

The Bee Line



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Newsletter of the Maine State Beekeepers Association | www.mainebeekeepers.org



What's Good for the Bees?

by Lori Harley, Editor

More from my October 2009 interview with Stan Brown and Karen Thurlow-Kimball...

FORAGE FOR THE BEES

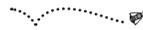
Karen is a master gardener. And both she and Stan concern themselves with providing as many resources for their bees as possible. How lucky for their bees.

KAREN: Trees make good bee food for somebody with a small yard. We have what we call a bee field down back here—it's just all wildflowers. It's just a mix of a lot

of things from goldenrod to St. John's wort to milkweed. You know, everything. But not everyone has an acre of land they can leave to be a bee field. But different trees—you figure, if you mapped out by the square foot, you could have an acre of blossoms there. So if I was confined just to a small yard, I would do a consecutive planting of trees that would bloom starting from spring until fall. Because I'd have my bee food up instead of spread-out.

TBL: What are some really good trees?

KAREN: Basswood, black locust. Serviceberry, blueberry—things you're going to get something from, too—cherries, apples, peaches.



TBL: I've been thinking about giving interested neighbors a list of bee favorites—things they can plant to feed the bees.

KAREN: It depends on what they're looking for. A lot of herb plants are great nectar producers, like rosemary, thyme...

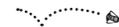
STAN: I made a deal with my neighbor up here. He has a lot of goldenrod. It's old pasture ground, and they brush-hog it two or three times a year to get it down. I says, "If you leave it alone and let me feed the bees, I'll mow it for you in the fall." And he did. I was glad to get the chance to save the goldenrod. But now, for two of them up there—my grandson owns one, and my daughter owns the other—I mow their fields for them. I said, "Next spring if the weather's good, I'll plow and harrow and seed them with white clover." Well, that tickled them.

KAREN: Yes, next year our crop for the bees will be white clover. It's getting so around here, because we've got the golf course

across the street, there's nothing there for them to eat. Grass? And it's really built up. We have a lot of dandelions here, tons of dandelions, but after those go by, there's a lull in the summertime when there's really nothing for the bees to have right in this immediate area, so we're planning on planting some annual white clover and boost them with that. Last year, it was buckwheat because we were starting to get worried that they wouldn't have enough hives to go into the winter, so we put in the three acres of buckwheat.

STAN: Couldn't get it in early enough because it was so wet. But they got to make us some black honey.

KAREN: We got it in. They had about three weeks on it and we got some really nice honey from it.



KAREN: I'm interested to find out whether the bees will work witch hazel, because that blooms in the end of October. It's a small tree, like the size of a pin cherry, but the blossom looks kind-of like if someone took a forsythia and kind-of shredded the yellow petals. And they like to grow under beech trees if you find them in the wild. They used to be really abundant in Maine, but now it's kind of hard to find them in the wild.

STAN: I'd get a few plants and set them out.

KAREN: I'm trying to get it set up so that there's always something blooming.

TBL: That's what I'm trying to do in my tiny yard, for whatever it's worth.

KAREN: You don't have to do full-size trees; you can do dwarf trees, or high-bush

A Belated Congrats!

Nick Kelley was voted Beekeeper of the Year, along with Ann Hawkes Paquin, at the spring MSBA meeting. (Sorry, Nick, for omitting you in the last issue.)

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*Open to all MSBA members; generally held the 3rd Thursday of each month, at the Maine Farm Bureau, 4 Gabriel Drive, Augusta.

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Message from the MSBA President

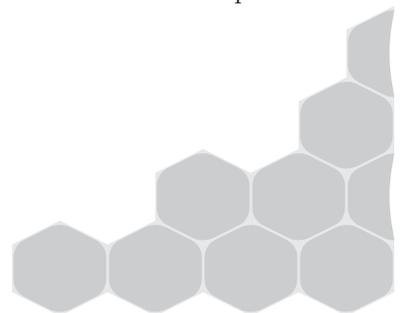
First I must thank the Membership for electing me president of the Maine State Beekeepers Association at the Annual Meeting in March. It is a real honor to join the ranks of many distinguished past MSBA presidents and I look forward to a productive and forward-moving year.

The mission of the MSBA is to educate and inform—not just beekeepers, but non-beekeepers as well, on the importance of honey bees and the many issues that surround our favorite pollinator. For the first time in years, the MSBA has formed a Legislative Committee which will keep abreast of the state- and national-level political activities which impact beekeeping, in the hopes of furthering the cause of those working to help honey bees and beekeepers.

We are also working on a variety of educational programs and promotions which we hope will make it easier for our members to access information for themselves and also to do educational presentations to non-beekeeping groups.

And most excitingly, we have decided to move the Annual Meeting date from late spring to mid-fall, in the hopes that we will have less conflict with beekeepers getting ready for the new season, bee schools, and the arrival of spring bees. To this end, the next “Annual” meeting will be held on October 16, 2010. Medhat Nasr, Alberta Provincial Apiculturalist, will be our first featured speaker; the second speaker is still to be determined. If you have ideas for speakers or topics, please email me at president@mainebeekeepers.org. Please keep an eye on the www.mainebeekeepers.org website for the latest updates on MSBA activities and for the Annual Meeting details and registration. Of course, full details will also be published in the August *Bee Line*.

