

Beeing Observant

Cowlitz Beekeepers Association Newsletter

Dedicated to Preserving the Honey Bee through Community Action, Awareness and Education
November 2021

Next Meeting:

Where: Nearly any place Via Zoom

When: November 18, 2021, 7:00 PM

Speaker: Christine Kurtz

Topic: Reading the Hive Debris

If you live in Cowlitz county or the surrounding area and find honey bees fascinating, then you should consider joining us. Reach us on Facebook by searching for Cowlitz Beekeepers Association or check out our website at:

<https://cowlitzbeekeeping.wixsite.com/website>

Association Officers and Board:

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Zoom Monthly Meetings

We are hoping to begin in-person meetings at the Sons of Norway in January 2022 with a Zoom option. Both are being pursued. Our Zoom Meetings have been a great success which is why we would like to hold a hybrid meeting which gives the flexibility to attend from home or enjoy the chance to get to know each other.

For now, I encourage you to join us on Zoom. All you need is a computer or smartphone connected to the internet, speakers, a microphone, and a camera. Join us at our next meeting. Click the link I will send out a few days before the next meeting.



Zenobia Scott educating our future on the importance of honey bees. These home schoolers were full of questions that she and husband Dave Scott (Trustee) enthusiastically answered.

Handmade Proud:

Looking to buy new woodenware at reasonable prices?

- Bottom Boards - Top Covers - Inner Covers - Hive Boxes and more...

Contact **Gerry Herren**

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Swarmchaser40@gmail.com



Our November Speaker

Christine Kurtz is a seasoned and experienced beekeeper with over a decade long work with bees, using a sustainable, treatment free and all-natural management style. Long time Sonoma County Ca resident, she is familiar with the ebbs and flows of the seasons and the cycle of the local honeybee. A strong believer in supporting locally adapted stock of bees, helping beekeepers become better beekeepers and help each other restock and share their bees as well as creating small queen rearing groups. She is a social entrepreneur that helped create localized communities within the Sonoma County Beekeepers' Association to facilitate education, connection between beekeepers, sharing of resources and involvement in local schools and events. She is an environmental activist determined to share the strong messages bees have for us all especially with the challenges we face with our environment.



In her 2013 term as President of Sonoma County Beekeepers' Association, and tenure within the SCBA Board of Director - she spearheaded efforts that lead to the 2013 North Bay Leadership Award - "Paint the Community Green" for outstanding work in the non-profit area, earning her bee association with Special Congressional Recognition, California State Legislature Recognition and Sonoma County Board of Supervisor Honor and Acknowledgment.

She was a part of the panel at UC Davis Honey and Pollination Center that defined the "Honey Wheel". Christine was honored in 2014 with "Most Valuable Beekeeper" within the Sonoma County Beekeepers' Association and also the start of her Honey Bee Consulting Business. She travels all over Sonoma, Napa and Marin County helping people with their bees.

In 2015 after a yearlong study of Permaculture she got her Permaculture Certificate concentrating on water management on her property to lower the impact of this precious resource to use to maintain a large organic garden. With her lives her husband of 30 years, 15 chickens, a goat, 2 dogs, and an ebb and flow of between 10 and 25 hives. Her stationary hives are in Petaluma, California in a semi coastal climate with long periods of dearth which often leaves the honey in the hive till Fall to make sure bees have enough of their own food to survive winter before any is harvested. Believing in lifelong learning, Christine is furthering her education about honey bees with Queen Rearing, continuing her studies in Permaculture and is currently in the Master Beekeepers Program at UC Davis about to start a research project on entombed pollen.

Shining a spotlight on fireflies

Investigating the status of some of this continent's most-beloved insects, experts recently completed a landmark assessment of 128 of the 167 known species of firefly native to the United States and Canada. The researchers—from the Xerces Society of Invertebrate Conservation, the ABQ BioPark and the IUCN Firefly Specialist Group—concluded in results released last spring that 11 percent of all assessed species are threatened with extinction and that insufficient data exist to evaluate the status of more than 50 percent.



The Buzz on the Horsley board

by John Holmes

Developed by Arthur Horsley of Yorkshire England, the board design was based off the Snelgrove board used to prevent swarming and produce a new colony/queen. Horsley's design was focused on a board that could also be used in outlying apiaries since his board didn't require as many manipulations as the Snelgrove board.

