

Local Buzz



September 2007

purchased over 1500 spoons and ran out before the last day! It was refreshing to hear people's concern about the plight of the bees and I was amazed at how educated some of the kids were that came through the booth, until they told me that they had taken classes taught by Randy, good job Randy!

Big thanks to everyone that donated their precious time to help organize the booth this year and spend numerous hours working in the booth. I truly find educating the public about bees very rewarding. The honey judging went very well and we had several winners from our organization. Good Job!

I hope all is well with your bees and they are ready for winter. Take care and we'll see you at the next meeting, Labor Day, Monday the 3rd of September.

Your President,

Shane Mathias

September 3rd Program

Our September 3rd program, 7 PM at the Grass Valley Veteran's Hall, will be a honey tasting and plant exchange. Bring your special honey to share, whether your girls made it or you bought it on vacation. Bring your extra fruits and veggies, pips, pups, tubers, runners, splits, bulbs, starts, cuttings, thinnings, and seeds to exchange with your fellow beekeepers. With all the creativity of the NCBA members, this could be a wild meeting!



Shane Mathias, our president, in front of his 'honeymobile' (note license plate). Shane is reputed to just load a hive into the passenger seat and drive off...

President's Message

Dear Fellow Beekeepers,

The fair has come and gone and summer is on its way out. Where did the summer go? I didn't get have the things done that I wanted to, but what's new? I vote for more hours in a day.

The county fair was a success. There were a few issues (i.e. no taster spoons, short supply of honey (believe it or not)), but all in all the bee booth was, once again a very popular attraction at the fair. We

Bee Bits

By Randy Oliver

I just returned from hot, humid Tucson, where The Western Apicultural Society held its convention this year. Tucson in August surprised me. Even though it is surrounded by saguaro desert, my plane descended through beautiful white rain clouds, onto wet tarmac. Tucson has two rainy seasons--winter, and July/August when the monsoons blow in. The temperature there was over 100° and 60% relative humidity. The saguaro desert at 3000 ft was in bloom, but the real surprise was when I drove up to visit Dee Lusby at 4000 ft in mesquite scrubland. It was absolutely verdant! The ground was covered ankle to knee deep with lush green annuals, and it felt like a tropical rain forest. Dee took me to see her bees--she calls them "small bees," but everyone else calls them Africans.

Those bees are a totally different animal than ours. The first thing that surprised me is that weak to moderate colonies can be worked with minimal smoke, and even bare hands, as long as you don't make any movement in front of the entrance, or pass a shadow over the frames. If you do, all hell can break loose. Otherwise, they act like a "touchy" local colony. There are usually bees flying around your veil and bumping you with warnings. But if you lift a bare hand up, they aren't especially prone to sting. We didn't get into any really strong colonies, but locals said that they can be much more defensive.

One thing that amazed me was the structure of the brood nest. When you cracked the boxes (stacked 5 or 6 high, and mostly empty), it looked like a queenless colony, with scattered bees roaming over the top bars, but no sign of a cluster. But when you lifted a frame, there was brood! The temperature and humidity were so close to broodnest conditions, that the bees didn't need to cover the brood, and just chimneyed up the middle.

The bees looked just like ours, but a little smaller. However, the queens were big and beautiful--varying in color, but some very light colored.

The conference had some great speakers, but the high point for me was the all-day visit to the Carl Hayden Bee Lab. We got to visit each of the researchers' labs, and see their equipment, and get detailed explanations of projects that they were working on. We also had some unexpected visitors. The Almond Board Honeybee Task Force decided to meet at our convention (for the first time face to face). So the world's largest almond grower

(Joe MacIlvaine) and beekeeper (Brett Adee) were there, plus other heavy hitters.

I spent most of my time with Dr. Gordie Wardell, who is the developer of the Tucson Bee Diet--Megabee, and Dr. Blaise LeBlanc, who is a chemist working on sugar syrup issues. Gordie gave an eye-opening presentation that correlated CCD with weather conditions that led to poor pollen intake and increased flight during times when no food was available. Much more to say, but not enough room here!