Best to all and your bees,
 Erin MacGregor-Forbes



- R E C I P E -

Honey Caramels

by C.C. Miller, contributed by Erin MacGregor-Forbes

1 cup extracted honey of best flavor, 1 cup granulated sugar, 3 tablespoons sweet cream or milk. Boil to “soft crack,” or until it hardens when dropped into cold water, but not too brittle—just so it will form into a soft ball when taken in the fingers. Pour into a greased dish, stirring in a **teaspoon extract of vanilla** just before taking off. Let it be $\frac{1}{2}$ - or $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch deep in the dish; and as it cools, cut in squares and wrap each square in paraffine paper, such as grocers wrap butter in. To make chocolate caramels, add to the foregoing **1 tablespoon melted chocolate**, just before taking off the stove, stirring it in well. For chocolate caramels it is not so important that the honey be of best quality.

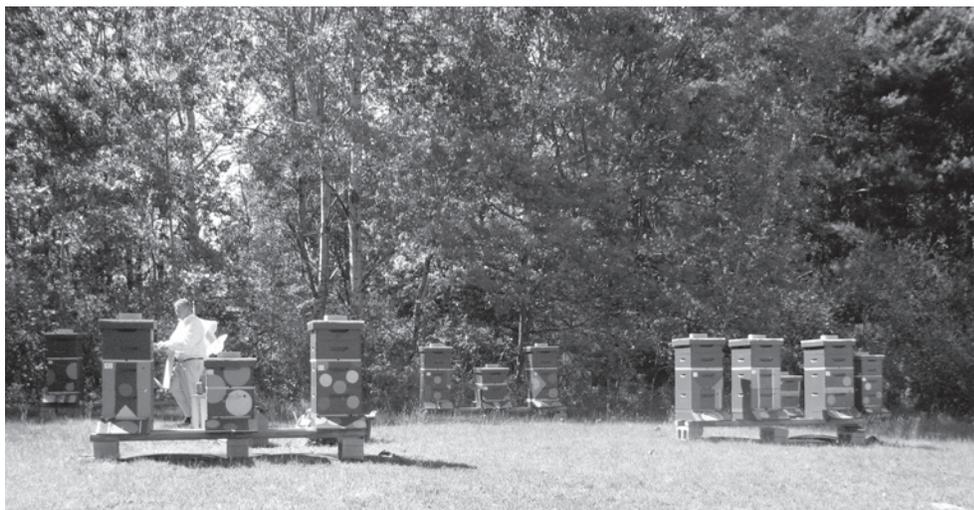
– C. C. Miller



For anyone who doesn't know, C.C. Miller was a great American beekeeper, developer of the “Miller Method” of queen rearing (one of the best-suited methods for sideline beekeepers), and author of *50 Years Among the Bees* which is hands-down my favorite beekeeping book.

For the Caramels: Soft crack is about 275°F. I used plain milk and doubled the recipe. This requires constant stirring while cooking and it takes a long time to get the mixture to temperature at a medium to medium-low setting—it took me over 45 minutes. Heat should not be too high, as high heat will boil over or burn the sugar/honey. Use a large saucepan if doubling the recipe.

These old-fashioned caramels are well worth the work! I made them for a work holiday party and they were a smash hit!



Jack Hildreth helping in the 2010 SARE yard.

SARE Grant Colony Update, 06/05/10

by Erin MacGregor-Forbes, EAS Master Beekeeper

The 2010 SARE project is underway with two new yards of fifteen colonies each. We are again comparing colony strength and survivability between three groups of colonies:

Group 1 Package bees from Georgia.

Group 2 Package bees from Georgia which we will re-queen with northern-raised queens from Vermont in mid-June, when northern-raised queens become available.

Group 3 Over-wintered nucs which were raised in Maine in the summer of 2009 and wintered over.

Our project number is FNE10-694; details can be found on the SARE website: www.nesare.org

Larry Peiffer of the York County Beekeepers Association is managing one yard on Poland Spring property in Hollis; I am managing the other yard in the Westbrook Industrial Park near outer Congress Street in Westbrook.

Our packages arrived one week late on April 24th, due to poor weather in Georgia. Our nucs were delivered two weeks early on May 1st because of the particularly early and mild spring we experienced here in Maine. So this year the colonies started off much closer to each other than one would normally expect.

This is our second year of this project comparing honey bee colony strength and survivability between groups of colonies started in these three ways. Again, all of the colonies are on identical new equipment which is all painted the same color, but the individual hives have identifying paint marks to help the bees orient to their own hive and to hopefully reduce drift between the colonies. Our paint color this year is navy blue, with the dark color again chosen to allow us to forgo wrapping hives for winter. The blue indicates the year (in coordination with the queen marking protocol.)

All colonies are on screened bottom boards and wired wax foundation. We started feeding 1:1 sugar syrup upon installation



(both packages and nucs) and we will continue feeding the colonies until they have built-out both deep hive bodies that will comprise their “nest” area. Once the two deeps are built out, we will stop feeding and begin honey-supering with medium supers. The first medium super that the bees store will be left with them for winter and any additional supers that they make will be harvested.

