



# SEMBA NEWS

Volume 24 Number 5 Newsletter of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers' Association  
August/September 2014

## SEMBA FALL MEETING

Hosted by Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club

### **When:**

Sunday, September 21, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.

### **Where:**

Schoolcraft College, Lower Waterman,  
18600 Haggerty Road, Livonia, MI.

### **Program:**

Wintering Bees Indoors and Innovative  
Devices for Straining Honey.....

Paul Antonelli

A new nuc box, devices for feeding,  
and "Saving the Bees" Project.....

Juanito Co

New Ideas for overwintering nucs.....

Winn Harless

Refreshments are welcome.

### **Program Notes:**

Beekeepers are creative in developing new ideas and equipment for better beekeeping. Please consider bringing your innovations to this meeting. It may be an idea you want to share, to have members critique or something you wish to market. For further information contact Roger Sutherland, 734-668-8568 or rsuther30@gmail.com

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

FOLLOWING THE MEETING ON SUNDAY  
SEPTEMBER 21, A BOARD MEETING WILL  
BE HELD. ALL SEMBA MEMBERS ARE  
WELCOME TO ATTEND.

## HONEYBEE GENOTYPES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In recent years, much attention has been focused on the global problem of honeybee colony losses. Among the many explanations for these losses, variability in the genetic makeup and vitality of honeybee populations might help

to explain some of the variability in honeybee colony losses experienced in different regions. This has led to the innovative honeybee Genotype-Environment Interactions (GEI) experiment carried out by members of the international honeybee research association COLOSS. The results are published in a special issue of the *Journal of Apicultural Research*.

A total of 621 colonies of 16 different genetic origins were set up in 21 apiaries in 11 different European countries managed by 15 research partners. Each location housed the local strain of bee together with two of "foreign" origins. The colonies were set up in the summer of 2009 and were managed and evaluated according to a standard protocol used by all participants until 2012.

IBRA Science Director Norman Carreck says: *"The results of these experiments show that the locally adapted strains of honeybee consistently performed better than the "foreign" strains. This may seem logical to many bee scientists, but may come as something of a shock for many beekeepers who believe that purchased queens are likely to be in some way "better" than the bees that they already have in their own hives. There is growing evidence of the adverse effects of the global trade in honeybees, which has led to the spread of novel pests and diseases. These papers which provide evidence that locally-adapted honeybee strains consistently perform better than imported strains may thus strengthen local bee breeding programs, and encourage the use of locally bred queens over those imported from elsewhere"*.

~Source: International Bee Research Association, May 2014

## THAT'S NOT HONEY, HONEY

By Jessica Kellner

I wanted to update you on more news regarding tainted, potentially toxic honey on store shelves, which we first reported last summer. Back then we learned from *Food Safety News* that up to a third of the honey on U.S. store shelves had been illegally imported from China, where beekeepers have employed an antibiotic that causes DNA damage in children and is

potentially carcinogenic. Because many Chinese beekeepers also use old methods and store honey in unlined, lead-soldered drums, Chinese honey is also high in lead, which is why it's been banned for export to the U.S. and Europe. But despite the ban, Chinese honey is illegally imported and lands on U.S. store shelves. Fast-forward to this month and another round of testing by *Food Safety News*, which found that more than three-fourths of the honey sold in U.S. grocery stores has had all traces of pollen completely filtered out. Pollen is the only way to identify the source of honey—in fact, the FDA says any product that's been ultra-filtered and no longer contains pollen isn't even honey. *Food Safety News* explains: "Ultra filtering is a high-tech procedure where honey is heated, sometimes watered down and then forced at high pressure through extremely small filters to remove pollen, which is the only foolproof sign identifying the source of the honey. It is a spin-off of a technique refined by the Chinese, who have illegally dumped tons of their honey - some containing illegal antibiotics - on the U.S. market for years."

*Food Safety News* bought more than 60 jars, jugs and bears-full of honey from grocery stores, drug stores, natural food stores and restaurants in 10 states and the District of Columbia, and had the contents analyzed by Vaughn Bryant, a professor at Texas A&M University and one of the nation's top pollen investigators. Dr. Bryant found that 76 percent of the samples from grocery stores had all pollen removed, 100 percent of honey from pharmacies had all pollen removed, 77 percent of the honey from big box stores had all pollen removed. 100 percent of the individual honey packets from restaurants like McDonald's and KFC had the pollen removed, yet 100 percent of the samples *Food Safety News* bought from farmers' market coops and natural grocery stores had the full, anticipated amount of pollen.

