

Next Meeting:

Where: Hybrid Meeting: Anywhere worldwide on your computer via Zoom or in person at the “Sons of Norway” building 224 Catlin St. Kelso WA. 98626

When: April 21, 2022, 7:00 PM

Speaker: “Alan Woods” President WASBA

Topic: WASBA Membership

If you live in Longview or the surrounding area and already keep bees, intend to do so or are simply interested in this fascinating hobby, Cowlitz Beekeepers Association is the association for you. Even if you don't keep bees, joining us will help support our cause, our community action

Association Officers and Board:

Ken Curtis, President (360)261-2795 or cowlitzbeekeepers@gmail.com

Vacant board seat V. President

Zenobia Scott, Secretary(360) 425-2314

Barbara Skreen, Treasurer

Ray Davis ,Trustee(503) 556-9784

Dave Scott, Trustee(360) 425-2314

Kathy Scott, Trustee(360) 601-0393

Elizabeth Peters, Trustee (360)241-6954

PNW Honeybee Survey

It's that time of the year. The PNW Honeybee Survey is now open at the following link:

<https://pnwhoneybeesurvey.com/survey/>

2022 Nuc Purchase

Our Nuc group purchase has closed for 2022. It looks like our total is 77 colonies which are tentatively scheduled for delivery on April 23rd. Everyone who ordered will be contacted about when and where to pick them up. If you haven't heard anything by April 15th contact Ken

2022 Membership

<https://cowlitzbeekeeping.wixsite.com/website/registration> click this link, fill out the form, submit. Then send your check to the listed address on the form. Cash payments can be arranged. Thank you for supporting Cowlitz Beekeepers Association.

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.


Attendees can join a Zoom meeting without signing into the app. 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


BEEKEEPERS CALENDAR OF SEASONAL ACTIVITIES


Suggested Activities for Beekeepers in the Coastal range from Washington, Oregon and Northern California...


Prepare Hives for April

 Check colonies for adequate Honey/Pollen supply. If colonies do not have adequate honey stores feed with 1:1 sugar syrup with Honey-Bee-Healthy. This month colonies can starve for lack of adequate food supplies particularly if the weather doesn't allow them to forage.

 Check for eggs and laying queen. This should be done on a warm day. Check the queen's laying pattern. If it is scattered and sporadic, she may be getting old, tired, and ready to retire.

 Check for Varroa mite levels by performing a sugar shake, alcohol wash, or 24-hour mite drop count. Treat as necessary, Formic Pro is a good option in spring. Oxalic acid vapor will not be effective at this time.

 By the end of April, you should be looking for swarm cells and have a plan for what you are going to do if you find them.

 If you are getting nucs or packages make sure that your site and equipment are ready.

Queen Breeding Locally

Board member Ken Curtis would like to start a group dedicated to selectively breeding queen bees to produce a strain of honeybees that are better adapted to our climate, as well as local pollen and nectar sources.

By implementing a queen rearing program we would be able to maintain a supply of queens for club members at a reasonable cost. Doing so would make requeening colonies more feasible. It would also help keep colonies healthy and eliminate unwanted traits.

Contact Ken at Kenctrts1957@yahoo.com 360-261-2795

Swarm List

If you want free bees then join the swarm list. All you need is a phone that receives texts and be a member of CBA. When I get a notice of a swarm, I group text everyone on the swarm list with the general location. The first person who texts back that they can quickly respond will get the details. Very few swarms fly before they are rescued when we respond fast. Text Bill at 3604304077 to get your spot on the list.

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

Out in the Bee Yard

Bill Holmes

This is the time of year when our thoughts are golden with optimism. More than hope we expect that it will all come together and be our best year ever with high honey production, low swarming, and controlled varroa. What we will certainly get is the joy of working the bees, better understanding of them, ideas for next year, and definitely some successes.