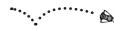
My Westbrook Industrial Park SARE yard is off to a great start. The flow in the area has been fantastic and the location is both easily accessible and fairly out of the way, which is great for the bees. It is easy to get to them and convenient from Portland, yet there is little non-local traffic, and they will not attract a lot of attention from strangers. After I had installed the bees, I found out that Joanne Romano (of the Cumberland County Beekeepers association) works just down the street from my bee yard and walks by it most every weekday—an added bonus for me to have an experienced beekeeper with her eye on the colonies during the work week, when I am not nearby.

And so things have started off on great footing with the weather being nearly perfect for the bees’ first month in the new yards. Geoff MacLean, Vice President of the Cumberland County Beekeepers association, will be helping me with my colonies this year. Taking detailed notes on each colony definitely slows inspections down considerably, so having a second person to take notes while I run through the colonies really helps. A second pair of eyes and hands also keeps things moving along. At this point, a full inspection of all fifteen colonies takes about three hours if we are moving fast. When you factor in setting-up equipment and getting ready to inspect, that works out to be about ten minutes per colony, which is just about right for a fast inspection.

Geoff and I installed the bees together and took a few short video clips of the installations for use in our Bee School presentations. It was fun and it hopefully will help to show how to correctly install a

package or a nuc. Over the course of the project, we plan to make several more clips showing requeening, marking queens, and general inspections. Keep an eye out for these videos on the MSBA YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/maineebeekeepers. Links to them will be on the new www.mainebeekeepers.org site as that rolls forward.

Our first full inspection of all of the colonies will be the weekend of June 12th (weather permitting) and we will begin our natural-fall mite counts this week. It is time to start getting a baseline count for mites so we can keep an eye on the Varroa mite population growth.



The 2009 SARE yard is officially retired from the SARE project. Results are compiled and we are working on a presentation date for our results for the first year. The written report will be available on the SARE website, nesare.org, by the end of July.

The 2009 colonies are now incorporated into our beekeeping operations. Unfortunately, two of Larry’s colonies did not survive the winter, but the other eight are doing well and making honey. All of my 2009 SARE colonies survived the winter and are doing very well. I moved the queens and two frames of capped brood to 5-frame nucs (and added drawn-comb frames and honey and pollen stores) to prevent them from swarming. I did this on the first weekend of May, just as the bees were beginning to rear queencells in the colonies. This method is essentially “artificial swarming.” It satisfies the bees’ urge to rear a new queen. It also provides a break in the brood cycle early in the year just as Varroa are starting to get a stronghold in the increasing brood nest. If done at the correct time when the bees are strong and building-up to swarm, it actually increases honey production (as the bees will not be feeding larvae for several weeks while the new queens are hatching, mating, and developing prior to egg-laying. As of last weekend, all but two had successfully requeened them-

selves. For the two that were still queenless, I re-combined them with their nucs. In the other colonies, I marked the queens and removed the nucs to build-up in my home yard. This approach to swarm prevention is the most certain of all swarm prevention techniques. The only requirement is an extra nuc box and frames, and the ability to find the queen. The advantages are many and this works very well for urban and suburban beekeepers who need to keep their apiaries “under control” (out of the trees and away from neighbors’ homes).

If time permits, I hope to rear a few queen daughters from the best of the SARE queens that came home in the nucs. They wintered well, built-up strong, and are easy to work with—just the kind of bees I want to have in my apiary.

QUEEN MARKING PROTOCOL

Years ending in	Color
...0 or ...5	Blue
...1 or ...6	White
...2 or ...7	Yellow
...3 or ...8	Red
...4 or ...9	Green

“When you requeen get the best.” 🐝



2009 former SARE yard making honey—colonies which have been correctly artificially swarmed will often make a large spring honey crop as a result of their high population and reduced need to feed young eggs and larvae while they are requeening.

KAREN...CONTINUED FROM PG 1

blueberries. And even instead of having a lawn, have creeping thyme—they make so much honey off of thyme. That is such a good bee plant. You could get rid of all the grass and put in creeping thyme. Marjoram, oregano—they like a lot of the herbs.

The fruiting and the blossoming plants that we get something from, too—if you can combine those in a yard for bees, you get something and they get something. So if you could, have a few semi-dwarf fruit trees. And witch hazel is even a medicinal plant.

STAN: Bees get something from everything.

KAREN: Huckleberries, low-bush blueberries, elderberries, high-bush cranberries. There's all kinds of options. If we just do a native landscape, for what we have in our area, it would be good for the birds, the humans, and the bees.

STAN: Alder is the first to bloom, basswood, then you get your maple. The alder, you see them with the long streamers.

KAREN: And willow, they like the willow. So there's all kinds of stuff—it's just fun to notice what's out when, and see what color pollen the bees are lugging so you know what they're working.

*Helpful chart of pollen colors:
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/pollen_source*

*Nectar/pollen plants, by Dr. James E. Tew:
ohioline.osu.edu/byg-fact/2000/2168.html*

MONOCULTURE

For better or worse, migratory pollination has become the norm for large-scale agriculture.

STAN: They come out, circle a few times, and orient themselves with the sun and the hive.

