

# The Voice of Professional and Backyard Beekeeping

# Cowlitz Beekeepers Association Newsletter



Dedicated to Preserving the Honeybee through Community Action, Awareness and Education

July 2021

Issue 7

## Next Meeting:

**Where:** At the Sons of Norway building  
224 Catlin St. Kelso WA or anywhere  
worldwide on your computer via Zoom

**When:** August 18, 2022  
7:00 PM

**Speaker:** Atreya Manaswa

**Topic:** Nutrition Management

If you live in Cowlitz county or the surrounding area and find honeybees 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:

Ken Curtis, President (360) 261-2795 or

[cowlitzbeekeepers@gmail.com](mailto:cowlitzbeekeepers@gmail.com)

Al Wilmoth, V. President (815) 391-4089

Zenobia Scott, Secretary (360) 425-2314

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Barbara Skreen, Treasurer

Dave Scott, Trustee (360) 425-3214

Kathy Scott, Trustee (360) 601-0393

Ray Davis, Trustee (360) 431-2882

Elizabeth Peters, Trustee (360) 241-6954

## 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](mailto:Swarmchaser40@gmail.com)

Atreya Manaswi is a 10th grade student at Orlando Science High School in Orlando, FL. He has been involved in university level laboratory academic research since the age of twelve and has won regional, national, and international awards for his extensive honeybee conservation research. In his four years of honeybee conservation research, the USDA, and University of Florida (UF) have funded his novel research projects. In 2021, he was recognized as one of the nation's leading top 30 youth scientific minds in the prestigious Broadcom MASTERS STEM Competition amongst 10 million students across the country each year. Amongst this pool of top 30, he was recognized as the 1st place national winner in the category of Scientific Research. In 2022, he was selected as the winner of the At-Large BioGENEius Challenge (as one student from across the entire US) and qualified for the 2022 International BioGENEius Challenge where he was named the highest honors awardee. He is also a very active public speaker and actively uses STEM as a catalyst to make positive reform in the community. In July 2022, he was also invited to speak at the United Nations CBD's GYBN on his honey bee research as an invited speaker. Through his speaking at various forums across the globe, he has impacted an audience of 21,000 individuals. Atreya is also an enthusiastic actor and performing artist having been involved in countless theatrical productions since the 3rd grade, often starring as the lead antagonist role. Recently, Atreya played the lead role in a play at his school which focused on mental health/suicide awareness. He is also a practiced acoustic guitarist, having played for 5+ years, and enjoys playing for his community. He holds a 2nd degree black belt in Taekwondo which he has pursued for the last 8 years. He takes pride in being a youth STEM leader with a fervent belief in the power of science and the youth's ability to transform our globe.

## Field Day

We are going to have a field day on Saturday 8/21/2022 at 12 p.m. The event will be held at the bee yard of Dave and Zenobia Scott weather permitting. The field day event is always fun, as well as educational. There will be a signup sheet at the entrance table at the next club meeting on 8/18/2022. For those who attend meetings on Zoom please send let us know if you would like to attend.

## Cowlitz County Fair

The Cowlitz County fair was a big success. CBA won a blue ribbon and a best in show ribbon.

## How to Recognize and Survive a Nectar Dearth

Ken Curtis

A nectar dearth in beekeeping is something that every beekeeper needs to be aware of. Beekeepers have a special relationship and will do anything to ensure the survival of their colonies. A dearth in beekeeping is something that even the most careful beekeeper cannot control.

### What is a Dearth in Beekeeping?

A dearth is a shortage of plants and flowers producing nectar resulting in bees not being able to find enough nectar to survive. Nectar can be reduced because of dry conditions and high temperatures. A dearth can be devastating to a colony because there is less food available for the bees.

A dearth is predictable to a point, but it is impossible to pinpoint because of changing conditions. The two most common times to see dearth are in winter due to the extreme cold and in the summer because of extreme heat.

### Spotting a Nectar Dearth

There are some telltale signs when a nectar dearth in beekeeping is occurring including:

## Our Zoom Meetings

Zoom video conferencing is celebrated for its ease of use, high quality video and audio, and collaboration facilities such as text chat and screen sharing. All you need is a computer or smartphone with 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. If you are not a member but would like to attend a meeting, request the code to [cowlitzbeekeepers@gmail.com](mailto:cowlitzbeekeepers@gmail.com)

- You'll hear your bees... you've already heard them, but they will be even louder and may seem agitated as they leave the hive.
- Bees will start flying closer to the ground, checking flowers more than once, and going for flowers they would normally fly over. They will also be flying slower as they are curiously trying to find whatever nectar sources are available.
- Bees will become more annoying and aggressive. They are likely to find new sources of nectar like a peanut butter and jelly sandwich at the picnic table or the new perfume your spouse is trying out.
- Other bees will come to your hives and attempt to steal nectar that hasn't been sealed in the honeycombs and turned into honey yet.