Mark Jensen, president of the American Honey Producers Association, sums up these findings with clarity, saying that removing all pollen from honey is contrary to marketing the highest quality product possible. "I don't know of any U.S. producer that would want to do that. Elimination of all pollen can only be achieved by ultra-filtering and this filtration process does nothing but cost money and diminish the quality of the honey," Jensen told *Food Safety News*. "In my judgment, it is pretty safe to assume that any ultra-filtered honey on store shelves is Chinese honey and it's even safer to assume

that it entered the country uninspected and in violation of federal law," he added.

This is all horrible news for us honey-lovers, but it is good news for the local honey movement. As this stunning new research shows, buying locally produced food isn't just good for bolstering healthy economies and improving community—it may also be vital to our health and wellness.

~Source: Mother Earth News  
Submitted by Roxane Hook

### **CREATING A FEDERAL STRATEGY TO PROMOTE THE HEALTH OF HONEY BEES AND OTHER POLINATORS**

Pollinators contribute substantially to the economy of the United States and are vital to keeping fruits, nuts, and vegetables in our diets. Honey bee pollination alone adds more than \$15 billion in value to agricultural crops each year in the United States. Over the past few decades, there has been a significant loss of pollinators, including honey bees, native bees, birds, bats, and butterflies, from the environment. The problem is serious and requires immediate attention to ensure the sustainability of our food production systems, avoid additional economic impact on the agricultural sector, and protect the health of the environment. Pollinator losses have been severe. The number of migrating Monarch butterflies sank to the lowest recorded population level in 2013-14, and there is an imminent risk of failed migration. The continued loss of commercial honey bee colonies poses a threat to the economic stability of commercial beekeeping and pollination operations in the United States, which could have profound implications for agriculture and food. Severe yearly declines create concern that bee colony losses could reach a point from which the commercial pollination industry would not be able to adequately recover. The loss of native bees, which also play a key role in pollination of crops, is much less studied, but many native bee species are believed to be in decline. Scientists believe that bee losses are likely caused by a combination of stressors, including poor bee nutrition, loss of forage lands, parasites, pathogens, lack of genetic diversity, and exposure to pesticides. Given the breadth, severity, and persistence of pollinator losses, it is critical to expand Federal efforts and take new steps to reverse pollinator losses and help restore populations to healthy levels. These steps should include the development of new public-private partnerships and increased citizen engagement. The US President has directed the establishment of a Pollinator Health

Task Force to be co-chaired by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. In addition to the Co-Chairs, the Task Force shall also include the heads, or their designated representatives.

~Source: *Catch the Buzz*, July 2014

## **BEESWAX USE IN WORLD WAR II**

Wax was used to coat air planes, shells, and drills. The tips of tap and dye sets were covered with beeswax to protect them. Bits also were coated in beeswax to prevent rust. Cables and pulleys, adhesive tape, varnishes, canvas tent and awnings needed to be waterproofed and the thread had to be strong. All were coated with beeswax for strength and waterproofing. Gene also mentioned that his father, Carl E. Killion, and he would take blocks of wax to the Tent and Awning Company of Terre Haute, Indiana and there they would use the wax to coat the threads before they sewed the canvas together. The canvas was also waterproofed with beeswax.

Common string was coated with beeswax so it would not slip. Pharmaceuticals, medicines, ointments, and dental procedures depended upon beeswax. Practically all types of ammunition were coated with beeswax from rifle cartridges to 16 inch shells. Beeswax did not expand in desert heat nor crack in polar cold. It was said that the typical war machine contained ten pounds of beeswax. Beeswax was used to desensitize gun powder for naval guns, as a corrosion inhibitor for brass casings, and as a waterproofing for leather.

About a million pounds of beeswax was used annually in the United States during the war, mainly for waterproofing ammunition and airplanes, ignition systems, and in motors and electric coils. When watching the old video footage of the invasion of the coast of Normandy on D-Day, one can appreciate the necessity of coating all the metal with beeswax to prevent rust in the salt water. This included weapons, shells, and tools.

