entrance could be either on the front or back of the hive. Pour dry sugar on the newspaper and replace the telescoping and inner covers. Winn puts 5 lbs. of white dry sugar on each hive. Winn has used this method of feeding recently and reports that the bees are consuming the sugar. He claims that moisture from the hive cluster is absorbed by the sugar making it more usable by the bees. If you wish to call Winn for more information, his number is 734-543-2914.

THE ORIGINAL MAN OF THE HOUSE

It's a sweet story: Honey turned Harvey Washington Wiley, M.D., longtime Director of Food, Sanitation, and Health, into a passionate consumer advocate. Born in 1844, Wiley fought in the Civil War, went to medical school, then taught chemistry. In 1878, fiddling with a polariscope, a device for measuring stress in glass, Wiley examined various transparent foods and was shocked to learn that what companies were passing off as pure honey was mainly glucose. This began his lifelong campaign against mislabeled and dangerous products. He spent 29 years as the chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Chemistry, where he fought for the passage of the 1906 Pure Food and Drugs Act. At *Good Housekeeping Magazine*, from 1912 to 1930, he alerted readers to frauds such as the treatment of spoiled vegetables with chemicals to 'revive' them. In 1911, Wiley sued Coca Cola for failing to label the soda as containing habit-forming caffeine. He lost the headline-making case, but paved the way for truth in labeling laws.

The Badger Bee, November 2010.
~ Contributed by Bill Sirr

MBA MEMBERSHIP (NEW PROCEDURE)

Membership in SEMBA qualifies you to join MBA at the discounted rate of \$25-single or \$30-family. Membership in MBA is now paid directly to the MBA treasurer. To join or renew MBA, make your check payable to MBA, indicate the name of your local club on the check, and send it to the new MBA Treasurer, Steve Tilmann, 2441 N. Stine Rd., Charlotte, MI 48813.

SEMBA Bargain Corner

For Sale:

- ~72 frame stainless steel extractor. New drive wheel and motor, \$1200. Call Blanche Barber, 248-634-7017.
- ~Glass jars that hold 2 lbs of honey. Each case has 12 jars. \$5 per case. Call Rich Marshall, 734-759-1030, or BettyBeeApiary@gmail.com

Found

Tote bag made of dragonfly-decorated black fabric, left at the November 14 SEMBA meeting. Contact Sutherlands.

Wanted:

- ~Local pollen. Call Denise, 734-567-0319.
- ~I am interested in having some bee hives on my 10 acres on Rushton Road between 8 and 7 Mile roads, Washtenaw County. Contact me, Bob Devereaux, 9695 S. Rushton Rd., South Lyon, MI 48178-9610, 248-486-8848 or rdevereaux@chartermi.net
- ~I am interested in having some bee hives on my 39 acres west of Manchester, never sprayed, surrounded by fields, forest and wetlands. Contact me at herrdokter.friedman@gmail.com

Ads in the Bargain Corner are free to SEMBA members. To place an ad contact Roger Sutherland. rsuther@hotmail.com

Southeastern Michigan
Beekeepers' Association
Organized April 1, 1934

Oakland Beekeepers' Club

Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club



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