Randy Oliver

Harvest Fair Entries Due Sept 7th

The Harvest Fair and Draft Horse Classic at the Nevada County Fairgrounds runs from Sept 20-23. Harvest Fair competition division 1116 is honey, with light, medium, or dark categories, and you only have to submit one jar! All competitors receive two complementary tickets to the draft horse classic PLUS a small cash premium if you win a ribbon. There hasn't been much completion in previous years, so get your entry ready now. For more information or to enter see www.nevadacountyfair.com or get your entry forms to the fairgrounds office by Friday September 7th at 5 PM.

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Broccoli: Food for Me & Bees

By Janet Brisson

We are so lucky to be living in the foothills. At 2100 foot elevation, we garden year round. Our big fall and winter crops we are putting in this fall are 'Cole' crops, a crop that actually helps replace calcium in your soil. These crops include cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels

sprouts, kale and Broccoli, with a special emphasis on the latter.

Broccoli is a plant that keeps on giving. We usually start cole crop seeds in the middle of July and always plant way more way broccoli than needed. This year we are buying starts at Eisely's Nursery in Auburn and they have a wonderful selection. The plants go into the ground, late August to early September, sometimes with shade cloth if the temps are in the 90's. (Pull shade off as temps fall into the 80's).

Of all the cole crops, broccoli will feed you first. By the end of October, you get a huge head of broccoli from each plant, and freezing is easy for later on, just blanch, cool and fill zip lock bags. After the heads are cut, side shoots will keep producing as long as you pick them. A frost only makes them sweeter and fall plantings mean no aphids. Around the end of November, when the other cole crops are ready, you can stop picking the side shoots and let the broccoli to flower.

Again, we are so lucky to be living in the foothills; we almost always get a really nice week of weather in December, January and February. Warm enough for our bees to break cluster and see what's outside. As beekeepers, we must watch our friends and their winter stores, as they will start consuming in this situation and could starve. But having bloom out there, like the bright yellow broccoli flowers, will provide a much needed food source for our gals in the middle of winter.



Honey Plum Butter

Janet Brisson reports that the NCBA library contains another wonderful book "Putting It Up With Honey" by Susan Geiskopk. Janet's adapted the following recipe from the book, so go out and get picking!

5 pound plums (approx) to make 10 cups of pulp
3 cups of honey

Wash, pit, and stem plums. Juice plums either in a steam juicer or other juicer, reserving both juice and solids. For steam juicer, put solids through a strainer and colander to remove any unwanted parts (may be necessary several times). For regular juicer, inspect solids, remove unwanted parts, recombine with juice, and boil over low heat stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes, then put through the strainer. Combine juice and solids with the honey, and cook until the plum honey butter stands up to a peak. This can be done either on the stovetop, stirring frequently to prevent burning or sticking, or Janet suggests you use the crock pot without a lid. If you use the crock pot, leave the lid off, and stir as needed to prevent sticking. Crock pot may be left on low overnight if you stir in the skin that will form on top.

When plum butter is ready, place in sterilized canning jars, and can for 10-15 minutes.

Sacramento Beekeeping Supplies

- Complete line of all beekeeping supplies
- Candle making supplies (molds, wicks, dyes, scents)
- Glycerin soap making supplies (soap base, molds, scents, and dyes)
- Honeycomb sheets for rolling candles (50 colors and in smooth)
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- Gifts, books, ready made candles

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RECEIVE QUICK SERVICE

The Nevada County Beekeepers Association is dedicated to apiculture education and promotion of the art and science of beekeeping among beekeepers, agriculturists, and the general public. This is a "not for profit" organization.

Meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 7 PM at the Grass Valley Veteran's Memorial Building at 255 South Auburn Street in Grass Valley. All visitors are welcome. The newsletter is published monthly as a service to the membership. Articles, recipes, commentary, and news items are welcomed and encouraged. Submission by email is encouraged. Please submit to Leslie Gault at lesliegault@yahoo.com. The deadline for the October 2007 edition is September 18th. A limited amount of advertising space (business card size 3" by 2") is accepted and need not be bee-related. Rates are \$1 per issue or \$7 per year for NCBA members and \$16 per year for non-members. All revenue from advertising goes to the Association treasury and helps offset the cost of producing and distributing this newsletter. To receive the *Local Buzz* via email: please email your request to lesliegault@yahoo.com

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