



SEMBA NEWS

Volume 24 Number 3 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association

April/May 2014

SEMBA SPRING MEETING Presented by the Schoolcraft Bee Club

When: Sunday, May 4, 2014
Potluck 1:30 p.m.

Bring a dish to pass and your own table service. Coffee and tea will be provided by SEMBA. (Please label with your name any dishes and utensils that you bring.)

Where: Schoolcraft College, Lower Waterman Center, 18600 Haggerty Road, Livonia, MI

Program: 2:30 p.m. (If you choose to not attend the potluck, join us for the program only.)

Neonicotinoids and Honey Bees - Latest Developments Walter Pett, Ph.D.,
Apiculture and Pollination Specialist, MSU

Ancient Beekeeping - Skep Making and Management Roger Sutherland

Program Notes:

In addition to presenting his program on neonicotinoids, Dr. Pett will explain how he plans to interact with Michigan beekeepers in his new position as Apicultural Specialist. He will be seeking your input regarding how MSU Extension can be helpful to beekeepers. Also, since several beekeepers have inquired about having a skep-making workshop this summer or fall, some possibilities will be suggested.

BEE CULTURE MAGAZINE DISCONTINUES CLUB-DISCOUNT PLAN

Subscriptions to *Bee Culture Magazine*, published by A.I. Root, are now available for \$25.00 per year and \$48.00 per two years plus \$15.00 per year for postage. Digital subscriptions are \$15.00 per year.

CONTEST FOR A SEMBA LOGO

Contest rules that are being developed now for the design of a SEMBA logo will be announced soon on our website, sembabees.org and in a future newsletter. Anyone interested may apply.

WINTER LOSSES REPORTED by SEMBA MEMBERS

Survey conducted March 15, 2014

47 Beekeepers with 1 - 5 hives
Total hives alive in September 2013--136
Total hives alive in March 2014.....51
Survival....37.5% Loss....72.5%
8 Beekeepers with 6 - 10 hives
Total hives alive, September 2013.....65
Total hives alive, March 2014.....23
Survival....35% Loss.....65%
10 Beekeepers with 11 - 25 hives
Total hives alive, September 2013....175
Total hives alive, March 2014.....80
Survival....46%, Loss.....54%
5 Beekeepers with 26 - 70 hives
Total hives alive, September 2013.....205
Total hives alive, March 2014.....102
Survival....50%, Loss....50%
Total number of beekeepers surveyed....70

Total number of hives reported alive,
September 2013.....581
Total number of hives reported alive,
March 15, 2014.....256
Survival 44% Loss 56%

NATIONAL WINTER LOSS SURVEY

Beekeepers needed! Thank you for your interest in participating in the National Colony Loss Management Survey organized by the Bee Informed Partnership and sponsored by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Please go to our online survey at <http://10.selectsurvey.net/beeinformed/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=BIP2014> and complete the survey there. It will be live on April 1st and close on April 30th. Please do not complete the survey more than once. Information about past Winter Loss and National Management Surveys and the annual reports can be found online at <http://beeinformed.org/>.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact us at askbeeinformed@gmail.com.

Dr. Dennis vanEngelsdorp

HONEY BEES HAVE A SWEET CLAW

New research on the ability of honey bees to taste with claws on their forelegs reveals details on how this information is processed, according to a study published in the open-access journal, *Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience*.

Insects taste through sensilla, hair-like structures on the body that contain receptor nerve cells, each of which is sensitive to a particular substance. In many insects, for example the honey bee, sensilla are found on the mouthparts, antenna and the tarsi – the end part of the legs. Honey bees weigh information from both front tarsi to decide whether to feed, finds the latest study led by Dr. Gabriela de Brito Sanchez, researcher, University of Toulouse, and Dr. Martin Giurfa, Director of the Research Centre on Animal Cognition, University of Toulouse, France.

Hundreds of honey bees were included in the study. Sugary, bitter and salty solutions were applied to the tarsi of the forelegs to test if this stimulated the bees to extend or retract their tongue – reflex actions that indicate whether or not they like the taste and are preparing to drink. Results revealed that honey bee tarsi are highly sensitive to sugar: even dilute sucrose solutions prompted the bees to extend their tongue. Measurements of nerve cell activity showed that the part of the honey bee tarsus most sensitive to sugary tastes is the double claw at its end. Also, the segments of the tarsus before the claws, known as the tarsomeres, were found to be highly sensitive to saline solutions.

