

## **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:** May 19, 2022, 7:00 PM

**Speaker:**

**Topic:**

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 and awareness and education programs.

### **Association Officers and Board:**

Ken Curtis, President (360)261-2795 or [kencrts1957@yahoo.com](mailto:kencrts1957@yahoo.com)

V. President, Al Wilmoth

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

## **Teamwork at its Finest**

This time of year, many beekeepers enjoy sitting in front of their hives watching bees performing tasks necessary for the good of the colony. There is peace in watching foraging bees leaving and returning to the hive. As the foragers return to the hive their counterparts await their return to offer their services for the good of the colony. The collective efforts of the colony are example of teamwork at its finest.

## **Rain, Rain Go Away**

As we leave the wettest April on record behind all we can do is hope May brings change. Although only six days into May more rain has fallen than all of May 2021. Dry weather is around the corner. Keep your heads up. When the rain does end forage plants should explode into bloom.

### **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](mailto:cowlitzbeekeepers@gmail.com)

**A special thanks to David, Zenobia, and Chantell Scott for representing the “Cowlitz Beekeepers Association” at the Earth Day celebration on Saturday April 22<sup>nd</sup> at Lake Sacajawea Park.**





## **BEEKEEPERS CALENDAR OF SEASONAL ACTIVITIES**

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

### ***Prepare Hives for May***

- Conduct what is likely the first hive inspection of the year on a warm day. After the first inspection is completed set a regular inspection schedule and stick to it.
- Perform varroa mite inspections using either a powdered sugar or alcohol wash. Treat as necessary. Formic Pro is a good option in spring. Oxalic Acid vapor is not effective this time of year.
- As the queen begins laying eggs at a higher rate colony with large populations may prepare to swarm. By keeping an eye out for queen cells, you may be able to determine if a swarm is likely. May and June are a good time to capture swarms. Have an empty hive ready should the opportunity presents itself.

## **Queen Breeding Locally**

Club President Ken Curtis will be attending queen rearing workshops in May 2022 with the "Pacific Northwest Queen Rearing Club" in Battleground WA. With hopes of beginning a queen rearing program with other interested CBA members.

## **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 Ken @ (360)261-2795 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

As I write this piece, we are looking at the 5<sup>th</sup> wettest April and in the top 10 Portland history. But I don't see a problem with my bees. They get out most at 45 degrees and there are nearly always breaks in the rain. If you are living elevation over 700' your conditions likely have been challenging. I am as usual, we will receive some wet weather in May and June to keep the blackberries full of nectar and my supers overflowing with honey.



coolest in days even at an hopeful,

Last week I helped a club member with inspections and performed a split on his strongest hive. He wants to avoid all the swarming his hives did last year so we were looking at doing swarm control splits. Any hive will likely swarm but your strongest and best colonies most assuredly will swarm without some active measures implemented by the beekeeper.

Swarming is the colony's way of reproducing at a larger level than the reproduction that takes place within the cells of wax comb. That swarm impulse is a hard-wired innate behavior. It is a process that healthy colonies go through and try as we might, we are unlikely to completely prevent it. Understand that the colony makes its decisions based upon many thousands of years of evolutionary history. But if you can change enough of the cues that trigger the swarm impulse, you may be able to prevent or even reverse it. Ultimately, as with other decisions made by the honey bee colony, specific responses to several factors or cues are involved in the initiation of the swarm impulse and not all of them are completely understood.

Colonies tend to swarm when they are crowded with bees. Overcrowding occurs when a colony grows beyond the capacity of its home. This happens routinely in wild hives living in a tree cavity. They build up in the spring until there are too many bees for the space and then swarm. Attentive beekeepers can add hive bodies and relieve overcrowding. If you already have double deep brood chambers, then adding a queen excluder and a super early in April can help your bees spread out.

Brood Nest Congestion is another important condition leading to swarming. Swarming typically does not occur unless the hive is full of sealed brood. When 90-95% of the cells in the brood nest contain some stage of brood egg laying is reduced leading to fewer larvae which in turn means less brood pheromone in the hive. This tips the bees that the brood nest is congested, and they begin swarm preparations weeks before a swarm bolts. So even though a cavity, or your managed hive, may have adequate volume, the swarm impulse is triggered. You should take measures to ensure that the queen's ability to lay to her full capacity is not restricted. You can rearrange brood combs by moving empty drawn combs into the center of the brood nest or supplying additional drawn comb. Blank foundation will not be interpreted by bees as brood comb, they don't see its potential. Reversal of the brood chambers is the simplest measure to take to reduce the swarm impulse. If you added a super in early April, then a few weeks later you can reverse those brood chambers.

Colonies are less likely to swarm with a queen in her first season than they are if the queen is older. Aging queens tend to lay fewer eggs, and their production of queen pheromone starts to drop off. Pheromonal signals get diluted as the colony population grows since it gets divvied up between more bees. Congested colonies with an older queen hamper the dispersal of her weak pheromones. You should consider requeening every 2 years.

If your queen is young, then during an inspection you would be looking for overcrowding and a lack of space for the queen to lay. You will also be looking for swarm preparations. If you tip the top box up and check the bottoms of the frames you might see what is shown in the picture. Those are swarm cells. If they are open with larvae inside, you have a little time. But if they are sealed up then swarming is imminent or has already happened. Seeing just empty small cups doesn't mean much as they do that all the time and may never use them.