My plan for the first major inspection of March was to implement a hive body weight reduction strategy. Not my idea, my back's. Initially I had thought to convert all my 2 deep system colonies to 3 western supers for brood which is almost exactly the same comb space as 2 deeps. I ruled out 8 frame bodies because of the huge conversion costs, should have started that way. As I tried to come up with how to migrate to all westerns I realized it was going to long process. My thinking cap suggested another idea. I realized the bottom deep was only picked up once per year in the spring. Therefore, I could continue to use one deep and add the western as the 2nd brood chamber. I got my calculator out and discovered that a deep plus a western had only 17% less comb space than 2 deeps while reducing lifting by about 20 pounds.

I have previously discussed moving one of my 11 hives into a longish hive and I did March 25th. The picture shows half of the frames covered by my modified Vivaldi inner cover. There are 22 frames across the box and I can add supers as desired. be fun to watch over the next year. So that leaves 10 hives to converts to the deep/super configuration. I decided I was not going to force the issue. I'd remove deep on each hive and check the bottom deep. Four hives had virtually empty deeps so on those I removed it, put the top box full of bees and brood onto the bottom board and added a western super. Four hives did not have brood in the bottom but had bees, honey and fresh nectar down there, so I reversed the hive bodies on them. The other 2 had brood in both boxes so I left them just as they were.



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Three hives had so much happening in them that I added a queen excluder and a super on them. That's about 3 to 4 weeks earlier than I have in the past. I also checked mites with the mite checker sticky board and the most I found was 7 per 24 hours and the average over all hives was 1.4. I am satisfied that my 2 winter Oxalic vapor treatments were successful. I will do an alcohol wash about mid-April to get better numbers. If mite counts reach a treatment threshold (1 to 2% or more) than I plan to use the Swedish sponge system with Oxalic acid that I wrote about in the March 2021 newsletter which you can find on the Cowlitz Beekeepers website. However, I will use a full sponge this year on the strong hives which will deliver 50 grams of OA. I'll still cut the sponge into 2 strips but will use both between the brood boxes. Let me also suggest that Formic Pro is an excellent product and approved for use with supers. I would prefer to not treat my hives but like any other animal in my household it is my responsibility to give them the best shot at a healthy life. There are no-treatment strategies you can employ and if you follow them diligently you may be successful.

Time to Eliminate Yellowjacket Queens

Yellow jacket workers, drones, and old queens die each fall with the first frosts. The only survivors are the newly fertilized females. They spend the winter hibernating in underground holes, brush and compost piles, hollow logs, tree cavities and firewood piles. They begin their overwintering around November and will stay there until the temperatures start to become spring-like. Then the queens, which are about 3/4 of an inch long, emerge, feed on nectar, and then find a nest-site. Once she has selected a location, she begins tearing strips of wood fiber and mixing that with saliva to build her nest. After she has built a small nest she lays her first

batch of eggs. When they hatch, she must feed the larvae a protein source. That's when she starts looking for meat, frequently other insects. But, she must also feed herself with a sugar source.

To prevent yellowjacket nests from ever being established, you eliminate the queens. The total number of queens available to start a nest in the spring is fixed. They can't make any more. Every queen caught now while foraging means fewer yellowjackets will be around to torment you during your summer outdoor activities, or to attack your bees in the fall. You should kill every spring yellowjacket you see, but you should also place bait traps around your property. Pictured at right is a Rescue trap which has a single chamber and a single scent attractant. A cotton ball sits in a cavity at the bottom with a pheromone scent which attracts yellow jackets and their queens. The attractant is Heptyl Butyrate (HB) which is a chemical found in rotting apples and pears. The scent lasts several weeks in spring but has a shorter life as the weather warms. Refills can be purchased at hardware, big box, and other stores. This trap works well but unfortunately only on Western Yellowjackets. We also have Common and Aerial yellowjackets, and bald-faced hornets which are also yellowjackets. You can improve the odds of catching queens or workers by adding a little cooked chicken. But since Yellowjackets do not eat rotting meat, the bait should be changed out every few days. In a 2017 study Dangsheng Liang and Jose E. Pietri found that combining chicken extract and HB in the same trap was not effective. But, hanging 2 traps on different branches of the same tree, one with HB and the other with chicken extract, they caught significantly more YJ's. Your best results would occur when you use 2 rescue traps 6 to 8 feet apart, one with the HB attractant that comes with the trap and the other with cooked chicken. If I only deployed a single trap, then I would use the attractant without any meat.