According to a British blogger, an unusual use for a beeswax-based polish occurred during World War II when hundreds of thousands of kilograms were used for polishing metal 'aeroplanes,' coating shells, waterproofing ignition apparatus, and coating canvas tents. Today he, a hobbyist, is building a Hugo Armstrong Spitfire IX FY-F BS 435 and is using the same coating used originally by the original British war plane manufacturer.

This article by author Karen Nielsen Lorence was published in the August 2014 issue of the

*American Bee Journal*.

Bees wax tip: Shred beeswax into screw top jar. Add same quantity of turpentine and same of linseed oil. Leave in mild warmth until next day, then shake to an emulsion.

~Article and tip submitted by Bill Sirr

## **RADIO FREQUENCY ID TAGS ON HONEY BEES REVEAL HIVE DYNAMICS**

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — Scientists attached radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags to hundreds of individual honeybees and tracked them for several weeks. The effort yielded two discoveries: Some foraging bees are much busier than others; and if those busy bees disappear, others will take their place.

Tagging the bees revealed that about 20 percent of the foraging bees in a hive brought home more than half of the nectar and pollen gathered to feed the hive. "We found that some bees are working very, very hard – as we would have expected," said University of Illinois Institute for Genomic Biology director Gene E. Robinson, who led the research. "But then we found some other bees that were not working as hard as the others."

~Source: *Catch the Buzz* July 22, 2014  
These findings are reported in the journal *Animal Behaviour*, July 2014

## **BEEKEEPING MEETINGS IN SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN**

[Oakland Bee Club](#) For information contact Dennis Holly, 248-542-1316 or [Hollysapiaries@yahoo.com](mailto:Hollysapiaries@yahoo.com)

[Monroe Bee Club](#) For information contact Bill Bray at [braybill@hotmail.com](mailto:braybill@hotmail.com)

[Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers](#)  
For information contact Megan Milbrath, 651-428-0543 or [a2b2club@gmail.com](mailto:a2b2club@gmail.com)

[Biodynamic Beekeeping](#), Ann Arbor, MI For information contact Eileen Dickinson at 734-717-4145.

[Pine River Bee Club](#), Goodells, MI  
For information contact 810-364-5477.

## IN MEMORY OF GILBERT TERRY (1957- 2014)

SEMBA member Gilbert Terry died on September 1, 2014 after a courageous battle with leukemia. In 2005, Gilbert was a student in the Beginning Beekeeping Course taught by Ed Nowak. For several years, he continued to assist with that course and later became an instructor in the Beginning Beekeeping Course held at Tollgate Farm. Also, he was one of the workshop presenters at SEMBA's Annual Beekeeping Conference. Gilbert maintained bees in Plymouth and was an employee of the William Fishbeck farm on Plymouth Road. Gilbert is survived by a sister, Mary Lynn Smock and a brother Ned Terry.

### JOIN FRIENDS AND FAMILY FOR A CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR GILBERT BONDS TERRY

**Date:** Saturday, September 13, 2014   **Time:** Open House, 1pm – 5pm   **Celebration Service: 3pm**  
**Location:** Murray Lake, 7994 Plymouth Rd. Ann Arbor, Michigan (where Curtis Road meets Plymouth Road)  
**Look for balloons on the mailbox and a sign "Celebrate Life".**

In an informal gathering, we will be sharing memories, tears, smiles, laughs that Gilbert has brought to our lives. If you would like to share something specific about Gil but do not want to speak yourself, you may email your message to [smockmar@hotmail.com](mailto:smockmar@hotmail.com)

No gifts expected. Please bring a chair to sit on and a dish to pass to complement picnic-style food: "Lee's Fried Chicken", chips, coleslaw, potato salad, chocolate cake, water, tea and lemonade.

**Please RSVP:** [smockmar@hotmail.com](mailto:smockmar@hotmail.com) or voice message on 734-233-8428.

## WORKER BEES 'KNOW' WHEN TO INVEST IN THEIR REPRODUCTIVE FUTURE

When a colony of honeybees grows to about 4,000 members, it triggers an important first stage in its reproductive cycle: the building of a special type of comb used for rearing male reproductive, called drones. A team of experts from the Department of Neurobiology and Behavior at Cornell University, led by Michael Smith, studied what starts the reproductive cycle of honeybee colonies. The results are published in Springer's journal *Naturwissenschaften-The Science of Nature*. Reproduction isn't always a honeybee colony's top priority. Early in a colony's development, its primary focus is on survival and growth. When the colony reaches a certain stage, its workers start investing in reproduction. The first step in this whole reproductive process is building cells of drone comb, the special comb made of large cells in which drones are reared.

