

# The Voice of Professional and Backyard Beekeeping

# Cowlitz Beekeepers Association Newsletter



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

August 2021

Issue 8

## Next Meeting:

**Where:** Willow Grove Pavilion A

**When:** August 22, 2021, 12:00 PM

**Speaker:** Chatter

**Topic:** Food, Fun, Auction, Honey Tasting

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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Dave Scott, Trustee (360) 425-2314

Kathy Scott, Trustee (360) 601-0393

Ken Curtis, Trustee (360) 261-2795

## Annual Summer Barbecue and Potluck

**Sunday August 22<sup>nd</sup> at 1:00 pm**

**Willow Grove Park, Longview, Pavilion A**

The Club will furnish Coffee, punch, water, hamburgers, and hot dogs. Members are asked to bring a side dish, dessert, or some other edible to share.

We will, as usual, have a honey tasting contest with prizes for first through third. This is a great chance to taste the wide variety of honey flavors in just our small geography. You only need to bring about 3 ounces since we transfer the honey to small tasting containers. If you harvested this year, bring some along!

New this year is a silent auction of 4 items that were donated by Bia Tadlock. A hive setup with a gabled outer cover, brand new electric decapping knife, a smoker, and a bee jacket will be offered. All are in great condition. Bid as often as you like to keep your bid in front. Winners announced at end of picnic. You must be ready to pay in exact cash or check.

We'll be right next to the river which will be scenic but that also means the wind could pick up so be prepared.

The site is just a short distance beyond the boat launch, and after turning into the park, head to the right. The spot is covered, bathrooms are nearby (portable restrooms will be available due to restroom remodel project), and there is table space for 80. You can bring folding chairs if you want, but it's not necessary. Set up begins at 12:00 for those who like to come early.



## Handmade Proud:

Looking to buy new woodenware at reasonable prices?

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

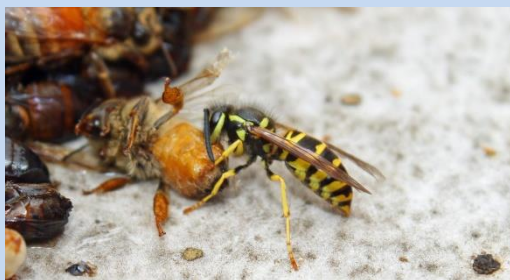
Contact **Gerry Herren**

Ph. (360) 355-0051  
Swarmchaser40@gmail.com



## Members Can Borrow the Club Extractor

Contact Kathy at 360-601-0393 to schedule.



## Yellowjacket Problems?

I have not seen many yellowjackets this year. Maybe it was a tough spring for them or maybe it's the fipronil banquet I have prepared for them the previous three years. There is still time to wipe them out if you are seeing some near your hives. Go to our website (not Facebook) click on Newsletters, then 2020 and open the August newsletter and look for the deadly procedure.



## 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.

## WE DID IT AGAIN!

This year's Go 4th Parade in Longview was another big hit thanks to all the support. Sue Brookfield, Pete Cassell, and Ali Schaafsma donated a combined 45 pounds of Bit O'Honey candy to hand out. We also made up 200 of our club's honey sticks - taped to a bright yellow card with a bee fact or a joke.

Special thanks to Marcia Exter for providing us a place to work on the float! She also recruited two friends and they made most of the tissue paper flowers, and we used Marcia's Warre hive as part of the float. A big shout out to Dave and Zenobia Scott for prepping their trailer.

Finally, thank you to our walkers - Bill and Sue Holmes, Marcia Exter, Sue Brookfield, and Ken Curtis. They handed the candy and honeys sticks to the crowd.

We won the Best Commercial Float Award AGAIN! Hope to see more club members involved in this fun community outreach next year. (Submitted by Kathy Scott who has led this effort superbly)



## The Buzz on the taste of Honey

by John Holmes

When judging the quality of a honey, many of our senses are utilized. The honey's color, texture, aroma, viscosity and flavor all play a part in choosing what we like best. Color and flavor of honey is very specific to the nectar collected and to the region where the plants grow. Flavor complexity is increased since honey is generally produced from multiple nectar sources found. With the factors of annual variation in weather and changing forage availability due to changing land use, flavor and color of honey can differ every year from the same location and beekeeper.



There are approximately 300 different varieties of honey in the U.S., generally named for the plant (tree, shrub or flower) from which they originate. To meet the definition of a varietal honey, 45 percent of the nectar gathered by the bees must be predominantly from a single type of flower. Most varieties are produced by migratory beekeepers. They move their bees into an area when a specific crop is in bloom and harvest honey before moving bees to new forage. Seasonal varieties are an option for stationary beekeepers. Harvesting honey by set seasons captures the nectar flow of distinct sets of plants.