Rescue has another model called the "WHY" which has 2 compartments. The bottom is just a smaller version of the trap above and is baited with heptyl butyrate. The top section uses multiple attractants. First a small cartridge of methyl butanol is opened and snapped in place at the top of the chamber. Then the bottom of the upper chamber is filled with a solution of acetic acid (vinegar strength) and water. Both the top cartridge and the acetic acid water additive have additional proprietary ingredients which could be chemicals like isobutanol that have been shown to attract common and aerial yellowjackets. This trap theoretically would do it all. However, I don't know of a study that shows the method works. It is possible that all the scents emanating and combining from that trap might be confusing and less effective than 2 separate traps spatially partitioned. It is a nice idea though and could be highly effective. You should be able to increase your catch by deploying a single chamber Rescue trap loaded with a chicken nugget hung about six feet away. But remember to change meat regularly. WHY trap refills are more expensive, but a multi yellowjacket specie catch may very well be worth it. Bill



Out in the Bee Yard

Bill Holmes

Dream Swarm Catcher



Swarm season is coming. You can put up bait hives to try and lure a foreigner to your apiary, but you might want to keep the swarms from your own hives too. One way to do that is by using a Russian Scion. This technique essentially applies the principle of the bait hive to the bivouac location. A tallish pole (perhaps ten feet high) is placed not far in front of the hives. On top of the pole is hung the scion. While there are elaborate designs, it need only be a simple roof about a foot square to provide a bit of shelter to the lure beneath it. The lure can be a short, vertical length of wood covered burlap then coated with beeswax. Or even an old frame could work. If you have a handy tree, toss a rope over a branch then pull the scion up. It's best that it is not swinging in the breeze. There are examples on YouTube. Do this and don't wait for them to fly too high or get buried in the brush, or set up on your neighbors swing set.



Fermented Honey

I got my order of Nashville fermented honey. If you remember I mentioned it in the March newsletter. It actually has a nice flavor. And it's got some heat. Tastes great on chicken and tri-tip which are the only things I've tried it on. It's slightly runny, most likely they have to add some water for the fermentation process. But how they control that and add the heat is not on their website. If you're into fermentation and want to experiment, it might be a fun project. But, you may never get it just right.

April Inspections

My most important inspections are in April. On the first warm day, I will gather my tools, smoker, and something to drink since I'll be out there for a couple hours and get started. I have hive bodies, lids, nuc boxes, stands, frames drawn and blank, and other sudden needs nearby in storage. In March I made a quicker trip through the hives so I know that they all have laying queens with great patterns, and honey stores were ample. So now I will be looking at making decisions on reversing hive bodies and replacing old comb with new blank foundation. I have always used wax foundation, but I tired of stringing wires, so my new frames will be black plastic which allegedly has a heavy wax coating. Just snap and go. A plus is that it's easier to see eggs in the bottom of cells with the black background. They can also be scraped down and reused someday.