KAREN: They orient themselves to vegetation that's around, and buildings and all that. In the almond groves, all the trees are spaced exactly the same distance apart, with the tops of the trees cut exactly the same. I've been by almond groves in California that took like three hours to pass—it's the most boring drive, because on either side of the road, it's just almond trees. They

were in bloom when I went by, but after you've seen a couple blooming, you're done seeing them! So they've found that when they put the bees in there, the bees all end up in the hives at the end of the rows unless the bees find spots where trees were missing—because they cut them down or do something *different*—so the bees can orient to where their hives are. Otherwise, it's just exactly the same. The bees end-up over-crowded in the end hives, and the hives in the middle end-up really weak.

TBL: And knowing this, couldn't an almond producer essentially build that into the plan—visual markers for the bees!?!

KAREN: Yes, some different kind of markers for the bees to orient themselves.

STAN: I don't know how much they spray in that orchard, either.

KAREN: They don't spray when the almonds are in blossom.

STAN: No, but I mean how much they do spray during the season. And why they don't keep their own bees.

KAREN: Well, they're almond growers, they're not beekeepers.

TBL: If they kept their own bees, it would be a good idea so that the bees would already be there, but they would need some other crop to offer the bees.

KAREN: They don't have any other crop when the almonds aren't blooming—not enough to sustain all the needed bees.

STAN: That's like the blueberry growers here—they won't keep their own bees because if they do, they have to move them to the edge, and then they go off to other farms.

TBL: This may be in a number of places, but I'm thinking of South America, where they're layering their plantings, based on the complementary needs of the plants.

KAREN: Oh, yes, avocado, banana, and coffee.

TBL: Yes! If you could pull that off with these other plants, for the purpose of also providing a continuous variety of forage

for the bees, that could be great solution!

KAREN: Well, the way the farming is [today], the corn fields don't even have weeds anymore. And the pollen of corn is not a nutritious protein for bees—they can't use it. You could have put bees on a corn field [years ago] because of all the weeds that would grow up between the corn—the mustard and everything else—the bees would have worked that. But now, you would get nothing by putting bees on a corn field. They would starve. The brood would be really weak—you'd see in two generations, your bees would just kind of fade out because nutritionally, they didn't get what they needed.

There are just some pollens that don't nutritionally feed bees. Pine pollen is one and corn pollen is the other. So, they need a variety. No, monoculture is not suited for beekeeping, and that's why they do migratory pollination.

HONEY

How fortunate when we have strong, healthy bee colonies able to share extra honey stores with us. The ancient Greeks and Romans aptly called honey the "nectar of the Gods."

KAREN: Before I moved here, I lived on the edge of a saltwater marsh—in Salisbury, Massachusetts, right on the edge of the marsh, right on the Merrimack River. It's a good place to keep bees because there's so much marshland, and there was all that purple loostrife they have down there. Everything—wild cherry, sassafras—just tons of stuff. Not a lot of houses, because you're on the marsh. My hives would each produce two-hundred pounds, easily. Because it was before mites and diseases, so a strong hive was really strong. So I would have eight and nine supers stacked-up.

TBL: Do you leave your honey supers on and let the bees take care of them until the end of the season?

KAREN: Well, I pull them off in the summer and I pull them off in the fall, but you



just keep putting a new super underneath. They're not quite finished with the top one, so you stick a new one underneath, and keep lifting them up, and going up, and then you can start pulling some off.

STAN: They're great workers, but they don't finish their projects!

KAREN: So you just have to leave the honey on until the bitter end sometimes to get them to cap it. Or re-arrange the frames to trick them into doing it.

STAN: That's a lot of work, too—they get kind of upset sometimes, moving them around like that.

KAREN: Yes, they don't appreciate it—you messing with their fine work.

STAN: Little engineers. They know the proper slope, the size.

TBL: I know, they're amazing.

KAREN: You don't follow some of the new-fangled ideas of the past thirty years of beekeeping.

STAN: I go by what old Dr. Langstroth studied—the spaces, and the whole thing.

KAREN: Or people who put in the spacers, and only use nine frames—the bees end up making all that bridge comb, burr comb, because they can't jump. And they have to get to the other frames, so they make all this comb and stick it all together so they can crawl over.

STAN: Makes a mess. Wasted energy.

KAREN: Wasted space.

TBL: So, the argument I've heard is they end up building the comb out further.

KAREN: I have never seen that—they don't really build it out fatter. And even if you did that, say, for extracting honey—if you thought you were going to get fatter comb—when you take your extracting knife and you run it on the edge of the frame, you're cutting off all of that extra comb. [Or if you don't want to] run it on the frame, you have to be so careful with the

extracting knife, which makes extracting a lot harder. So if you take that extra amount of honey—because you think you got it extra fat—you'd probably get that in the tenth frame anyway.

TBL: What else do you not like to do that others might do?

KAREN: Queen excluders. He hates queen excluders.

STAN: They're honey excluders.

KAREN: He thinks it wears their wings.

STAN: The bees don't like it.

KAREN: Actually, we have a letter from a person about queen excluders which I saved, because I thought it was quite interesting. [This woman's letter describes the significant increase in her bees' honey production after she removes the queen excluders from her hives.] We have more people coming here looking for queen excluders. He won't sell them—he won't even keep them in the shop.

TBL: Maybe queen excluders are geared toward huge apiaries where you're just sending in somebody to "go collect the honey supers above the queen excluder."