Another strategy for reducing the urge to swarm is splitting the hive into 1 or more colonies. If swarm cells are present, then you would perform a swarm control split. If not, then you can do a walk away split and increase the size of your apiary while giving your hive room to grow. You can google swarm control splits and find many that have names such as Taranov or Demarree, but also youtubers, bloggers, and websites telling you how to do it. What they all have in common is separating the swarm cells and young brood from the queen and capped brood (don't worry if a frame is mixed just put it in either). The queen can stay on the original colony or can move to the new site, just remember the field bees will stick with the original site. You could also make a couple of nucs if you have multiple frames of swarm cells.

Walk away splits are a method to increase the size of your apiary. The simplest way is to move one hive body onto a separate bottom board while making sure that both boxes have eggs and young brood to raise a queen. If you know which box contains the queen, then you could buy and install a queen in the queenless box. It takes 16 days from fresh egg to emergence to produce a queen. We won't know when they will start an emergency queen cell, or if they will use an egg or a very young larvae but it could be around 14 days to emergence of the new queen. Laying could begin as early as 8 days later but likely 2-3 weeks after emergence or 4-5 weeks after the split. If you want to know where the queen is before splitting, you can remove the top box then put an empty hive body on the remaining box which will act as a funnel or a fence. Then shake all the bees from the frames you set aside into the funnel and let them work their way into that bottom box. Remove the funnel box and place a queen excluder over the now crowded bee box followed by placing the removed box with all the frames void of bees back on top of the excluder. Wait 2 hours and nurse bees will be covering the brood in the top box and the queen will be in the lower box.

Since I don't usually want more colonies and I would like to keep strong colonies for honey production, I'll make a nuc with hives that are boiling over with bees and running low on brood space. That at least gives them 5 frames of foundation which may hold them off from swarming until June.

Back in the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph I mentioned doing inspections on a member's hives. I quickly found the queen on the first frame I removed which was the outermost. We always start with that frame because she is rarely on it, and we want to create space for removing the rest of the frames. Just remember she can be anywhere, and you should always remove a frame slowly and carefully. The thing about this queen was white paint on her back. Last summer I looked at this hive and found swarm cells on the bottom of several frames and while I was deciding which to remove so only one remained, the tip of the cell opened, and a queen popped out and quickly disappeared into the hive. My friend never installed a marked queen. So how did she get there? He said the hive was always active so that eliminated a swarm moving into an empty box. The only thing I can come up with is a fairly rare phenomena called usurpation where a small summer swarm invades a stronger queen-right colony. If anyone has any other ideas, please pass them along. Bill

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

Cowlitz Beekeepers Association  
Monthly Hybrid Meeting  
April 21, 2022

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

In attendance: 25 members were at the Sons of Norway Building

11 members were on Zoom

36 total

Great attendance for our first Hybrid meeting!

Our speaker was Allen Woods from WASBA (Washington State Beekeepers Association). WASBA has workshops that are available at four different times during the Spring. To get an invitation to these workshops, please sign up for the newsletter at [Woodsbeeco.com](http://Woodsbeeco.com). Allen talked about the four different reasons hives die in winter. 1) Not enough bees, 2) Starvation, 3) Mites, 4) Moisture. There was also a question and answer time after his presentation.

Old Business:

Nuc delivery and pick-up, April 23, 2022, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Gearheart Gardens Dog Park.

The Home and Garden Show has been postponed until September 10th and 11th of this year. Not enough vendors had signed up.

Earth Day Celebration will be April 30, 2022, from 10 a.m. to 2: p.m. to be held at Lake Sacajawea Park at the Hemlock Plaza area. Set up is at 9:00 a.m. A canopy, table and 2 chairs will be provided. David, Zenobia and Chantell Scott will be there to greet the participants.

New Business:

Treasurer's report:	Checking	\$8,000.00
	Savings	<u>4,300.00</u>
	Total	\$12,300.00

That total includes the purchases from nuc sales that will be picked up this Saturday.

It is time to start up our cell groups again. It has been two years since we have had any meetings due to the COVID shut down.

Need to start a mentors list for the club.

Ken Curtis would like to start a queen rearing program.

Field Day will be scheduled for June of this year. Time and sign up will be at our next monthly meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Minutes taken by,  
Zenobia Scott, Secretary

The Fair is July 27 - 30, 2022 this year, from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Mark Taylor has invited our club to use part of his booth at the fair. Need to contact him for more information and set up time.

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

## Executive Board Meeting via Zoom

April 27, 2022

Due to technical difficulties the meeting came to order at 6:32 p.m.

In attendance:

Because of the technical difficulties, 2 members were not present via zoom. Ken Curtis, Ray Davis, Elizabeth Peters, David & Zenobia Scott were in attendance. Kathy Scott and Barbara Skreen were contacted by phone or text to get their feedback.

Voting on two pieces of business:

Al Wilmoth as our new Vice President, and the club to purchase an extractor along with a hot knife for club members to check out for use.

Al Wilmoth had volunteered for the position when the club was asked for volunteers because Ken became our President when John Holmes stepped down. Al has 10 years' experience as a beekeeper and is a member in good standing.

A vote was taken of all seven executive board members and unanimously passed. Al Wilmoth is now our new Vice President. We will be purchasing a new extractor and hot knife.

Field Day will be held Saturday, June 11, 2022, weather permitting.

Cowlitz County Fair:

The Fair is July 27 - 30, 2022 this year, from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Mark Taylor has invited our club to use part of his booth at the fair. Need to contact him for more information and set up time.

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Minutes taken by,  
Zenobia Scott, Secretary