Use of the Horsley board starts with the selection of a strong colony which is contained in a single brood box. For good success there should be a strong nectar flow starting. On a good day with bees flying, set the parent colony aside. In its place install a new bottom board and brood box containing frames of foundation and/or drawn comb, one frame space is left empty in the center area of the box.

Returning to the parent colony, locate the queen and palace her and the frame she is on in the empty space of the new brood box. You must ensure that there are no queen cells on this comb, if present it is essential, they are destroyed. If the parental colony included a queen excluder and supers, these can now be placed over the new brood box. If lacking they need to be added to the new brood box.

Place the Horsley board on top of the supers with the entrance facing the back of the hive, opposite to the floor entrance. Place the parental brood box on the Horsley board, bringing frames together and replacing the removed frame with a new frame of foundation/drawn comb. Cover board and top is then installed. Open the board's entrance wedge to its full extent (fully closing the queen excluder opening). This will allow the flying bees to return to the main entrance in the lower brood box.

Three to four days later, partially close the entrance, there by opening the queen excluder in the board. All frames are checked for queen cells. Those found sealed should be destroyed since they utilized older larvae and will produce lower quality queens.

Ten days after the last inspection frames are again checked for queen cells, they will be well advanced in development. Depending on the number the beekeeper has the choice to reduce down to the best two or cut out surplus cells which could be installed in new nucleus hives. Once queen cell reduction is complete the hive is closed and the board's entrance is fully opened, closing the queen excluder opening.

If successful a new queen will be produced and the workforce of the hive was not lost due to swarming. Options are available to the beekeeper. If a two-queen hive is desired, once eggs are seen in the upper brood box, the brood box and Horsley board can be rotated so the entrance is at the front of the hive. The entrance is reduced, opening the excluder opening, and both colonies can store honey in the supers. Option 2 is to produce comb, keeping the colonies separate the top colony is provided a box of foundation to draw out. Option 3 is to replace the old queen, either finding and killing the old queen or combining the two colonies counting on the younger queen winning the battle. Option 4 is to winter over the new colony in place as insurance against winter colony loss, if both colonies survive the winter the top colony is removed becoming a separate new colony.

Unfortunately, although available in England, I was unable to locate a seller in the USA. So, if you want to try using a Horsley board, you'll need to build one or have one built. I'm planning of modifying a Snelgrove board.



Original method developed by Arthur Horsley

<http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/horsleyboardmichaelbadger.pdf>

<https://southstaffsbeekeeperscom.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/fact-sheet-6-horsley-board.pdf>

Cowlitz Beekeepers Association

Monthly Zoom Meeting

October 21, 2021

Meeting came to order at 7:00 p.m.

There were 31 in attendance.

Our guest speaker was Michele Colopy. She is the Executive Director of Leadership Education Action Development out of Ohio. She talked about how pesticides affect the honey bee and native pollinators. If you have any questions you can reach her at execdin@leadforpollinators.org, www.leadforpollinators.org, or 330-803-3449. Their mission is to provide leadership, education, action and development to support the health and sustainability of the honey bees, native pollinators and their ecosystem.

We will be electing new officers and trustees in December. Our current officers and trustees are:

President: Bill Holmes

Vice President: John Holmes

Treasurer: Barbara Skreen

Secretary: Zenobia Scott

Trustees: Ken Curtis, David Scott, Kathy Scott and Dixie Tollefson

Nominations for Officers so far are:

President - John Holmes

Vice President - Ken Curtis

Treasurer - Barbara Skreen

Secretary - Zenobia Scott

Nominations for trustees so far are: (4 positions)

Ray Davis, Elizabeth Peters, David Scott, Kathy Scott, Jan Wilson

We will be taking nominations at our November Zoom meeting.

Bee School will be held on Mondays starting January 31, 2022 through February 21, 2022. John Holmes and Ken Curtis will be the instructors. Hoping for in class participation. If not, it will be via Zoom.

The club will be selling nucs to bee club members again this coming spring. More information will be coming later.

We are hoping to begin in person meetings next year. Could be a hybrid meeting. Will find out more information later.

Next month's guest speaker will be talking about reading your bottom board.