I have another goal which is to test 9 frames in my 10 frame boxes. My bees frequently propolize and wax up any space they can, making removing the first frame difficult. Sometimes I'm close to tearing the top bar off as I pry away and then I roll a bunch of bees on the way out and on the way back in. I noticed that 8 frame boxes for some reason have more empty space when all the frames are loaded, so I thought why not go to 9 frames, then I'll have room to slide one over for easy removal. There's two ways to do this. I can space all 9 frames evenly, or I can push them together and have some space on both sides. I don't know which would work out the best so my plan is to try this on 2 hives and try both methods to see which, if any, placement is best. Another benefit is reducing the weight of the box by 8-10%. Bill

The 12th annual Pacific Northwest Honey Bee Loss Survey

<https://pnwhoneybeesurvey.com/survey/> is open and will be available until May 1st. Please consider downloading and filling out the note sheet to aid in quick survey entry. Many have found that this simple resource has been key to have on hand in the bee yard throughout the year not only to track items but to

Oxalic Acid; Exemption From the Requirement of a Tolerance

Based on the lack of toxicity and the fact that residues will be below and indistinguishable from naturally occurring oxalic acid, EPA concludes that there is a reasonable certainty that no harm to the general U.S. population or any population subgroup, including infants and children, will result from aggregate exposure when considering dietary exposure and all other non-occupational sources of pesticide exposure. Accordingly, EPA finds that exempting residues of oxalic acid from the requirement of a tolerance will be safe.

Last month I said we could now use Oxalic acid with supers installed based on the above. This is not correct. Although it states that oxalic acid would not be expected to be found at amounts above background levels, it does not change the label restriction. What?, you say. The key to the above is the word “tolerance”. The FDA manages human health by enforcing “food tolerances”. The exemption above means the FDA will no longer test honey for the presence of oxalic acid.

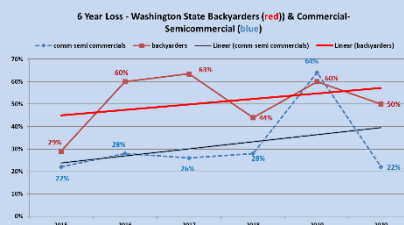
The EPA is concerned about how pesticides are used (not just how much ends up on final food products), which is why they enforce pesticide label restrictions. A pesticide label describes many things such as what should be worn while applying the pesticide, if it should not be mixed with other pesticides, and how it should be applied. Pesticide labels are written by the manufacturer of the pesticide and approved by the EPA. The label for oxalic acid currently states “Do not use when honey supers are in place.” As long as this label is in place, it is the law, regardless of FDA tolerance rulings.

The Registration Division of the EPA requested that Health Effects Division (HED) review a label amendment request for the use of oxalic acid in beehives. The HED released their findings on November 19, 2020. The amended use requests to modify the directions of use so that oxalic acid dihydrate may be applied when the honey supers are present on the hive. The HED findings document provided the results and is based on detailed considerations. They concluded that there is no anticipated occupational handler, dietary, or aggregate risks that would preclude approval of the proposed label amendment use of oxalic acid in beehives.

So, there is an application to change the label. There does not appear to be any reason why it should not be changed, and yet it has not been changed. It’s also difficult to know if it will ever be changed without a pesticide manufacturer leading the charge. There isn’t any money to be had by anyone if the label is changed, thus change seems unlikely, but possible, I’m hoping. Bill

remind of alternative bee husbandry options. **I would like to see every CBA member who had hives in 2020 to participate in the survey.**

Figure 4. Cowlitz loss history
2017-2020 () = number respondents



Beekeeping in the Urban/Suburban Setting

Mid-Atlantic Apicultural Research and Extension Consortium

Since legal problems with bees most often occur in cities and suburbs, beekeepers should manage bees so that they do not bother neighbors. You can take several precautions to decrease the chances of your colonies becoming a public nuisance.

Maintaining gentle colonies is imperative in highly populated areas. Keeping colonies with bees that try to sting each time they are examined, or that consistently hover around the bee veil even after the colony is closed, is not advisable in the urban setting. Selecting hybrid strains that have been bred for gentleness and requeening on a regular schedule will certainly help. If a colony becomes too defensive, requeening with a new queen will likely change colony temperament in a month or so.

Providing a source of water near the hives will stop a lot of unnecessary complaints. Otherwise, the bees may get their water from the neighbor's swimming pool, dripping water faucet, birdbath, children's wading pool, or hanging wash. Once they have become accustomed to a watering place, they will continue to use it throughout the season, and correcting problems after they develop is not always possible short of moving the bees.