KAREN: You still need to get all the bees out of the supers. They have those one-way bee doors, out but not back in. We use a bee blower. Some people are against blowers. It's kind of like a leaf blower, only you set the super up on a certain frame and blow the bees back toward the hive; put down a cloth and blow them onto the cloth, right at the entrance of the hive, and they crawl back in. Sometimes we just shake them out if there's not a lot of bees—it just depends on the situation in that hive, and how many

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bees are up in the supers when we go to get supers. It's good in the fall because if we do it in the morning when it's cool out, generally the bees are down in the brood box. We try to just get them off quick, and get the covers back on. And we don't smoke the bees when we're taking off supers, because if there's any empty cells, the bees dive into those, and then you can't get them out.

TBL: Keeping bees has made me look at honey very differently. When I put honey on a spoon, I think, "How many bee hours did it take to make this?"

KAREN: Yes, he hates to see even a teaspoon of honey get wasted. When I empty-out buckets while extracting, I have to scrape them dry! They work hard to make that.

STAN: Were you saying I eat a lot?

KAREN: Yes, and we lick our fingers a lot, too! 🍯

The Buzz about Bees: Biology of a Superorganism

by Jürgen Tautz; with photographs by Helga R. Heilmann

W. Adam Stearns

In this book, the author relies heavily on his own research of Honey Bees and their behavior, both as individual colony members, and as a Superorganism—the colony. As a result, there are no footnotes in the book. Tautz does include a listing of reference material, with authors familiar to those of us who have done Honey Bee research on our own (Bonner, von Frisch, Seeley, Wenner, Winston), however, these references are not provided to support his findings, but rather to provide a comparison for the many cases of “traditional thinking” about what happens in a colony versus what his detailed research has found to be the truth regarding individual and collective behavior in the hive. Jürgen Tautz is a professor at the Institute of Behavioral Physiology and Sociobiology, of the University of Würzburg



The Buzz about Bees

Biology of a Superorganism

With Photographs by Helga R. Heilmann

 Springer

in Germany. There, he heads the BEEgroup which is of course focused on the detailed study of the Honey Bee (www.bee-group.de).

While the research work outlined in the text of this book is extremely interesting and valuable to the beekeeper (I will get to that later), it is the photography included that sets this book apart from all others in the beekeeping world. Helga Heilmann, the photographer, has truly demonstrated that a picture is worth more than a thousand words. For every concept discussed by Tautz, Heilmann has provided several incredible photos that easily explain the concepts far better than additional detail in the text could ever do. This book is some 300 pages, of which there are approximately 120 pages of true reading. The remainder is full of incredible, high quality, concept-supporting photos.

Tautz includes, as important topics to discuss from his research, the Honey Bees' similarity to mammals, their ability to “propagate immortality,” new thinking on nuptial flights of queens, the sometimes forgotten value of the comb to the Honey Bees, and how the family relationships within the colony work to ensure the continuation of a viable species.

The author makes some interesting comparisons between mammals and Honey Bees: 1) the “Homo” genus and the “Apis” genus are both very ‘species-poor,’ as observed in the fact that only nine species in the Apis genus are known; 2) both have a very low reproduction rate (swarm = child); 3) the females produce nourishment (milk = royal jelly) for the offspring in special glands; 4) a precisely controlled protective environment for developing offspring (comb = womb); 5) a constantly maintained, and similar “body temp” (36°C for humans, 35°C for the brood nest); and finally 6) a similarity in high learning and cognitive abilities. Another similarity to humans that the author draws is that both species, in their ability

to build their own shelter, are able to free themselves from the extremes of the environment, and in turn allow more efficient use of available material and energy.

With respect to being species-poor, Tautz notes that nearly 170,000 species of flowering plants are pollinated by just nine species of Bee, and that this extreme numerical imbalance suggests that Honey Bees are so successful in this area that they leave little room for coexistence of similarly occupied competitors in nature. He notes that this is the perfect example of globalization and monopolization in the animal world. In understanding the true reproductive process of Honey Bees, Tautz provides a perfect analogy with a fruit tree: A Honey Bee colony is like the fruit tree, a swarm is like the fruit that comes from the tree, and a Queen is like the seeds in that fruit.

Much of the research that was conducted by the author required hundreds of hours following individual bees, fitted at birth with microchips. Some of the more interesting findings follow:

The author has created an additional working category for bees in the colony: heater bees that specifically place their body over a particular cell, bring their body temp up to 41°C, and then transfer this heat to developing larva/pupa. These heater bees also climb into empty cells in the brood pattern and generate heat to warm the 1 to 6 occupants of adjacent cells. Tautz indicates that these empty cells in the brood pattern are not a mistake by the queen, but rather a spot for heater bees to work and/or feeder bees to store some honey close to the brood, to feed the heater bees. While beekeepers still need to be concerned about “spotty” brood patterns, it appears that it must also be evaluated against the external environment and weather conditions. Tautz demonstrated that bees in fact do sleep, and suggests that those most



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in need of sleep in the hive are the heater bees, who are doing a tremendous amount of work, maintaining brood nest temperature.