Harvesting and processing can seriously affect the honey's characteristics. Care must be taken not to use too much smoke or honeybee repellent compounds during harvesting, this can impart an off flavor. Heat tends to darken honey and drive off the volatile compounds that provides aroma and taste. Filtering the honey may also change the flavor, removing pollen or particles of propolis.

Not surprisingly, to taste we must use our sense of smell. When tasting honey, it is recommended to let the honey melt on your tongue and breathe through your nose to capture the subtle flavors. Much like wine tasting, honey tasting comes with practice and consuming lots of honey. That sounds like a very good thing.

The Honey Connoisseur, by C. Marina Marchese and Kim Flottum. Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, 2013.

<https://www.americanhoneytastingsociety.com/>

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## Three Ways to Count Your Varroa Mite Problems

From Betterbee

If you've got bees, you've got Varroa mites. The only questions are how many, and how much harm are they doing to your bees? In the late summer and early fall, mite levels soar in relation to the shrinking number of bees. So, the mite levels are going up while the number of bees is going down – thus more mites are parasitizing fewer bees.

And at the same time your hive is raising their all-important, and physiologically different, winter bees. These bees need to live much longer than regular bees in order to bridge the colony through the winter broodless period and be alive to restart the brood build-up that will eventually be next season's foragers. Unfortunately, the mites cause physical harm to honey bees and brood. They also pass on deadly diseases that will amplify the damage they cause and further shorten the life spans of the winter bees.



Getting the mite levels down as soon as you can at the end of the season is the key to protecting your hives.

Decisions about what to do are best made with up-to-date information about the size of the problem.

### Three common ways to test for Varroa mites

1. Use **sticky boards** to count the number of mites that fall out of the hive over a defined period of time. This method is non-invasive but is best done weekly all season to get a trend rather than relying on a single test. ([read more](#))
2. Do a **sugar roll** on a sample of nurse bees to assess the number of mites on bees working close to the brood. This method doesn't kill the tested bees. ([read more](#))
3. Do an **alcohol wash** on a sample of nurse bees. This method is faster than a sugar roll, but the tested bees are killed. ([read more](#)) (Using Dawn Ultra at 2 tbl per gallon of water has shown to be as effective as alcohol. Bill)

## Out in the Bee Yard

Bill Holmes

On Thursday July 29<sup>th</sup> I removed my supers. On Saturday the spinning begins. I had 9 hives survive winter and lead the charge into spring. Four hives started out well but for reasons I both understand and do not understand they faced difficulties and either died or just struggled. The other five flourished and produced over 700 pounds of honey. I was hoping to do mite counts Thursday, but the heat and the work let me know another day is not procrastination but wisdom. So, I hope to do that on Monday and get on with an Apiguard (thymol) treatment which is the first time I have used it.



I have always avoided queen excluders except in a few circumstances. Last year I put one in one of my hives just to prove that I was correct in not using them. Well, that hive did as well as my best producers and there wasn't any brood in the supers. This year I went all in on queen excluders. My average super weighed 50.5 pounds and on the 2 hives that went 5 high the weight was consistent across the boxes. My bees did not seem to mind a little wire above the brood nest. Did I mention no brood in the supers?

Clearing the bees has usually meant a fume board, which works very well. I use honey bandit which smells like almonds and sends the bees scurrying to lower levels in just a few minutes. But I would rather not put any odd smells in my supers even if it dissipates and does not get into the honey. So I revisited the Clearer board/bee escape board method I had rejected 2 years ago. The problem I had was 2 fold. First, all the 50 pound supers had to come off so I could install the board then they had to be stacked back on which was much harder than taking them down. Second, nothing happened, all the bees were still in the supers so I had to unstack the heavy supers, take off the board then restack them, then use the fume board. Just writing this makes me wonder why I decided to give them another try. But, thinking too much has never been a problem so this winter I built the cone clearer board shown in the picture. Now I have 2 boards that are the typical supply store triangle maze type board and this new one. Results were quite different. One hive with the triangle board installed did not move down and I fumed them without removing the clearer board



which worked fine. The rest had very few bees left in the supers. The clear winner was the cone board. The only thing I did different this year was to add a super with blank foundation just above the brood nest and placed the clearer on top of that. I also made sure that any top entrance was closed off, though I don't know that I didn't do that 2 years ago. I may build 2 more of the cone clearer boards this winter but it would go a lot easier if I had help installing the boards (not fishing here). That picture is taken after removing the supers and you can see a couple bees walking on top of the screen but thousands found the channel and a trip through the cone and out of the super.

I'm finishing up this article after our Saturday family plus honey day. This project can be a serious chore but having so many there to help and make the day fun, memorable, and effective warms my heart each year.