~*ABJ Extra News*, February, 2014

NEW TOOL FOR LOCATING SWARMS

www.swarmpatrol.com is a newly launched state-of-the-art website – especially designed to help beekeepers collect swarms in their specified local area, as well as enabling the sale of bee related products utilizing the latest GPS and mobile technologies.

Please register on the site and have a good look at its capabilities and potential. It does not cost anything, and does not put the registering person under any obligation to collect swarms.

So how does the website work? A member of the general public uses www.swarmpatrol.com to register a swarm for collection, and provides its detailed address. The system captures its GPS coordinates. It instantly compares the swarm location with the location of beekeepers

on its database, and sends a text message to the closest 3 who have registered that they are prepared to travel the distance. They, in turn, contact the person reporting the swarm and arrange to remove it. We realize that many of the bee associations have swarm collection lists, and manage swarms very well, but we do encourage you to have a look at www.swarmpatrol.com. The site is a not-for-profit site. ~Source: www.swarmpatrol.com February 7, 2014

ZOMBIE FLIES INFECTING MAJOR MEDIA OUTLETS MAY BE THE CAUSE OF MEDIA COLLAPSE DISORDER

The so-called "Zombie Flies" have supposedly reappeared in bee colonies and again are being insinuated as an explanation for the loss of millions of colonies of bees. Is there any merit to these bizarre and desperate reports? Unlikely.

Properly known as the Phorid Fly, these predators have been seen in bee colonies occasionally for years and have always been thought of as incidental and of little consequence. But now? It isn't the new agricultural technologies killing bees, it is Zombie Flies, Zombie Flies carrying cell phones no doubt. How else are they able to alert the media?

First, there is no evidence presented that these are anything other than occasional encounters; there has been no legitimate statistical sampling that I'm aware of, but this simple fact doesn't deter industry apologists and spin doctors grasping for straws in their never ending search for "sound science".

There is a more likely explanation. The Phorid Fly depends on bumble bees as its primary host. Bumble bee populations have crashed for the same reasons as honey bees. In the absence of bumble bees these flies are struggling to survive, and what's left? Honey bees, of course, primarily because of beekeepers' efforts to keep the honey bee populations going.

Zombie Flies? What really warrants our concern are Zombie Reporters at Zombie News Outlets.

~Source: *CATCH THE BUZZ* February 7, 2014



HONEY BEE FORAGE

Pictured above is White Dutch Clover, *Trifolium repens*. Genuine four-leaf clovers come from the White Dutch Clover. There are 10,000 three-leaf clovers for every one "lucky" four-leaf ones which is why the four-leaf clovers are so rare. The four leaves are said to stand for faith, hope, love and luck. Ireland is home to more four-leaf clovers than any other place, giving meaning to the phrase "the luck of the Irish."

~Source: *Project Apis m.* March 2014

Submitted by Bill Sirr

DISINFECTING HONEY COMB WITH OZONE

By Jan Suszkiw

Sometimes even honey bees need help with "housekeeping" especially when it comes to cleaning their honeycombs once the honey has been removed. U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) research has shown that fumigating honeycombs with ozone gas can eliminate pests and pathogens that threaten honey bee health and productivity. Now, ozone fumigation may also help reduce pesticide levels in honeycombs.

The findings come from a two-part study led by entomologist Rosalind James with the Pollinating Insects-Biology, Management, and Systematics Research Unit operated in Logan, Utah, by USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS). Results from the first part of her team's study, published in 2011 in the *Journal of Economic Entomology*, demonstrated that fumigating honeycombs with ozone gas at concentrations of 215 to 430 parts per million (ppm) killed all life stages of the greater wax moth, depending on length of exposure.

Ozone, a highly reactive state of oxygen, also destroyed spores of the chalkbrood fungus after 24 to 36 hours of exposure using 1,500 ppm. Another honeybee pathogen, the American foulbrood bacterium, required substantially

longer exposure times and an ozone concentration twice as high.

Read more about these findings in the March 2014 issue of *Agricultural Research* magazine.