Based on his research, the author also demonstrated, contrary to other research, that bees do not use energy consumption to gauge distances to food sources, but instead work on a visual odometer, and that it is this visual odometer information which is translated to other bees in the waggle dance.

A common apparent misconception, according to Tautz, is that Virgin Queens head out of the hive on their nuptial flight in a solitary manner. Not so, according to his research. The new Queen takes with her an entourage of several dozen to several hundred worker bees, all of whom are reported to be relatively old, and able to guide the mated Queen back to the hive in an efficient manner. This entourage also provides a kind of "strength in numbers" protection from hungry birds or others who may view the sole queen as a tasty meal. Tautz notes that on many of those sunny afternoons when we see a bunch

of bees conducting orientation flights by the hive entrance, these workers are actually waiting to escort a new queen on her nuptial flight. If this is in fact the case, do many of our small mating nucs contain enough bees to keep a population at home, and provide an adequate escort population for the Queen's first flight?? Is this why full-size hives have very high success rates for Virgin Queens returning and becoming successful, while mating nuc success is around 35%??? These are questions I will ponder as I prepare for a summer heavily involved in raising new queens.

The author discusses comb development in great detail, and explains that the bees make the comb in a perfectly circular shape. He suggests that the wax, not totally solid or liquid, is actually in a "fluid state," similar to glass, and that as the wax passes through its glass transition temperature, it becomes more liquid. In this state, the wax behaves like two soap bubbles when they collide; a perfectly flat wall is created between them. This is exactly how the perfectly six-sided cells are created in the Honey Bee's comb. Over time, where

each cell comes in contact with another, a flat wall is created, due to wax's fluid nature.

One final thought from the author is that of Honey Bee colonies as managers of solar energy. There are those members that collect the solar energy (converted by plants as pollen and nectar), and those that refine the energy (converting to Honey and Royal Jelly), and those that consume the energy (as food to grow, or fuel to heat the hive). All this activity creates an energy stream equal to that of a 20-watt light bulb continuously shining. What an interesting way to think of the Honey Bee colony.

This book is an extremely interesting read, and the great photos substantiate all concepts hypothesized in the book. For beekeepers that do not enjoy reading, the photos make it very easy to plow through the roughly 120 pages of text. This is not a book for very new beekeepers, as Tautz presents material regarding Honey Bee biology and beekeeping concepts assuming the reader already has some understanding of the basics.

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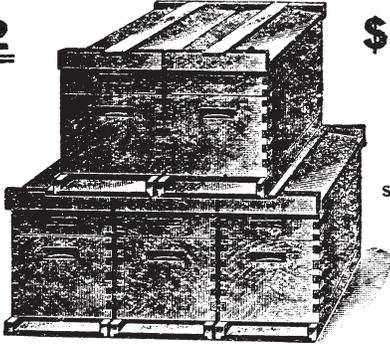
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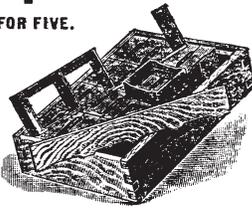
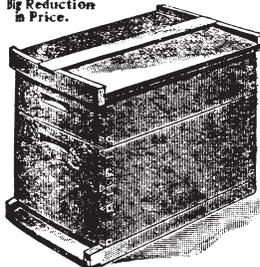
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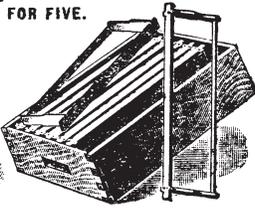
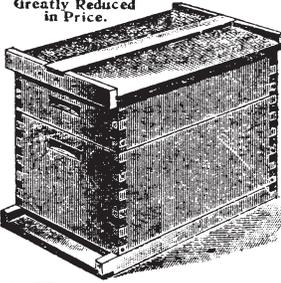
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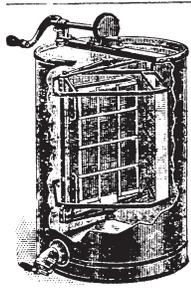


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Introducing “Voices from the Hive”

by Lori Harley, Editor

Welcome to this new feature of *The Bee Line*, thanks to a suggestion by MSBA member David Israel. David thought it might be interesting to periodically learn about beekeepers from around the state via featured profiles, so it only makes sense to me to make his profile the first.

At the very least, these profiles will prove fun and informative, helping us all appreciate the myriad of perspectives brought together around this mutual beekeeping interest.

As seasoned beekeepers well know, and new beekeepers soon learn, gaining the experience and confidence necessary to keep bees well requires time inside the hive, time reading books, and most importantly, time spent with a network of fellow beekeepers, and ideally, time with a special mentor. At its best, this feature could pave the way for matching mentors with learning beekeepers.

Given the intricacies of beekeeping and the significant impact the beekeeper can have on the well-being of his/her charges, an important goal of the MSBA is to educate its membership on the art and science of beekeeping, with future resources such as the following:

- streamlined bee school curricula *and* bee school teacher training,
- facilitated study groups for beekeepers preparing for the Master Beekeeper Certification Program, and
- teaching materials which can be used in less formal, less in-depth presentations/introductions to beekeeping such as are often requested by area schools and groups.

Stay tuned! 🐝

Submit the name and contact info (with his/her permission, please) of a beekeeper you would like to see profiled here, or submit your own profile and photographs for consideration to thebeeline@maine.rr.com.