~Source: *Catch the Buzz* August 21, 2014

For the complete article go to: <http://www.springer.com/gp/about-springer/media/springer-select/worker-bees-know-when-to-invest-in-their-reproductive-future/32280>

### SEMBA Bargain Corner

#### **For Sale:**

~Anti-Varroa Queens available. Contact Meghan Milbrath, 651-428-0543 or [meghanom@gmail.com](mailto:meghanom@gmail.com)  
~Closing beekeeping operation. Many items for sale. Contact Ted Hysen, 734-878-6792 or [tphsen@gmail.com](mailto:tphsen@gmail.com)  
~ Hive of three deep suppers full of honey, bees and brood for winter. bottom boards and covers  
You move. suppers are heavy. Suggest two person lifting device  
Start extracting honey now. \$200 for all. Call Jim at [\(248\) 473 4187](tel:2484734187) for more information

#### **Hive Location Offered:**

~Dutton Farm in Rochester, MI with acreage is ready to host bee hives. The bees can stay the year round. Contact Amy Vine at 248-425-5946 or email [amyvine5@comcast.net](mailto:amyvine5@comcast.net)

#### **Wanted:**

~Bee trees with live honeybees needed for video observation. Please call Jerry Dunbar, 586-770-9953.  
~Beeswax. Contact Steven, 281-677-1510.  
~Sixty- eight year old Christian man from Turkey with 50 years experience is offering his beekeeping services to interested beekeepers. He has experiences in queen rearing, honey extraction, frame and hive construction and many other aspects of colony management. He resides in Macomb County, Clinton Township and can be contacted by calling his son Afi at 586-850-1170.

Note: Ads in the Bargain Corner are free to SEMBA members. To place an ad, email Roger Sutherland at [rsuther30@gmail.com](mailto:rsuther30@gmail.com).

**HEARTLAND QUEEN BREEDING COOPERATIVE**

I have been working with the newly formed Heartland Queen Breeding Cooperative, which is a group that formed to breed better bees for northern beekeepers. We have some queens available that are very promising for fighting against varroa. These genetic advances are our true hope to move away from chemical treatments, and these queens are the next step.

Why they are so exciting: Apis cerana - the Eastern Honey Bee - is the one that originally had varroa, and therefore has adapted various strategies for dealing with this pest. One of these strategies is to bite the mites and damage them while grooming. Most Apis mellifera just pull them off, unharmed. Greg Hunt, a researcher at Purdue University, has been working to promote this biting behavior in Apis mellifera. When he started, only 2% of the mites that dropped were bitten. Now, he has bees that will bite 80%.

They have been crossing these bees with queens of other known anti-varroa traits to get some super anti-varroa bees. The goal is to disseminate these queens far and wide this year to see how they work in various northern climates.

I will be receiving 90 2 day old queen cells soon. I will finish them and hatch the virgins into cages. These virgins will be available to purchase for \$20 on a first come-first serve basis. If you are interested in one of these queens, please fill out this form:

<http://umich.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8fd03382b5413e870d1ea68a3&id=970247ad40&e=e2fc2909a0>

I am still sorting out shipping costs, but shipping should be available as well.

I am also available for consulting for making nucs or late season splits for housing these queens. If you would like me to deliver the queen and help you make a split, please let me know, and I can set up an appointment.

=====

**UPCOMING MSU EXTENSION BEEKEEPING WORKSHOPS**

MSU Extension Specialist, Walter Pett, has placed two demonstration hives at the Forgotten Harvest Farm, near Fenton, and two at the Saginaw Valley Research Center , near Richville. We would like to invite beekeepers of all ages and experience levels to learn about the various methods for removing honey from the hives, inspecting, the colonies for Varroa mites, and wintering strategies. We will meet from 1-4 pm at the Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center on Friday, September 12, and at the Forgotten Harvest Farm on Friday, September 19. Free registration. Call or email MSU Extension- Saginaw Office at 989.758.2500 or vanpopp8@anr.msu.edu.

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

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

Oakland Beekeepers' Club



Schoolcraft Beekeepers' Club