~Source: ABJ Extra News March 13, 2014

CLEANING BEESWAX CAPPINGS

By Bill Sirr

First quality always brings the high dollar, and so it should. The extra effort is worth a little extra. So it is with beeswax. For the small operator, the solar furnace is a must, even if only one hive is involved. A solar furnace is inexpensive and simple to make. I have found it to be an easy and inexpensive way to get that clean wax by melting the cappings in a nylon stocking or panty hose. After the cappings have drained on their own, I put them into a nylon hose, place it in a tub of water for a quick rinse, and hang it up to dry. The dried cappings-filled stocking is placed in the solar furnace. The wash water is then fed back to the bees. Wax left to be robbed out sometimes isn't, and the bees get trapped inside the ball or mound of wax. I usually find them when I take the wax apart.

To fill the nylon stocking, I use a paper tube 3 inches in diameter. These tubes come inside some paper rolls and are about 3 feet long. I cut off six to nine inches of the paper tube and pull the hose up over it until the toe is reached. Then I fill the tube with wax giving it a little shake from time to time. This will cause the hose to pull free of the tube now full of beeswax. This process is repeated until I run out of beeswax or nylon hose. This leg of wax is placed (after rinsing and drying) into the solar furnace. On a good sunny day, the leg will be emptied of wax and will hold the debris. A short piece of plastic drainpipe is even better than the paper tube for filling the stocking.

If your wax is placed in the solar furnace full of honey, the honey will run out first and fill the bottom of your mold. It can be poured off and the wax washed and allowed to dry.

Beeswax has many uses other than foundation and candles. It is a fine lubricant for wood and will help loosen rusted bolts. Put a little on your iron for easier ironing.

~Source: First published in a 1975 SEMBA Newsletter and reprinted in SEMBA News, January/February 2005.

SEMBA ANNOUNCES CHANGES IN THE MENTOR PROGRAM

The SEMBA Mentor Program, inaugurated in the fall of 2002, is designed to pair a novice beekeeper who is a SEMBA member with an experienced beekeeper (or mentor) living relatively close by. The experienced beekeeper would be able to answer questions by phone or e-mail or might make an on-site visit to help with some problem. Each pair would develop their own plan of cooperation.

The mentor program is designed for the beginning beekeeper. To qualify for the mentor program, the beginning beekeeper will have taken SEMBA's Beginning Beekeeper's Class or has at least two years of beekeeping experience and has taken a beekeeping class. **The program is NOT intended as a substitute for beginning beekeeping instruction.**

The mentor list now includes: **Flint and Mt Pleasant area, Paul Mazur; Northville area, Clayton Scholz; Plymouth/Canton area, Win Harless; Ann Arbor area, Roger Sutherland; Brighton area, Ron Forfinski; Lapeer County area, Jim Goodrich; Royal Oak and Detroit, Rich Wieske; Rives Junction/Jackson County area, Mike French.**

If you are interested in becoming involved in the mentor program as a mentor or a mentee or need more information, please e-mail John Haynes at mentor@sembabees.org. As new mentors volunteer, we will add those names and the area served to the SEMBA web site (<http://www.sembabees.org>). For new mentors, a contact will be made with you before assigning a mentee.

AN SOS FROM THE COMMERCIAL BEEKEEPING INDUSTRY

The North Central Regional Center for Rural Development at Michigan State University is hosting a free 45-min webinar featuring Professor Marla Spivak, University of Minnesota, on the topic: "Responding to an SOS from the Commercial Beekeeping Industry". **Date:** April 22, 2014 **Time:** 1 p.m. **Location:** Webinar

Contact: Rosa Soliz, soliz@msu.edu

Webinar URL: <http://connect.msu.edu/newtech>

BARGAIN CORNER

For Sale

~3# packages with Italian Queen for \$87 (approx. pick-up date May 5); 5 frame nucs for sale for \$140; 10 frame deep with at least 6 frames of brood for \$180; and Italian queens \$24 each. For further information, contact Carl at hardyhoney@att.net or (586) 484-1110. Please leave a message.

~5 frame Nucs (medium frame only) for sale \$150 dollars - All Summer long, June – August 2014.
Contact Carol Hoffman (269) 727-0707 or e-mail: essential_honey_bees@earthlink.net

~Bees from H+R Apiaries, Georgia. 3 lb. \$94, 2 lb. \$84. Delivery approximately May 10, 2014. No cage charge.
Contact: Shawn Shubel, (517) 548-5176.

Hive Location Offered

10 acres with over 100 apple trees ready to host bee hives. The bees can stay year round. Located in Milford by the GM Proving Grounds. You can contact me at tmcadotte@gmail.com or 248 420 4357.

Southeastern Michigan
Beekeepers' Association
Organized April 1, 1934

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

Oakland Beekeepers' Club



Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club