David Israel



BRUNSWICK [CUMBERLAND COUNTY]

BEEKEEPER SINCE: WHOLE LIFE, KINDA...SEE BELOW

4 RURAL HIVES & 2 GROWING SUBURBAN NUCS

DAY JOB: COMMUNICATIONS AT BOWDOIN

BEGINNINGS

My father was a beekeeper, so I have always been around bees. We even had an observation hive in the dining room growing up. It was only a couple of years ago that I got my own—when my father-in-law’s CSA farm (www.finsonfarm.com) had a dearth of pollinators and I figured I could run a couple of hives by myself.

LESSON(S) LEARNED

Patience. You really can’t rush mother nature or expect bee supply catalogues to deliver when you want them to.

GOALS

Trying to get some things accomplished by serving on the board of the Maine State Beekeepers Association with regards to effective communication and spreading the responsibility and ability of our 400-plus members to contribute information to the Association (the web is a marvelous thing). I also hope to be able to help a couple of others along, as many members of my local clubs have helped me (special shout-out to Erin MacGregor-Forbes).

VIEW

I have yet to let the rest of the world in on the secret that beekeeping isn’t really that scary—if they found out, it might not seem that cool or dangerous.

BK STYLE

I am working on learning to take the long view.

BEE

I consider my bees to be both livestock *and* pets.

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THE BACKYARD BEEKEEPER: Bee Venom Therapy—Fact or Fiction? You decide. by Matthew Scott

For many decades, bee venom therapy has been advocated by a number of medical doctors (MDs). Charlie Mraz, the “dean of bee venom therapy,” worked with Drs. Beck, Broadman and others up until their deaths in the late 1930s and 1940s. Both medical doctors published their clinical works of success and failures. Charles Mraz spent tireless hours with them as he was convinced over six decades that bee venom therapy would play an important role in human health, especially for arthritic conditions and later, multiple sclerosis. Prior to his death, Charlie published *Health and the Honeybee* in 1995, which he dedicated to his predeceased wife Margaret. I personally met Charlie and Margaret at numerous EAS conferences in New England in the 1960s and 1970s.

Charlie was an acclaimed authority worldwide in commercial beekeeping before gaining recognition on his pioneer work in bee venom therapy. His collaboration with very respectable physicians of recent times include Drs. Theodore Cherbuliez, Bradford Weeks, and a few others. His daughter Michelle Mraz has carried on his vision and work through the American Apitherapy Society. This organization renders homage to Charlie and his continued work until his death at 94 years of age.

So what does all this mean to us, in the business of keeping and managing honeybees? Bee venom therapy comes with the craft, as we all receive stings over time. With the keeping and handling of bees, say after 40-50 years, and receiving lots of stings, we either become sensitive to or non-allergic to the stings. There is a current saying that beekeepers do not get arthritis. Is this true or false? Well, I at least have a personal answer. I contracted rheumatic fever in 1960 when I first started keeping bees. My personal physi-

cian kept testing my blood and asking me if I was experiencing any joint pains or muscle problems, and my answer was “no.” At the time, I did not know the connection between joint and muscle problems with rheumatic fever. After 30 years of annual physicals and blood checks (he was looking for my sedimentation rate to go down, and it did after a few years), my doctor continued to be amazed at my health and continued improvement. When he retired, his final prescription for me was, “Matt keep getting stung.” Since we do not know the dosage or all the sting locations, which have been random over my lifetime, it is difficult to scientifically document my case. I cannot explain this either, but I will conclude that the bee stings are not causing me any harm and that my case is perhaps a good clinical trial, but not well-documented.

Over the past four decades, I have provided honeybees to local folks—roofers, carpenters, contract workers, and people suffering from joint pain—who all came to me for bees. I advise them to first get a sensitivity test for bee venom, and if negative, I would be happy to provide them with bees to treat their joints. I neither could, nor would give any medical advice. I give them references and published drawings, only. They have to apply the stings. All I have asked is that they let me know if they experience any negative effects and/or if the treatment is not successful. I have never received a negative response over all these years. Therefore, no conclusions on my part. However, I did treat my wife from 1993 through 1999 with significant success in the relief of joint pain in her hands, wrists, elbows, hips and shoulders. She wanted to try, and so I followed Charles Mraz’s book and diagrams.

More recent work by Pat Wagner can be found in her 1997 book, *How Well Are*

You Willing To Bee?, that documents her miraculous recovery from MS through bee venom therapy. A very interesting read. She also documents her work with Charles Mraz and the American Apitherapy Society.

My conclusion is this: Scientists always like to see documented work, and the field of Apitherapy is wide open. Prior to and after WWII, science brought us the discovery of Penicillin, followed by anti-inflammatory drugs. Thereafter, the research into bee venom was simply dropped—there was no more money for that research, as the profit-making motive had been lost. So I make this null hypothesis (to be tested) as to the effectiveness of bee venom on human health. This may never be answered, but I throw it out as a scientific statement. I conclude that it has worked for me, even though it was not my intention to be stung in the first place—it just happened.