Minutes taken by Zenobia Scott, Secretary

Out in the Bee Yard

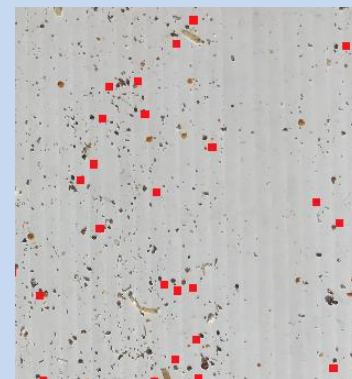
Bill Holmes

At the beginning of October I had 4 light hives out of my 11. I began feeding 2:1 syrup and by the time it turned too cold in my opinion to continue syrup they had gained sufficient weight to at least get them through January.

October 30 started out in the low 40's but by 2:00 it was up to 60 degrees, so I lit my smoker, put my coat on and went out to see how things looked. For these quick visits I just use burlap in my smoker. It works ok for a few hives but then I just get a wisp of smoke for the last few hives. The strong breeze across the top of the hives and my weak smoker meant I wasn't getting any smoke on them at all. Thankfully, they were all quite calm today, though my hotter hive was skipped. The purpose of this inspection was just to see if they were generally broodless so I could give them some oxalic acid vapor. I did not find any brood or eggs which is what I expected. I only use oxalic acid when hives are broodless. It just hasn't proven effective for me except in the odd occasion when I just need to knock the mites down to buy time until I can use something that works better.

I recently read a study out of the north east that an upper entrance did not reduce the humidity in the hive. It did however, contribute to heat loss. Also in the NE, Tom Seeley does not use upper entrances. I am not going to contradict him exactly, but until I see something from the north west, I am going to continue using upper entrances. I believe the slight amount of heat loss is more than offset by the benefit ventilation adds to our wet and fairly mild winters. I insulate the top with 1" of Styrofoam, you can also use a quilt box which insulates and absorbs moisture and leave off the upper entrance. At the end of the newsletter there is a design for a quilt box from Honey bee Suite.

Whenever I use the mite checker board under the screened bottom board to count mites I resort to a magnifying glass and a pencil while sitting hunched over at the dining room table. If there were only a couple mites it wasn't too bad, but still you have to go over the entire board. I hoped there was a better way. At the Apple app store I looked for counting apps. The first one I found was promising. It was called Count This and allowed you to identify an object then let the app count all of them in a picture. Sounds great but I thought the \$25 annual subscription was a little much. But, unfortunately I couldn't get it to recognize a mite. The next app I tried, Visual Counter, was manual. But what's nice is that you can take a picture of the board then slide it back under the hive and repeat with all your colonies. Just keep track of which picture belongs to each hive. Then, you can get comfortable in the living room with your phone, call up the app and load a picture and start counting. You zoom the picture in to where the mites are clear and tap each mite you see. A little mark appears with each tap so you don't get lost and the counter begins tallying. The first picture shows the entire mite board with a final count of 80, and the 2nd picture is a zoom of the screen showing the red marks from tapping next to mites. It's fairly quick and it's free. Bill





Zoom Meeting Recordings

Most of our meetings have been recorded and loaded to our website. I frequently forget to start the recording at the beginning so it's like you came to the meeting late. Look for "Bee Information" then video.

<https://cowlitzbeekeeping.wixsite.com/website>

Elections

Each October and November we nominate for Trustees and Officers for your Association. You may nominate yourself or someone else by sending an email to Zenobia. The election will be held the same way we did it last year using an emailed ballot sent out in late November. Results of the election will be published in the December newsletter and your 2022 officers and trustees will be introduced at the December meeting.

How to Substitute Honey in Baking Recipes

Honey is a natural food, not a standardized, "purified" product. There's a variation in its sugar content and in the proportions of the sugars present. Also, honey has taste and the flavor varies depending upon several factors such as the weather and what flowers the bees have visited. These "problems" of flavor and lack of standardization make honey less predictable than sugar and cause most of the difficulties people experience when they look for THE RATIO to use in substituting one for the other. There is no one proportion that will always "work". Using honey instead of sugar in cookies, cakes, and other baked goods results in a product that is nice and moist (and stays that way longer, too). Honey is also useful when creating sauces and you're looking to create harmony among the different flavors; most notably, it's a great foil against the heat of chili peppers.