The new decapping planer worked well. The free 250 volt decapping planer with the European plug even worked well on 110 volt American with a conversion plug. That was a welcome surprise. The electric carving knife did one side of one frame quite nicely but then started bogging down and getting hot so I abandoned that. Maybe if it was an industrial model, it would have worked.



Best wishes to all of you who are getting ready to fill your buckets. Bill

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## Pollen nutrients improve bee health

For the first time four nutritional compounds found in different flowers have been directly proven to enhance gut health of honey bees, boosting their immune systems and increasing lifespan, based on a study by U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service scientists.

Researchers found that feeding caffeine, kaempferol, p-coumaric acid or gallic acid -- all nutritional compounds found in the nectar and pollen of various flowers -- improved the abundance and diversity of bacteria in the honey bees' gut.

The four nutrients to test were chosen because they are naturally present in flowers favored by honey bees, and they had already been shown to improve honey bee lifespan and tolerance to a common pathogen, *Nosema ceranae*. Caffeine has been shown by researchers to make bees better learners and improve their memory of rewarding floral scent and nectar quality. The study is the next step in more specifically defining how some nutrients in flower pollen can help bees by showing a connection through improving the gut microbiome.

The beneficial impact of the nutrients has implications for healthier hive management through designing better dietary supplements.

There are multiple example flower sources for the nutrients.

- caffeine -- citrus and coffee
- gallic acid -- mint, raspberry, sunflowers and apples
- kaempferol -- petunias, asters, canola and poppies
- p-coumaric acid -- buckwheat, roses and clover

The study was published in the Journal of Applied Microbiology.



## Trap Outs

I get calls from the public about bees in structures. Most of these involve removal of some portion of a structure to access the bees. They could be in walls, soffits, or between floor joists. This is commonly called a cut-out. They can be a lot of work but are frequently successful at getting the queen and the rest of the staff rehomed and the home owner free of a bee problem. Sometimes the bees are in a cavity that can not be opened like cement block walls or trees. To remove bees in these cases we do a trap-out. The club has been involved in 4 trap-outs this year, and this is the first year we have done any that I know of. Board member Ken Curtis has done 3 and Mikal Boucher and I (mostly him) are in the process of one now. Ken's have all been successful in getting bees and queen to move into his hive body.

The first step is to seal all entrances except for one. This can be a chore on deeply fissured trees. Then you mount the new entrance hole that you will use to attach to your hive body. Top left picture shows a deep hollow in the willow which was sealed with a thick piece of foam (this is the one Mikal and I have going). Ken's last trap-out was very easy since there was just one small opening that he could quickly adapt to his pvc pipe. After allowing the bees to adapt to the entrance changes you can add the hive body and some fully drawn frames. After a couple days you can place the one-way funnel so field bees are forced store nectar/pollen in the beekeepers box, and the colony queen is no longer seeing incoming resources. After that you add a frame of brood which attracts nurse bees and hopefully the queen trips out to see what's going on in the new addition. When she comes out you can keep the box to capture emerging brood. But when you are done seeing bees in the funnel it's time to go. Someone should seal the old hive so it doesn't attract swarms. It's an easy system, just requires multiple site visits. The funnel I built is a short cone while Ken is using a very long funnel. I don't have enough data to choose one over the other but I like the idea of the longer one. The system we are following is called the Price trap-out after a beekeeper from Prineville, Or. You can Google Price trap-out for inspiration and more information.

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## Cowlitz Beekeepers Association July 15, 2021, Meeting Minutes

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

Our guest Speaker was Dewey Caron. He shared with us his PNW Report from the honey bee survey. If you are wanting more current information you can go to the website at [PNWhoneybeesurver.com](http://PNWhoneybeesurver.com). There was a short Q & A after his presentation.



**General Bee Club business:**

- Potluck! It's been 2 years since our last one because of COVID. Our annual potluck will be held August 22, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. at Willow Grove in a covered area. The Club will provide hamburgers and hot dogs, disposable plates, eating utensils, punch and coffee. Bring your desired food to share. A honey tasting will be held. Let's see who wins this year! We will also have a silent auction of bee supplies that was donated by the Tadlock family. We will not have our regular club meeting for the month of August because of being able to have our potluck.
- Next meeting will be held on September 16, 2021. Hopefully at the Sons of Norway building in Kelso at 7:00 p.m.
- A big thank you to all who were involved in the 4th of July float. We did it again, we won 1st prize for Best Decorated Float! Way to go team.
- Kalama changed their ordinance forbidding bee hives in an urban site to allow them. Our letter to the council helped them see the benefits honeybees have for our environment.
- A beginning beekeeper class will be held starting in October, courtesy of WASBA. There is a cost for this class and a manual will be provided. More information will be available later.
- We had a short Q & A at the end of our general meeting time.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Minutes taken by Zenobia Scott, Secretary

## Honey Flavor Wheel