## **What to Do During a Dearth**

As beekeepers we cannot control the weather or force flowers to produce more nectar. However, there are some things beekeepers can do to anticipate the dearth. One thing a beekeeper can do to prepare for a dearth is not to drain all the honey from hives to ensure the bees have plenty of food stores. Minimize the number of hive entrances and reduce the entrance. This will make it harder for foreign honeybees, yellow jackets, and wasps to enter the hive to rob it. A beekeepers must also decide if they should feed the bees. During extreme heat and drought conditions feeding could become necessary. Be aware if you feed, it can backfire. Sugary syrup may send an alarm signal to foreign bees to come and rob a hive of uncapped nectar. If you do feed, it is best to place the sugar syrup inside of the hive rather than outside.

It is important to weigh hive regularly during a nectar dearth to monitor honey stores regularly. Many of the bees will stay in the hive instead of exploring for nectar sources which could result in their remaining honey at a rapid pace.

Once nectar stores inside of the hive are depleted supplemental feeding will be necessary. Check to make sure the queen looks healthy and for any signs of hive damage. These inspections should be done as fast as possible to avoid allowing foreign bees and wasps to rob your hive.

When looking ahead to next year it is important to consider the possibility of a nectar dearth happening again. Many beekeepers plant plants that produce nectar early in the spring to give colonies a head start. It is important to plant plants that produce nectar during the summer. Some examples include Dahlias, Mint, Oregano, and sage. A google search will turn up many other pollinator friendly plants that produce nectar during the summer.

## **What not to do During a Nectar Dearth**

- Do not harvest any honey.
- Do not place additional feeders around your property. Although this will keep your bees busy flying from feeder to feeder, but it will also attract unwanted bees which will likely rob your hives.

- Do not leave a hive open for longer than five minutes. If a problem is spotted while inspecting a hive close the hive while deciding on a corrective action. Do not leave a hive open and walk away, which would be an open call to robbers.

Reference: What is a Nectar Dearth in Beekeeping and tips how to survive it

Beehour.com, <https://beehour.com/what-is-a-nectar-dearth-beekeeping-and-tips-how-to-survive-it/>

## Cowlitz County Fair

the Cowlitz County fair was a big success. We won a blue ribbon plus a ribbon for best in show.



## Cowlitz Beekeepers Association Executive Board Meeting July 13, 2022

Meeting came to order at 5:08 p.m.

All board members were in attendance.

A special thanks to Kathy Scott, Barbara Skreen and Zenobia Scott for all the work that they do for the 4th of July parade, Earth Day Celebration, and Cowlitz County Fair. They make the running of each event go smoothly.

Shall we order an uncapping tub for members to use? The Board voted yes. Ken will be ordering it.

Tossed around the idea of having the B-line Company of Rochester, WA to come in and show their supplies to the club for members who are wanting beekeeping supplies. There was mixed feelings about this idea.

Need to pay dues to WASBA. Also, there is the possibility of starting a club apiary through WASBA and WSU. WASBA will provide grants to have the apiary for training, field day, etc. WASBA will also provide 1-4 hives with bees to start with. Will bring this up to the membership to see if this is something they would be interested in doing. Club members will be responsible to maintain the apiary.

Field Day - Do we still want to have it? Will bring this up to the membership at the meeting on July 21, 2022. David Scott said his apiary is available for the Field Day.

Cowlitz County Fair - July 27-30, 2022. Fair hours are from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Need volunteers to man the booth which will be located in the main Expo Building in the Natural Resources Area. Time slots are for 3 hour shifts. A sign-up sheet has 2 person 3 hours slots and will be available at our monthly meeting on the 21st. Setting up the display will be on July 26, 2022 beginning at 9:00 a.m. The 10 available booths are on a first come first served basis.

Our annual Potluck will be on September 17, 2022 out at the pavilion at Willow Grove Park. The pavilion is available from 12:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. We will need 2 BBQ grills for grilling hamburgers and hotdogs. More information will become available in August.

Meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

Minutes taken by,  
Zenobia Scott, Secretary

## Out in the Bee Yard

Bill Holmes

The Asian Giant Hornet aka murder hornet was given a new name by the Entomological Society of America. It will now be called the **Northern Giant**. There was always a little confusion when referring to the Asian hornet, Asian Hornet, and even the European Hornet which can be found on our east coast. it won't take too long for the new name to get widespread usage, but the may be stuck with 3 names for a while. So far none of the newly named hornets have confirmed sightings this year, but it is still early.