Most colonies have a basic flight pattern as they leave and return to the hive. People and animals passing through this flight path could be stung. Bees also spot cars, clothing, and buildings in the vicinity of the hive by releasing their body waste in flight. Spotting from a single colony is generally not serious, but several colonies flying in one direction may make a car or house unsightly in a short time. If possible, do not allow hives to face children's play areas, neighbors' clotheslines, houses, and so forth. Planting a hedge (vegetative corral) or building a fence at least 6 feet high forces the bees to fly above head level and thus reduces the chance of encounters with pedestrians. Fences and hedges also keep colonies out of view, which helps reduce vandalism and concern by the neighbors who might have unfounded, but to them very real, fears related to bee stings.

When manipulating hives, keep your neighbors in mind. Weather and time of day influence the disposition of a colony. Colonies kept in the shade tend to be more defensive. Work the bees on warm, sunny days, when the field force will be actively foraging. Avoid early morning and late evening manipulations if possible. Use smoke efficiently and work carefully and slowly to help prevent defensive behaviors. During a nectar dearth, keep robbing at a minimum. Robbing stimulates defensive behavior. Keep examination time to a minimum and make sure honey supers and frames not being inspected are covered. Top entrances should be avoided in close neighborhoods during the summer season. Whenever a hive with a top entrance is opened and the supers moved, hundreds of bees will be flying around confused because their entrance is gone.

Swarming bees can be a major concern for neighbors. Even though swarming bees are quite gentle and seldom inclined to sting, the presence of a swarm in the neighborhood tends to excite people, and your apiary, rightly or wrongly, will likely be identified as the source of the swarm. Having sufficient equipment to manage your colonies and reduce swarming is a must.

Part of being an urban beekeeper is good public relations. Beekeepers who permit their bees to become nuisances force communities to institute restrictive ordinances that are detrimental to the beekeeping industry. Do not keep more colonies in the backyard than the area forage can support or more than you have time to care for adequately. Giving the neighbors an occasional jar of honey will also sweeten relations. Only a very small number of communities prohibit keeping bees. In most instances, violation of an ordinance or keeping bees in a negligent manner usually means moving the bees to another location.



The **Western Apicultural Society** is providing, free, monthly, **Zoom Webinars**. Past presentations in Dec 2020, Jan and Feb 2021 are available on YouTube.com, search: western apicultural society. The April webinar hasn't been listed on their website but they are held towards the end of the month. Register at <https://www.westernapiculturalsociety.org/events-1>

CBA has a **New Facebook Group** and it needs you. Thanks to new member Nate for getting it set up. We think this will be helpful for discussions and questions about beekeeping. You can get several perspectives and then match up the answers to your goals. Find us and join at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/457379328804524>

Cowlitz Beekeepers Association
Monthly Zoom Meeting
March 18, 2021

Meeting came to order at 7:04 p.m.
38 in attendance

Nuc Sales - Nucs tentative delivery is Saturday April 17, 2021. Payment of nuc orders need to arrive no later than March 31, 2021.

The City of **Kalama ordinance** states it is illegal to have honey bee hives within the city limits. Letters are being sent to the city council letting the city officials know how beneficial honey bees are to our environment.

We need to rebuild our **Facebook** page and need help with it. If you have tech skills and would like to help please contact Bill Holmes.

Guest Speaker for our meeting tonight was Dr. Dewey Caron. He stated that the survey is open to fill out on 'How did your bees do over winter?' Dewey has 3 books available to purchase if you are interested. Honey Bee Biology, \$50; The Complete Bee Handbook, \$17; A Field Guide to Honey Bees, \$15. You can contact him at dmcaron@udel.edu to order. There was a question-and-answer time after his presentation.

Our guest for April 15, 2021 will be Charlie Vanden Heuvel.

Meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Minutes taken by, Zenobia Scott, Secretary