Editor’s Note: You can find more information regarding Pat Wagner at www.olg.com/beelady



SUMMER CLUB ACTIVITIES

Cumberland Beekeepers

Open Hive

Saturday, June 26, 11AM
(rain date: Sunday, June 27)

Red Brook Honey
(details via members-only email list)

10 hives! Possible marking of drones for practice, making of increase-nucs for overwintering.

Open Hive

Tentative for Sunday, July 11
(rain date: Sunday, July 18)

The Finson Farm
(details via members-only email list)

Western Maine Beekeepers

Open Hive

Saturday, June 19, 11AM

Steve Herb, 778-5031
91 Staples Pond Road, Temple

Picnic and Annual Meeting

Saturday, July 24, 10AM

Senior Citizen Building,
Kineowartha Park, Wilton

Cost: \$1/person (13 and older)

Bring: plates, silverware, beverages (no alcohol in the park), a salad or desert to share, and lawn chairs; you may also want sun screen and bug repellent!

We will have a raffle—donations for the raffle would be greatly appreciated.

York Beekeepers

Open Hive

Saturday, June 19

South Berwick
(details via members-only email list)

This will be an informal meeting; people sometimes come and go throughout.

Bring a lawn chair, veil and a potluck plate. Our host has offered cold well water, soft drinks, coffee and tea to the group.

Open Hives are a great opportunity for learning—see how others set-up their apiaries, enjoy tours through a wide variety of hives, and keep connected with your local beekeeping community!

WORKSHOP

How to Make Summer Nucs: Cumberland County Beekeepers Association

Presenter: Master Beekeeper
Erin MacGregor-Forbes

Thursday, June 24, 1 – 4PM
(rain date: June 25)

163 Highland Cliff Road, Windham

Participation: Limited to 20 people (this workshop is not designed for first-year beekeepers; two-plus years of beekeeping experience is recommended)

Fee: \$110 (includes 2 queens and 1 divided hive body to contain the nucs)

FMI: Erin MacGregor-Forbes, 838-4046
or queenbee@overlandhoney.com

Register online at www.overlandhoney.com
via PayPal, or contact Erin for registration form.

A hands-on workshop utilizing the CCBA's club hives to make four summer nucs for the purpose of wintering-over for use the following year. (Two nucs per each full-sized colony.) Northern-raised queens from Michael Palmer of French Hill Apiaries will be utilized to head the newly made colonies. Participants will learn the fundamentals of making their own summer nucs as well as receive instruction on preparing the new colonies for wintering.

Each participant will leave the workshop with two queens and one divided hive body so they can make up their own nucs in their home apiary. This requires at least one strong, healthy queenright colony in the beekeeper's own yard.

Purpose: to begin educating our membership in methods of sustainable apiary management, as facilitated by wintering nucleus colonies. The goal of making summer nucs is to provide a strategy for England beekeepers to obtain locally raised increase/replacement colonies in the early spring. Due to climactic conditions, it is feasible to raise and mate Northern queens in the early spring in New England. It is for this reason that we raise our queens spring and summer of the previous year and support them with small (nucleus) colony through the winter. The following spring overwintered nucleus colonies are used by beekeepers to replace deadout colonies, to increase colony numbers, or to provide the beekeeper a benefit by offering these nucleus colonies for sale.



BUZZINGS

Submit all announcements and news at least 15 days prior to publication date (see page 3).

Eastern Apicultural Society 2010 Conference

Monday – Friday, August 2 – 6, 2010

Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina

Monday and Tuesday will feature a Short Course with EAS Master Beekeepers presenting the Introductory Level classes, and a number of well-known educators teaching the Advanced Level, including Keith Delaplane, Nick Calderone, Wyatt Magnum, Jennifer Berry, Marion Ellis, Maryann Frazier, and Clarence Collison.

The remainder of the week will be comprised of lectures and workshops on a variety of topics. From apiary record software to woodworking, microscopy classes to talking to youngsters about bees, there are sessions to interest all. There is even a Bee Rodeo planned with hive-tool throwing, a queen-finding race and smoker-lighting contests.

There will be times for socializing, a barbecue and awards banquet, vendors to visit, and even a tour of Brushy Mountain Bee Farm. Boone is just off the Blue Ridge Parkway in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains, with family attractions like Grandfather Mountain, Tweetsie Railroad and Mast General Store; outdoor adventures including whitewater rafting, hiking, biking and horseback riding; as well as great shopping, performing arts and visual arts.

FMI: www.easternapiculture.org

The Apiary News

The spring edition of the Worcester County Beekeepers Association newsletter is now available on their website: www.honeybeeclub.org

Maine State Hive Registrations Due

Registration forms for reporting 2010 hives: www.maine.gov/agriculture/pi/apiary/index.htm

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Maine State Beekeepers Association

THE BEE LINE | Newsletter of the MSBA

Lori Harley, *Editor*
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra Gift Contribution | \$ _____ |

Total Payment \$ _____

Cost

Current Age	# of Years Beekeeping	Most # of Hives	Current # of Hives

Please make check payable to:

Maine State Beekeepers Association

Send to:

Eric B. Davis, *Membership*
70 Totte Road, PO Box 76
Shapleigh, ME 04076
ebd1@hotmail.com | 207-636-3123

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HONEYBEES NEED YOU!

This is a new / renewing membership (check one). How did you find out about the MSBA? _____