**Hornet.**  
Giant  
Hopefully  
hornet

At the last CBA meeting Heike Williams from OSU clearly explained the importance of healthy vigorous winter bees. Those bees, which are critical to winter survival, start being produced in September. Unmanaged/untreated mites in August can impact your hive in January or February even if you do an oxalic acid treatment in December, killing nearly every mite in the hive. It will be too late. I have 12 hives and am going to treat half with Apiguard and the rest with Apilife Var as soon as my supers are pulled on August 11. Both are thymol based. It can be confusing to choose a treatment that is right for you. I'll list the options along with pro's and con's of each. My assumption is that all supers have been removed.

- Apivar. This is a creation of chemists, the chemical amitraz is impregnated onto a plastic (polymer) strip which is hung between frames for 6 to 8 weeks. Use 1 strip for each 5 frames of bees, 4 in a double deep. Repositioning strips during the treatment may be helpful. They claim 99% efficacy which depends on proper placement. There aren't any harmful effects on brood or queens. You should pull the strips after treatment. The only downside other than it being a chemical is if you



have high mite counts at the beginning of treatment then the 6-week treatment period could be too long to protect developing winter bees. There are no temperature restrictions.

- Formic Pro or Mite-Away Quick Strips (MAQS) Formic acid is an organic acid. It is the only product that can kill mites that are feeding on capped brood. Applied when outside temperatures are between 50 and 85 degrees. There will be some young larvae killed and queen loss has been seen. Applied twice over a few weeks. This is likely the best treatment if you have a high mite count and the temperature is working for you. Formic Pro is slightly easier on your bees than MAQS.
- Apiguard. This is a gel of an extract of thyme. It comes in small aluminum trays that you place on the frames of the top brood box. You will need a spacer or an empty super to allow space for the inner cover. Thymol works from 60 to 105 degrees being more effective at the higher end. Two treatments required over the 3-to-4-week period. Also available in bulk tubs. Possible loss of some young larvae and queen may reduce egg laying. It is up to 95% effective.
- ApiLife Var. Another thymol product which adds menthol, camphor, and eucalyptol oils. It has a lower dose of thymol than Apiguard. Comes in a small package of 2 tablets. Requires 3 tablets for a full treatment. I bought a 10 pack which will fully treat 6 hives. Up to 90% effective. Requires temperatures of 65 to 85 degrees and is very effective at the lower range. May make bees irritable. Read research on the two thymol products: <https://www.blog-veto-pharma.com/us/thymol-considerations-for-a-successful-varroa-treatment/>
- Oxalic Acid. Either a drip or vapor (sublimation) treatment. Vapor requires proper safety equipment. It is very good at killing mites with no known negative effects on bees or larvae. Does not remain effective more than 2 or 3 days in the hive. Multiple treatments of 5, 6, or 7 days will knock mites back but they will keep returning. Best to use this during brood breaks like November, on swarms, or on a hive that swarmed 2 weeks previously. Maybe could be used on a high mite count hive followed by apivar. This is not a good late summer treatment.
- Not recommended are: Hop Guard, an extract of the Hops plant that I have not seen where it is effective, though there are few side effects. Apistan or CheckMite which are chemicals that mites have developed resistance.

Check out the Honey Bee Health Coalition's tools for Varroa Management at <https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/resources/varroa-management/>

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### August Checklist

- Extract ripe honey
- Provide a fresh water supply daily
- Remove the queen excluder until next season
- Test for Varroa and treat if necessary.
- Check hive weight to begin getting ready for winter
- Attend your local bee club meeting

June 16, 2022

Meeting came to order at 7:05 p.m.

In attendance: in person 23, via Zoom 6

Our guest speaker was Ted McFall of McFall Bee Yard in Curtis, WA.

Ted talked about the Giant Asian Murder Hornet

If you have questions or would like to set up Giant Asian Murder Hornet traps, contact Public Reporting at: [agr.wa.gov/hornets](http://agr.wa.gov/hornets)

call 1-800-443-6684

e-mail [hornets@agr.wa.gov](mailto:hornets@agr.wa.gov)

The 4th of July Parade is coming up. Need volunteers to walk or ride in the parade, also more Bit O' Honey candy to hand out at the parade. Decorating the float will be the day before the parade.

Cowlitz County Fair is July 27th through the 30th, from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Setup will be the 26th beginning at 9 a.m. Tear down will be the 31st. Signup to man the booth will be at our meeting on the 21st. This year's theme is "Let the Good Times Grow".

Meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Minutes taken by,

Zenobia Scott, Secretary