1. As a general guide, when using honey in recipes, use less of honey because it is almost twice as sweet as sugar. Replace one cup of sugar with $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of honey.
2. Since honey is a liquid, reduce the amount of another liquid ingredient in the recipe by $\frac{1}{4}$ cup for each cup of honey added.
3. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda for each cup of honey used. This will neutralize honey's acidity and help the food rise and prevent over-browning.
4. Lower your oven temperature by 25 degrees and coat your utensils with cooking spray to prevent the honey from sticking to measuring cups or spoons.

Pollen seasons growing longer

It's not your imagination: Pollen seasons that plague so many hay fever sufferers have grown longer in recent decades—and climate change is at least partly to blame, concludes a recent study. To explore possible links between a warming climate and allergies, researchers examined pollen records from 60 U.S. and Canadian cities between 1990 and 2018. They found that allergy seasons now start 20 days earlier, last 10 days longer and include 21 percent more pollen than 31 years ago (timothy grass pollen, above). Published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, the analysis provides the first documented connection between rising temperature and pollen levels on a continentwide scale. “The strong link between warmer weather and pollen seasons provides a crystal-clear example of how climate change is already affecting peoples’ health in the United States,” says lead author and University of Utah biologist William Anderegg. Pollen-related allergies are tied to respiratory health, viral infections and even school performance.



How to make a moisture quilt for a Langstroth hive

From Honey Bee Suite – Rusty Burlew

For years I tried to reduce moisture accumulation in my wintering hives. Then, after much reading about Warré hives, I decided to modify a Warré-style moisture quilt box into something that might work on my Langstroths here in the Pacific Northwest.

I spent quite a while thinking about this and a long time building the quilts, but at this point I am *ecstatic* about the results. They are really working—no moisture at all is dripping down on my bees. The funny thing is this: the quilts are working in a way that is different from what I predicted—but more on that in a bit.

Here is what I did

- I bought a bunch of two-inch supers that were designed to be used as mountain camp rims.
- Using a one-inch hole saw, I drilled four holes in each frame for ventilation.
- After I painted the frames, I stapled a piece of #10 hardware cloth over each hole to keep out critters.
- I bought canvas (burlap would also work) by the yard, cut pieces to fit the frames, and finished the edges so they wouldn't fray.
- I stapled one piece of canvas onto each rim, stretching it as tightly as I could.
- I filled each “quilt” with wood chips leftover from brood rearing (chicken brood rearing, that is.)
- I put one quilt frame on each hive. In most cases I placed it above the top brood box and below the telescoping cover. In some of the hives it is above a mountain camp rim and below the telescoping cover.

How they work

The wood chips are light, fluffy, and basically the same temperature as the air above the brood nest, so the moist air does not condense on the wood chips at all. Instead, the humid air rises and goes right through the canvas and the two inches of wood chips until it hits the cold inner surface of the telescoping cover. Once it hits that cold surface, the moisture condenses (just like in a regular hive) and then rains back down. But instead of the drops falling on the brood nest, they land on the wood chips and are absorbed. It is just so cool!

I've opened all my hives several times since I installed the quilts and in each case the inside of the telescoping cover and the top layer of wood chips have been wet. When I stir the chips, it is easy to see that only the surface layer is wet because the wet chips are a yellowish-brown color compared to the dry ones which are almost white.

The chips stay dry

My original plan was to change the wood chips whenever the moisture quilt became saturated, but so far, I haven't had to. It seems the ventilation holes are allowing the chips to dry despite all the rain. The moisture hasn't seeped down more than one-quarter inch. While building the quilts I was worried that the 2-inch super would be too shallow, but it seems to be about right for this climate. I think that a very cold climate would warrant a thicker layer—perhaps a three-inch rim like those used for baggie feeders.

I should also mention that the four ventilation holes are providing the sole top-of-the-hive ventilation for each hive. Four holes may seem like a lot, but the canvas and the wood chips prevent a cold draft from flowing across the bees—the air movement is more diffuse because of the quilt. I keep a very small entrance in winter, but I have the *Varroa* drawers removed so air flows in through the bottom of the hive and out through the ventilation holes.

Of all the changes I made to my hives over the years, nothing has helped more than the moisture quilts. I've used quilts for five years now, and on average, I went from overwintering 50-60 percent of my hives, to overwintering 80-100 percent.

<https://honeybeesuite.com/how-to-make-a-moisture-quilt-for-a-langstroth-hive/>

