

The Voice of Professional and Backyard Beekeeping

Cowlitz Beekeepers Association Newsletter



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

March 2021

Issue 3

Next Meeting:

Anywhere worldwide on your computer via Zoom or in person at the "Sons of Norway" building, 224 Catlin St. Kelso WA.

When: March 16, 2023

Speaker: Eli Ocheltree

Topic: "Swarm Control Without Splits – Until Necessary!"

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

Al Wilmoth: V. President (360) 673-8787
Zenobia Scott, Secretary (360) 425-2314
Zebscott56@gmail.com

Barbara Skreen: Treasurer

David Scott: Trustee (360) 425-2314
Zebscott56@gmail.com

Ray Davis Trustee:

Elizabeth Peters: Trustee

Ana Pitkin: Trustee

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

2023 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.

2023 Nuc Purchase This year we will again buy nucs from Foothills Honey Company in Colton, Oregon. These are 5 frame nucs. The cost is \$160 per nuc to club members only.

There is more information about the nucs and ordering information at:

<https://cowlitzbeekeeping.wixsite.com/website/nuc-sale>

Fill out the form and send a check to the address shown at the bottom of the form. If you don't do checks then contact me and we can arrange a cash purchase. Nucs can be ordered now while **payment may be made any time before March 25th.**



Asian Giant Hornet

In December, 2019 the WSDA received and confirmed two sightings of Giant Asian Hornet near Blaine WA.

In 2020 and 2021 both Washington and Canada had new confirmed sightings of the hornet. As of the end of 2021, the WSDA had located and eradicated four Asian Giant Hornet nests in Whatcom County.

No hornets were located in 2022.

Cowlitz Beekeepers Association
Monthly Meeting
February 16, 2023

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

Attendance: in person 20, via Zoom 6, total 26. It was great having everyone present!

Our guest speaker was Paul Maresh from North Portland, Oregon, with 25 years of beekeeping experience. He talked about the importance of reducing the Varroa mite from our hives, if you want to make money from your bees and what makes you the most money. Paul shared the best times to set up your Yellow Jacket traps along with the reason for having them in place at those specific times and the type of bait to use. A couple of books he suggested to have on hand are: A Book of Bees by Sue Hubble, and Honey Bees and Their Maladies by Dewey Carron. There was a question and answer time after the presentation.

The Beginning Beekeeper Class started February 13, 2023 with 20 registered participants!

Nuc sales have begun. If you want to order a nuc, please go online to the Cowlitz Beekeepers Association website to order the amount of nuc(s) you want and send payment to the address on the site. You must be a member of the Cowlitz Beekeepers Association or Columbia County Beekeepers Association in order to place an order. Price per nuc is \$160. Payment must be received no later than March 25, 2023. Any late payments will not be ordered. Delivery will be in April.

The Home and Garden Show will be at the Cowlitz Expo Center (fair grounds) on April 15 & 16, 2023. Volunteer times are for 3 hour shifts starting the 15th from 9-12, 12-3, and 3-5; 16th from 10-1, and 1-4. Set-up will be the morning of the 14th and tear-down on the 16th at 4. Volunteer sign-up will be available at our March meeting or you can call Zenobia Scott at 360-425-2314 to reserve a time slot.

A big thank you to Ken, Susan and Zenobia for the raffle prizes this month, also a big thank you to Elizabeth for refreshments this month.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Minutes taken by,
Zenobia Scott, Secretary

Apiary Layout

Ken Curtis

An apiary, also known as a bee yard is a place where bees or a collection of beehives is kept. If you are considering becoming a beekeeper or creating splits and setting up a new bee apiary it is beneficial to have a proper apiary layout. If you don't have a grid line map of your property now is a good time to create one. Even if your property is small map can be beneficial before starting a project.

If you are new to beekeeping there are a few some extra steps you will need to take that someone who is setting up an additional bee yard may not need to do. The first thing you need to do is ensure that you accommodate local ordinances.

The second thing you should do is join a local bee club. As a member of a local bee club, you can gain tips from local beekeepers in your local climate zone. A local bee club could also be a good place to find a mentor who is waiting to share their beekeeping knowledge to help you become a better beekeeper, and avoid costly mistakes. Lastly you will want to start gathering up supplies. At a minimum you will need a hive, smoker, hive tool, and a bee suit.

Deciding on an Apiary Layout

The actual layout you decide on will depend on your property. However, there are some basic things that every well thought out bee yard needs including, food and water, protection from a harsh environment, and space around the hive(s).

Bees forage in a two-mile radius from the hive so you don't need to supply all of the forage your bees will need, but you should make sure there is available forage in the surrounding area. Take the time to look around to see what your neighbors are growing, as well as what is growing naturally. Your research will be rewarded with healthy bees and more honey. **Even if you think there is plenty of forage for your bees planting pollinator friendly plants and encouraging your neighbors to do the same is beneficial.** Your neighbors may have questions so be prepared with answers. Some common questions include, "do all bees make honey? Are honeybees aggressive?" Knowing the answer to these questions is a good way to build rapport and educate your neighbors, while helping your bees.

You will want to provide shelter from hot and cold weather. Placing your hives on the south side of a building or fence to protect from extreme cold, windy weather with the hive opening facing away from the building. This is important if your apiary experiences a lot of freezing temperatures such as at high elevations. Haybales are a good option for a windbreak if you don't have a fence or building.

Space between hives if you have more than one hive needs to be determined. Some beekeepers place their hives side-by-side in sets of two so they can work each hive from one side for each hives, and yet other beekeepers place hives as far apart as possible to help prevent drift and reduce the spread of disease.

Local Ordinances, food and water, weather, and space between hives all need to be taken into consideration when laying out a bee apiary, as do other factors.

A honeybee apiary is an ongoing project that will change as a beekeeper grows and learns more about bees and local environmental conditions.

Reviewing Losses

Ken Curtis

Awful news or an opportunity to learn:

No beekeeper wants to go out to their hive(s) to feed in winter or inspect in the spring only to find their bees hadn't survived the long cold winter. It is heartbreaking when a hive dies, but it is important to determine why so it can be avoided in the future.

External signs:

Once you are out in the apiary take note of any activity at the hive entrance. Are there any bees coming and going if the weather is warm enough.? The number of bees built up on the ground or on the bottom board may be an indication that a hive is dead. A pile of dead bees may be an indication that something as gone wrong. A knock on the side of the box may indicate whether or not there's an active hive inside and where the cluster is located. If the cluster is still alive inside, you'll hear a low humming after the knock.

Take a look inside:

If you find that the colony inside has absconded or died it is important to take note of what could have caused their demise. It won't be easy, but dissecting a hive and determining why is a skill every beekeeper must develop to grow and learn. After finding a deadout hive provides the beekeeper with an opportunity to ask themselves some questions to determine what they can do in the future and is it safe to use their beekeeping equipment again.

Evidence of mites:

The first question a beekeeper should ask is "when did I last inspect/treat for Varroa Mites"? Mites are present inside many hives, resulting in weakness and population diseases within the hive, and ultimately death. Varroa mites are responsible to the death of many, many hives in the U.S.

A good indication of a Varroa infestation in an active or dead hive is mite feces built up inside of cells. "It is a white thick substance, often coating the edges or bottom of previously used brood cells" (PERFECTBEE, 2023). A more proactive plan of action by the beekeeper in the future is essential if Varroa Mites are suspected to be responsible for the loss of a colony.

Diseases:

Varroa Mites are the number one cause of hive losses, there are many diseases that impact honeybees resulting in the deaths of honeybee colonies. The size, color, and shape of the brood cells and honeycomb should be noted. Is there an abnormal smell? Are there any cells that are sunken or appear blackened at the edge, and emit a foul odor. This could be an indication of American Foulbrood (AFB) or European Foulbrood (EFB). Because of its highly contagious nature hives infected with AFB and EFB are required to be burned in many states (PERFECTBEE, 2023). Check [this link](#) to learn more about the diseases that impact honeybees and what you can do to prevent or treat these diseases (PERFECTBEE, 2023).

While inspecting the interior of the hive it's important to take note and take pictures of each section of the hive. Share your findings with a more seasoned beekeeper, especially if you are not sure of what you are looking at. Contact your state apiarist if you fear an active hive may have or a currently collapsed hive might have collapsed or may have an infectious disease. Oftentimes, they will have an apiarist come to your apiary and help you to inspect your equipment for any signs of possible issues and determine the why the hive was lost (PERFECTBEE, 2023).

The best thing a beekeeper, newbie or seasoned can do in the event of the loss of a hive is keep a positive attitude. With the proper attitude and a positive plan for the future, this sad scenario can help prepare for a better beekeeping future.